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Language Awareness and Teacher Development

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Language Awareness and Teacher Development

Stephen Andrews and Angel M. Y. Lin

Introduction

As Ball et al. (2008: 389) note, “Most people would agree that an understanding of content matters for teaching. Yet, what constitutes understanding of the content is only loosely defined”. This chapter seeks to address this issue and to explore what constitutes “usable professional knowledge of subject matter” (ibid. 402) in relation to language teaching, together with the related question of how best to foster such knowledge among pre-service and in-service teachers. The chapter focuses on the second/foreign-language (hereafter L2) context, addressing both the teaching of L2 as a subject and also the teaching of content subjects through the medium of the learners’ (and often the teacher’s) L2. In doing so, the issues will be viewed through the lens of Teacher Language Awareness (or TLA – see, for example, Andrews, 2007), TLA being “… a label applied to research and teacher development activity that focuses on the interface between what teachers know, or need to know, about language and their pedagogical practice” (Andrews and Svalberg, 2017: 220).

In the chapter, we explore the importance of language awareness (LA) for teachers from a variety of perspectives. We consider the nature of the knowledge about language that L2 teachers need in order to be effective professionals. We then examine the increased attention to LA for teachers that accompanied the development of the TEFL/TESOL industry, particularly in the UK, and the links between such activity and the broader LA movement. We discuss the methodologies that have been most closely associated with teacher development in this tradition, and examine some of the approaches to the development of TLA adopted in pre-service and in-service programmes for L2 teachers. Finally, we consider TLA in the context of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) and Language Across the Curriculum (LAC), where the L2 is the medium of instruction, exploring the challenges in such contexts of developing content-aware language teachers and language-aware content teachers, and describing some of the methodologies typically employed to address those challenges.
In the past 25 years, increasing attention worldwide has been paid to understanding the nature of teachers’ knowledge about language and its potential impact on teaching and learning (see, for example, Freeman and Johnson, 1998; Freeman, 2004). Much of this discussion has taken place in the context of debates about professionalism and setting standards (see, for example, Bunch, 2013). TLA-related research, including that which has used the term ‘Knowledge About Language’ (KAL) rather than Language Awareness, has sought to shed light on those issues.

Much of the early TLA/KAL-related research (see, for example, Palfreyman, 1993; Andrews, 1994, 1997, 1999; Williamson and Hardman, 1995; Brumfit, Mitchell and Hooper, 1996; Borg, 1998, 1999a, 1999b; Johnston and Goettsch, 2000) focused on teachers’ knowledge about grammar (or the “lexicogrammar”, Halliday, 2004). More recently, however, the conceptualization of TLA has evolved to incorporate teachers’ language-related cognitions more broadly (their feelings, beliefs and understandings about language in general and the specific language they teach) and their awareness of students’ developing interlanguage. In light of the growing interest globally in CLIL and LAC, the focus of TLA has also broadened beyond teachers of L2 to include the LA of other teachers working within L2 contexts, in particular the LA of teachers of content subjects such as Science and Mathematics who are teaching those subjects through the medium of their students’ L2 (Lin, 2016). In this regard, in the US context, Bunch (2013) notes the increasingly common challenge faced by mainstream teachers to provide support for learners from non-English-L1 backgrounds to help them cope with the demands of subject-matter academic literacy. Bunch refers to the “pedagogical language knowledge of mainstream teachers …[which is] …. construed as knowledge of language directly related to disciplinary teaching and learning and situated in the particular (and multiple) contexts in which teaching and learning take place” (2013: 307 – italics in original).

The terminology associated with TLA and much of its original conceptualization draws primarily on theory and practices originating in the UK (as discussed in the following sections). However, similar issues have been addressed by North American scholars (see, for example, Lindahl, 2016, and works cited by Bunch, 2013). Much of the recent discussion of L2 teachers’ knowledge about language explicitly embraces a sociocultural perspective. Lantolf (2009), for example, argues for the importance for L2 teachers of “explicit systematic knowledge of the language as a semiotic tool” and therefore proposes that L2 teacher education programmes need to “(re) introduce intensive and extensive systematic study of the TL [target language]”, with due attention to “the meaning-making potential of language”, so that teachers are provided with the “pedagogically relevant knowledge they need to raise the proficiency of their students” (2009: 271). Johnson (2009) makes a similar point, as she advocates “Developing Teachers’ Awareness of Language as Social Practice”. Johnson’s argument is that TLA is not just about L2 teachers’ knowledge about the structural properties of language (useful though that might be, as she notes, in supporting teachers’ efforts to help students to develop awareness of/ability to draw on the language resources at their disposal). Adopting a ‘language as social practice’ perspective means that the point of departure for L2 teachers’ awareness of language is no longer discrete form/communicative function, but rather “the conceptual meanings that are being expressed that denote ways of being in the world” (ibid. 46).
What is TLA and Why is it Important for Teachers in L2 Contexts to be ‘Language-Aware’?

As the preceding section suggests, the answers to these questions are closely linked to broader issues regarding teacher professionalism and teacher knowledge (for a more detailed exposition of this argument, see, for example, the discussion in Andrews, 2007: 23–47). According to Shulman (1999), teacher professionalism depends on a range of well-developed knowledge bases, both generic and subject-specific, with knowledge of subject matter (hereafter SMK) forming the core of those knowledge bases and of teacher professionalism: “… professional teachers must be well educated, especially in the subject matter they teach, and … their career-long professional education experiences must continue to be grounded in the centrality of that content” (Shulman, 1999: xiii). Shulman argues that well-developed SMK is integral to the teacher’s pedagogical content knowledge (PCK), “… that special amalgam of content and pedagogy that is uniquely the province of teaching, their own special form of professional understanding” (Shulman, 1987: 8). It is PCK that enables the teacher to draw on his/her SMK in ways that are likely to promote learning, in other words that makes it possible for SMK to become “…. usable professional knowledge” (Ball et al., 2008: 402).

If we apply such arguments to the L2 context, and to L2 teaching specifically, Andrews (2007) argues that there are a number of interrelated knowledge bases at the intersection of content and pedagogy in L2 teaching that enable the L2 teacher to make appropriate and principled decisions about the handling of language content:

• Knowledge of the language (i.e. language proficiency);
• Knowledge about the language (i.e. declarative knowledge of subject matter); and
• Knowledge of the learners (especially cognitive knowledge of learners as it relates to subject matter).

It is also important to note the closeness of the relationship between teacher knowledge and teacher beliefs. Any teacher’s SMK is inevitably bound up with his/her beliefs about subject matter. For that reason, it may be better to use the overarching term ‘cognitions’ in considering what constitutes TLA (as suggested in the Introduction). Borg’s work (1998) focuses specifically on L2 teachers’ beliefs and decision-making in relation to grammar teaching, while Borg (2006) comprehensively explores teacher cognitions in teaching grammar, reading and writing. (See also Borg’s chapter in this volume.) For any teacher, as emphasized by Tsui (2003), it should also be noted that teacher cognitions are ‘situated’, in the sense that they are jointly constituted by the individual teacher’s particular working context and that teacher’s understanding of and response to his/her working context. The situated nature of subject-matter cognitions underlines their context-specificity: i.e. they are knowledge/beliefs about how particular subject matter might best be taught/learned in a given context with particular learners.

Collectively these knowledge bases can be viewed as TLA. If we apply Shulman’s general argument to the context of L2 teaching, professional excellence in L2 teaching requires teachers to be ‘language-aware’. Similar arguments can be made in relation to teachers of content subjects through the medium of L2 (see Bunch, 2013, and the latter part of this chapter), with the added complication that the scope of TLA for
such teachers has to extend to academic language/discourse, across all three interrelated knowledge bases.

This brief discussion necessarily simplifies a number of complex and unresolved issues. As Ball et al. (2008) point out in relation to education across all subjects, although Shulman’s arguments regarding teacher knowledge and PCK have been hugely influential, education researchers have made little progress in developing a coherent framework for content knowledge for teaching, and PCK has often not been clearly distinguished from other forms of teacher knowledge. Also, as Svalberg (2016) observes with specific reference to language teachers, precisely what content knowledge they need is rarely problematized, with researchers often failing to take account of the complexity and malleability of language and the creativity of language use. Svalberg (ibid. 9) notes that “… LA as content is not a fixed body of knowledge but constantly changing”, citing the grammar of spoken language as one such area of evolving understandings and perceptions. Andrews (2007: 67) makes a similar observation: “Language-aware teachers need to re-evaluate, and to keep re-evaluating their personal conceptualisations of subject-matter knowledge to take account of new developments and new insights”.

Drawing on a distinction in cognitive science (see, for example, Anderson, 1983, 1995; Robinson, 1997), Andrews (2007, and elsewhere) argues that there are two dimensions of TLA:

• The declarative dimension: the ‘language-aware’ L2 teacher needs a deep and wide-ranging knowledge (however defined) about both the target language and about how language works; and
• The procedural dimension: the ‘language-aware’ L2 teacher needs to be able to draw appropriately on that declarative knowledge in all aspects of his/her pedagogical practice.

The relationship between the two types of knowledge (declarative/procedural) is controversial. Woods (1996: 192), for example, suggests the distinction is increasingly blurred, given the situated nature of teacher cognitions, as noted above. The key point regarding TLA, however, is not the validity of the distinction, but rather the importance for the L2 teacher of the procedural dimension, and the need for declarative knowledge to become proceduralized in order to be usable. This has profound implications for LA and teacher development, which are explored in later sections of the chapter.

According to Wright and Bolitho (1993: 292), who pioneered LA professional development for teachers: “The more aware a teacher is of language and how it works, the better”. But why? What is the rationale behind Wright and Bolitho’s assertion? How might a language-aware teacher be better equipped to enact the curriculum in ways that support student learning? As noted earlier, the arguments in support of such assertions focus on the potential impact of TLA on teachers’ language-related decision-making. Andrews (2007: 34–45) suggests that TLA potentially affects:

• Every decision that the L2 teacher makes in relation to the language made available for learning; and
• Anything the L2 teacher does to influence the assimilation by each learner of new understandings about “language as a semiotic tool”.
In the context of lesson preparation, for example, TLA impacts on the teacher’s ability to analyse target language from the perspective of the learner/learning, identify key features for learning, highlight those features appropriately in examples to be presented to learners, specify appropriate learning objectives, and select material and tasks that suit the learners and serve those objectives.

Within the classroom itself, once the lesson begins, TLA becomes arguably even more significant, affecting the teacher’s ability to provide appropriate language-related mediation/scaffolding, help learners notice key features in language that is made available for learning, produce spontaneous examples and appropriately formulated clarifications, monitor the language produced by students, and limit potential sources of learner confusion. In L2 learning/teaching contexts where teacher and students share the same L1, TLA may affect the teacher’s choices/decisions about whether to use the L1 or the L2 when, for instance, providing clarifications of form or meaning. In relation to corrective feedback, TLA would affect decisions the teacher makes about whether to give feedback and how to do so. It would also affect the quality and appropriateness of any feedback given.

In the classroom, the pressures on TLA are necessarily vastly more demanding than during preparation, because the teacher needs to meet the ‘real-time’ challenge of responding spontaneously to language learning opportunities as they arise. As noted by Andrews (2007), this requires not only alertness and quick thinking on the part of the teacher, but also “… ease of access to the subject-matter knowledge base, a good level of communicative language ability and constant awareness of the learner” (ibid. 44). For these reasons, approaches to promoting the development of L2 teachers’ LA have increasingly sought to emphasize the procedural dimension and the proceduralization of declarative knowledge, as discussed later in this chapter.

The Origins of Initiatives to Develop L2 Teachers’ LA

In many parts of the world, the conventional preparation to become a qualified L2 teacher (of whatever language) has involved studying for a relevant first degree, taking courses that typically focused more on literature/culture than on linguistics. Professional training, where available, has generally taken the form of a one-year teaching certificate/diploma, taken after the first degree, with an emphasis on the development of pedagogical skills and understanding of foundational issues in education. Such training courses have usually contained little or no explicit focus on knowledge about language, and made no attempt to examine the intersection between content and pedagogy. Instead, there has been an implicit assumption that the student teacher possesses adequate SMK as a result of his/her first degree, and is able to draw on that knowledge in the classroom. Lantolf (2009) notes a similar situation in the US context, with foreign-language teacher education programmes typically including little or no direct study of the target language, and with any courses on linguistics generally focusing on “… formal analysis of morphosyntax and phonology, with much less attention given to language as a semiotic tool” (ibid. 271). As discussed in the following section, the limitations of such an approach and the flaws in the assumption that content knowledge translates directly into practice have become increasingly apparent, with the ‘knowledge transfer’ challenge in L2 teaching (addressing the disconnect between the declarative and procedural dimensions of TLA) having parallels with that of enabling teachers...
of all subjects to develop “usable professional knowledge of subject matter” (Ball et al., 2008).

Historically, however, the initial development of courses for L2 teachers with a component explicitly focusing on LA (‘language analysis’: i.e. TLA) was not prompted by the need to address the ‘knowledge transfer’ challenge and enable subject-trained L2 teachers to proceduralize their declarative SMK. Instead, as discussed in chapter 9 of Andrews (2007), it was driven by a more immediate imperative in the post-World War II era, as the learning of English, for practical and social purposes, by adults as well as younger learners, became increasingly popular worldwide, leading to the emergence of the EFL industry in the late 1950s/early 1960s. In that era, the demand for EFL teachers worldwide outstripped the supply to such an extent that it was very easy for untrained graduates (particularly native-speakers of English, whatever their degree subject) to get jobs as English teachers. The serious language schools quickly appreciated the need to provide some training, leading to the development by John and Brita Haycraft at International House (IH), London of short, highly practical TEFL courses. The International House Certificate, launched in 1962, was “… the first training course in how to teach languages interactively and without translation” (www.ihworld.com, accessed 25 June 2016). These IH courses rapidly evolved into the four-week model that ultimately formed the basis for the ‘Prep Cert’/RSA/CTEFLA/CELTA, the widely recognized pre-service TESOL course administered as a scheme initially by the Royal Society of Arts, and since 1988 by Cambridge ESOL. From the beginning, these courses included a certain amount of language-focused work (variously labelled ‘Language Analysis’, ‘Language Awareness’ or ‘LA’).

The Language Awareness/Analysis component in pre-service TESOL courses for native-speakers (such as CELTA/CTEFLA) became even more significant in the 1980s and 1990s. In that period, it became evident that most native-speakers of English below a certain age had no experience of studying English grammar, even at school, and that many native-speaker graduates with first degrees apparently relevant to English had learnt little or nothing about the English language at any time during their education (Andrews, 1994). During the 1990s, the focus of the Language Awareness/Analysis component of these introductory courses began to evolve, moving away from the transmission of KAL (typical of many Language Awareness/Analysis components up to that point, according to Kerr, 1993), and giving increased attention to fostering awareness of potential implications for the learner and the process of teaching and learning. The current CELTA syllabus (www.cambridgeenglish.org, accessed 1 April 2016) lists five main course topics, one being ‘Language analysis and awareness’. The focus of this component emphasizes the application of SMK, i.e. its usability. According to the CELTA syllabus: “This topic (i.e. Language analysis and awareness) includes: understanding key terminology used in English language teaching; applying this terminology in planning and teaching; demonstrating a working knowledge of English grammar, lexis and phonology”.

Another catalyst for increasing interest in L2 teachers’ LA was the growth of in-service refresher courses for non-native-speaker teachers of L2 English, which burgeoned in the early 1980s as ESOL curricula worldwide were reconceptualized to take account of developments in communicative language teaching (CLT). Whether these curricula conformed to a ‘strong’ version of CLT (learning the target language through the process of communication) or, more typically, a ‘weak’ version of CLT (learning the target language in order to communicate) (see Howatt, 1984 for further
discussion of these versions of CLT), the emphasis on communication and on meaning raised new challenges for teachers, particularly serving teachers who were accustomed to more traditional structural curricula and teacher-centred methodologies, and created widespread demand for in-service courses.

These in-service refresher courses often incorporated a Language Awareness/Analysis component, with the aim being to promote teachers’ understanding of the communicative function(s) of language, by encouraging them to examine relationships between language form, meaning, context and use. As noted by Andrews (2007: 184–185), the Language Awareness/Analysis components of introductory TESOL courses, particularly when facing the time constraints of the CTEFLA/CELT A format, have often been obliged to address (at least, to some extent) the perceived need of pre-service teachers for the security of a set of core ‘facts’ about language. By contrast, the activities on the in-service refresher courses developed in the 1980s (especially when the course/component was labeled ‘Language Awareness’) were generally inductive data-based ‘consciousness-raising’ tasks intended to promote reflection on interrelationships within the language systems, critical interrogation of pre-digested ‘facts’ and examination of individual preconceptions about language. Resource books based around such activities include Bolitho and Tomlinson (1980), Wright (1994), and Thornbury (1997). These developments, and the pedagogical approaches adopted, embody many of the principles and associated practices of the wider Language Awareness ‘movement’ (see, for example, LINC Coordinators, 1992). The approaches to developing the language awareness of L2 teachers are discussed further in the following section.

Approaches to the Development of TLA Adopted in Pre-Service and In-Service Programmes for L2 Teachers

One of the most important conceptual contributions to the development of TLA was made by Edge (1988). Writing in relation to the design of integrated Bachelor of Education courses for pre-service L2 teachers, Edge highlighted the need for such courses to address three roles that the trainee L2 teacher needs to take on: language user, language analyst and language teacher. These roles are associated with three interrelated competences: language user with the teacher’s language proficiency; language analyst with the teacher’s language systems knowledge base; and language teacher with the complex blend of knowledge bases that underpin enactment of the curriculum. This framework was highly influential on the approaches to the development of L2 teachers’ LA proposed by Wright and Bolitho from the early 1990s (see, for example, Wright and Bolitho, 1993, 1997; Wright, 2002), and on the conceptualization of TLA outlined by Andrews (e.g. Andrews, 2007).

In Figure 4.1, Lindahl (2016) offers a reconceptualization of these overlapping domains of TLA, highlighting characteristics of each domain, while also illustrating their ‘nuanced interconnectedness’ (Lindahl, 2013: 41) as these different domains contribute to L2 teacher cognition.

Wright and Bolitho (1993: 298) propose a methodological framework for LA activities for teachers, based on Edge’s three domains. Their approach to LA professional development for teachers requires teachers to draw on and continuously enhance their competences within the three domains. The approach (further discussed in Wright and Bolitho, 1997) is experiential, with the starting-point for activity derived from challenges encountered in teachers’ own classroom experiences with language. Wright
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(2002) develops these ideas, stating that an LA approach to professional development for teachers “… takes it as axiomatic that links between language awareness and knowledge and the classroom will be made” (ibid. 124).

Wright (ibid. 125–127), drawing on the principles and approach discussed in Wright and Bolitho (1993, 1997), describes a five-stage cycle for LA activities designed to interconnect the user/analyst/teacher domains. Stage 1 ‘Doing’ involves work on data (either language data or language-related classroom data) that pushes participants to question/discuss their current understandings of the focal language area. Stage 2 ‘Reviewing’ engages participants in reflection, giving them time and space to talk through their reactions to the Stage 1 activities and to examine collectively the impact of those activities on their understandings. Stage 3 ‘Making sense’ involves a new set of collaborative activities, working with reference materials, designed to promote a more refined appreciation of both the focal language area and of the learning challenges it might present for students. Stages 1 to 3 are primarily focused on enhancing the declarative dimension of participants’ TLA. During these stages, the role of the facilitator is to help participants build on their initial insights, by asking questions to stimulate participants’ thinking and, where appropriate, contributing his/her own ideas and analyses. Stages 4 and 5 are designed to stimulate and then reinforce connections between the declarative and procedural dimensions of TLA. Stage 4 ‘Linking’ leads participants towards thinking about the relevance of their enhanced linguistic knowledge to the real world of the classroom via, for example, activities that involve analysing how the focal language area is handled in published teaching materials. Stage 5 ‘To the classroom’ is where, in Wright’s words, “… linguistic knowledge is given pedagogic relevance” (ibid. 127): participants undertake classroom-related tasks (such as planning activities/lessons

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**Figure 4.1.** Domains of TLA.
or modifying/supplementing teaching materials with particular learners in mind), which push them to draw on and apply their enhanced declarative knowledge to the enactment of the curriculum.

The LA activities that take place in the five-stage cycle described by Wright (ibid.) and their underlying principles emphasize engagement with preconceptions about language, development and organization of knowledge about language, and critical reflection. Johnson (2009: 48–52) extends this discussion, using the user/analyst/teacher framework to show how different communicative genres (such as email messages) can be analysed in order to develop teachers’ language awareness: first, by asking participants to discuss their experiences as composers and recipients of emails (the user domain); then, inviting them to reflect on linguistic, pragmatic and discourse features in two emails making requests, one from a specific L2 ‘languaculture’ (the analyst domain); and finally, encouraging them to make the link to the classroom, by thinking about the communicative features of this specific genre and activities/strategies that might help learners to enhance their ability to write such emails (the teacher domain).

Andrews (2007: 189) argues that “…a combination of language-related self-reflection and focused collaborative activity … represents the most effective way of helping L2 teachers to achieve enhanced levels of language awareness and the development of pedagogical strategies for dealing with language that are of direct relevance to their specific teaching context”. Andrews (ibid. 190–197) describes the design of a Bachelor-level course for pre-service teachers of L2 English. The course focused particularly on the promotion of transfer of knowledge about language to pedagogical practice, via both its timing (immediately following an extended teaching practicum block) and its structure (emphasizing reflection and collaborative activity focused on language areas selected by the students, drawing on their recent classroom experience). A three-phase case study session early on in the course focused initially (Phase 1) on awareness-raising about a particular grammar area and analysis of related reference grammar information (both in books and online resources). Students then (Phase 2) conducted a critical evaluation of textbook treatment of the grammar area, paying particular attention to the textbooks’ presentation of the rules and the examples selected to illustrate those rules. Finally (Phase 3), the students analysed transcriptions of teacher talk (recorded in a local secondary classroom), examining the teacher’s interaction with students about the selected grammar area, using materials evaluated in Phase 2. The workshop sessions following the case study focused on the students’ selected grammar areas: aiming to enhance their understanding of each chosen area and their appreciation of the potential difficulties each area poses for their students, in order to help them make informed decisions about their handling of grammar with students of different ages and with different levels of L2 proficiency.

Each of these approaches explicitly sets out to address the challenge of making the links needed to create the “shift from new knowledge to classroom reality” (Wright, 2002: 128). Bartels (2005, 2009) emphasizes the significance of this issue, which he refers to as the Knowledge Transfer challenge. Bartels argues that L2 teacher education courses targeting the development of Knowledge About Language (KAL) as applied to teaching (i.e. TLA) should be “…organized around activities typical of L2 instruction” (Bartels, 2009: 127). In this way, he suggests that L2 teachers can be helped to develop “…the domain-specific, dynamically organized, implicit knowledge that is easily used for teaching…” (ibid. 128). Such activities, according to Bartels (ibid.), should be characterized by being central to teaching, relevant to practice, and focused on
details and issues linked to the participants’ own experience. They should also involve theorizing practice (i.e. abstracting generalizable KAL from specific teaching situations), and designing and engaging in ‘deliberate practice activities’ that help them to acquire the KAL they think they need (ibid. 130).

Andrews (2007) emphasizes the importance of L2 teachers’ engagement with the content of learning, arguing that the extent to which the teacher seriously engages with content-related issues impacts significantly on the application of TLA in that teacher’s enactment of the curriculum. As Svalberg (2007: 302) points out, engagement with language (EWL) is a core concern of all LA practitioners and researchers: “LA both engenders engagement with language and is constructed through it…” Svalberg (2007) defines, expands and develops the notion of EWL, while Svalberg (2015) outlines an approach to developing L2 student teachers’ knowledge about language, with specific reference to grammar, in which course participants were required in groups to negotiate solutions to consciousness-raising grammar tasks designed to promote cognitive conflict (Tocalli-Beller, 2003). The conditions contributing to cognitive conflict during the course were the student-teachers’ lack of prior knowledge, conflict with their prior knowledge/prior learning, the absence of an equivalent term or concept in their L1, and inherent conceptual difficulty or ambiguity (Svalberg, 2015: 539). Svalberg argues that such activities stimulate a high quality of EWL, thereby promoting the construction of new/enhanced knowledge about grammar.

TLA in the Context of CLIL and LAC: Challenges and Approaches

As noted earlier, TLA is becoming an increasingly important topic for further research in the contexts of LAC, content-based instruction (CBI) and CLIL. Various studies (Banegas, 2012; Butler, 2005; Cammarata, 2009; Lyster and Ballinger, 2011) have reported challenges that teachers have encountered during the implementation of CBI/immersion/CLIL (hereafter CLIL will be used as an umbrella term to cover all these related contexts). These challenges include teachers’ uncertainty about the objectives or requirements of the programmes; teachers’ self-positioning as either a language teacher or a content teacher rather than a ‘2-in-1’ teacher with the dual role of both content and language teaching (Lin, 2016); insufficient teaching materials with language scaffolding; and last but not least, the inconsistency between the aims of examinations and those of CLIL programmes, which confuses teachers regarding which sets of objectives they should follow. When planning their CLIL lessons, teachers may encounter other more concrete issues: for instance, time management is a practical problem as CLIL may be more time-consuming than regular L1 content lessons; the learning attitudes and the motivations of students are also challenging aspects for teachers (Hunt, Neofitou and Redford, 2009).

These challenges speak to the need to assign TLA a greater place in CLIL teacher preparation programmes. However, before we can design such programmes we need to attain better conceptualization of TLA in CLIL contexts – e.g. what is the nature of TLA in CLIL contexts? How is it different from TLA in other teaching contexts?

To conceptualize TLA in CLIL contexts (and as proposed by e.g. Lantolf, 2009, and Johnson, 2009, in relation to TLA more generally), it is useful to adopt systemic-functional linguistic (SFL) perspectives. Drawing on genre and register theory (GRT) in the tradition of SFL, Bunch (2013) elaborates the notion of ‘pedagogical language knowledge’ (see Introduction to this chapter) and argues that the knowledge base of
PLK should include awareness of genres, registers and information density. Teachers should be able to analyse the linguistic features of academic texts using these linguistic analytical resources. This converges with Lin’s recent work in CLIL contexts (see, for example, Lin, 2016). From SFL perspectives, language and content are always already integrated, as language is the primary semiotic (meaning-making) resource to construe (i.e. to construct and understand) content (Halliday, 1993). In light of this and in the specific CLIL context, what do we mean when we talk about integrating content and language learning? The key to understanding this is to differentiate between using subject-specific language to teach content on the one hand, and teaching subject-specific language to talk about content on the other. That is, when we ask the question ‘how can teachers integrate content learning with language learning?’, the focus is a pedagogical one (Dalton-Puffer, 2013). TLA thus encompasses both using and teaching the language of content areas.

Here, the work of Lindahl and her colleagues (Lindahl, Baecher and Tomas, 2013; Lindahl and Watkins, 2015; Lindahl and Baecher, 2016) is especially important. It provides us with a useful framework to conceptualize the complex nature of TLA in CLIL contexts. Lindahl and Watkins propose three domains of TLA in CBI/CLIL contexts: user, analyst and teacher (see the earlier discussion of these three domains above). The user domain consists of language proficiency and implicit and procedural knowledge of how to use language in content/discipline-specific ways. The analyst domain consists of knowledge about language (forms and functions) and explicit, declarative, metalanguage knowledge about the language of the disciplines. The teacher domain consists of pedagogical content knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge, and L2 theory knowledge as well as empathy with L2 learner experience. CLIL teacher preparation thus needs to enable CLIL teachers to develop TLA in all these three domains: to become competent users, analysts and teachers of subject/content-specific language.

While TLA in other contexts might not necessarily put such a strong emphasis on genre and register theory (GRT) as key elements of TLA, TLA for CLIL contexts will need to focus more on GRT, with Halliday and Hasan’s work in register theory (Halliday and Hasan, 1976) as well as Martin and Rose’s work in genre theory (Rose and Martin, 2012) helping us gain a deeper understanding of how CLIL teachers can be helped to master discipline/content-specific language as users, analysts and teachers. The following discussion converges with and further elaborates Bunch’s work on PLK, drawing on GRT and SFL (for example, analysing the linguistic features of History texts – see Bunch, 2013).

Lin (2016) has delineated how teachers can be provided with a metalanguage to analyse and talk about academic content language and texts through drawing on key concepts from register theory (Halliday and Hasan, 1976): field (what is the subject matter), tenor (who are involved), and mode (what is the channel). When a writer or speaker produces a text (written or spoken), lexical, grammatical, and rhetorical choices are being made. The choices made by the speaker/writer depend on the overall purpose and situation of the communication as well as the following factors:

1 The relationship between the participants: speaker/listener; writer/reader (i.e. the tenor);
2 The subject matter of the text (i.e. the field);
3 The channel of communication: written or spoken (i.e. the mode).

These three factors together determine the register of the text (Derewianka, 1990: 18).
In Sydney School genre theory (Martin and Rose, 2008; Rose and Martin, 2012), a culture consists of different conventional ways of doing things: e.g. different ways of organizing texts to achieve different social purposes. These different conventional ways of structuring texts to achieve different purposes constitute different genres. Genre is thus defined as a “staged, goal-oriented, social process” (Rose and Martin, 2012: 54). It is said to be “staged” and “goal-oriented” because a genre typically goes through different rhetorical stages to achieve its primary goal or social purpose. In summary, texts are organized according to their genre (purpose) and register (field, tenor, mode); the genre shapes the overall organization or structuring of the text (e.g. the kinds of stages through which the text unfolds to achieve its overall purpose) while the register shapes the lexico-grammatical patterns or linguistic choices made in constructing the text (Derewianka, 1990). TLA for CLIL contexts will thus need to pay special attention to GRT. Figure 4.2 shows the Genre Egg, a diagrammatic representation of GRT when applied to analysing academic content-specific language use.

Figure 4.2. The Genre Egg as an important element of TLA in CLIL contexts. 

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Given the highly complex nature of TLA for CLIL contexts, how can we adequately prepare teachers for such contexts? Lindahl and her colleagues have pioneered a number of promising approaches, which include the creating of a culture of language awareness in CLIL contexts (Lindahl and Watkins, 2015), and fostering TLA in supervisory feedback cycles (Lindahl and Baecher, 2016) and content-based activity design (Lindahl, Baecher and Tomas, 2013). In the following section, we shall draw on their framework and the Genre Egg from GRT to discuss LA and teacher development in CLIL contexts.

**LA and Teacher Development in CLIL Contexts**

LA and teacher development in CLIL contexts needs to focus on how to help teachers to become competent *users, analysts and teachers* of discipline-specific academic language. Most content teachers can use academic language in subject-specific appropriate ways without being able to analyse it or teach it. As for language teachers, the situation is no better, as they are also usually more familiar with everyday and language arts genres (e.g. narratives) than academic genres (e.g. explanations). Thus, in CLIL contexts, where academic language awareness is a key challenge to both content teachers and
language teachers, the question of how to help teachers become competent analysts and teachers of academic genres, styles and registers requires systematic efforts in enhancing both the declarative knowledge and procedural knowledge of teachers in these areas, as well as fostering collaboration of content and language teachers. Below we shall describe some of our experience in LA and teacher development in CLIL contexts.

First, in order to enhance teachers’ analytical awareness of the linguistic features of academic genres and registers, we have used the Genre Egg (see above) to provide a common analytic framework for both content teachers and language teachers to analyse academic and everyday texts. This is done in an inductive way by engaging both content and language teachers in comparing and contrasting subject-specific academic texts with everyday English texts (see Figure 4.3).

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Contrasting Academic Texts with Everyday Texts

A) The destruction of rainforests constitutes a great loss of resources to humanity and science.

B) His decisive and farsighted acts in accepting the Truce of Villafranca, in stopping Garibaldi from marching on to Rome, and in allying with Bismarck made the unification movement possible.

C) My name’s Jennifer. I have lots of friends. We like reading magazines and going on Facebook.

Activity: Can you decide which subject area each of the above textbook sentences belongs to? What are the different language demands on the student in these different subject areas? Can you analyse the different kinds of lexical and grammatical complexity using the concepts and terminology in the Genre Egg?

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Figure 4.3. Application scenario.
Source: From Lin, 2016: 64. Reproduced by permission of Springer.
When teachers are engaged in this kind of contrastive text analysis, both content teachers and language teachers are likely to notice the different linguistic features at the lexico-grammatical level of academic and everyday texts. To further enable teachers to analyse these features, we have co-constructed lexico-grammatical analytical tables (e.g. Table 4.1) to help highlight the patterns to them.

Teachers can be guided to analyse the differences between content subject textbooks and English language textbooks using a table like Table 4.1. Sentence (A) (from a Social Studies textbook) has a simple relational sentence pattern: \(X\) constitutes \(Y\), where \(X\) is a nominalized group (the destruction of rainforests) and \(Y\) is another nominalized group (a great loss of resources to humanity and science). Sentence (B) (from a History textbook), similarly, has a simple sentence pattern: \(X\) made \(Y\) possible. However, \(X\) in this case is a complex nominalized group with three subcomponents:

1. His decisive and farsighted acts in accepting the Truce of Villafranca,
2. [his decisive and farsighted acts] in stopping Garibaldi from marching on to Rome,
3. and [his decisive and farsighted acts] in allying with Bismarck.

The repeated material in the square brackets has been elided without changing the meaning.

The sentences from the English language textbook also have a simple sentence pattern:

\(X\) is/has/likes \(Y\).

However, the nouns/noun groups are relatively simple:

\(X \rightarrow I, My\ name, We\)
\(Y \rightarrow Jennifer, lots\ of\ friends, reading\ magazines\ and\ going\ on\ Facebook\)

In our experience, engaging teachers in such a linguistic analytical process is very effective in raising their awareness of academic language features, as well as how academic texts are packed with high information density through such lexico-grammatical patterns (such as nominalization). Similarly, teachers can be engaged in contrastive
text analysis at the levels of academic functions and genres in different curriculum contexts (see the Genre Egg in Figure 4.2) to help enhance their awareness of different principles and choices shaping the use of different genres and registers in different contexts (for more examples, see Rose and Martin, 2012; Bunch, 2013; Lin, 2016). After teachers have gone through the analysis stage themselves (e.g. in teacher preparation programmes) through an inductive process, they are more likely to be aware of how to teach such features to their future students using a similar, inductive approach. They will then become not just competent analysts of academic texts but also active teachers of features of academic texts in CLIL contexts. It is important to note that, when drawing on GRT and SFL in developing the Genre Egg for teachers, care has been taken to address the metalanguage challenge, and minimize the amount of technical terminology, as this is often off-puttingly unfamiliar for the many teachers without a background in SFL (Bunch, 2013). Recent efforts so far to help such teachers develop genre and register awareness appear to have avoided ‘throwing the baby out with the bathwater’ and have proved to be promising (Rose and Martin, 2012; Bunch, 2013; Lin, 2016).

Concluding Remarks

As illustrated in this chapter, TLA continues to evolve, both in its conceptualization and the nature of professional development activities that focus on TLA enhancement. Views of the knowledge base itself are challenged (bearing in mind, for example, the issues regarding knowledge about language such as those raised by Svalberg, 2015) and modified, with a greater focus (as noted in the preceding sections) on language as social practice, meaning-making and SFL. At the same time, TLA is seen as more than just a knowledge base, and rather as a core element of the language teacher’s professional identity. Increasingly, TLA is reconceptualized from a sociocultural perspective, both in terms of its potential impact on the enactment of the curriculum (affecting the teacher’s role as ‘expert’ collaborator in processes of dialogic mediation – see, for example, Johnson, 2009) and in approaches to teacher development, within broader processes of teacher socialization and communities of practice. At the same time, as noted by Johnson, the approaches to developing L2 teachers’ LA proposed by, for example, Wright (2002), linked to Edge’s (1988) three domains (see above), while not explicitly embodying a learning as social practice perspective, are nevertheless already closely aligned.

The breadth of TLA research and teacher development also continues to grow, embracing and addressing the challenges faced by teachers in CLIL contexts. However, much remains to be done, in terms of analysing and understanding the knowledge about language needed by L2 teachers and by teachers of content subjects in L2 contexts, and enhancing our understanding of the impact of TLA on pedagogical practice and student learning, as well as in refining approaches to supporting the lifelong development and refinement of teachers’ language awareness.

Related Topics

Content and language integrated learning; pedagogical content knowledge; teacher language awareness; knowledge about language
References


