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lingua e nuova didattica

N°1 FEBBRAIO 2017 - ANNO XLVI

**Un curriculum orientato
allo sviluppo sostenibile.**
Una proposta tedesca

Franca Quartapelle

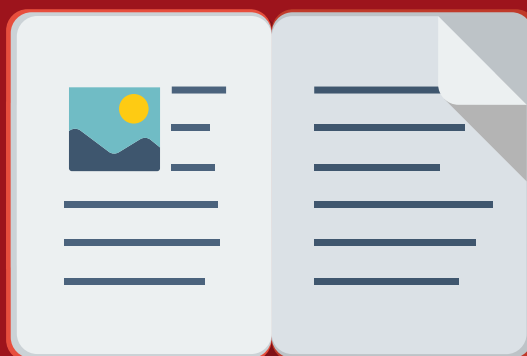
« **Ma si può dire in
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strategizing foreign language for the deep
reading of complex academic L1-text

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**Picture books e uso
narrativo della lingua
inglese**

Licia Masoni

**Un'esperienza formativa
di CLIL in ambiente
multimodale**

Attilio Galimberti

Periodico in collaborazione con

British Council
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Luciano Mariani, Lulu Press, 2016

CLIL at Upper Secondary: strategizing foreign language for the deep reading of complex academic L1-text

Y.L. Teresa Ting



Questo articolo parte dalla sfida del *deep-reading*, la lettura profonda, per illustrare come una lingua straniera possa essere usata strategicamente per aiutare gli studenti non solo a navigare attraverso l'impegnativo linguaggio accademico dei loro manuali in L1, ma anche per coltivare l'alfabetizzazione e il pensiero critico. Sebbene non possiamo modificare la complessità intrinseca dei concetti contenutistici che gli studenti dovranno apprendere, potremmo modulare i codici linguistici attraverso i quali gli studenti accedono a tali concetti. Questo articolo illustra come il CLIL ci fornisca un *range* di codici-linguistici alternativi, che possiamo ottimizzare per permettere agli studenti di comprendere il testo accademico complesso sia in Italiano che in lingua straniera CLIL.

In this article I would like to discuss the challenges facing deep-reading and literacy development and illustrate how the use of a foreign language, as in the case of CLIL – Content and Language Integrated Learning – makes it possible to strategically use foreign languages to help students navigate their challenging L1 textbooks and, at the same time, cultivate literacy and prompt critical thinking in both the foreign language as well as the mother tongue. Content-education at upper secondary is already difficult, even in the mother tongue: CLIL at secondary is the challenging prospect of learning unknown content through a foreign language. While we cannot modify the inherent complexity of the content-concepts that students must learn, we can modulate the linguistic codes through which students access such concepts. This awareness opens a trove of possibilities whereby language experts can optimize the presence of two languages plus their respective registers to delineate literacy-tools students can use to not only access complex academic text in L1 but also evaluate complex propositions presented through an academic foreign language. This article illustrates how *translanguaging* strategies for deep-reading can help content teachers to comfortably “*completare la programma*” and language experts to optimize content complexity for cultivating academic literacy and critical thinking in a foreign language.

Introduction

The ability to read deeply is *sine qua non* to understanding information embedded in complex text. Unfortunately, reading and comprehending long complex texts is becoming a “neglected skill” in today’s reality of SMSs and 140-character-Tweets. Without the ability to read deeply, young people will not only extract less from their textbooks while in school, but once in the workforce, individuals who cannot read deeply will have problems comprehending work-related texts that are probably longer and more complex than five words plus an emoticon. The 2013 OECD PIAAC Report on adult literacies surveyed over 150000 adults between the ages of 25-65 from 24 countries and found that, even in the “best performing countries” of Japan and Finland, only 1 out of 5 adults are fully functionally literate and numerate, able to comprehend texts and numbers about common everyday issues sufficiently well to extract implicit but simple information. In most other countries, only 1 out of 10 adults possessed literacy and numeracy competences at a level where they are “positioned to succeed” (OECD 2013).

It is rather ironic therefore, that, as our scientific acumen supports increasingly more advanced technologies, we are becoming less and less literate. Being able to read and comprehend expository text is undoubtedly the main modality for accessing and gaining knowledge. This is especially the case when in secondary content education when this knowledge is often complex and abstract. Even if instruction comes through other modalities of input such as videos or lectures, texts provide the printed word and information students will need to complete even oral tasks such as Socratic discussions, simulated debates, collaborative problem-solving and even drawing-to-learn, graphing, tabulating etc.

Thus the importance of helping students read complex expository text. Various instructional strategies have been delineated for cultivating students’ reading skills at secondary (Jetton and Shanahan, 2012; Zwiers, O’Hara, Pritchard, 2014). Many of the excellent strategies are particularly useful when teachers are fluent in the language of instruction: in such contexts, teachers are able to monitor students as they converse collaboratively about what has been read so to continuously probe and prod students in the right direction of thinking and reasoning. In the case of CLIL in Italy, or many other realities where the CLIL language of instruction is a foreign language for *both* the teacher and the students, not only do many students not have the linguistic resources to partake in meaningful ‘collaborative discussions’, teachers may not have the linguistic resources to conduct and lead ‘instructional talk’ towards deep-level understandings of the textual input.

The instructional dilemma behind this article can therefore be summarized as follows: “Are there simple instructional procedures that Content experts, who are not fluent in the CLIL language of instruction, can use to nonetheless move the Content curriculum forward and also help cultivate academic literacy?” The suggestion presented here is to use simple, non-academic English, which is familiar to the students, as scaffold into the complex academic Italian in their expository L1-textbook, which is familiar to the Content teacher. In Section 1, I invite

readers to consider some of the practical challenges facing disciplinary education and thus the development of disciplinary literacy, even in the mother tongue. Ironically, when educating through the mother tongue, we easily overlook such challenges which, however, become evident when students must learn complex content through an explicitly foreign language, as is the case of CLIL. This prompts teachers to automatically seek strategies for supporting students through this challenging endeavour. Section 2 discusses this and presents some very simple *translanguaging* strategies that help students read deeply, and thus learn from otherwise complex academic Italian text. Section 3 discusses how, when we realize that, even in L1, academic discourse about complex secondary concepts is itself an unfamiliar linguistic code, we become aware that the CLIL language of instruction is actually another access code students can use for constructing knowledge and developing literacy. This Section will illustrate how the strategies presented here are coherent with existent theories on language learning. Section 4 concludes with a discussion of how such a “language-aware CLIL Mindset” unlocks an array of linguistic codes teachers can optimize for helping students read actively and think critically, through both the mother tongue and the CLIL language of instruction.

1. Literacy: intrinsic difficulties amplified by current trends

Why is *functional illiteracy* (Giere 1987; National Literacy Trust 2011) emerging in a society that is now surrounded by so much knowledge? Of course there are no simple explanations. However, we may consider two interrelated factors that complicate the process of *schooling for literacy*: the traditional practical challenges and how these are exasperated by modern modalities of communication.

1.1. Practical challenges and perplexing dilemmas

Firstly, as students get older, the content they must learn of course becomes increasingly more complex: for example, the very tangible and visible notions regarding photosynthesis at primary become significantly elaborated and much more abstract at secondary, with tertiary education introducing concepts which only Biology students can readily grasp. Since concepts exist through the language in which they are embedded, as concepts become more complex, so too does the language used to *language about* these concepts. Therefore, as illustrated in Figure 1, the learning of content, especially at secondary, is a cognitively demanding process whereby students must not only understand complex concepts but also decipher the complex disciplinary discourse in which these concepts are embedded.



Figure 1. The cognitive demands of Content-education.

The learning of Content involves two cognitively demanding processes which must be equilibrated: the understanding of new concepts (C) plus the processing and comprehension of the language used to *language about* these concepts (L). (Ting, 2012)

Unfortunately, the language used to *language about* disciplinary concepts, i.e. *disciplinary discourse*, is incomprehensible for those outside the particular disciplinary community, such as learners. In fact, Halliday and Martin (1993) suggest that the language of science turns our mother tongue into an “alienating” foreign language for those who are not members of that particular *discourse community* (Wenger 1998). This is the case for all academic disciplines and as Bourdieu et al., (1994: 8) state so well “*academic language is no one’s mother tongue*”. Doubly unfortunate for learners is the fact that, since disciplinary academic language is the code used by community experts to *language about* community knowledge, disciplinary discourse represents the correct and best way to *language about* community knowledge. That is why disciplinary discourse is the *language of schooling*, used by teachers to properly explain the concepts at hand and it is the language used by expository textbooks which, being reliable sources of knowledge, must of course use *the proper language to language about knowledge*.

Unfortunately, yet again, is the fact that, since disciplinary discourse is the most accurate way to *language about* disciplinary knowledge, it is the language students are expected to produce to show they have learnt. This brings us to what we might consider a *dilemma of education*: *we expect students to generate output that utilizes a way of languaging which, if used as input, would be foreign, alienating and incomprehensible* (see Swain 2006 regarding the term *languaging*; Ting 2015; Ting and Ciadamidaro, 2015). This dilemma of education is shown in Figure 2.

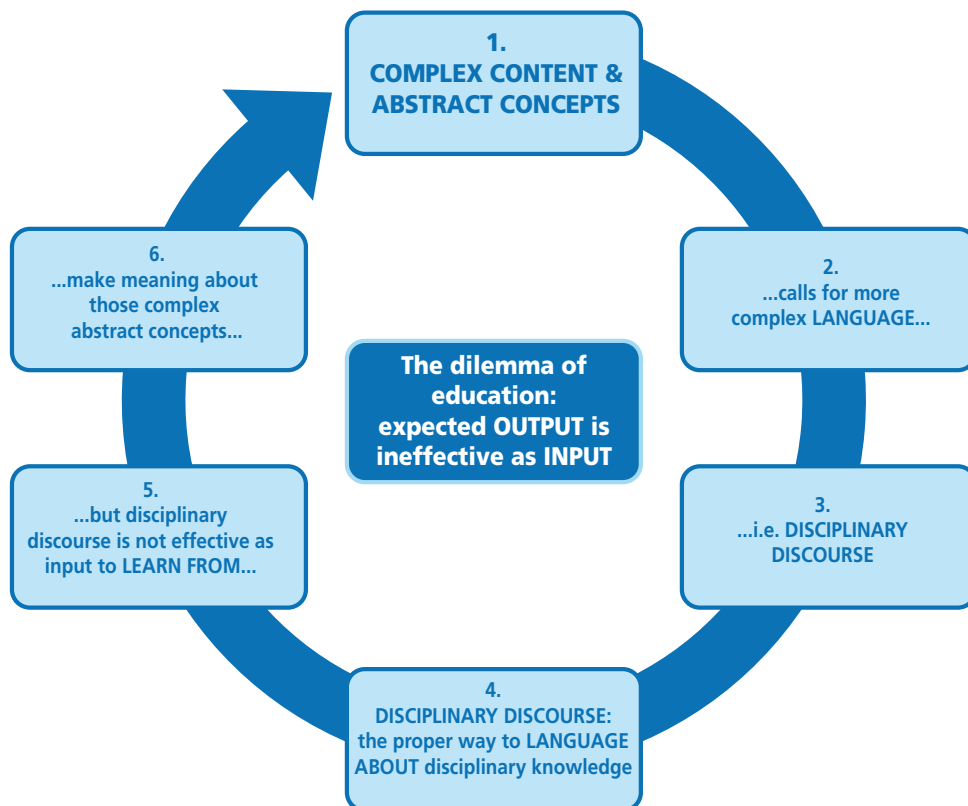


Figure 2. The challenges and dilemma of education.

Sufficient research and anecdotal evidence tell us that, despite years of reading well-written textbooks and listening to eloquent teachers, even in the mother tongue, academic literacy does not happen “naturally”: indeed, academic literacy must be learnt through explicit instruction (Wellington and Osborne 2001; Zwiers *et al.* 2014).

1.2. Newer ways of reading defy deeper ways of thinking

The second factor that accounts for more recent deterioration in literacy may be related to the norms of today’s social media which prefers short emails, even shorter SMSs and no more than 140 characters per Tweet. In fact, although *functional illiteracy* and the inability to read deeply is indeed very worrying, it is actually rather expected in light of our digital reality. For example, in the past, to find the answer to a question such as “*what’s the difference between a lime and a lemon?*” it would have been necessary to go through several books and digest some pages of information. With the digital revolution we are now able to find numerous differences between lemons and limes in a very short time. In fact, a “Googling-click” reveals differences that had not crossed our minds, such as different amounts of folic acid or potassium. In fact, there is so much information about the “*differences between a lime and a lemon*” that we must decide when to stop listing the differences. To survive such information inundation, it is necessary to do what experts call *skim, scan and flip*: *skim* quickly through a huge amount of text to get the gist, *scan* for key words where we might pause and read quickly before *flipping* to the next digital text. In fact, *skim scan and flip* is probably the only healthy way to survive the massive amounts of “lemon-lime” facts that one finds. With so much information to process after each click, we cannot read deeply every single piece of text appearing on our screen since to do so would be humanly impossible and highly inefficient. *Skim scan and flip* is therefore a necessary strategy for surviving information inundation without *cognition melt-down*.

Unfortunately, *skim scan and flip* fuels an “on-the-page mindset” and does not contribute to cultivating students’ ability to read deeply and extract information from complex texts so to comprehend complex concepts. A *skim scan and flip, on-the-page mindset* is a risk for democratic citizenship since anybody from anywhere can write about anything. As such, digital texts may be written for personal gains rather than for democratizing knowledge (Fairclough 1991): creams that dissolve cellulite, grow hair on shiny craniums, and remove wrinkles that have been diligently collected over a lifetime, all in one tube. Worse, virtual experts selling ephemeral miracle-cures for real illnesses inflicting our loved ones. The democratizing virtue of the Internet has two faces: while the freedom to share information represents the first ingredient of democracy, the unrestrained freedom to “produce text that looks like fact” calls upon an ability to read deeply, think critically and *read beyond the page*.

To navigate this information-everywhere society, we need a rich *repertoire of learnt knowledge* to help us discern treasure from trash. Much of our repertoire of learnt knowledge will come from schooling, from the systematic studying and understanding of subjects that comprise our school curriculum. And the quality and quantity of this learnt knowledge requires the ability

to read deeply so to understand the information presented in our textbooks and other reliable resources. More than ever, young people must be fully *functionally literate*, able to *read deeply* and utilize their *repertoire of learnt knowledge* to process inundations of information so to understand what is probably true, what is probably not true, and what they do not know enough of *yet* and thus need to investigate further before taking a stand or transferring monies etc.

2. Strategizing foreign language for deep-reading

The first question that comes to mind is of course: “*If teachers already find it difficult to motivate students to read their Italian textbooks deeply, how can the use of a foreign language help?*” Indeed, this is the fundamental concern surrounding the implementation of CLIL at upper secondary, especially when CLIL uses Content-learning time, as is the case in Italy. As explained in Section 1.1, since disciplinary discourse is the most precise way to language about disciplinary concepts, it is the language used by textbooks. However, since such “*academic language is nobody’s mother tongue*”, students struggle to process it easily enough to learn from such language, even if the text is written in their mother tongue. They are therefore easily put off by such expository texts, finding Tweets, SMSs and emoticons, a more “enjoyable read”.

2.1. Using comprehensible non-academic English to access challenging academic Italian

To see how familiar foreign language can serve as a scaffold into challenging Italian academic text, I will illustrate through a text regarding the Long Depression, taken from Wikipedia. Although Wikipedia texts are certainly not created with the rigors of a textbook, these are often dense in information and terminology, not unlike how subject-related information would be presented in L1 textbooks.

Industrial Crisis of the Long Depression (1873-1879)
 From Wikipedia ([https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grande_depressione_\(1873-1895\)](https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grande_depressione_(1873-1895)))

Crisi industriale

SECTION I

Le cause che portarono alla crisi industriale sono del tutto simili a quelle della crisi agricola: le industrie cioè producevano molto più di quanto il mercato potesse assorbire sotto forma di consumi. L'indice più vistoso della crisi fu la caduta dei prezzi.

La crisi può essere spiegata per la concomitanza di tre fattori:

1. aumento del progresso tecnologico, che favorì un incremento della produzione di beni;
2. aumento del numero di paesi industrializzati, e in particolare ingresso di nuovi attori economici nel mercato globale (Stati Uniti e Germania guglielmina);
3. imposizione di bassi salari, con conseguente riduzione dei redditi e crisi sul lato della domanda aggregata.

II

Ad un impetuoso aumento dell'offerta di beni non corrispose un corrispettivo aumento della richiesta di beni, per la scarsa domanda dovuta all'assenza di una borghesia sufficientemente in grado, come oggi, di compensare sul lato dei consumi e della bassa circolazione monetaria. La crisi delle vendite e la caduta del saggio dei prezzi provocarono effetti immediati sul lavoro, determinando licenziamenti e disoccupazione crescente.

Ai paesi tradizionalmente industrializzati (Gran Bretagna, Belgio, Francia) si affiancarono nuove potenze con grandi capacità produttive e altri paesi a più lenta e tardiva industrializzazione (Italia, Russia, Giappone).

III

La situazione peggiorò ulteriormente allorché si tentò di rispondere alla caduta della produzione e dei prezzi con ulteriori riduzioni salariali. Particolarmente violente furono anche le repressioni ai danni del movimento sindacale (la National Labour Union americana scomparve). I tagli dei salari provocarono nuove cadute dei consumi e conseguenti ulteriori riduzioni dei prezzi, conducendo a una situazione di perdurante deflazione per l'intero ventennio.

Figure 3. An example of academic text that exemplifies how students' Italian textbooks may present the topic.

Figure 4 illustrates a task in which comprehensible *non-academic English* is used to help students read through the first section of academic Italian text that, without assistance, would be difficult to *immediately* understand. In fact, a readability analysis (Gunning Fog) of the English translation of this first section estimated that 13.1 years of schooling is needed to understand this text *at first reading*. Students can undoubtedly re-read challenging academic texts numerous times so to learn (and memorize) it well enough “to do school”. However, what is necessary are strategies that help students understand concepts well so that such knowledge becomes an enduring resource that serves professional purposes or simply informed citizenship.

This CLIL task provides the “official context” for using a *translanguaging* strategy that calls for students to migrate between two languages, reading and re-reading information presented in both English and Italian. From the point of view of Content-instruction, the process is straightforward, since, by increasing the number of times students process the information in and through both languages, we very naturally increase the likelihood of their comprehending the content. However, this strategy is only effective if applied through a certain degree of language-awareness. Firstly, being more language aware, we realize that there are other linguistic registers students can use as access points into complex content that is embedded in alienating academic discourse. At the same time, through the *CLIL looking glass*, we realize that the academic register in Italian is already difficult, so we cannot ask students to work through a direct translation of academic English since that would make what is already difficult, impossible. The task thus uses *informal English* to access *academic Italian*. In fact, the instructions alert students to the need to manage two registers, “informal English” and “academic Italian”. Such instructions sensitize students to the existence of different registers and cultivates an awareness of “*linguistic appropriacy*”. Finally, since students are expected to complete these exercises by working together, they are processing and *languaging* about the information collaboratively while co-constructing the necessary language for completing the task.

Task 1. Write the Italian equivalent next to each of these English phrases about the first section of text about the Industrial Crisis.

The English phrases are not identical to the Italian so you must also modify your Italian sentence. The English phrases are also in informal English: you should write in academic Italian.

1. The industrial crisis happened for the same reason as the agricultural crisis: there were more things produced than what people needed, so prices fell dramatically.	
2. Better technology made it possible for industries to produce more things.	
3. There were more industrialized countries and there were new “players” in the international industrial market.	
4. Salaries were kept low so incomes were low and the total demand of goods was low.	

Figure 4. Social English as scaffold into academic Italian.

2.2. Engaging with academic discourse in both languages

The task of Section II is illustrated in Figure 5 and involves the students reading through two versions of text in English and deciding which best summarizes the information presented in academic Italian. The first option is a literal translation of the Italian text and does not flow well in English. Of course students may not know enough English to realize this, but they do know enough about language-usage, even in Italian, to know that constructions such as “*did not correspond a corresponding increase*” is poor style.

Task 2. Which best summarizes the paragraph in the second section:

- a. An impetuous increase in supply of goods did not correspond a corresponding increase in the demand for goods, for the poor demand due to the absence of a sufficiently capable bourgeoisie, like to day, to make up on the side of consumption and low monetary circulation. The crisis in sales and fall in prices provoked immediate effects on employment, causing layoffs and rising unemployment,
- b. The increase in the supply of goods greatly exceeded the demand. Unlike today, the middle-class that could spend money and buy goods was very small. Therefore, monetary circulation was extremely limited, leading to a crisis in sales. In response to decreased sales, prices were lowered, which led to lower profits. Companies responded to such low profits by laying-off employees, causing a rise in unemployment.

Figure 5. Deciding which English version best summarizes paragraph II of the Italian text.

Upon realizing that version *b* is better, learners would need to check this hypothesis by engaging with the English and Italian texts more deeply, thus becoming aware of cohesion and linking devices such as conjunctions (e.g. “*Therefore...*”) and anaphoric references (e.g. “*... such low profits...*”) which are important ingredients of academic discourse in any language.

Note that version *b* uses an academic English register. If this text had been presented directly as input to learn from, it would have been very difficult to comprehend. However, students are able to access this academic English text because of the cognitive scaffold provided through the two preceding steps: first, the task requires students to read the original Italian academic text, which, although not easy to understand deeply, can be understood for gist. Secondly, when students try to correlate the first, poor-quality English text with the Italian text, they must re-read the Italian, a process that they do again when reading the second and better English version. Through this *translanguaging* task, students not only learn terms such as “*supply of goods*”, “*demand*”, “*monetary circulation*” but also assimilate the academic language they need to think through and discourse about the topic, in both Italian and English.

2.3. Harnessing all languages for thinking deeply about Content

The first two tasks have warmed up students’ cognitive faculties to read more than 140-characters: they are now ready to do some thinking. At this point, students have grasped not only enough disciplinary concepts to help them reason through ideas which are not “*on the page*”, they are also warmed up to the discourse they will need to *language through* more complex propositions such as those in the third task shown in Figure 6.

In fact, in question 1, although the correct answer is *c*, options *a* and *b* are proposing more far-sighted actions which would have increased the circulation of monies and may have prevented or attenuated the economic crisis. By having students read through these two scenarios, they are using English to access notions of economics that are beyond what is written in the Italian text, i.e. understanding that short-term profit-driven visions can short-circuit economic growth. The second simple question has the sole purpose of introducing the terms “*Labour Union*” and “*salary reduction*”, used in context. The third question of this task invites students to use what they have learnt to critically think through three propositions by referring to their everyday common sense: in this case, *b* and *c* are illogical, leaving students with the understanding *languaged* through proposition *a*. Tasks such as this give students an opportunity to use their real-world common-sense knowledge to think through what they are learning in school, which not only makes schooling more meaningful, but also favours a deeper-level of information-processing and understanding.

Task 3. Referring to the last section:

1. How did employers respond to the crisis in sales?
 - a. They increased salaries so people could spend more.
 - b. They realized that more money should circulate so they gave employees more bonuses.
 - c. They thought to save their companies by reducing salaries: this reduced the amount of circulating money.
2. Why was the Labour Union suppressed?
 - a. The Labour Unions would oppose salary reductions.
 - b. The Labour Unions were from a different political party.
3. Which of these is most logical:
 - a. When we cut people’s salaries, they will spend less and the economy will slow down.
 - b. When we cut people’s salaries, they will spend as much as before until they finish their savings.
 - c. When there is a crisis and we cut people’s salaries, they will solve the problem by finding a better job.

Figure 6. Moving into deeper “off the page” thinking.

3. Foreign language as resource

As we can see, CLIL makes available other ‘codes of entry’ into the complex concepts that students at upper secondary must learn. When Content teachers understand that the academic language in L1-textbooks is already, itself, a complex linguistic code, they realize that ‘*the foreign language*’ may actually, at times, be more comprehensible. This language-awareness opens an array of linguistic strategies for both Content and Foreign Language experts, enabling them to design tasks that help students *translanguage* between different registers in both English and Italian. In this way, for Content teachers who may not themselves be fluent in English, ‘English’ becomes an accomplice rather than a complication. Likewise, for the Foreign Language expert, the CLIL context can be utilized for cultivating a far wider range of language skills.

The basic premise of the strategies illustrated here is that CLIL should not simplify the

content but should simplify the *process of learning* by modulating the *language of input*. When CLIL is implemented during content learning time, as is the case in Italy, we cannot sacrifice content for the sake of learning a foreign language: while on the operating table, what matters is how well our surgeon knows his content, not how well he speaks a foreign language. Therefore, even if the concepts at secondary are abstract and complex, such complexity is intrinsic to the content and must not be modified. What we can modify, however, is the language within which those concepts are embedded. In this paper, we have seen how “language-awareness”, which is at the heart of CLIL (Coyle *et al.* 2010), helps delineate strategies in which simple non-academic English can serve as a code through which students can access, read and comprehend complex academic Italian. By supporting deep-reading, such *translanguaging* strategies then enable students to seamlessly move into academic English.

To understand the importance of such simple strategies for scaffolding students into academic foreign language, we should refer to the work of Cummins, who, studying immigrant populations in Canada, found that, while it took only 2 years to master the informal social language which he termed BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills), it took up to 7 years to master complex academic language which Cummins called CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency) (Cummins 2008). Not surprisingly, mastery of academic language is essential for academic success. Also not surprisingly, as discussed in Section 1, since disciplinary discourse is the most accurate way for thinking through and speaking about complex disciplinary concepts, academic language is the language of schooling, essential for the learning of complex content and for the production of credible discourse.

Various strands of research in FL-education have thus sought ways to move from BICS to CALP, or referring to Cummins’ oft-cited Quadrant model, to move learners from quadrant A to quadrant D, as illustrated in Figure 7A (gradually scaffolding through quadrants B and C). For example, experts in task-based-language-teaching (TBLT) suggest that, if we increase task complexity, learners will need to think more complex thoughts and thus be motivated to use and produce more complex language (e.g. see Van de Branden *et al.* 2009). As I hope has become clear here, even in the mother tongue, “*complex academic language about complex concepts*” is already a challenge. The challenge of CLIL at secondary is therefore not about increasing complexity but about helping students navigate complex academic language so they can comprehend complex abstract concepts. It is this intrinsic content-complexity that is, however, invaluable for language instruction since it establishes an opportunity to help learners recognize the existence of linguistic registers. Such language-awareness is the first step towards the mastery of academic language in the foreign language.



Figure 7. CLIL provides new opportunities for language-education. While traditional language learning seeks complex language output and complex thinking by increasing task complexity (A: “complex task” indicated in circle), CLIL already departs with complex academic text that languages about complex abstract concepts (B: “complex text” indicated in circle) and must seek strategies to help students assimilate not only complex concepts but also complex disciplinary discourse.

Conclusions

When CLIL is implemented at upper secondary, it is crucial to identify strategies which merge and optimize the expertise of both the content teachers as well as their foreign language colleagues. While we cannot modify the intrinsic complexity of the concepts students must learn it is possible to modulate the linguistic code we give students for accessing and processing the complex academic language in which these concepts are embedded. Although such language support and strategies for deep-reading are readily found for primary and lower secondary education, there are less insights and suggestions for upper secondary practitioners (Shanahan and Shanahan 2008), reflecting the fact that, as students get older the depth of content that must be learnt gets deeper, making it increasingly more difficult to delineate text-processing strategies that enable students to “finish the book”. In an era that encourages teachers to consider active and interactive cooperative knowledge-co-construction that engages student in creative, out-of-the-box problem-solving, the suggestion that we “finish the textbook” has almost become “a blasphemy of good education”. However, do we want a surgeon who has not finished the book? In this “*information everywhere society*”, textbooks are the most reliable source of *systematically organized correct information*. Most would hope that their surgeon passed his exams thanks to his textbook and not because he collaboratively and actively surfed the Internet. Basically, students should *at least* “finish the book”. And of course, “finish the book and understand it deeply”: i.e. the importance of deep-reading. If we can find strategies for helping students finish the book through active, interactive and collaborative knowledge-co-construction, that would be even better.

By using the CLIL foreign language to prompt students to read Italian academic texts deeply, we are not only helping young people put aside their *skim scan and flip* habits to digest expository texts, we are also helping build the *repertoires of learnt knowledge* students will need to pursue democratic citizenship in this information-everywhere reality. Finally, when students realize that English can help them understand their Italian textbooks, they will see that English is not just another school subject to pass but embrace it as a tool for

accessing knowledge. This is true for English as for any CLIL language of instruction and is an awareness that catalyzes a pro-positive attitude towards multilingualism.

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