

How to Cite:

Shirley Abisak Iswarya, D., & Sundarsingh, J. (2022). CLIL for the undergraduate students of engineering in teaching business English. *International Journal of Health Sciences*, 6(S2), 11171–11177. <https://doi.org/10.53730/ijhs.v6nS2.8014>

CLIL for the undergraduate students of engineering in teaching business English

Shirley Abisak Iswarya D

Research Scholar, Department of English, School of Science, Arts, Media and Management Karunya Institute of Technology and Sciences, Coimbatore, Tamilnadu, India

Corresponding author email: shirleyiswarya@gmail.com

Sundarsingh J

Former Professor, Department of English, School of Science, Arts, Media and Management Karunya Institute of Technology and Sciences, Coimbatore, Tamilnadu, India

Email: sundarsinghj@gmail.com

Abstract--The present study is an experiment on the effectiveness of CLIL methodology for teaching Business English to undergraduate students. The experimental classroom adopted CLIL learning strategy at tertiary level so as to enable the learners to achieve proficiency in both subject knowledge and communication skills simultaneously. The aim is to facilitate the learners' global carrier opportunities and internationalized higher studies gateways which can be achieved by concentrating on the content specific knowledge and communicative competency. A group of 60 students are taken into consideration and divided into two groups as control group and experimental group. The experimental group students are taught with CLIL methodology and the speaking skill of the learners are assessed after the periodical 5 hours of teaching. The speaking skills of both the groups were assessed based on their language production. It is found that CLIL students showed more interest in learning the subject and had an improved language style, fluency and high deliverance potential along with confidence.

Keywords--CLIL, tertiary level, speaking skills, language acquisition, communicative competency.

Introduction

Content and language integrated learning is a dual- focused learning in which teaching and learning of both the content and language happens invariably. English is a globalized language; the importance of the English language is highly increasing at this present 21st century learning. This century learning skill requirements meets with the objectives of CLIL. CLIL is all about using English as a medium of instruction and performance in this internationalized scenario. The language needs are of high requirement all over the world despite the various courses and subject matter. The job providers from various parts of the world expect enhanced subject knowledge and language to work with the institutions and sectors. CLIL has been evolved from various methodologies like bilingual, content- based instruction, immersion etc. CLIL helps in developing better language learning strategies and to focus upon the subject matter and the context. English as a mode of communication at a very global market is the need of an hour. CLIL aims at inculcating the learners with subject knowledge (content) and communication competence (language) at various levels of learning and teaching. Some common benefits of CLIL are improving high levels of communication in the learners and also developing the language competence of them in the way of oral and written production. The results showed that the learners were able to be found comfortable in the learning environment stress free and motivated to learn the language as it focused on the context and language production in terms of communication (Heras, Lasagahaster, 2015). Learners of CLIL learn the language with the help of various subject, it is to their benefit and increased outcomes the language is taught with their course book wherein they learn the subject and the language effectively.

Functions of 4c Model

Coyle designed a 4Cs framework especially for CLIL on 1999 to set the strands of the methodology, which indeed satisfies the learning focus of 21st century. The 4Cs framework focuses on the content (subject knowledge), communication (language proficiency), cognition (thinking ability) and culture (awareness about ideas, customs, people and society).

The 4Cs functions on developing the subject knowledge and intensifies the skill to activate a better understanding of the content with the help of cognitive processing thereby enhancing the proficiency of the language along with cultural awareness (Coyle, 2010). Culture is understood holistic while exercising the content, communication and cognition. This model forms as a basis in teaching, designing and analysing the language acquired with the help of Content and Language Integrated Learning.

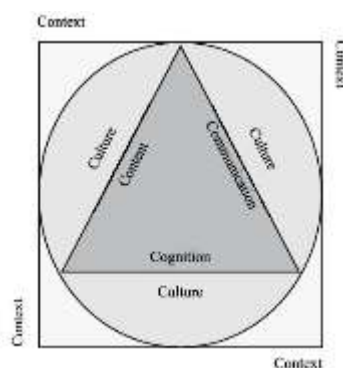


Fig 1. The 4C model by Coyle (Coyle, 2007)

Research background

The target group students were chosen from different regions of the country with multilingual background. English has been taught as a subject and not as a language which is essential for communicative purpose and hence the students of rural mediums finds it difficult communicating in English. The learners at various stages of academic learning finds arduous to communicate in professional English. Indeed, it is a global phenomenon that innovation and language skills are utmost necessary to compete with the career challenges of the world. To make the learners meet the global standards of communication in all aspects, CLIL acts as fastest way of developing the language skills at required levels. CLIL also develops the self-confidence in the frontline learners of second language acquisition with enthusiasm to understand and produce the language at very now (Klimova,2012).CLIL meets the needs of learners accurately and paves way for the learners to acquire the content which is pertaining to their syllabus along with enhanced language proficiency at a minimal period of time. In learning the language through CLIL, the knowledge as well as the language acquisition takes place in which it is more of imbibing the language with the help of the four basic skills of learning. Learners become speakers of the target language with fluency, but accuracy in speaking is achieved in a timely basis of continuity.

Aim

This research is an attempt to enhance the speaking skills of the learners at tertiary level by adopting CLIL approach and equipping them to meet the internationalized standards. It is to study the effectiveness of CLIL methodology on tertiary level students in learning business English.

Study Context and Participants

The specialty of CLIL is that it can be performed with any disciplinary learners in teaching the subject matter and the language hand in hand. The methodology was performed with the group of 60 engineering students in teaching business English. The engineering students are of undergraduate level and belong to their first year of studies. The participants were taught business English by implementing CLIL methodology and assessed based on the following categories:

Vocabulary, grammar, content, discourse and language style. On the observation, the data was collected as control and experimental group and later examined.

Methodology

A ground 60 respondents were taken from first year engineering program for the experiment. The course was given to experimental group through CLIL methodology while the control group was taught using tradition method. After 5 hours of teaching the students through traditional and CLIL methodology an assessment was made to measure the potential of the learners. The samples were taken from the mix of students belonging to both English medium and vernacular medium. The evaluation was based on five categories: vocabulary, grammar, content, discourse and language style. The analysis was made depending on the marks given for every individual student on the basis of all the five categories as per mentioned. The analysis based on the data showed an improved performance level of the CLIL students.

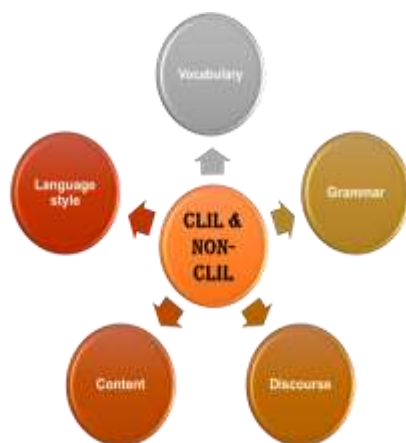


Fig 1. The Five major Criteria of assessment

Experiment and Procedure

To assess the study, five broad categories were framed and tested among the two different groups. The learners were taught Business English course offered by Cambridge at B1 and B2 levels. Learners were to perform individual and collaborative task in business context wherein they were asked to express their own opinions on the business related topics. The range of marks given to them scaled from 0-10 on each category and the results are drawn for the control and experimental group learners.

Grammar was acquired implicitly in learning with CLIL methodology and errors occurred as if in any other condition but can be overcome with a period of time. Quite a lot of inputs on grammar in the language were understandable by the learners as the task itself was structured with tools that kindled cognitive aspect of the learners to acquire grammar in the implicit manner. In CLIL, the learners acquired grammar through language skill and not by traditional way of teaching-learning process that focuses on the rules of grammar. Here, the learners of

experimental group were able to produce cohesive grammar suitable for the content and conveyed the idea with minimal complications. The experimental group learner's performance was better in comparison with the control group.

When acquiring language through CLIL, the range of vocabulary learnt and the fluency factor of the learners were found to be developing as the task designed are of expressing personal opinion. The business topics were given in form of bulletin, prompt material or in form of pictures to keep the learners not to be deviated from the logic and the idea of the task that has to be achieved. (Korpela, 2013) Through CLIL, the learners achieved fluency in comprehending the subject matter and delivering it rapidly with the help of cognitive ability achieved while performing with the particular methodology. The learners developed unconscious learning under the circumstance of incidental environment so they were able to produce variety of sentence structure that met high standards (Rohrmeier and Rebuschat, 2012)

A discourse is a unit of sentence occurring in a connected speech or writing in order to merge the ideas or thoughts of the speaker. The task given for the learners to prepare and perform in a minute or two made their ideas to flow in connected manner which in turn invariably produced cohesive devices and coherence. The learners were assessed based on the use of discourse makers at a suitable range and the marks were awarded.

Content is developmental when it comes under the methodology of CLIL, it has the relation to cognition, communication and culture. Knowledge is divided into four categories: factual (the rudiments of understanding the concepts), conceptual (the ideas or concepts that flow), procedural (the process to make things work on with required skills) and meta cognitive (cognitive operation to have control over the learning) (Anderson, Krathwohl et al., 2001). All these components constitute, knowledge and content learning objective, which develops all the necessary skills and knowledge required for the learners to be thoroughly equipped. Language and content are acquired through CLIL with the help of LSRW skills, the task designed for the learners initiated them to perform competency oriented and content oriented. The learners moved more appropriate with the ideal concept and its relativity because the focus on teaching the content was highlighted throughout the process of teaching-learning.

Language is a tool for communication and the language style of an individual varies as the language keeps growing in the society. Uninterrupted language fluency was developed by CLIL methodology, in which the thought process of the learners became fast and spontaneous in course of period but in time accuracy was also developed. The learners communicated with language knowing the speaking context.

The Table 1 below presents the assessment guideline followed for assessing the respondents

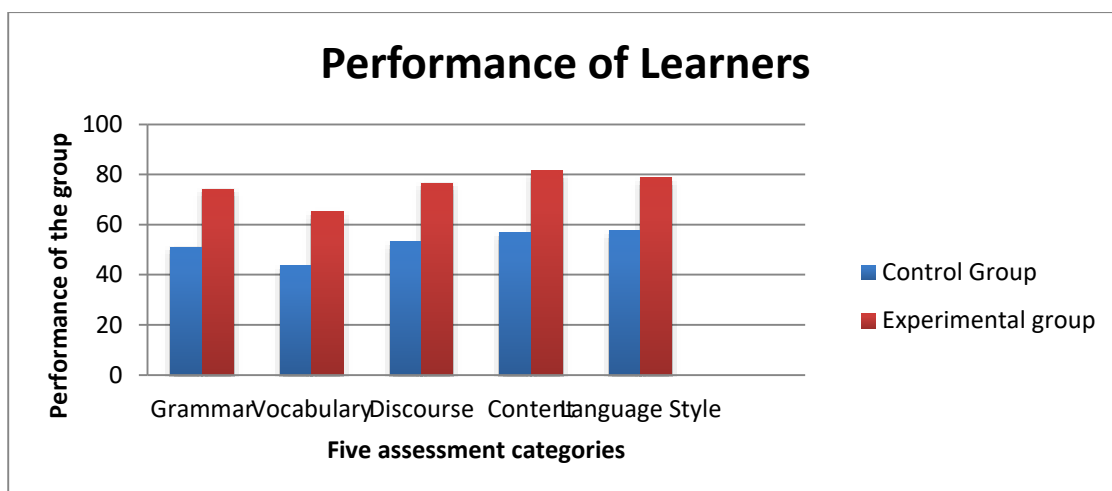
Assessment Categories	Elements considered for evaluating the CLIL and Non- CLIL learners on Pre and Post test
Grammar	Analysed based on use of tenses and complexity in structuring

	the sentence with conceptual understanding
Vocabulary	The use of appropriate words and terms in business context and in suitable environment of the sentence
Discourse	Type of discourse markers and connectors to make the sentence invariably logical and cohesive
Content	Efficient relevancy of the content produced according to the topic provided
Language Style	The effective fluency on communication rather than accuracy and the style in deliverance of the language.

Table 1. Evaluation Criteria for assessment in speaking skill

Results and Discussion

The learners were able to understand the task and performed as the graph shown:



Graph 1. Shows the performance of the two groups in assessing speaking skills

Based on the collected data, the analysis shows an increasing and a positive performance of the CLIL learners in comparison with control group. The use of language and the communicative competency of the learners were enhanced after the Post- test and reflected in the results collected. The learners showed interest in learning the subject at ease and gained confidence over the language, the individuality of the learners and their personal opinions were strongly made without being deviated from the relevant topic. The learners of control group remained stagnant in their performance and assessed with their personal abilities whereas the learners of experimental group were taught in CLIL methodology giving emphasis to assess the speaking skills. The findings of the study, states that CLIL learners showed improved results in communicating the subject matter and the language acquired in the process of learning. The learners of CLIL also found to have strong command over the language with enriched content and deliverance ability. Content acquisition reflected in the language produced with enhanced communicative competency.

Conclusion

The present study shows that the students of experimental group (CLIL) outperformed the learners in the control group (Non-CLIL). Both the groups were assessed based on the similar criteria and the materials recommended. The learners of experimental group showed a notable improvement in their performance in the speaking skills with enhanced ability of language competency, use of versatile language style suitable for expressing the subject knowledge, fluency in communicative competency and contextualized use of grammar depending on the content and developed self-confidence.

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