

# **Pseudo-compliance or Convergence?**

## **Content teachers work together to learn about language.**

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# Background

Secondary teachers in New Zealand undertake professional learning and development (PL) to support English language learners (ELLs) to succeed academically.

Invited by the SLT to conduct PL with interested teachers at a senior secondary school for international students seeking entry to university.

**How collaboratively did secondary content teachers work during this PL initiative to learn about language?**

# The shape of this paper

- ④ Literature
- ④ Methods
- ④ Findings
- ④ Discussion
- ④ Conclusions

# Literature

## ④ Pedagogical content knowledge:

“the blending of content and pedagogy into an understanding of how particular topics...are organised, represented and adapted to the diverse interests and abilities of learners” (Shulman, 1987, p.8).

## ④ Teaching language and content (continuum)

- CBLT (Lyster & Ballinger, 2011)
- CLIL
- EMI (Farrell, 2020):

## ④ **Resistance from subject teachers** (Faltis & Valdes, 2016; Gleeson, 2015)

# What do subject teachers need to know about language?

## Teachers with **Disciplinary Linguistic Knowledge**

- View SLA as a social and interactive apprenticeship into a discipline
- Scaffold academic language learning and encourage learner autonomy
- Use texts that are amplified and increasingly complex
  - Pedagogical language knowledge (Bunch, 2013)
  - Disciplinary linguistic knowledge (Kibler et al, 2015; Schleppegrell, 2018; Turkan et al., 2014)

# The Research Project

- Small-scale PL project over one year at an urban senior secondary school in New Zealand.
- The school prepared international ELLs for entry to a New Zealand university.
- Three contrasting cases of subject-specific teacher collaborations.
- Thematic *versus* analysis (Saldaña, 2013) and framework from Davison (2006).
- PL conducted by Zoom involved teachers:
  - working with colleagues to identify the linguistic demands of subject texts
  - developing pedagogies that fitted research evidence about DLK for ELLs and their existing pedagogical subject knowledge.
  - engaging with a SFL paper on disciplinary language (Fang & Schleppegrell, 2010).

# The case participants

## Economics/accounting cluster

Combined first session (five participants)

Maria (accounting)  
& Anita (economics)

session 1

session 2

session 3

session 4

session 5

session 6

Gary & Alise (economics) and Donna  
(accounting)

session 1

session 2

session 3

Gary & Alise  
(economics)

session 1

session 2

session 3

Donna & Mohan  
(accounting)

session 1

session 2

# Findings

Theme	In vivo example	In vivo vs example
1. Using the language of language	<p>"I think a lot of it went over my head." (Maria)</p> <p>"It's just extraordinary how educationalists can make the obvious incredibly complicated." (Gary)</p>	<p>"They [the students] actually have more grammar than we do." (Anita)</p>
2. Teaching language or teaching content?	<p>"I honestly thought it was the English teacher's job." (Maria)</p> <p>"I don't see that as what we would be doing in accounting." (Donna)</p>	<p>So it's better than just telling them. They had to do it (Anita)</p>



Theme	In vivo example	In vivo vs example
3. Simplifying or amplifying?	<p>“With complicated constructions they get lost.” (Alise)</p> <p>“We go over-the-top to make it nice and structured and easy to interpret.” (Gary)</p>	<p>“We can’t just keep on making it simpler and simpler and simpler.” (Donna)</p> <p>“We have to build, we can’t just keep on making it simpler and simpler and simpler.” (Maria)</p>
4. Teaching under pressure of time	<p>“We ... don’t have time to devote... to these activities ... we have lots of curriculum to be covered.” (Alise)</p>	<p>“I don’t want ... to take up a lot of their time but I thought <i>oh great</i>, [a dictogloss] fits in.” (Maria)</p>
5. Planning opportunities for students to talk	<p>“Engagement doesn’t necessarily happen in class.” (Maria)</p> <p>“They’re more and more <i>naturally</i> pushed to cooperate and work together.” (Alise)</p>	<p>“[Talking]’s processing content.” (Anita)</p> <p>“They cannot solve it unless they communicate and share whatever ...they have got.” (Mohan)</p>

# Discussion (Davison, 2006)

Level	Distinguishing characteristics
1. Pseudo-compliance or passive resistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An implicit or explicit rejection of collaboration and <b>preference for status quo</b> (generally after a short 'attempt');</li> <li>• little or no real investment of time or understanding by teacher;</li> <li>• expectation is that 'this too will pass.'</li> </ul>
2. Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A positive attitude and expressions of 'good intent';</li> <li>• efforts made to implement new learning but with limited understanding of implications,</li> <li>• 'achievements' conceptualised as nonintrusive and very concrete (e.g. development of worksheets, <b>minor adaptation</b> of texts);</li> </ul>
3. Accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A positive attitude and willingness to experiment;</li> <li>• efforts made to <b>accommodate</b> PL but uncertainties seen as unnecessary and avoidable;</li> <li>• only limited understanding of theoretical base of educational linguistics achievements conceptualised mainly as strategies;</li> </ul>
4. Convergence (and some co-option)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A very positive attitude, embracing opportunities to learn from peers;</li> <li>• efforts made to engage with co-teacher's ideas and initiate dialogue and interaction/experimentation, high degree of respect for other evident,</li> <li>• some <b>cooption</b> of other's ideas/strategies with still limited understanding of educational linguistics;</li> <li>• increasing satisfaction collaboration, increasingly seeking opportunities for <b>peer interaction</b>;</li> </ul>

# Discussion: Pseudo-compliance or Convergence?

## Supporting one another up

Anita and Maria: from different disciplines but got on well, consistently collaborated at the **convergence** level. Observed and took feedback from each other in good heart.

## Complying with gentle resistance

Gary and Alise: were used to planning and working together and **complied** with the PL. Did not find time to observe one another. Apparent that once the PL ceased, they would revert completely back to their congenial and subject-dominant norm.

## Coopting a reluctant partner

Donna and Mohan: Donna **passively resisted** knowledge outside her discipline. Worked well with Mohan. Observed and fed-back on one another's lessons **convergently**. Differed markedly in integrating the new learning.

# Relationship with the PL and Facilitator

## Working as ambassador for DLK.

- Acknowledged teachers' expertise before suggesting modifications that would enhance language learning.
- Situated language teaching approaches within subject matter (suggesting **convergence**).
- Convinced some participants to modify texts and use classroom interaction.
- PL seemed most effective when participants observed one another teaching.

But unclear how deeply changes were embedded.

## **How collaboratively did content teachers work during this PL initiative to learn about language?**

- Teachers appeared to prefer working within their discipline.
- Some movement in participants' understanding of disciplinary language demands.
- Pedagogies claimed as belonging to their subject.
- Some participants politely resisted more than superficial adaptations to their practice, claiming time as an excuse.
- However, even after a year, DLK was still at an emergent stage and would need consolidation to transform their practice.

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