

# The Integrated Plurilingual Approach: A didactic model providing guidance to Spanish schools for reconceptualizing the teaching of additional languages

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## Abstract

*This paper presents a formative research project that is still being carried out and which aims to provide guidance to Spanish schools for adopting a new approach in teaching additional languages from a plurilingual, communicative and conceptual perspective (Cummins, 2007; Negueruela, 2008, 2013). To this purpose, a didactic model has been developed, the so-called Integrated Plurilingual Approach, which is to serve as a comprehensible scientific orienting basis for helping teachers to move informedly towards plurilingual education. Furthermore, the resulting formative intervention is based on a sociocultural perspective of teacher development and is carried out through external dialogic mediation (Johnson, 2009). Accordingly, teachers participating in the project find their own conceptions about additional language teaching confronted with the scientific concepts of the new model. As a result, they engage in a reconceptualization process that empowers them to transform their teaching practice, as significantly supported by the data of an exemplary analysis.*

**KEYWORDS:** CONCEPT-BASED INSTRUCTION; DIALOGIC MEDIATION; FORMATIVE RESEARCH;  
PLURILINGUAL EDUCATION; SOCIOCULTURAL THEORY; TRANSLINGUISTIC  
CONCEPTUALIZATION

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## 1. Introduction

The formative research project presented in this paper is framed within the educational language learning context in Spain, as determined by two facts: (1) the regular use in class of other co-official languages in some Spanish regions (for instance, Basque in the Basque country or Catalan in Catalonia); and (2) the active presence in the classroom of languages spoken as L1 by the children of immigrants who have come to Spain as a result of recent migratory influxes.

Furthermore, given the overall acceptance of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe, 2001: 4) in our country, plurilingualism and intercultural learning are also essential components of education and language teaching. Regional educational institutions, however, propose different models for plurilingual education that depend not only on the linguistic reality operating in their territory, but also on their own interpretation of the concept of plurilingualism itself.

Moreover, there is no serious debate in Spain on how to best teach additional languages (henceforth, ALs), so as to effectively promote plurilingualism. Accordingly, educational institutions more often than not impose these models on teachers rather than carefully explaining their underlying theories. Such is the case with the approach known as *Content and Language Integrated Learning* (henceforth, CLIL), i.e. one of the most widespread AL-teaching models in Spain, which seeks to teach non-linguistic subjects through a language other than the learners' L1.

Under such circumstances, our research team is carrying out – in collaboration with schools in the Barcelona region – a three-year formative research project aimed at helping Spanish AL-teachers to move in a principled way towards plurilingual education [Research project, *Diseño y experimentación de un modelo didáctico para el fomento de la competencia plurilingüe en la enseñanza-aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras* (Design and implementation of a didactic model to promote plurilingual competence in the teaching and learning of foreign languages) funded by the Spanish government (Reference: EDU2012-38452)]. For this purpose, we have developed both a didactic model to be used by teachers as a new orienting basis of action, and as a formative intervention for them to appropriate the model's key principles. Both the project and the formative intervention are rooted in sociocultural theory, as – unlike other theories – it explains genetically how learning comes into being. Thus, it allows for a better understanding of an individual's development, the processes involved, and the most effective methods of instruction.

## 2. The didactic model of orientation: the Integrated Plurilingual Approach

AL-instruction in Spain currently follows one of two patterns: it either focuses on language as a school subject (e.g., English, German, French, etc.); or it aspires to promote language development through bilingual instruction. In the first case, a communicative approach is adopted, which aims at reproducing given models rather than at creating new ones, thereby preventing learners from reacting to all but the simplest exchanges (cf. Negueruela, 2013). As for the bilingual schools, the AL is used for teaching non-linguistic subjects (such as Science, Geography or Music), without either raising language awareness or establishing links with linguistic subjects.

In this context, the *Integrated Plurilingual Approach* (henceforth, IPA) seeks to develop plurilingual competence through properly organized language instruction.

### 2.1. Theoretical principles

The IPA relies on the following three key-principles: (1) the concept of plurilingual competence vs. multilingualism, as defined by the Council of Europe (2001) (cf. 2.1.1.); (2) Galperin's Concept-Based Instruction (henceforth, CBI), as delineated by Negueruela (2008, 2013) (cf. 2.1.2.); and (3) a holistic conception of language (cf. 2.1.3.).

#### 2.1.1. Plurilingual competence vs. multilingualism

While multilingualism refers to the coexistence of different languages in specific social and educational contexts, plurilingualism refers to personal competence. By virtue of this competence:

as an individual person's experience of language in its cultural contexts expands, from the language of the home to that of society at large and then to the languages of other peoples (whether learnt at school or college, or by direct experience), he or she does not keep these languages and cultures in strictly separated mental compartments, but rather builds up a communicative competence to which all knowledge and experience of language contributes and in which languages interrelate and interact. (Council of Europe, 2001: 5)

This understanding of plurilingualism is also supported by studies on bilingualism, such as those by Cummins. According to his Interdependence Hypothesis (Cummins, 1979, 2007), there are no separate competences between the languages of a bilingual, instead there is a common underlying competence. Consequently, instruction in a given language that fosters communicative competence in this language has positive effects on the development of competence in any other language. This holds true as long as three

conditions are met: (1) adequate exposure to the language (be it at school or in the social environment of the learner); (2) necessary motivation to learn it; (3) optimal teaching and learning environment. Give these presuppositions, Cummins questions the monolingualism prevailing both in AL teaching and in language immersion practices. Instead, he favours the pedagogic use of translation (owing to the strategic value of the mother tongue in learning a new language), as well as explicit work on linguistic concepts and on interlinguistic transfer strategies.

### 2.1.2. Concept-Based Instruction

Following Negueruela's formulation (2008, 2013) of Galperin's CBI (1992) we consider that 'learning a new language involves not only mastering new forms, but primarily interiorizing new concepts and being able to use them communicatively' (Negueruela, 2013: 54). On the basis of Vygotsky's writings (Vygotsky, 1986), we also agree with Negueruela that the linguistic concepts that form the focus of formal instruction must be scientific in nature (i.e. those that are derived from rigorous and systematic research) rather than spontaneous concepts that emerge non-consciously during interactions carried out in one's first language during childhood or when exposed to a new AL outside of formal instructional settings.

These concepts can be regarded as semantic-pragmatic and discursive categories that are closely related to the notions established in the Council of Europe's Threshold Level (Van Ek, 1975). Among these are included, for instance, (in)determination, distance, intensification, aspect, deixis, modalization, politeness, spatial relationships, etc. Such concepts can find expression in any of the different language subsystems (phonetic, lexical and morphosyntactic). For instance, in Spanish, as in other languages, the intensification of a quality can be expressed through a suffix – *guapÍSIMA* prettiEST –, an adverb – *MUY guapa* VERY pretty –, a locution – *LA MAR DE guapa* EVER SO pretty or even through emphatic intonation on the term to be intensified.

Given that CBI gives priority to conceptual meaning over form, it offers added value to plurilingual education, in that learners know – from their mother tongue (Swain and Lapkin, 2013) – how a concept can be expressed through different linguistic elements thereby they can open up to new possibilities to express the same concept in the AL they are learning. In this way, learners can 'become aware of the complex meanings expressed through language' (Negueruela, 2013: 54), i.e. they can go beyond merely reproducing the texts dealt with in class and 'use the language in a flexible way across an array of contexts' (Lantolf, 2008: 24).

### 2.1.3. Holistic conception of language: the text as basic work unit

The IPA conceives of language as a semiotic system where meaning creation through linguistic elements stands above attention to form. For this reason we adhere to Halliday's systemic-functional linguistics (Halliday, 1978), in as much as sociocultural theory 'is aligned with meaning-based functional perspectives on language' (Lantolf and Poehner, 2014: 70); all the more so as Halliday considers language to be a human creation that serves the purpose of reaching the goals of life in society, revealingly coinciding herein with Vygotsky's (1986) view of language as a semiotic system that mediates thinking.

Furthermore, Halliday establishes the text as the basic linguistic unit, i.e. as a semantic unit whose form is determined by a communicative purpose, to be fulfilled by choosing the elements most suitable to it from those available in the language system. In didactic terms, this implies framing the necessary attention to form within text grammar (Martín-Peris and Esteve, 2013), starting at the level of text typologies and textual genres and focusing then on the functionality of the linguistic concepts in the text (Negueruela, 2013). Thus, learners are to become aware of pragmatic and linguistic conventions related to the text, as a sample of a given text type or genre (Ferreira and Lantolf, 2008; López Ferrero and Martín-Peris, 2013), while adopting an interlinguistically contrastive perspective (Nord, 2003; Fernández, 2010).

## 2.2. Teaching methodology

The three theoretical principles presented above entail two key instructional procedures for the IPA to be applied to the classroom: reflective action-based teaching (cf. 2.2.1) and translinguistic conceptualization (cf. 2.2.2).

### 2.2.1. Reflective action-based teaching

According to Van Lier (2007), action-based teaching is inextricable from learner agency, i.e. from their socioculturally mediated capacity to act. Hence the need for a teaching methodology that enables learners to use the linguistic knowledge they are constructing to best suit their communicative goals. To us, this is only feasible by blending the communicative approach with Concept-Based Instruction (Negueruela, 2013). In the case of the IPA, this mixed methodology relies on the Integrated Discourse Approach (Adair-Hauck and Donato, 1994; Esteve, 2002; Herazo, 2014), which is closely related to task-based learning, but differs from it in two aspects: the scaffolding structure and the understanding of the textual genre as the axis around which work in class revolves.

The scaffolding structure results in a cyclical sequence of concatenated tasks. It leads the learners from a text (or texts) provided to them at the onset of the sequence to another text to be created by them as they carry out specific

conceptual work on various linguistic elements. This happens according to a top down – bottom up – top down approach, i.e. an approach from the text – to the sentence – to the word – to the sentence – to the text.

This cyclical sequence, which we call the ‘didactic sequence’ (Carandell, 2013; Esteve, 2014), to use a term developed in previous Spain-based research on first language didactics (Camps *et al.*, 2003), ensures attention both to meaning and form: it provides room for metalinguistic reflection on linguistic concepts, as related to a communicative goal and, especially, to the meanings that the learners set out to construct.

Based on a proposal by Esteve *et al.* (2003), an example of a didactic sequence is presented in Table 1 (with questions for learners in italics, and explanations or comments on them in Roman type). This sequence was created for A2-German learners at secondary school with Catalan/Spanish as L1 and English as first AL.

**Table 1:** Example of a didactic sequence for A2-German learners at secondary school with Catalan/Spanish as L1 and English as first AL\*

<p><i>TITLE: Introducing yourselves on the web</i></p> <p><i>CONTEXT: You have set up a German-Spanish group to carry out a linguistic exchange on Facebook. Some German-speaking people have already joined in and you want to get in touch with them through Skype.</i></p> <p><i>END TASK: You must prepared to have a Skype chat with the German-speaking members of the Facebook group in order to introduce yourselves orally and discuss with them how to best carry out the linguistic exchange.</i></p>
<p><b>Didactic sequence</b></p> <p><b>Task 1.</b> The learners come to a global understanding of the texts through an overall analysis of the discourse genre ‘informal conversation’.</p> <p><i>Listen to the following texts and answer the questions below (the texts are two recorded conversations – a formal and an informal one – where proposals are discussed):</i></p> <div><div>a. <i>What text type do both texts belong to? How do you know?</i></div><div>b. <i>What are they about?</i></div><div>c. <i>Are both situations the same? What similarities and differences can you identify?</i></div><div>d. <i>What have you understood globally? What has helped you?</i></div></div>
<p><b>Task 2.</b> The learners act as language researchers.</p> <p><i>In groups of three, analyze the transcriptions of the conversations that you have just listened to by dealing with the following questions:</i></p> <div><div>a. <i>In the informal conversation, which linguistic elements are used to express the communicative functions listed below? (Watch out, as each function can be expressed through more than one element):</i></div></div>

<b>Communicative function</b>	<b>Linguistic elements in German</b>	<b>Linguistic elements in Catalan/ Spanish and in English</b>
<i>Start up a conversation</i>		
<i>Introduce oneself and ask for the partner's name</i>		
<i>Express that something has not been understood</i>		
<i>Show that one is attentively listening to one's partner</i>		
<i>Propose something</i>		
<i>Show like or dislike for the partner's proposal(s)</i>		
<i>Compromise with the partner, so as to reach an agreement</i>		
<i>Finish up the conversation</i>		

b. Let's consider the similarities and differences between German and our languages (Spanish and Catalan).

- What do you find interesting about what you have discovered in German?
- Can you spot any difference(s) related to other languages you know? Which ones exactly?
- Let's take a closer look at such little words in German conversation as 'denn', 'mal', 'ja'. Are you familiar with 'question tags' in English? What are they used for exactly? How do we express their meaning in Catalan/Spanish? Do you use the same linguistic elements (i.e. modal particles) in these languages? If not, which ones? Are they used in the same way as in German?
- Compare the syntactic position of modal particles in German with that of 'question tags' in English and of their Spanish/Catalan equivalents. Are there any similarities?
- Now compare the German intonation with the Spanish/Catalan in a similar situation. Do they sound alike?

**Task 3.** The teacher systematizes and elaborates on the learning outcome in task 2.

The teacher takes up the outcome of task 2, in that s/he first puts forward what learners have been able to discover for themselves and then comments on what they have found noteworthy. Afterwards, discourse modalizers (such as the *Modalpartikeln*) in German are dealt with and systematized within the conceptual framework of modalization in informal conversation.

**Task 4.** The learners prepare the Skype chat in small groups.

The teacher asks the learners to discuss in small groups what they want to tell the German members of the Facebook group and to write it down.

Afterwards, the teacher hands out the following grid for them to plan their oral production by themselves:

What do we want to say?	Can we say it in German? Do we know how? Which Modalpartikeln seem (most) suitable? Why?	What do we still need to carry out the task?

Once the grid is filled in, the teacher systematizes and elaborates on the learners' answers.

**Task 5.** The learners rehearse the Skype chat and record it. After listening to the recording, the learners reflect on their use of *Modalpartikeln*, by dealing with the following questions

- Analyze which 'Modalpartikeln' you have used: why have you chosen these and not others?
- Listen to other classmates' recordings and make the same analysis.

Together with the teacher, the students critically analyze the recorded performance and assess it. Through this procedure the teacher can ascertain to what extent the linguistic concepts were adequately understood by the learners, as well as to spot any concepts needing further explanation.

Final task: The learners perform the Skype chat with the German-speaking members of the Facebook group.

\* Unless otherwise stated, the texts reproduced in all tables and figures were originally written either in Spanish or Catalan and translated to English by the authors.

The didactic sequence includes tasks for both text comprehension and production (abilities necessary for communication) and tasks for collaborative metalinguistic reflection through pedagogical use of translation (González Davies, 2007), leading learners both to become aware of the linguistic elements required for the final task and to manipulate them as convenient. The necessary functionality of the linguistic concepts underlying such elements is rooted in their relevance for the learners, as they are essential for performing the communicative act inherent in the task and, hence, for expressing the learners' own significant meaning.

In schools, similar didactic sequences could be introduced both in L1 and AL classes, from a transversal perspective of language instruction which breaks away from the traditional monolingual approach to language teaching, as informing the so-called Integrated Communicative Projects (Ruiz, 2011). These involve all languages taught in the school and deal with linguistic concepts as framed within text types and genres (e.g. modalization in informal conversational texts) in a both coordinated and contrastive way, thereby promoting interlinguistic transfer strategies.



### 2.2.2. Translinguistic conceptualization

As shown in the example in the previous section, attention to form and conceptual work is an integral part of the didactic sequence. Yet this encompasses reflection that goes well beyond the mere explanation of grammatical rules, so as to confront learners with a more sophisticated metalinguistic analysis, i.e. ‘translinguistic conceptualization’. This results from blending insights stemming from language awareness (Esteve *et al.*, 2003; James and Garret, 1991), translanguaging (Creese and Blackledge, 2010; García, 2009; Lasagabaster and García, 2014) and CBI, as conceived of by Negueruela (2008, 2013).

The term ‘translinguistic conceptualization’ is intended to make discursive practices involving different languages, maximally significant, by blending it with interlinguistic, i.e. transversal, reflection. Such reflection exceeds mere contrastive analysis, to become a strategy by which learners situate themselves – communicatively and cognitively – in the discursive practice that they are taking part in, by comprehending and appropriating its key concepts.

The strategic value of ‘translinguistic conceptualization’ is illustrated in activities 2–4 in the didactic sequence given in Table 1. These activities raise learner awareness of the linguistic concepts needed to effectively participate in an informal conversation in the new language, by activating their previous knowledge of the genre of informal conversation, familiar to them from their first or other languages. This knowledge involves linguistic concepts that are characteristic of this genre – irrespective of the language – but of which learners may not yet be fully aware (as with the Spanish, Catalan or English equivalents for the German discourse modalizers, i.e., *Modalpartikeln*).

## 3. The formative intervention

The formative intervention associated with the research project sets out to ascertain what meaning the IPA – as a new pedagogic model – has for schools participating in the project and, more precisely, how the schools appropriate its key-principles and teaching procedures and incorporate them into their activity system, thereby transforming it.

The intervention draws, thus, on activity theory (Engeström, 2011; Johnson, 2009), by which subjects act within a global activity system. In our case, this system is that of the eight schools participating in the project (two primary, two secondary and two schools for adult education) including the classrooms where the IPA was put into practice.

The formative intervention has a twofold aim: (1) exerting an influence on the system, by confronting the teachers involved with a scientifically grounded orienting basis of action (the IPA); (2) investigating the development and consequences of the ensuing formative process (lasting between five and six months in each case and guided by members of our research team as facilitators).

Research on the formative process is based on three types of data: (1) video-recorded data on every single phase of the intervention; (2) internal documents explaining and justifying the centre’s resetting of its language teaching model (collected at the end of the project); and (3) semi-open interviews with teachers and learners (also collected at the end of the project).

3.1. Design principles

The formative intervention was designed according to the Vygotskian principle of double stimulation, as applied by Engeström (2011). It thus aimed to encourage participants as active agents to bring about transformations in their own teaching practice. The aim of the first stimulus is to encourage the agents to verbalize tensions and contradictions about their own practice, as well as to become aware of problems that these tensions and contradictions may give rise to. The aim of the second is to help overcome such problems through external mediation, involving a challenge for the agents and ultimately leading them to reconceptualize their initial understandings (Negueruela, 2011).

In developing this external mediation, we have again drawn on Gal’perin’s CBI principles. These principles do not only help organize and systematize the concepts triggering the necessary reconceptualization, but they also account for the mental actions that must be promoted in order for learners (here the teachers) to appropriate and internalize the relevant concepts.

3.2. Design phases

On the basis of the above premises, our formative intervention was carried out in the following six phases.

*Phase 1:* Becoming aware of one’s own Orienting Basis of Action (OBA) and verbalizing conflicts related to one’s own practice (first stimulus).

At the outset of the formative intervention, teachers in each school were asked to verbalize their own OBA (Gal’perin, 1992), so as to become aware of it, allowing their own concepts and tensions about plurilingual education to emerge as they answered the reflection questions shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Reflection questions for phase 1

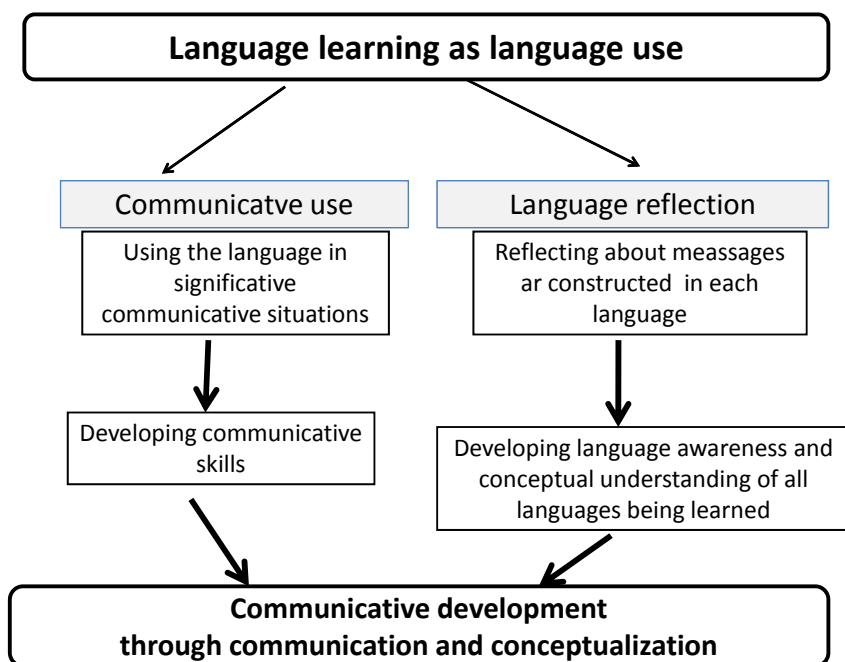
What do I/we understand by ‘language teaching’?
What is the linguistic reality in our school? How do I/we handle it in class? Why in that way?
Which role do I think the mother tongue plays in learning foreign languages? And other languages known by the learner?

The reflections arising from the answers to these questions were jointly commented on, so as to detect possible quality connections (Kozulin, 2003) between the teachers’ concepts and those of the IPA.

*Phase 2:* Being confronted with the IPA – as a new didactic model – by taking part in a training session involving conceptual mediation (second stimulus; first enrichment of the teachers' initial OBA).

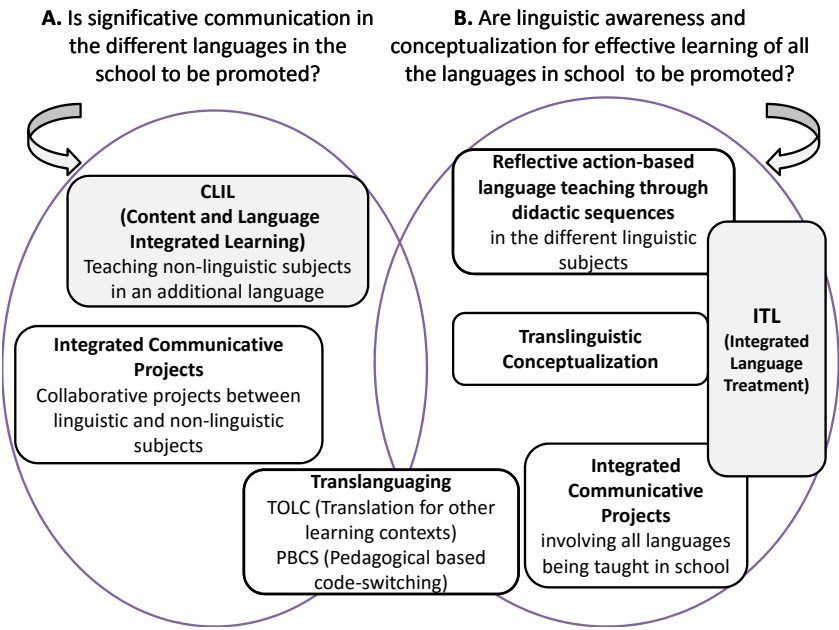
This phase developed along a three-hour training session based on constructive scaffolding (Esteve and Carandell, 2009), and consisted of five sub-phases.

- (2.1) Teachers experienced the IPA as learners of an AL unknown to them, by carrying out a didactic sequence especially created with this aim.
- (2.2) They then reflected on the experience, from which many IPA principles emerged and expressed in the teachers' own words.
- (2.3) Next, they were presented with the first of two increasingly complex 'Schemas for Complete Orienting Basis of Action' (henceforth, SCOBAs: Gal'perin, 1992) aimed at confronting them with the IPA as the new orienting basis of action to be appropriated by them. This first SCOBA, i.e. IPA-SCOBA 1 (cf. Figure 1), is an adaptation of the model by Wolff and Legenhausen (1992) and clearly outlines the interrelationship between the communicative and the conceptual approach.



**Figure 1:** IPA-SCOBA 1

- (2.4) Once IPA-SCOBA 1 had been discussed, the teachers analyzed a sample of a didactic sequence similar to that in section 2.2.1, thereby reflecting on the aim and structure of its tasks. Guided by the facilitator, they shared their reflections and, in groups, systematized any emerging key concepts.
- (2.5) They were then given IPA-SCOBA 2 (cf. Figure 2), so as to fit these concepts into the IPA conceptual frame, and thereby conferring them scientific status. The conceptual distinction between CLIL (*Content and Language Integrated Learning*) and ILT (*Integrated Language Treatment*) proved particularly relevant, as teachers held quite a different view on AL teaching, especially with regard to the didactic sequence and the Integrated Communicative Projects (Ruiz, 2011).



**Figure 2:** IPA-SCOBA 2

*Phase 3:* Apprehending the IPA key-principles (second enrichment of the teachers' initial OBA).

This phase involved both individual reading and collective reflection on the IPA key-principles and teaching procedures, as carried out in the two following sub-phases:

(3.1) After working on IPA-SCOBAs, the teachers individually read a series of documents – accessible to them from a wiki created for that purpose (<https://enfoqueplurilingueintegrador.wikispaces.com/home>) – on the IPA key- principles and concepts related to the teaching procedures.

(3.2) A minimum of two sessions were then carried out in each school in order to guarantee adequate comprehension of the new concepts. For this purpose, the teachers elaborated their own schematic representation of their understanding of the IPA and presented it to their colleagues, thereby enabling the facilitator to ascertain whether they had experienced an enrichment of their own OBA (cf. Esteve, 2013) with regard to phase 1, as well as to spot concepts requiring further explanation.

*Phases 4 and 5:* Elaborating and carrying out an IPA-based methodological proposal (third enrichment of the teachers' initial OBA: towards reconceptualization).

Once the teachers were able to integrate the IPA – as a new OBA – into their own activity system, they first elaborated (phase 4) an informed IPA-based methodological proposal (action plan), and then carried it out in class (phase 5). Each teacher's proposal was designed in accordance with the context of their own school and class group, as well as with directives from external educational institutions, i.e. the macrostructures (Johnson, 2009).

*Phase 6:* Generating internal documents accounting for IPA-related model resetting (as reconceptualization of the teachers' practice).

After experimenting with the IPA in Phase 5, the schools generated internal documents accounting for IPA-related model resetting, i.e. for new goals, as well as concepts and teaching procedures to determine their activity system thereafter.

#### 4. Exemplary analysis

For space reasons, we will exemplify data analysis from just one school, a secondary school in Canet, a town close to Barcelona. Learners' L1s are Spanish and Catalan, with English, German and Chinese as ALs.

We have chosen this school as an illustrative example, as the crystallization and comparison of data from different phases of the formative intervention clearly reveals an empowering transformation of its activity system, at both collective and individual level.

The following data consists of four excerpts from the school's internal document on IPA-related model resetting (phase 6) (cf. 4.1), two samples of teacher

1 classroom discourse (phase 5) (cf. 4.2) and three samples of final teacher inter-  
2 views (between phases 5 and 6) (cf. 4.3).

3  
4 **4.1. Excerpts from the school’s internal document on IPA-related model**  
5 **resetting**

6 The four excerpts given below (translated from original Catalan) belong to the  
7 school’s internal document generated in Phase 6, that aim to justify to both  
8 parents and educational institutions its IPA-related model resetting and, more  
9 precisely, the new goals (excerpt 1, cf. Table 3), as well as methodological pro-  
10 cedures (excerpts 2–4, cf. Tables 4–6) brought about by this resetting.

11 **Table 3:** Excerpt 1 from the school’s internal document regarding the new goals result-  
12 ing from methodological and systemic modifications  
13

<p><b>New goals resulting from methodological modifications</b></p> <p>1. Implementing work on competences through Integrated Communication Projects, i.e. interrelated groups of didactic sequences referring linguistic subjects, i.e. ILT 1 (Spanish and Catalan) and ILT 2 (English and German), to non-linguistic ones, in order to promote a horizontal and holistic view of language.</p> <p>2. Dealing with one and the same <b>concept from the curriculum</b>, be it <b>linguistic</b> (for instance, ‘folk literature’) or <b>non-linguistic</b> (for instance, ‘the Universe’) in ILT1 and ILT2, within global projects promoting work by areas of knowledge.</p> <p><b>New goals resulting from systemic modifications</b></p> <p>3. Adapting to the peculiar dynamics of activity-based, contextualized learning by modifying teaching schedules.</p> <p>4. Turning one Science and Social Studies lesson per week into a working session with interrelated groups of didactic sequences, involving all languages taught in the school.</p> <p>5. Further developing learners’ plurilingual awareness by consolidating German as second AL and introducing Chinese as third AL through ILT.</p>
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31 Excerpt 1 states the new IPA-related goals resulting from both method-  
32 ological (goals 1–2) and systemic modifications (goals 3–5). As a whole, they  
33 reflect the school’s appropriation of the IPA holistic conception of language, as  
34 well as of its plurilingual competence and reflective action-based teaching.

35 Goal 1 refers not only to a ‘horizontal’ (i.e., transversal) and holistic view of  
36 language, but also to ‘Integrated Communication Projects’. These are ‘interre-  
37 lated groups of sequences referring linguistic to non-linguistic subjects’ which  
38 can also be regarded as a token of the ‘activity-based, contextualized learning’  
39 mentioned in goal 3.

40 Goal 2 further develops the transversal character of the projects in goal 1.  
41 Non-linguistic subjects are no longer referred to as separate from linguistic  
42

ones, but rather ‘one and the same concept from the curriculum, be it linguistic or non-linguistic’ is now dealt with in global projects, whose essence also informs the Science and Social Studies working sessions in goal 4.

Goal 5 states the development of ‘the learners’ plurilingual awareness’ (reminiscent of the IPA plurilingual competence) as a goal to be reached through ILT, i.e. Integrated Language Treatment. Though used to indicate linguistic subjects in goal 1, ILT refers here to an IPA-related language teaching approach, as explained in excerpt 2.

**Table 4:** Excerpt 2 from the school’s internal document about ILT

**What do we understand by ILT?**

As a term, ILT has for us a holistic component that points to singularity. To us, this means singularity as agreed upon from the perspective of all languages involved, i.e. Spanish, Catalan and English, and as emerging through collective scaffolding. We do not deal with the same items in all three languages, but we do address the concepts underlying them, which have previously been analyzed in detail, sequenced and temporalized. In integrating the communicative functions and structures common to all three languages, we do not merely add these together, but broaden our understanding of them. This means that we focus on the peculiarities of each language while dealing with them in both a differentiated and an integrating manner.

**Why ‘ITL’ and not ‘Spanish’, ‘Catalan’ or ‘English’?**

Our school sets as its goal not only to help learners to master a language, but also to develop their capacity for learning any language. It goes without saying that in just four years at secondary school, learners will not be able to become proficient in English or German. We do hope, however, that after these four years they will have developed the strategic capacities necessary for further language learning, be it through self-study or tuition.

Excerpt 2 consists of two sections on the first of the new IPA-related teaching approach assimilated by the school, i.e. ILT.

In the first section, ILT is defined as a teaching procedure, related to the IPA holistic conception of language and to translinguistic conceptualization. Accordingly, it accounts for both what is specific to each language taught in the school, i.e. its ‘singularity’, and for that which is common to all of them, i.e. the underlying concepts, understood both from a pragmatic and a formal perspective (‘communicative functions and structures’).

This explicitly points to translinguistic conceptualization, involving a broader understanding of languages and ‘both a differentiated and an integrating manner’ of dealing with them. Clearly understood by the school, this

1 procedure is explained in scientific terms, although in such a way that the fam-  
2 ilies addressed can also understand it and transform their basis of orientation  
3 accordingly.

4 The second section refers to ILT's twofold aim, i.e. 'not only to help learners  
5 to master a language, but also to develop their capacity for learning any lan-  
6 guage'. Such an aim becomes explicitly strategic when considered in the long  
7 term ('developed the strategic capacities necessary for further language learn-  
8 ing, be it through self study or tuition'), thereby indicating instruction that is  
9 empowering as it arises from reflective action-based teaching.

10  
11 **Table 5:** Excerpt 3 from the school's internal document about pedagogically based  
12 translation

13 **Plurilingual thinking**  
14  
15 Teachers working on an ILT basis strive to promote a more global  
16 view of languages, by raising awareness of languages as ways  
17 of looking at and understanding the world (...). It is also  
18 necessary to break intercultural prejudices between languages. To  
19 this end, pedagogically based translation proves greatly useful,  
20 as it is not literal, but contextualized, i.e. communicative and  
21 meaning-driven.

22 Excerpt 3 consists of a section entitled 'plurilingual thinking', again remi-  
23 niscent of the IPA's plurilingual competence. It describes the IPA teaching pro-  
24 cedure of pedagogically based translation, a translinguistic practice referring  
25 to the IPA's translinguistic conceptualization. Pedagogically based translation,  
26 moreover, is also related to the IPA holistic conception of language, in that it is  
27 'communicative and meaning-driven' and, hence, a useful tool for addressing  
28 interculturality.

29 **Table 6:** Excerpt 4 from the school's internal document about translinguistic  
30 conceptualization

31  
32 We consider ourselves to be pursuing a model, not a faultless  
33 one, but one providing us with helpful tools. For instance,  
34 working with online dictionaries in class for resolving doubts;  
35 or setting research questions as homework, such as 'Does "Más feo  
36 que Picio" "as ugly as sin" have any equivalent in Catalan'? Or  
37 'We already know that adjectives in Spanish and Catalan have two  
38 endings. Is this the case in English?' (A learner answered this  
39 question as follows: 'None, but then, why is it that there is a  
40 difference between "handsome" and "pretty"?'?).  
41 By posing such questions, we build bridges between languages and  
42 enrich them, and more importantly, we talk about language and,  
above all, about grammar as a living being, not as something just  
dwelling in books.



In excerpt 4 the IPA teaching procedure of translinguistic conceptualization ('We already know that adjectives in Spanish and Catalan have two endings. Is this the case in English?') is addressed to as such and immediately related to reflective action-based teaching ('we talk about language and, above all, about grammar as a living being').

This conceptualization is implemented through enriching methodological proposals, such as 'setting research questions for homework'. These, in turn, are integrated in a personal pedagogical model ('not a faultless one, but one providing us with helpful tools') whose very coming into being bears witness to collective empowerment.

## 4.2. Two samples of teacher classroom discourse

The following are two samples of teacher classroom discourse with learner interaction from one of the IPA-based methodological proposals (phase 5): one from the Catalan (cf. Table 7) and the other from the English class (cf. Table 8).

**Table 7:** Sample of teacher classroom discourse from the Catalan classroom in phase 5

We were focused on a goal, on a challenge, right. Look at this slide, Ariadna, where would you say that the challenge lies? Where is it to be found? (...) We are able to publish a cover of a traditional song in language X (ITL 1 or 2) on the YouTube channel.

T (teacher): The final product that I'll ask from you, pay attention, is a reformulation, well, what text do we associate 'reformulation' with?

L (learner): Hmmm ... a short text.

T: A brief text that reflects our process is a summary, isn't it? If we write a summary, our 'top' summary, what was it like? Do you remember?

This sample presents an episode in the Catalan classroom. It consists of a monologic part, where the teacher introduces the concept of 'cover', to be dealt with in her class and taken up later on in the English class, followed by a brief exchange with a learner.

The teacher's monologic part reveals appropriation of reflective action-based teaching as related to textual genres, in that she refers to a didactic sequence (termed by her as 'challenge') and to its communicative purpose ('publish a cover of a traditional song on the YouTube channel').

The exchange, in turn, reveals that she has made hers the dialogic mediation experienced in the course of the formative intervention, as she uses it to jointly construct knowledge. Such use evidences empowerment related

to joint construction of knowledge, thereby showing again appropriation of reflective action-based teaching.

**Table 8:** Sample of teacher classroom discourse from the English classroom (phase 5)

T	(teacher):	How would you say ' <i>cultura popular</i> ' traditional culture in English? ...
L	(learner ):	'Popular'?
T:	No	
	[...].	
T:	Does 'popular' mean the same as 'famous'? What's the difference between being 'popular' and being 'famous'?	
	[...].	
T:	'Being popular' has got positive connotations and 'being famous' might have positive or even negative connotations.	
T:	Can you remember when you were little? What kind of songs did you listen to?	
L:	'Nanas' lullabies.	
T:	Good. How would you describe 'nanas'? lullabies	
	[...].	
L:	It's the song that <i>te transporta</i> transports you.	
T:	Where?	
L:	A <i>la son</i> towards sleep.	
T:	How would you describe it?	
L:	<i>Ho puc dir en català?</i> Can I say it in Catalan?.	
T:	Try.	
L:	<i>Una nana és una cançó que t'ajuda amb la son i que la pot fer la teva mare o personatges animals</i> A lullaby is a song that helps you fall asleep and that your mother or animal characters can sing to you.	
T:	Do you know an equivalent for this song in Catalan?	
	[...] Think of the first one? [...].	
L:	<i>Cada dia al dematí</i> Every day in the morning.	
T:	'Twinkle, twinkle little star', English. Catalan? ' <i>Cada dia al dematí</i> ' Every day in the morning. And what about Spanish? ' <i>Estrellita ¿dónde estás?</i> ' Little star, where are you?	

This sample presents an episode in the English classroom where the teacher takes up the work on the cover of a traditional song initiated in the Catalan class, while she interacts with a learner. His interventions in Catalan are reproduced in this language, followed by the corresponding English translation in square brackets.

The teacher uses dialogic mediation for translinguistic conceptualization. In so doing, she not only allows the learner to use his L1 in talking to her, but

also takes up the Catalan word given by learner and encourages him to keep using Catalan to complete a task which entails both a clear intercultural component and an affective appeal to the learner's agency.

### 4.3. Three samples of final teacher interview

**Table 9:** Sample 1 of final teacher interview after phase 6

For instance, the concept of space. We have dealt with it starting right in the English class. You know, they have a boring Science textbook (...).

In Maths (ITL) they work on the concept of theme-rheme. New information is always provided in Catalan and, on the following day, the 'rheme' takes it up and presents it in English.

Sample 1 indicates appropriation of the essence of translanguistic conceptualization, as shown by the fact that such concepts as 'space' and 'theme-rheme' are mentioned. In the case of 'theme-rheme', conceptualization not only involves the use of different languages (i.e. Catalan and English), it also has an interdisciplinary character (as both languages are used for explanations in the maths class).

**Table 10:** Sample 2 of final teacher interview after phase 6

We think that's what happens with CLIL. It remains on the 'surface' and doesn't come to 'the bottom'. I mean, 'the bottom is the deep structure'. We don't get at that level, because they're obsessed with using the language, that is, with translating, but they don't translate as we do, that is, ... they just have a textbook with contents written in another language, but this ...

Sample 2 can be understood as a critique on the shortcomings of CLIL and, more precisely, on its lack of depth ('it remains at the surface') and reflective practice ('they're obsessed with using language ... they don't translate as we do'). This, in turn, indirectly points to a conceptually more demanding and, hence, a more enabling approach and, consequently, to reflective action-based methodology.

**Table 11:** Sample 3 of final teacher interview after phase 6

This involves a shift from the textbook lesson to real communication. For me, it was like breaking established patterns. Then you feel as if you change course at sea. At first, you are at a loss, until you get a glimpse of your destination. Once you've identified your destination, you find what you're doing more meaningful.

Sample 3 shows a preference for ‘real communication’ as opposed to the artificiality of the textbook. This clearly reveals appropriation of a holistic conception of language as manifested in situated discourse practices. Such a conception is also recurrently referred to in the school’s internal document, thereby becoming the IPA principle most consistently appropriated. The reason is that it is the most closely related to teaching practice, in that it lies at the core of the two IPA instructional procedures, themselves also consistently appropriated, according to all types of data considered.

#### 4. Conclusions

Despite reservations that may arise owing to the reduced scope of the sample data considered above, it may be stated that the formative intervention carried out in the project has led the participant teachers – as shown in the crystallization of this data – to appropriate the IPA principles and teaching procedures. This particularly applies to the holistic conception of language, as the IPA principle most relevant to teaching practice, and to both reflective action-based teaching (with the didactic sequence as the basic organizational instrument owing to its genre-focus) and translinguistic conceptualization, as directly informed by it.

This appropriation of IPA was significant for most of the schools participating in the project, and it was particularly empowering in the case of the school analyzed in the present article. Here, the theoretical reconceptualization resulting from external mediation indicates a clear transformation process in the participants’ teaching practice over time, as supported by collective and individual data gathered in different phases of the project. This process eventually leads the school to establish an informed language teaching model of its own, based upon the IPA principles, while maintaining coherence with its own specific context.

The formative process described involves confronting the teachers’ own OBA with the new didactic model, as shown in the IPA-SCOBAs used. Their use involves both conceptual enrichment of the original OBA, in that SCOBAs not only lead teachers to adequately apprehend the key principles and procedures of IPA, but also provide them with orientation in pedagogically informed decision-making. This twofold conceptual and methodological relevance of SCOBAs within a CBI-based formative intervention that our project has demonstrated is, in our opinion, the first of its two most significant contributions.

The second contribution is the relevance of the formative methodology applied, with regard to two elements that make it transferable and applicable to other educative contexts. The first is the external dialogic mediation adopted, which informs the whole formative process and raises awareness of

both conceptual and methodological challenges and affordances. The second is the constructive orientation towards the didactic model to be appropriated, paving the way to reconceptualization by enabling participants 'to understand theory through its relevance, but also to ... regard, and modify their practice anew through a theoretically informed lens' (Lantolf and Poehner, 2014: 223).

## About the authors

[To come]

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