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MODULE 2 **SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION FOR CLIL**

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OUTLINE

AIM	This module focuses on the findings of SLA research that are relevant to CLIL
TARGET GROUP	Language teachers and subject teachers of secondary level involved in initial and in-service teacher training, and professional development
TRAINERS	TIE-CLIL network experts with a background in SLA
EXPECTED OUTCOMES	By the end of this module, the participant should be able to <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Discuss what the content teacher and the language teacher in a CLIL context can do to encourage and guide students to successfully use the L2 resources they have■ Advise content-subject and language teachers on how to deal and cope with some learners' errors■ Discuss some of the characteristics successful CLIL experiences seem to share■ Find solutions for the CLIL situations discussed
SUBJECT	Any language (although most examples are taken from English SLA) and non-language subjects
CONTENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Learner's language and types of errors■ Incidental and intentional learning■ Types of Input: Comprehensible, Simplified, Elaborated, etc.■ Language produced in CLIL contexts■ Learners' individual characteristics■ Characteristics of successful CLIL programmes
STRUCTURE	6 working units
METHODOLOGY	Individual analysis, group dialogue, short introduction on content; task group; individual work; plenary sessions for discussion, comparison, conclusions
EVALUATION	Evaluation will be conducted by means of <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Glossary of key terms■ Solutions to the problem-solving situations discussed■ List of features of incidental and intentional language learning relevant to CLIL

- Individual profile of good language learners in terms of incidental and intentional language learning
- A list of illustrations of comprehensible input provision and output sequences in the classroom
- Diagram of second language competence and communication strategies with examples taken from CLIL situations
- Summary of language learners' individual characteristics and relevance to CLIL

CERTIFICATION

According to local programme implementation

Notes to the trainer

Structure

Each unit contains a core information text titled *What is...?* as well as some other sources of input from other readings such as articles, excerpts, abstracts, reviews, extracts, etc. as the main source of information. Whereas the former was written and designed by the authors of each unit, the second source of information comes from published materials.

The core information text could be seen as an introduction to the state of the art of each topic (input types, interlanguage, etc.). It is a summary of what participants should know about the topic by the end of each unit. It can also be seen as the trainer's notes within contact hours teaching or as a self-study material for the end-users. Each core information text presents the main ideas from SLA field which are relevant for CLIL.

The structure of each unit can be best understood as consisting of three main steps: pre-tasks, readings and post-reading tasks. Pretasks elicit and check participants' background knowledge to build on their previous knowledge, to raise some expectations, to allow syllabus planning and negotiation, etc. Most of those tasks involve brainstorming, initial evaluation etc. The introductory tasks are followed by the readings. Each unit offers a wide variety of post-reading tasks to ensure and check comprehension, ranging from very practice-oriented to more academic-based. Some of the post-reading tasks suggest some additional and further tasks and readings, some of which involve rethinking and self-assessment.

Unit 1 focuses on the concept of learner's language and types of errors.

The main question is to consider how to handle learners' errors in CLIL classes. **This unit is meant primarily for language specialists.**

Unit 2 discusses the differences between incidental and intentional learning.

Unit 3 analyses the different type of input: comprehensible, simplified, elaborated, etc.

Unit 4 analyses some language produced in CLIL contexts.

Unit 5 discusses the importance of learners' individual characteristics.

Unit 6 examines the characteristics of successful CLIL programmes.

Recommendations

1. Before starting the module

Participants may vary considerably as concerns their previous background on Second Language Acquisition. Language teachers may be already familiar with some of the ideas discussed in this module, although probably not many have seen them related to CLIL previously. On the other hand, for subject teachers this may be the first time they are presented with the ideas and findings from the field of SLA.

The trainer should take this difference into consideration when planning the sessions and choosing the tasks. While language teachers can be expected to be able to work through all the tasks and read the core information text as well as the selected readings, for subject teachers,

the trainer may decide to spend more time on the comprehension of the main core information text, the introductory tasks and a limited choice of post-tasks.

In any case, it is important that at the beginning of each unit the trainer elicit the participants' personal ideas and start building on them.

2. Inputs

According to the characteristics of the participants of the course, the trainer will decide on the way contents are to be presented with two main aims in mind. To facilitate comprehension by using techniques such as the use of visual aids (OHP transparencies, diagrams) and also to be coherent with the widely-used techniques and strategies inherent to CLIL programmes.

3. Group dynamics

Co-operative teaching methodology and group work will be most adequate for some tasks in class. Individuals will also be asked to work through the readings outside class, reflect on the implications for their practice and prepare their own contributions to the small group or the class group.

4. Frequently used abbreviations

L1: First Language

L2: Second Language

SLA: Second Language Acquisition

IL: Interlanguage or Learner's Language

Unit 1

Interlanguage: Learner's Language

4 hours



OBJECTIVES

1. To identify the different characteristics of interlanguage (learners' language)
2. To distinguish and identify different types of learners' errors: errors which are a necessary step in the acquisition process (*developmental errors*) and errors that can be attributed to L1 influence
3. To reflect on the importance of developmental sequences

PROCEDURES

1. Initial activity
2. Introductory text
3. Tasks on the text for language teachers, content teachers and both; in group, pair-work text-based discussions, individual work
4. Individual reading of recommended articles; class discussion
5. Self-assessment

WORKING MATERIALS

1. "What is 'interlanguage'?"
2. P. Lightbown & Spada, N., "Learner Language" in *How languages are learned*, Oxford University Press, 1994: 71-90
3. Larsen-Freeman, Diane "Grammar and Its Teaching: Challenging the Myths". ERIC Digest. Source: ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics Washington DC http://www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC_Digests/ed406829.html

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

1. Glossary of key terms
2. Solutions to the problem-solving situations discussed

1. Initial activities



You may choose one of the following initial activities.

Task 1

In this section you will find out the extent to which some of your expectations and beliefs about (a) how languages are learnt, (b) the type of errors learners make and (c) how teachers should deal with them are either confirmed or disconfirmed by second language acquisition research findings.

Are the following statements true or false? Do you know why?

Initial Evaluation: Checking our own beliefs

1. In learning a foreign language (i.e. English), most of the errors students from different first language (L1) background (Spanish / German / Italian / French first language) will be making are completely different from one another.
2. Most of the errors which foreign language learners make are due to interference / influence of their first language.
3. One of the potential dangers of students talking to their peers is that they might pick up each others' errors.
4. The way each person learns a language is completely different from another. It depends on the language they speak, their attitude, their intelligence, motivation, etc.
5. An increase in the number of second or foreign language learners' errors is sometimes an indicator of progress.
6. The easier a grammar rule is, the easier it will be acquired. For example, 3rd person -s for present simple in English is rather easy to state and it is fairly easy to acquire.
7. Learners' knowledge about the language (i.e. knowing grammar rules) does not necessarily result in being able to use it in more open and free spontaneous contexts.
8. Languages are learnt mainly through imitation.
9. Both first and second language (L2) learners in the process of learning the English past, would start using frequent irregular past verbs (e.g. *mummy went*, *we saw*) before they use regular past tenses (e.g. *mummy called*).
10. Both L1 and L2 learners in the process of learning the English past may be saying things such as *We played cards yesterday* but also *I buyed the book* [instead of *I bought the book*] / *She teached me* [instead of *she taught me*].
11. Second language structures which differ most from the equivalent structures in a learner's native language (L1) are also the most difficult to acquire and should therefore be given greatest emphasis in the syllabus.
12. Second language structures which are closer to the equivalent structures in a learner's native language (L1) are the easiest to acquire and should therefore be given greatest emphasis in the syllabus.
13. There is a direct relationship between linguistic complexity and learning difficulty.
14. The syllabus should present target structures to the learner in order of increasing complexity.
15. Both in first and second language acquisition there are systematic and predictable stages or sequences of acquisition.

Task 2

Below you will find some of the concepts and dichotomies you will be learning about in this unit.

Draw a horizontal line on the right column as if it were a thermometer from 0° to 100° C: 0° means I don't have a clue of what it is or might be about; 100° means I already know what this is about, how it works and I can provide lots of examples.

Assign each concept its corresponding temperature.

Some key terms	0	20	40	60	80	100
1. Acquisition and Learning						
2. Interlanguage						
3. Order of acquisition						
4. Learners' errors						
5. Developmental errors						
6. Transfer errors						
7. Developmental sequences						
8. First language acquisition						

2. "What is interlanguage?"



In this section we are going to consider learner's language itself. We will examine the type of language second and foreign language learners produce in the process of learning the target language. We will examine the types of errors learners make and discuss what they can tell us about their knowledge of the language and their ability to use this knowledge. English children learning their mother tongue may say *goed* instead of *went*. We have also heard second language learners saying *teached* instead of *taught*. We will discuss the extent to which second and first language acquisition are alike in this respect. Most people seem to be aware of the fact that learners' first language may influence the learning of a second one. What most people are not aware of, however, is the fact that learners with different language backgrounds in learning English as a second language will go through the same stages in learning some grammatical features such as verb negation. In other words, Spanish, Italian, German, Finnish learners of English in the process of learning negation in English will go through the very same four stages. For example, the Spanish negation system is preverbal (*Yo no lo quiero* 'I don't want it') whereas several of the other languages are not. The differences among those learners can be best understood in terms of rate (how fast they would move from one stage to the next). An important second language acquisition (SLA) finding is that there are some learners' errors that cannot be predicted or attributed to learners' first language, instructional setting (formal, informal) or age.

Language Acquisition

Although for most SLA researchers the terms acquisition and learning are interchangeable, for others acquisition is contrasted with learning. **Acquisition** is associated with the *unconscious learning* which takes place when the emphasis is on communication and there is no attention to *form*, whereas **learning** refers to the development of conscious knowledge of the target language through *formal* study. For the second group of researchers, learning means the same as *explicit knowledge*.

When do researchers consider that something has been acquired? In the early 70's researchers

suggested learners had acquired a given morpheme when they were able to use it grammatically most of the time. Lately, however, most researchers suggest learners have acquired a language form when they are able to use it in spontaneous settings whether in a target-like fashion or not, most of the time. One researcher in particular developed one of the latest models of acquisition based on the idea that a language form had been acquired if learners would use it at least in three obligatory contexts from the communicative tasks in which they were engaged, yet not necessarily target-like. When learners are in the process of learning something they would attempt to use the language form in a wide variety of ways, overgeneralising its rule and also using it in non-obligatory contexts. For example when a learner is in the process of learning the English past, he or she may say *I saw you yesterday when I go beach but I didn't saw Mia. I'm going to called her.*

Similarities between First Language and Second Language Acquisition

Children do not learn their mother tongue simply through *imitation* and *practice*; instead, they produce *utterances* that are not like those they have heard. Children's language seems to be created on the basis of some internal processes and knowledge which interact with the language they are exposed to, allowing them to find out how the language system works gradually. Children's early language seems best described as a developing system with its own internal and systematic structures, not just an imperfect imitation of the language they are in the process of learning. Finally, children's language reveals there is an order of acquisition of English morphemes and also some other syntactic structures such as *negation*. For example, English children invariably first start using the *-ing morpheme* before they would ever come up with a *plural -s form*; or they start using the *irregular past* of some highly frequent verbs such as *saw* and *went* before they start using the *regular -ed morpheme*. When they start using the regular *-ed morpheme*, they also tend to overgeneralise its use and apart from saying *called*, they would also say *comed*. In acquiring *English negation*, children also go through a series of stages, some of which are not target-like (grammatical). At one stage, English children use pre-verbal negation in utterances like *mummy no comb hair*.

SLA research has also found out that second language learners learn English morphemes in a given order of acquisition and that *the plural -s morpheme* is acquired much earlier than the *third person -s morpheme*. In fact, the *3rd person -s morpheme* along with the *-ed morpheme* is one of the latest morphemes acquired by second language learners. Learners will only start using those morphemes in spontaneous situations once they have already acquired other morphemes such as the *plural -s*.

Interlanguage

Interlanguage is the learners' language, i.e., the type of language produced by learners who are in the process of learning a second language. Interlanguage is also defined as the learners' developing second language knowledge. Analysis of the learners' interlanguage shows that it has some characteristics of the learner's native language, some characteristics of the second language and some characteristics which are very systematic, i.e. rule-governed and common to all learners. In language acquisition, learners' errors are caused by several different processes.

Learners' Errors

SLA has identified three main types of errors. The first of these are developmental errors, which are similar to the errors made by children learning the language as their first language. Developmental errors are assumed to be a natural product of a gradually developing ability in the new language in the studies so far carried out, developmental errors make up the majority of errors exhibited by second language learners. Examples of developmental errors are the misuse of *third person -s* (*she work hard, he doesn't works hard*), the *-ed morpheme* (*she teached us last year*), of *negation* (*I not like it*) and of *interrogatives* (*I wonder what is she doing*). Transfer or interlingual errors, or errors clearly attributable to first language influence, are also frequent. One example of a transfer error for learners from most romance languages learning English is adverb placement in instances like *I have every day a cup of coffee in the morning*.

Developmental Sequences

Research on SLA has revealed that there are important similarities between first language acquisition and second language acquisition. One important finding has been that in both first and second language acquisition there are sequences or 'stages' in the development of particular structures.

Developmental sequences are similar across learners from different language backgrounds, from different ages, or from different learning contexts (formal instruction vs. naturalistic). In other words, second and foreign language learners in the process of learning the target language, pass through a series of identifiable stages in acquiring grammatical structures. One such example is provided by Italian tenses where learners irrespectively of mother tongue start by marking completion with past participles.

The language that learners produce (*IL*) provides evidence that they acquire different morphological features in a *fixed order* and also that they pass through a sequence of developmental stages in the acquisition of specific morpho-syntactic features. The existence of **developmental sequences** is one of the most important findings of SLA research to date. There is a general acceptance in the SLA research community that the acquisition of some features of L2 grammar occurs in stages.

3. Tasks on the text



Task 1: Glossary of related SLA terms from the Tutorial

Look for definitions and explanations of the bold-faced terms and italicised terms in the tutorial. Then write definitions for them using your own words. If possible, write down synonyms of those terms.

1. Working in heterogeneous pairs (subject-matter teacher and language teacher) read the following instructions and split the work between the two of you. Be ready to share and compare the results with other pairs. (1) Look up the definition of *interlanguage*, *developmental sequence* in an Applied Linguistics dictionary. (2) Are there any related terms provided? (3) Who coined the term? (4) Are there any Applied Linguistics dictionaries in your mother tongue? If so, look the term up (5). Then, look it up in a desk-reference bilingual dictionary¹ English-Your mother tongue and see whether the term can be found. (6) Are there any related terms provided? (7) Also, find out how the term has been translated into your mother tongue. You may want to use some reference SLA manuals such as Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991) which might have been translated to your first language and check the term there (It has been translated to Spanish and Japanese at least). (8) Finally, find out whether there are any developmental sequences being described for your first language (there are developmental sequences being described for German, Italian, Spanish at least). Compare your answers with a different pair.

2. Discuss the relevance to CLIL programmes of the different types of *learners' errors* and of the *developmental stages*. Why do language teachers as well as content teachers need to be aware of *learner's interlanguage*? What is it that they may expect from their learners based on what they've read about learner's *interlanguage*?

3. Read the following complaint by a language teacher and comment on it. This teacher severely criticises a couple of students that have been interviewing each other in order to find out some facts about each other's friends. She interrupts them and says:

¹ Richards, C. J. Platt & H. Platt, 1992. This well-known dictionary of Applied Linguistics has recently been translated into Spanish: *Diccionario de lingüística aplicada y enseñanza de lenguas. Versión española y adaptación de Carmen Muñoz Lahoz y Carmen Pérez Vidal*. Barcelona: Editorial Ariel, 1997.

I have taught you the present simple tense, haven't I? How many times have I told you not to forget the 3rd person -s? Yet you seem to ignore what I said. Look, What is Mary, isn't Mary a she? Isn't Mary a third person singular? Why on earth have you said Mary work hard instead of Mary workS hard. We have spent over a couple of months 'studying' the present simple tense and asking and giving information about habitual actions, haven't we? You haven't learnt anything, have you?

- What is it that this teacher is not aware of?
- What is this teacher taking for granted?
- Is the 3rd person -s one of the earlier morphemes acquired by second language learners?
- What is the difference between formal study, having learnt something and having acquired something?
- What type of language does this teacher expect from their students? Why?

4. One teacher listening to a student's telephone conversation in order to make a complaint about a flight focuses her attention on the following learners' interlanguage samples:

*I call yesterday...and you **told** me that...My flight **taked** off... No, I **saw** it! Yes I am going to **made** to the complain office*

And concludes the learner has not yet *acquired* English past tense morphology.

- What can you tell this teacher?
- Does the learner fully master the past?
- Are all the past forms used by the learner target like? Are all the past morphemes grammatical?
- Are all the instances in which the learner uses a past morpheme obligatory?

5. How can you know whether a learner's error is a *developmental error* or a *transfer error*? SLA research literature has reported that Spanish, Catalan, Italian and French L1 learners tend to make the following error in learning English as a second language

I drink every day three cups of coffee.

- Is this utterance grammatical?/ Is it correct?/ Is it target-like? Why not?
- If only some romance L1 learners such as Catalan, Spanish and French make this type of error while other L1 learners tend not to make this type of error, what can we conclude about the type of error this is?
- In Catalan and Spanish it is possible to say each of the following combinations. Find out what it is like in other languages such as French, Italian, or Portuguese. Also find out whether non-romance speakers (such as Germans, Finns, etc.) seem to have the same adverb placement problem in learning English.

*(Jo) em bec, cada dia, tres taces de cafè / (Yo) me bebo cada día tres tazas de café / *I drink every day three cups of coffee*

Cada dia, em bec tres taces de cafè / Cada día me bebo tres tazas de café / Every day I drink three cups of coffee

(Jo) em bec tres taces de cafè al dia / (Yo) bebo tres tazas de café al día / I drink three cups of coffee every day

6. One teacher notices that most of her students from Spanish and Catalan L1 background keep making this type of error in learning English when engaged in communicative tasks

I no work... I not work ...I not want it...She don't work...She not work

And she attributes these errors to the fact that Spanish as well as Catalan are pre-verbal languages, that is, that negation in Spanish and Catalan is made by placing the negative before the verb.

*(Yo) no trabajo..... (Yo) no lo quiero..... (Ella) no trabaja
(Jo) no treballo.... (Jo) no ho vull..... (Ella) no treballa*

and concludes that these errors are interlingual errors, that is transfer errors to be attributed to the transfer from learner's L1 background.

- Is this teacher right? What can you tell this teacher?
- Has this teacher gathered enough evidence to support her claim? In order to reject her hypothesis, what type of data would you recommend this teacher collect?
- Are learners whose L1 is Spanish or Catalan the only ones who would most likely make this type of error in learning the verb negation in English?
- German L1 learners of English are said to move faster from pre-verbal negation (stage 1) to post-verbal negation (stage 2). The rate is faster although the path is the same. How can we account for it? Is German also a pre-verbal language? If you do not know the answer, what would you predict based on the fact that German learners move sooner from stage 1 to stage 2 in learning verb negation in English?
- Find out other ways of negating in different languages.
- Would you expect the very same learners to make the very same type of errors if instead of being engaged in communicative tasks, they were completing a more controlled written grammar exercise for which they had more time to plan and to rely on formal knowledge? Why?

7. These learners have been working on a science project to find out which type of detergents, biological or non-biological, eliminates stains better. They are bilingual students. They are fluent Catalan and Spanish speakers. They have been designing their own experiments to find out the answer for three types of stains: coffee stains, orange juice stains and oil stains. The team of teachers composed by a science teacher and a foreign language teacher has been monitoring the experiment. When it comes to report the results of the experiment this is what one group of students looking at the following grid of findings says:

	Coffee stains	Orange juice stains	Oil stains
Biological detergent	X	OK	X
Non biological detergent	OK	X	OK

S: *Non-biological detergent removes coffee stains better than biological detergent. Non-biological detergent remove stains in oil better. Non-biological detergent don't remove orange juice well*

- What can you tell about this learner's interlanguage?

4. Individual reading



P. Lightbown & Spada, N., "Learner Language" in *How languages are learned*. Oxford University Press, 1994:71-90.

Larsen-Freeman, Diane "Grammar and Its Teaching: Challenging the Myths". ERIC Digest. Source: ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics Washington DC. http://www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC_Digests/ed406829.html

5. Evaluation and assessment



Choose the best answers and justify them in the right-hand column

1. Learners' knowledge about the language (i.e. knowing a grammar rule) (a) usually results in (b) does not necessarily result in being able to apply it and use it in more open and free spontaneous contexts.	
2. In learning a foreign language (i.e. English), most of the errors students from different L1 background (Spanish / German / Italian / French) will be making are (a) completely different (b) similar to one another.	
3. The way (path and rate) each person acquires a second / foreign language is (a) completely different (b) largely similar to one another.	
4. Most of the errors which foreign language learners make (a) are due to (b) are not due to interference / influence of their first language.	
5. Students talking to their peers (a) will probably (b) will not likely pick up each others' errors.	
6. Languages (a) are acquired (b) are not acquired mainly through imitation.	
7. An increase in the number of second or foreign language learners' error can be an indicator of (a) failure (b) progress.	
8. As a rule, the 3 rd person 's' for the present simple in English is (a) more difficult to state (b) almost as difficult to state as the 's' for plurals.	
9. The 3 rd person 's' for the present simple in English is (a) far more difficult to acquire than (b) as difficult to acquire as the 's' for plurals.	
10. The English - ed past and 3 rd person 's' are examples of (a) morphemes from the developmental sequences which are acquired rather late (b) structures so simple to state that explicit grammar teaching can speed up the acquisition process.	