



Content and Language Integrated Learning: A Paradigm Shift in ELT

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Abstract

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is a recent teaching approach widely adopted in numerous international contexts, round the world. Today, it is being promoted as a way to endorse language learning within the educational system. When implemented, CLIL predominantly involves subject content teachers, using English as a medium to teach their subjects exploring the pedagogy of both, content and English Language Teaching. The purpose of the study is to observe and analyze effective use of CLIL in teaching performance, language development and proficiency. We will also discuss how CLIL pedagogy has brought in a paradigm shift to content-based teaching and task-based language teaching, providing recommendations for effective language pedagogy in CLIL. Further, we will argue that the effective language-pedagogical approaches and experiences can benefit not only CLIL-teachers but language teachers as well.

Keywords: CLIL, ELT, Language Learning, Pedagogy, Approaches

Introduction:

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is becoming a popular and widespread practice of immersion education. When we look forward towards the approach, the major questions arising among teachers in the CLIL classroom is how to assess the students' performance both with regard to subject content as well as knowledge of their progress in English language. In education, content is usually labeled as a "content area", which UNESCO's

International Bureau of Education (2018) define as “topics, themes, beliefs, behaviors, concepts and facts, often grouped within each subject or learning area under knowledge, skills, values and attitudes, that are expected to be learned and form the basis of teaching and learning” (p. 1). Content in itself is at times mistaken for subjects like mathematics, science, social science, history, biology, and geography but the fact is that a language course is almost never considered content. We often face such problems because the entire educational system observed as a systematic cultural view arising from the conceptual values of modernization over the past several decades, where our education system splits the teaching and learning of language and content subjects when they should really be beading them in single thread. A prodigious deal of flexibility is required with the subject teachers teaching in CLIL classroom as teaching CLIL automatically brings about a simplification in subject knowledge. In order to counterbalance their approach, the teacher often insist on summative assessment modes. However, at times they are not allowed to insist on an English answer while doing evaluation. Therefore, it becomes necessary for us to find a method of assessment that moves in a parallel manner: the progress in subject content knowledge as well as the language improvement into account which further involves progressive writing followed by formative assessment. Content can, after all, be defined as knowledge and/or skills that the learners would need to acquire even if they were not also learning the CLIL language (Coyle, Hood, & Marsh, 2010).

Changes to education also need “to incorporate new teaching and/or learning approaches that enable the development of critical and creative thinking skills” (Granados, 2018). Such ‘new’ educational programs should also try to accelerate the pace of relevant learning, as well directly relating teaching and learning process through curricular items to prepare students for real-life situations.. Research conducted with the employers indicates that, even in the most developed countries, universities no longer equip students to respond to the new, changed requirements to be placed in the contemporary jobs (Popović, 2014). Quite a lot attention has been paid to the proficiency level in English of CLIL teachers and to the selection and adaptation of subject matter textbooks for CLIL. The national CLIL evaluations indicate that little attention has been paid to the pedagogic catalogue of CLIL teachers and how it adds to the students’ target language proficiency. Therefore, in this paper we aim to investigate the effective CLIL teaching performance and relate it to the theoretical principles in second language acquisition which further observes the gap through following research questions: Can CLIL teaching performance be evaluated from theoretical assumptions with regard to effective language teaching and learning? Is it possible to provide practical recommendations to both CLIL teachers concerning effective language pedagogy? If, yes, then how? After comparing some selected articles that previous studies it has been noticed and discussed further in the paper that the authors found various issues related to the different types of methodologies being used in the evaluated studies. The present study suggests a gap between theory and practice that CLIL educators need to address.

Literature Review:

(Widdowson, 2000) observed that “attested” language is not the same as “authentic” language and that questions of authenticity rest more on audience engagement than they do with source (Widdowson 1990). With this in mind we suggest that one of the prime requisites of authenticity is genuine communication: the text must convey a message. In the case of a CLIL text this will

relate to the content and it will likely conform to one of Mohan's (1986) knowledge structures – describing, comparing, evaluating etc. (Khwanichit, S & Sumalee, C) assert in their research that globalization and interculturality have increased the scope of learning English as a medium of expression. In such an environment, the demand for English as a foreign language has been multiplied for global exposure. Now, the responsibility lies on the teachers/trainers/facilitators to impart the skills leading to the proper acquisition of English Language. These authors do observe that there is no perfect approach available with the English teachers but Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) seems to be a teaching approach that meets all of these demands. They agree that authenticity, multiple focus, active learning, safe learning environment, scaffolding may be used as tools for CLIL implementation. Learners can accomplish effective language learning when they get good instruction and exercise in real-life situations. Goris, J., Denssen, E., & Verhoeven, L., 2019 affirms that Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) has been introduced in many European countries since the 1990s onwards. This innovative method aims to increase language learning prospects through the use of a target second language in the teaching of a range of subjects in the school syllabus. As the target language is invariably English, many see CLIL as a way of helping learners develop an optimal command of English as a foreign language (EFL). (Kelly, K) in her paper concludes that CLIL students who experience this language support, where language is explicitly linked to 'curriculum thinking skills', will quickly develop their academic language. A CLIL teacher who is constantly looking for opportunities to embed language in task in this way, can work towards this academic development and know that they are helping their students success both in academic thinking but also academic language. A good number of papers included in the journal (Vienna English Working Paper, 2007) emphasize on the richness and flexibility of CLIL as teaching approach. The authors try to explore discourse-pragmatic aspects of CLIL classroom talk; short- and long-term effects of CLIL on target language proficiency; comparative analyses of teachers' performance in CLIL vs. L1 vs. target language lessons; developing CLIL teaching materials by taking into consideration the content-specific concepts to be learnt as well as the relevant linguistic resources; CLIL-sensitive means of assessment; pedagogical tools for CLIL teacher education; and CLIL as a heuristic in describing necessary conditions for successful teaching and learning, which by nature always concerns content and language.

3. Methodology:

The present study includes a self- assessment part. In that self -assessment the question "Where have you learnt most of your English?" either all of it in school/ most of it in school or all of it outside school. Why and how learning takes place is a constant debate, but here certainly motivation and relevance are key factors. Students watch Television, cartoons, read books, comics, play computer games, listen to music, etc. of their own choice. They choose programs (books, games, music) as they are somehow relevant to the individual student. The results is their motivation to change the ambient language into a communicable form, via comprehended input to intake and then to integrate it into their own language proficiency. To find out more about the actual situation, four teachers teaching different subjects were interviewed about their views on the use of adapted text/material in the classroom. During the interview, it was suggested and all four teachers agreed on to use much more adapted text/ material than what is presently the case. The question, then, is why is the use of the available material as prescribed in the syllabus is so scarce? The reasons stated by them were distinct. First of all, either too difficult or too easy;

while content of the material is at the right level, the language tends to be at a much too sophisticated level or simplified and vice versa. The teachers also used adapted text/material to show students examples of current and up-to-date language in order to improve their language teaching performance. So, how can this be linked to the theory of motivation? Bearing in mind the supposed positive effect of the use of adapted text/material relevant to the students in teaching is suggested to use, although the authentic and prescribed material is stipulated to the use.

4. Findings:

The conceptualization of effective teaching performance for language acquisition in CLIL includes attention to features such as functional communication, concurrent attention to form and meaning, and method of taking corrective feedback, within a broader framework of three essential conditions for language acquisition – exposure, use, and motivation (Willis, 1996). Now these important conditions have been further elaborated through an observation tool for this study on the basis of five basic assumptions related to effective language teaching performance.

4.1 Acquaintance With An Adapted Text

Before a lesson a CLIL teacher would employ different strategies in adapting text/ material on the basis of empirical evidence. There should be considerable scope for personal intervention while handling the text. The teacher's approach must affect the tailored adapted text/ material in order to have it interesting but understandable for learners. Two types of framework can be identified during the lesson, either on content and/or language of the adapted text/ material, and content and/or language of teacher talk. In this category, the observation may rely on the following indicators for effective teaching performance: selection of text; text adaptation in advance; preparation of teacher's talk; discussion and tuning of teacher's talk.

4.2 Meaning-focused Orientation

Here the teacher may likely stimulate content-processing of oral or written contribution in the form of Summative Assessment, by giving relevant tasks that involve students in order to understand the meaning (a sort of review making sense). The teacher should check whether the meaning of the adapted text/ material has been grasped adequately. In case, the student is not able to deliver the gist/ review properly or presents erroneously, the teacher might extend some kind of help. In this category, the observation may rely on the following indicators for effective teaching performance: orientation towards meaning; scrutinizing meaning identification; accentuating correct and relevant terms and vocabulary; practice followed by a revision of relevant terms.

4.3 Form-focused Approach towards Language

A CLIL teacher may conduct activities concentrating at awareness for language form, making learners conscious about specific language features directing the students' attention to correct and incorrect uses of form. This activity may thus facilitate students to notice the implicit or explicit form of language. While providing feedback, the teacher must pay attention on students' ability in varying implicit techniques (for instance: clarification requests, re-forms) or explicit techniques (for instance: explicit correction, metalinguistic comment, query, advice) for focusing on form, as well as nonverbal responses. In this category, the observation may rely on the following indicators for effective teaching performance: noticing of problematic and relevant language forms; providing examples of correct and relevant language forms; correct usage of problematic and relevant language forms; facilitating relevant language forms by discussing rules; sharing peer feedback.

4.4 Opportunities for delivering Creativity

Here the target language of a CLIL teacher can encourage learners to share responses, reaction, interrogation, clarification aiming at opportunities of finding their creative side. Different interactive modules for instance, group, pair work might be implemented to facilitate meaningful communication in English. Further, through the mode of instructions in the lesson plan itself, the teacher may guide the students to use English exclusively in the lesson. The teacher may use a series of activities for further exercising essential aspects of form/meaning use. In this category, the observation may rely on the following indicators for effective teaching performance: asking for responses; formulate interaction letting students communicate; focus on the use of the target language; focusing on output oriented creativity (oral/ written).

4.5 Verbalizing Strategies

A CLIL teacher may assist the students to overcome their problems or doubts related to language and content comprehension and communication, by developing a list of receptive and productive strategies. A framework of immediate response might be considered of great importance, where the teacher shall be able to suggest to the learners an effective methods to resolve the problems with regard to the comprehension or use of language form. In this category, the observation may rely on the following indicators for effective teaching performance: stimulating amenable and productive strategies; reflection on use of strategy; drawing a framework to synthesize the output oriented strategies. These five assumptions can be considered as the basic ingredients for effective language learning and teaching activities.

5. Conclusion:

The CLIL programmes emphasize the link between content and language demands in a different way and can be placed along a line of language-driven or content-driven approaches. The basic and theoretical assumption behind this study was not only to analyze the successful use of the language to learn new concepts, students will learn the academic content specified in the curriculum and at the same time develop their language proficiency but also to observe the effect of content-based instruction on the acquisition of oral competence in English. Precisely, it aims

at examining the similarities and differences between content-based instruction and traditional instruction (language-driven instruction). To reiterate, our research sampling of adapted texts backs up both: teachers do employ distinct strategies when adapting texts and the students seem to gain advantages in more global tests, sophisticated analyses regarding lexical richness, variation and complexity. We should now emphasize that this is an intended descriptive study representing only the beginning of our research into the question of text adaptation. We would not argue that any one approach is inherently better than any of the others. Rather, it is likely that what teachers need is a range of techniques (Nation, 2001). The further scope of research may thus be classroom-based research with learners of different ages and levels in order to explore their relationships with the texts may be carried out in order to evaluate the assessment mode on a quantitative basis. Thus, it will facilitate us to lure more definite conclusions on the effects of content-based instruction.

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