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English for Employability :
The Possibilities of Content and Language Integrated Learning (Clil)

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Abstract

This paper attempts to analyse the possibilities of Content and language Integrated Learning and its contributions to enhance the employability skills of learners. The logic lies in the acronym: in delineating that Learning involves the Integration of both Content and Language, CLIL makes explicit the fact that the learning of any content must involve the learning of the language associated with the content. The CLIL lesson has 4Cs objectives under the framework of Content, Cognition, Communication and Culture. The global goal of the CLIL lesson is Communication in informal context. Content and Language Integrated Learning is learning a language through other curricular subjects where the target language is the medium of instruction. It is a dual focused approach in which both the content and the language is learnt simultaneously. CLIL classrooms are not typical language classrooms due to the fact that language is the medium through which content is transported. Content based instruction, Bilingual education, immersion language learning, are some of the terms used interchangeably with CLIL, but CLIL differs from them in the Pedagogical 4C framework, that is Content, Cognition, Communication and Culture. It is a method of respecting one's own culture along with the culture of the target language. This paper attempts to employ the concept of CLIL for enhancing the English language skills in students while learning of other subjects.

It is a commonly accepted notion that teaching a foreign language is a complex one and many approaches and methods were followed in different parts of the world to teach a foreign language in an effective way. This paper attempts to analyse the possibilities of Content and language Integrated Learning and its contributions to enhance the employability skills of learners. The term CLIL was coined by David Marsh, University of Jyvaskyla, Finland in 1994 and according to him "*CLIL refers to situations where subjects, or parts of subjects, are taught through a foreign language with dual-focused aims, namely the learning of content and the simultaneous learning of a foreign language.*" However, CLIL teaching has been practiced for many years, from the Babylonian era to the early sixties when bi-lingual education was introduced in many institutions around the world. The logic lies in the acronym: in delineating that Learning involves the Integration of both Content and Language, CLIL makes explicit the fact that the learning of any content must involve the learning of the language associated with the content. At the level of schooling, successful education in either a first or additional language requires that learners are equipped with the language for thinking about the content. When learning through CLIL, where an additional language is used, language-supportive resources, methods and activities are actively and coherently used to enable learners to use language purposefully.

During the 1970s and 1980s, development of this kind of language teaching model was influenced in particular by the Canadian experiment with immersion teaching. This first began as a result of English-speaking parents living in the province of Quebec who considered that proficiency in French was vital in a French-speaking environment. They thus sought to offer their children an education in this language that would lead them to acquire significant language skills. Programmes for immersion teaching have been enormously successful in Canada. Support from the education authorities and the involvement of parents have undoubtedly been key factors in their success. These projects have given rise to a great deal of interesting research, especially from the teaching perspective. While it has gradually become clear that the Canadian experience is not directly transferable to Europe, it has nevertheless been valuable in stimulating research in this area and encouraging the development of a very wide range of experimental activity. CLIL is the platform for an innovative methodological approach of far broader scope than language teaching. Accordingly, its advocates stress how it seeks to develop proficiency in both the non-language subject and the language in which this is taught, attaching the same importance to each. Furthermore, achieving this twofold aim calls for the development of a special approach to teaching in that the non-language subject is not taught in a foreign language but with and through a foreign language. This implies a more integrated approach to both teaching and learning, requiring that teachers should devote special thought not just to how languages should be taught, but to the educational process in general. CLIL enables languages to be taught on a relatively intensive basis without claiming an excessive share of the school timetable. It is also inspired by important methodological principles established by research on foreign language teaching, such as the need for learners to be exposed to a situation calling for genuine communication.

CLIL assumes that subject teachers are able to exploit opportunities for language learning. The best and most common opportunities arise through reading texts. CLIL draws on the lexical approach, encouraging learners to notice language while reading. The language to be looked at falls into three categories - subject specific, academic and other lexis including fixed expressions and collocations.

Widely advertised as a “dual-focused approach” that gives equal attention to language and content (e.g., Mehisto, Marsh, & Frigols, 2008, p. 9), CLIL can be described as an educational approach where curricular content is taught through the medium of a foreign language, typically to students participating in some form of mainstream education at the primary, secondary, or tertiary level. There are many characteristics that CLIL shares with other types of bilingual education, such as content-based instruction (CBI) and immersion education.

The characteristics of CLIL are as follows. It is about using a foreign language or a lingua franca, not a second language (L2). That is, the language of instruction is one that students will mainly encounter in the classroom, given that it is not regularly used in the wider society they live in. In most of the occasions the dominant CLIL language is English, reflecting the fact that a command of English as an additional language is increasingly regarded as a key literacy feature worldwide. CLIL also implies that teachers will normally be nonnative speakers of the target language. They are not, in most cases, foreign language experts, but instead content experts. CLIL lessons are usually timetabled as content lessons (e.g., biology, music, geography, mechanical engineering), while the target language normally continues as a subject in its own right in the shape of foreign language lessons taught by language specialists

The CLIL lesson has 4Cs objectives under the framework of Content, Cognition, Communication and Culture. The global goal of the CLIL lesson is Communication in informal context. The objectives of the CLIL lesson are as follows:

Content

- To enhance understanding of the types of forests.
- To gain knowledge of the conservation and its need.
- To identify the relationship between forest and wildlife.
- To analyze the after effects of destruction.

Cognition

- To develop an understanding of conservation and its need.
- To predict the effects of destruction of forests.
- To compare the relationship between forests and wildlife.
- To classify the types of forests.
- To create steps to preserve forests.

Communication

- To enhance the ability to describe a picture using the specific semantic vocabulary.
- To develop the ability to elicit questions using modal verbs.
- To enhance the ability to reply in an informal context.
- To hypothesize the effects in composition writing
- To use appropriate punctuation marks in writing.
- To enhance the ability to elicit required answers through appropriate Questions

Culture

- To emphasize the participation as citizen in preserving the natural resources.

The pace of debate on education and languages has only increased, and growing interest in CLIL (content and language integrated learning) approaches continues to raise new questions for researchers, teachers, policy makers, and learners—indeed, society at large—about the needs for, and challenges of, integrating content and additional (or even first) languages in the classroom and beyond. Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is the recent development in language teaching. It is teaching a curricular subject through a language other than the mother tongue. CLIL method is used for teaching a second or a foreign language. English is learnt as a second language in India. Many studies have brought out that language learning is possible through technology integrated CLIL method in the Indian context.

Language learning is at the heart of learning process in today's educational context. It demands creativity and it is very much dependant on the cultural learning. Information and communication technologies across the globe have induced the learning of other languages other than the mother tongue for global communication. Mastering the grammar rules alone cannot ensure optimal learning. A language in use along with the learning in meaningful contexts is the requirement of today. The learners are exposed to wide range of resources through ICT, the classroom learning has to overcome these hurdles and provide rich learning environment with a tendency to bring the maximum output in the skill development of the learners in this ever changing global scenario. Though we are in the crossroads of achieving English language literacy, still we have to put extra efforts in order to produce better results. In this context CLIL- Content and Language Integrated Learning can contribute immensely to India as it is a multicultural and a multilingual country. A citizen of India has to have a link language to communicate with his/her fellow citizens, though Hindi is the National Language of India there still exists some significant amount of population who do not know this Language. In this context the language barrier to communication is reduced by learning English. Learning this can give two benefits to a person that is he/she can communicate within his/her country and across the globe. Content and Language Integrated Learning is learning a language through other curricular subjects where the target language is the medium of instruction. It is a dual focused approach in which both the content and the language is learnt simultaneously. CLIL classrooms are not typical language classrooms due to the fact that language is the medium through which content is transported. Content based instruction, Bilingual education, immersion language learning, are some of the terms used interchangeably with CLIL, but CLIL differs from them in the Pedagogical 4C framework, that is Content, Cognition, Communication and Culture. It is a method of respecting one's own culture along with the culture of the target language. CLIL models and pedagogies are initially based on the very same principles as are communicative language teaching and task-based learning. It is in this assumption; the paper attempts to employ the concept of CLIL for enhancing the English language skills in students while learning of other subjects.