

The Implementation Of Clil At Uzbek Secondary Schools As An Educational Approach

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OPEN ACCESS

**The American Journal of
Social Science And
Education Innovations**

JULY 2020

Page No.: 163-169

Volume-II Issue-VII

PUBLISHED: 30 JULY 2020

www.usajournalshub.com/index.php/tajssei

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Abstract

The article looks at the definition of CLIL as an innovative approach in teaching as well as its aims. Most importantly, it examines potentials and challenges of CLIL in implementing at Uzbek secondary schools and caters for some guidelines to organize a successful CLIL lesson in classroom. CLIL is being seen more and more as an alternative to ELT (English Language Teaching), leaving many teachers wondering exactly what CLIL is and whether they should adopt it. We will invite language educators to consider ways to improve not only pupils' language competency and also their subject knowledge in CLIL education in order to promote a motivational classroom atmosphere whose results will be of considerable importance for both their study in Higher Education and future working life.

Keywords: CLIL, foreign language, approach, secondary school, implementation of CLIL, 4 Cs.

Introduction

These days the importance of English is increasing and it is turning into a global language around the world whereas teaching it as a foreign language is becoming more and more monotonous since it is taught beginning from primary school to high school in regular classroom environment. For this reason language teachers should hit upon some approach that can expose their learners to new challenges. It should be noted that CLIL could be a good solution to this issue and by using its methodology children are encouraged to learn the language without any awareness of it. In fact, CLIL is the term used to describe a methodological approach in which foreign language tuition is integrated within subject teaching. This is not a new approach in Europe - it has been practiced for about three decades but the term was first officially used in the 1990s. The 2006 EURYDICE publication "Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) at schools in Europe" showed that CLIL programmes had been started in most EU member countries both at primary and secondary levels and as part of mainstream school education or within pilot projects. With CLIL method, pupils have the chance to learn subject context and improve their language competences simultaneously. Based on this, most countries have begun to apply this approach mostly in secondary schools and the learners do not necessarily need to be proficient in English to cope with the non-language subject (Graddol, 2006: 86). According to some studies, if it is properly implemented, its benefits are manifold. It can contribute to improving students' language skills and subject knowledge, but also promote multiculturalism, intercultural knowledge and understanding. It also fosters the development of diverse learning strategies and the application of innovative teaching methods and techniques. Moreover, content related instruction seems to facilitate students' cognitive development and learning in general. However, albeit above potentials, the implementation of CLIL has not become part of school curriculum in Uzbekistan so far. Several pilot projects has been adapting in some private language teaching centers for almost a decade and found the result effective which led to most Uzbek EFL teachers being interested in implementing this innovative approach in their language classrooms.

Definitions of CLIL

CLIL stands for Content and Language Integrated Learning and was coined in 1994 by David Marsh and Anne Maljers as a methodology. This term is defined by Coyle, Hood, Marsh (2010), that is a dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the teaching and learning of both content and the language. That is, in the teaching and learning process there is a focus not only on content and not only on language. Each is interwoven, even if the emphasis is greater on one or the other at a given time. CLIL can integrate linguistic and factual features by using a foreign or second language as a tool in order to study the content. In other words, CLIL is an approach to teaching and learning in which school subjects are taught and studied in a second (foreign) language. In CLIL "A foreign language is used as a tool in the learning of a non-language subject in which both language and the subject have a joint role" (Marsh 2002). So CLIL is different from foreign language teaching, as in CLIL a foreign language is the vehicle for a form of subject-based teaching. While language and subject learning are both the aims of CLIL, the main focus of teaching is the subject, not the language.

Aims of CLIL

It is widely believed that CLIL focuses on enhancing both students' knowledge in a certain subject and their skills in the language through which the subject is taught. In this case the language functions as a tool to learn subject content while subject content is taught as base for learning the language. The main aims of CLIL can be seen in the following:

- Developing oral communication skills in meaningful and significant social situations;
- Improving not only students' competence in the target language, but also inculcate a positive attitude to other languages and cultures;
- Bringing real-life situations into the classroom;
- Gaining a better knowledge of subjects;
- Enhancing learner concentration, problem-solving, motivation, collaborative learning;
- Preparing for further studies and life-long learning;

- Achieving higher educational standards.

At Uzbek secondary schools

These days there is an argument among educators whether it is possible to implement CLIL at Uzbek secondary schools. It has already begun in some private educational sectors such as language learning centers. However, majority of Uzbek pupils go to public schools. It is true that pupils at public school begin learning English classes from the first grade till eleventh grade. While they can have the opportunity to acquire communicative language in English during this long period, they are encountering some problems in Higher Education. One of the challenges they are facing is related to the academic language of the field they have chosen in Higher Education. Admittedly, they acquire the basic knowledge of the chosen field in their first language, but they need to study foreign sources in order to be a good specialist. The English language they learned at school is not enough to explore scientific concepts since they do not know key content vocabulary in foreign language. Also, there is another increasing concern that most schoolchildren are losing their motivation to learn English to some extent as they have to study it for 11 years in a regular pattern. For both of the issues CLIL can be an effective solution. Certainly, using CLIL methodology needs permission for its introduction in public schools by Ministry of Education. We would recommend that science through English should be established to secondary school curriculum as this will have profound implications on education quality. The potentials of science teaching through CLIL approach can be seen in:

- increasing learner motivation
- preparing for future studies and/ or working life
- developing multilingual interests and attitudes
- introducing the wider cultural context
- improving overall and specific language competence
- assessing International Certification and enhancing school profile
- diversifying methods and forms of teaching and learning language

As we see above, CLIL can meet learners' needs for language learning language and content simultaneously. It can contribute to improving students' language skills and subject knowledge, but also promote multiculturalism, intercultural knowledge and understanding. It also fosters the development of diverse learning strategies and the application of innovative teaching methods and techniques. Moreover, content related instruction seems to facilitate students' cognitive development and learning in general. Despite these potentials, CLIL has not been part of Uzbek mainstream primary education yet, except for a few pilot bilingual education programmes carried out so far, for introducing CLIL into Uzbek secondary schools poses a number of problems such as:

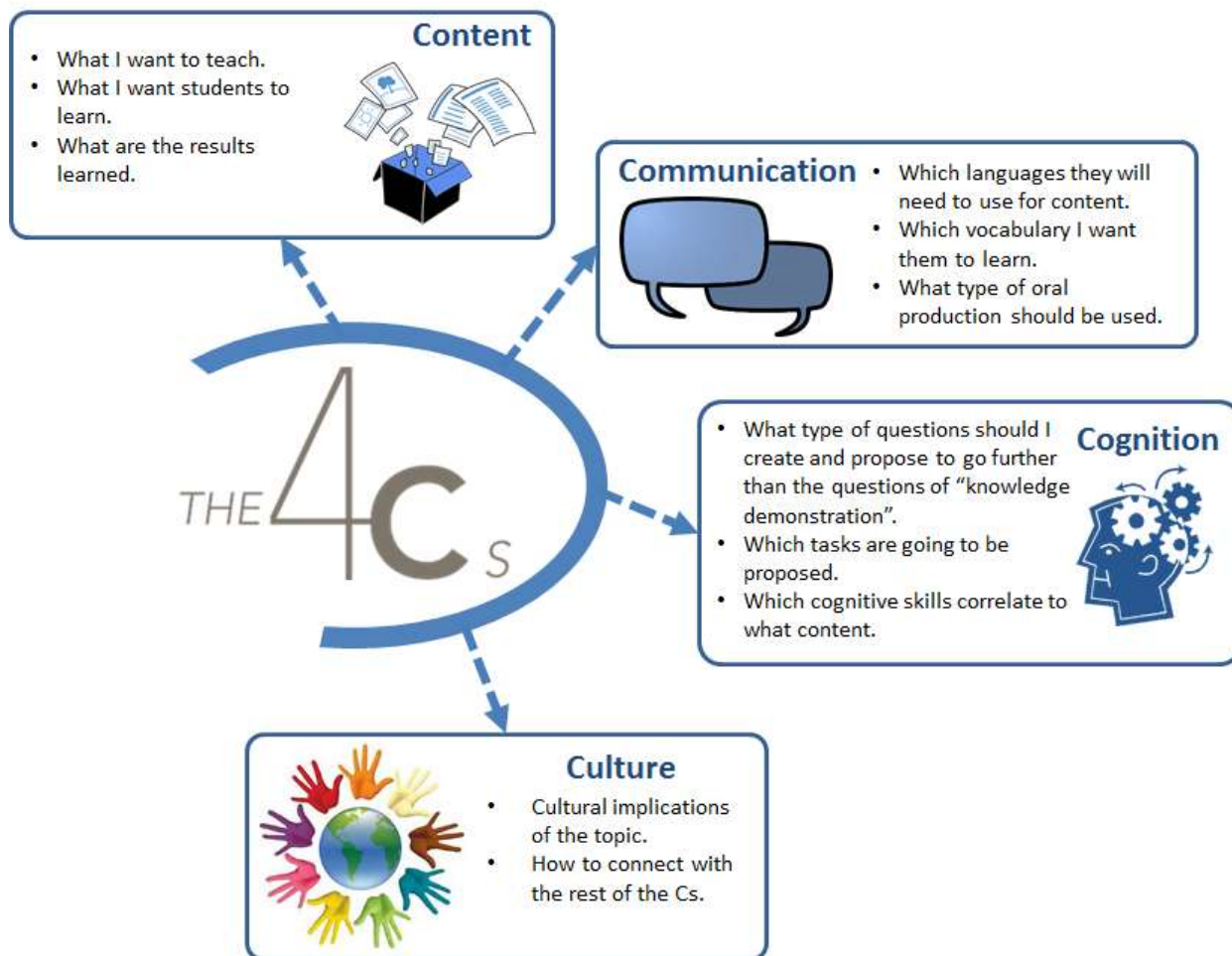
- lack of teachers who can teach CLIL lessons
- relative lack of a national center of expertise in teaching subject through an additional language in the country's teacher education community, owned by subject teacher trainers – not language specialists – which would ensure that all relevant subject teacher preparation would be based on language-supportive pedagogy.
- incorporating development of both students' subject and language
- selecting and adapting materials to meet the specific teaching context
- designing activities to meet the CLIL purposes

These challenges can be dealt with based on experience in other educational systems. Yet, it seems to be a long way to its implementation, but when we look deeper in the practice in Uzbekistan we can realize that this approach is not entirely new. Some topics from other subjects are also covered in English classes. Shapes, domestic/wild animals, food we get from domestic animals, historical events, simple mathematics, etc. are often found in textbooks for language learners.

A successful CLIL lesson

A CLIL lesson is not a language lesson neither is it a subject lesson transmitted in a foreign language (Ćirković -Miladinović, 2007). Considering the relative lack of teacher training programmes and obvious sources of materials, there is an understandable concern over what actually happens in a CLIL classroom. In fact, the underlying principles

of cross-curricular teaching can be found in the 4Cs curriculum (content, communication, cognition and culture) (Coyle, Hood & Marsh, 2010) which stated that a successful CLIL lesson should combine elements of the following four principles:



The 4Cs Framework is a theoretical framework that can contribute to maintaining the balance between the language and the content. Coyle, Hood & Marsh (2010) argue that proper integration of content learning and language learning in a specific context results in effective CLIL through:

- progression in knowledge, skills and understanding of the content;
- engagement in associated cognitive processing;
- interaction in the communicative context;
- development of appropriate language knowledge and skills;

- the acquisition of a deepening intercultural awareness, which is in turn brought about by the positioning of self and 'otherness'.

Conclusion

In brief, teachers in Uzbekistan need to adapt the integration of language and content to their own needs and circumstances. Language teachers, and non-language teachers, can and should work in collaboration to decide on subject areas, themes and topics that can be performed in English and set goals and objectives according to their particular situation. CLIL can be seen as an educational approach which supports linguistic diversity, and a powerful tool that can have a strong impact on language learning in the future. As such, it deserves space even in state schools in Uzbekistan.

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