

SCAFFOLDING STRATEGIES IN CLIL CLASSES – SUPPORTING LEARNERS TOWARDS AUTONOMY

Margarida Coelho

Instituto Politécnico de Portalegre (IPP)

Portugal

margco@estgp.pt

CLIL learners are faced with considerable challenges as they have to deal with both content and language learning through using a foreign language as a medium of instruction. The use of the foreign language as a tool “of learning”, “for learning” and “through learning” (Coyle, et al: 2010) demands a redefinition of curricular boundaries by generating cooperation between language and subject matter (content), opens new ways of approaching the teaching-learning dynamics and empowers the CLIL teacher with a new role in the classroom. To make sure that learners successfully deal with the tasks to accomplish, it is essential that the CLIL teachers clearly identify language demands and consistently adopt strategies to assist and support students. These *scaffolding* strategies - “temporary supporting structures that will assist learners to develop new understandings, new concepts and new abilities “ (Hammond, 2001) – will both help the learners’ development of content, language and learning skills and effectively support and lead them towards enhanced confidence, motivation and autonomy in learning. Thus, assuming scaffolding as a key element in CLIL teaching, in this paper we will provide a brief overview of the origin of the concept as a teaching strategy (Lev Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory), focusing then on the review of some recent studies (A. Walqui: 2006, O. Meyer: 2010, P. Mehisto: 2012) and on the systematization of the most relevant approaches and conceptual frameworks there presented. As a conclusion, we will argue for a broader, more extensive and continuous use of different scaffolding strategies in CLIL classes, as an effective means to foster the learners’ autonomy and progressively build their confidence in using a FL language for effectively dealing with content.

Keywords: CLIL, scaffolding, scaffolding strategies, learner’s autonomy.

Biographical note:

Margarida Coelho is a senior lecturer at the School of Technology and Management of the Polytechnic Institute of Portalegre, where she teaches English Language/ Technical English. She is also Coordinator of the Languages and Culture Centre (CLiC) of the Institute and

researcher in C3i - Interdisciplinary Coordination Center for Research and Innovation. With a Master's degree in 20th century English literature and culture (Universidade de Lisboa), she has recently developed her research in the area of translation studies and language methodologies, particularly CLIL.