The role of interpersonal language in CLIL

Ana Llinares

ConCLIL Project seminar
Jyväskylä, 3rd February
INTER-CLIL project
(Llinares, Whittaker, Morton, McCabe, Dalton-Puffer, Nikula; PhD students: Basse, Pascual & Vázquez)


• *Interpersonal function*

  a) Language used to evaluate the information presented- the content of the subject (Appraisal Theory)

  b) Language used to interact and establish social relations in the classroom
A three-part framework for understanding the roles of language in CLIL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBJECT LITERACIES</th>
<th>CLASSROOM INTERACTION</th>
<th>LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GENRE</td>
<td>Instructional and regulative registers (focus)</td>
<td>Expressing ideational meanings (key concepts and understandings)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REGISTER</td>
<td>Communication systems (approach)</td>
<td>Expressing interpersonal meanings (social relationships, attitudes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interaction patterns and scaffolding (action)</td>
<td>Expressing textual meanings (moving from more spoken to written forms of language)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Halliday’s Interpersonal Metafunction (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004), developed by Martin and White in Appraisal Theory (eg. Martin 2000, Martin & White 2005).

What is Appraisal?

The study of the linguistic resources by which speakers or writers express evaluation, attitude and emotion.
Types of Appraisal: Attitude, Engagement and Graduation

• *Attitude* is concerned with feelings, either construing emotional reactions (*affect*), assessing people’s behaviour (*judgement*) or valuing things (*appreciation*).

• *Engagement* has to do with sourcing attitudes and the play of voices around opinions in discourse.

• *Graduation* has to do with grading phenomena, either through softening or sharpening (*focus*) or through intensification or amount (*force*).
Example of Science Group Work (grade 8)

S2: No, it can't be here
S1: Yes, why? ((unintelligible)) are joined together. And.. NO3
S2: And where do you place this?
S1: Maybe like.. Something like that? ((S2 laughs)) We don’t know the.. maybe..
S3: ((unintelligible)) here
S2: It's a balanced already because we know where.. where goes everything. Where to place this? Stir it
S1: What? ((S2 checks the experiment))
S2: Is broken
S3: I think that now we can take it out because they.. they have a different.. or less time.. ((S1 keeps on stirring for some more seconds))
S3: Now it's dissolved?
S2: Stir a bit more
S3: Now it's perfect
S2: Maybe you can
Research questions

1. Do secondary school CLIL students use the L2 interpersonally, both academically and socially? **What type of interpersonal language** is used?

2. Which difficulties do CLIL students show in their expression of the interpersonal function in English, in relation to the demands of the *register (spoken/written)*, the *genre (subjects)* and the *specific classroom activity (group work/whole-class discussions)*?

3. Are there any differences in the use of the interpersonal function between CLIL classrooms from *different European contexts* and with *parallel content classrooms taught in the students’ mother tongue (Spanish)*?

4. Do the frequency and variety of interpersonal features in CLIL students’ written and spoken production **persist in the long run**, two years after the end of the CLIL programme?

5. How does this compare with the use of interpersonal language in English by students from non-CLIL contexts?
## Corpus: Stage 1 of the analysis (Spoken data)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Spain</th>
<th>Austria</th>
<th>Finland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whole-class discussion</td>
<td>1 History</td>
<td>1 Geography</td>
<td>1 Biology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group work</td>
<td>1 History</td>
<td>1 History</td>
<td>1 History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Chemistry</td>
<td>1 History</td>
<td>1 Physics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Coding

UAM Corpus Tool  
by Mick O’Donnell  
Downloadable from http://www.wagsoft.com
Summary of results
(Cross-sectional/Spoken)

I Activity type

• **More appraisal in group work** than in whole-class discussions.

• However, breaking this down by the different types of appraisal and how they interact with subject area, and national contexts, **engagement is more frequent in group work** than in whole-class discussions.

This means that in group work the students either acknowledge or ignore different points of view and negotiate a space for their own positions.
Summary of results
(Cross-sectional/Spoken)

II Subject area

• Surprisingly, **more appraisal overall in the physical sciences** than in the social sciences.

• However, a closer look at the data shows that the appraisal area of engagement was **playing an important role in science, as well as epistemic self-judgement** (in terms of what students deemed themselves to know).

• On the other hand, **attitude seems to be more frequent in the social sciences**, where students seem to be showing more emotional reactions towards people and things.
Summary of results  
(Cross-sectional/Spoken)

III National Context

• The Spanish context showed more appraisal overall. The Spanish group work sessions were particularly rich in appraisal phenomena.

• The Austrian context stood out for its low levels of appraisal overall, and according to activity type and subject area. Much of this appraisal was done in German.

• The Finnish data had more appraisal in whole-class discussions than in the other two contexts.
Corpus: Stage 1 of the analysis (Written data)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>16 students’ essays in 4 grades (grade 7-10)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approx. 11,000 words</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Coding

UAM Corpus Tool by Mick O’Donnell
Downloadable from http://www.wagsoft.com
Summary of results I (written/longitudinal)

• There seems to be some development over the 4 years in the use of APPRAISAL resources (e.g. move to recorder voice in Historical Account).

• This shows students are beginning to construct the "voices" of the secondary school historian.
Summary of results II  
(written/longitudinal)

- Better texts show **greater variety** of APPRAISAL SYSTEMS

- Better texts make **less** (and different) use of Graduation.
Further stages

- Analyse appraisal and other features of the interpersonal function in other activities
- Analyse the language used for specific types of appraisal
- Compare the same students’ use of appraisal in spoken and written texts on the same topic.
- Compare the students’ evaluative performance with that of parallel classes in the L1
- Study CLIL students’ development in the use of interpersonal resources (from 7th to 12th grade)
- Compare CLIL and EFL students’ use of interpersonal resources
- Use ethnographic information (carrying out qualitative analysis) to look more closely at the specific types of activity they were doing (i.e. classification task in lab experiment). Examining the relationship between CLIL students’ use of evaluative language and the roles inherent in the different activity types they were involved in, focusing on possible differences and similarities across subjects and contexts (Goffman’s 1981 notion of participation framework).
- Dig deeper not only into language use but also into classroom cultures.