

Lecture 12 ROLE OF CLIL IN FLT

The plan:

The advantages of CLIL

CLIL in the classroom

The future of CLIL

Content and Language Integrated Learning

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) has become the umbrella term describing both learning another (content) subject such as physics or geography through the medium of a foreign language and learning a foreign language by studying a content-based subject.

Content and Language Integrated Learning - methodology article

In ELT, forms of CLIL have previously been known as 'Content-based instruction', 'English across the curriculum' and 'Bilingual education'.

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is an innovative approach in language education that combines the learning of a subject with the acquisition of a foreign language. It allows students to study content from various subjects—such as science, history, or geography—while simultaneously improving their language skills. CLIL is widely used in modern classrooms because it encourages meaningful communication, enhances motivation, and promotes the practical use of a foreign language in real-life contexts. To encourage learners to use CLIL in the classroom, teachers can create authentic, interactive, and student-centered activities. For example, presenting tasks that require students to research a topic, discuss it in the target language, and present their findings motivates them to apply both subject knowledge and language skills. Incorporating multimedia resources, collaborative projects, and problem-solving tasks also engages students and stimulates active use of the language while learning content.

1.*Project-Based Learning (PBL): Students work on a project related to a subject topic, conducting research, preparing presentations, and producing reports in the target language. This technique integrates language practice with critical thinking and problem-solving.

2. Task-Based Learning (TBL): Teachers design tasks that mirror real-life activities, such as conducting experiments, analyzing data, or preparing a historical timeline. Learners use the foreign language as a tool to complete these tasks, ensuring that language learning is functional and context-based.

CLIL is used in language teaching because it fosters both content mastery and language proficiency simultaneously. Unlike traditional language teaching, which focuses primarily on grammar and vocabulary, CLIL encourages students to develop

communication skills, critical thinking, and subject knowledge in meaningful contexts. It also prepares learners for academic and professional settings where using a foreign language is essential.

CLIL is important because it enhances motivation by connecting language learning to real-world content. It helps students develop a deeper understanding of subject matter while practicing language skills in authentic contexts. Moreover, it promotes cognitive flexibility, intercultural competence, and autonomy in learning, which are essential skills in today's globalized world.

CLIL works by integrating language and content instruction through careful planning and scaffolding. Teachers select content topics suitable for the learners' language level, introduce key vocabulary, and provide language support as students engage in content-based tasks. Interaction, collaboration, and meaningful communication are central to CLIL, allowing learners to acquire language naturally while focusing on understanding and applying subject knowledge.

In conclusion, CLIL is a dynamic and effective approach that bridges language learning and subject knowledge. By stimulating learners to actively use the foreign language, employing project-based and task-based techniques, and connecting language to real-life contexts, CLIL enhances both language proficiency and cognitive skills. Its importance lies in fostering motivation, autonomy, and practical language use, making it a valuable methodology in modern language teaching.

With the expansion of the European Union, diversity of language and the need for communication are seen as central issues.

- Even with English as the main language, other languages are unlikely to disappear. Some countries have strong views regarding the use of other languages within their borders.
- With increased contact between countries, there will be an increase in the need for communicative skills in a second or third language.
- Languages will play a key role in curricula across Europe. Attention needs to be given to the training of teachers and the development of frameworks and methods which will improve the quality of language education
- The European Commission has been looking into the state of bilingualism and language education since the 1990s, and has a clear vision of a multilingual Europe in which people can function in two or three languages.

How does CLIL work?

The basis of CLIL is that content subjects are taught and learnt in a language which is not the mother tongue of the learners.

- Knowledge of the language becomes the means of learning content
- Language is integrated into the broad curriculum
- Learning is improved through increased motivation and the study of natural language seen in context. When learners are interested in a topic they are motivated to acquire language to communicate
- CLIL is based on language acquisition rather than enforced learning

➤ Language is seen in real-life situations in which students can acquire the language. This is natural language development which builds on other forms of learning

➤ CLIL is long-term learning. Students become academically proficient in English after 5-7 years in a good bilingual programme

➤ Fluency is more important than accuracy and errors are a natural part of language learning. Learners develop fluency in English by using English to communicate for a variety of purposes

➤ Reading is the essential skill.

The advantages of CLIL

CLIL helps to:

➤ Introduce the wider cultural context

➤ Prepare for internationalisation

➤ Access International Certification and enhance the school profile

➤ Improve overall and specific language competence

➤ Prepare for future studies and / or working life

➤ Develop multilingual interests and attitudes

➤ Diversify methods & forms of classroom teaching and learning

➤ Increase learner motivation.

CLIL in the classroom

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. Here is a paragraph from a text on fashion:

The miniskirt is a skirt whose hemline is high above the knees (generally 200-300 mm above knee-level). Its existence is generally credited to the fashion designer Mary Quant, who was inspired by the Mini Cooper automobile, although André Courrèges is also often cited as its inventor, and there is disagreement as to who invented it first.

The language to be looked at in a passage like this falls into three categories - subject specific, academic and other lexis including fixed expressions and collocations:

Subject specific	Academic	Other language
miniskirt	credited	above the knee(s)
hemline	designer	credited to
knee-level	cited	inspired by
fashion designer	invented	cited as
		disagreement as to

- The treatment of this lexis has the following features:
- Noticing of the language by the learners
- Focus on lexis rather than grammar
- Focus on language related to the subject. Level and grading are unimportant
- Pre-, while- and post-reading tasks are as appropriate in the subject context as in the language context.

The future of CLIL

There is no doubt that learning a language and learning through a language are concurrent processes, but implementing CLIL requires a rethink of the traditional concepts of the language classroom and the language teacher. The immediate obstacles seem to be:

- Opposition to language teaching by subject teachers may come from language teachers themselves. Subject teachers may be unwilling to take on the responsibility.
- Most current CLIL programmes are experimental. There are few sound research-based empirical studies, while CLIL-type bilingual programmes are mainly seen to be marketable products in the private sector.
- CLIL is based on language acquisition, but in monolingual situations, a good deal of conscious learning is involved, demanding skills from the subject teacher.
- The lack of CLIL teacher-training programmes suggests that the majority of teachers working on bilingual programmes may be ill-equipped to do the job adequately.
- There is little evidence to suggest that understanding of content is not reduced by lack of language competence. Current opinion seems to be that language ability can only be increased by content-based learning after a certain stage.
- Some aspects of CLIL are unnatural; such as the appreciation of the literature and culture of the learner's own country through a second language.

Until CLIL training for teachers and materials issues are resolved, the immediate future remains with parallel rather than integrated content and language learning. However, the need for language teaching reform in the face of Europeanisation may make CLIL a common feature of many European education systems in the future.

Where is CLIL happening?

CLIL has precedents in immersion programmes (North America) and education through a minority or a national language (Spain, Wales, France), and many variations on education through a 'foreign' language. Euro-funded projects show that CLIL or similar systems are being applied in some countries, but are not part of teacher-training programmes. There has been an increase in the number of schools offering 'alternative' bilingual curricula, and some research into training and methodology. Several major

European organisations specialising in CLIL projects have emerged, including UNICOM, EuroCLIC and TIE-CLIL.

In the UK the incentive comes from the Content and Language Integration Project (CLIP) hosted by CILT, (the National Centre for Languages) which is the UK government's centre of expertise on languages. CILT monitors a number of projects covering the 7-16 age range and involving innovations in language teaching such as the integration of French into the primary curriculum. Other research is based at the University of Nottingham, while teacher training and development courses in CLIL are available through NILE (the Norwich Institute for Language Education).

Questions for discussion

1. What is the most important benefit of CLIL in FLT? Why do you think so?
2. How will you stimulate learners to use CLIL in the classroom?
3. Describe 2 techniques of using CLIL in language teaching.
4. Why it is used in language teaching
5. Why is CLIL important?
6. How does CLIL work?