



## CONTENT AND LANGUAGE INTEGRATED LEARNING (CLIL): A TOOL FOR PROMOTING THINKING SKILLS

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### ABSTRACT

In the present system of education Content Based Language (CBL) has emerged as a new trend in improving the learners' thinking skill. It is used as a tool for promotion of the versatile abilities (multi-faceted abilities) of the learner. It is also a version of bilingual education and subject-based teaching which simultaneously teaches the language required for the school learning. The present paper focuses on content and language integrated learning and the language across the curriculum language learning. As Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is an emerging trend in teaching English language it provides a springboard for innovative pedagogy as the teachers' attempt to understand and develop the principles and practices for linking English language learning with the curriculum.

**Keywords:** *Content Based Language, Second Language Learning, Content and Language Integrated Learning, Task-based Learning, Curriculum Development.*

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There are many associations and organizations offering Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) providing opportunity to use language as a tool for Second Language (L2) Learning rather than Target language texts. At this juncture a few linguists like Marsh and Lange give heavy focus on CLIL arguing the ability and capability of its importance of form and content. While stressing the need of CLIL, Marach Lange opines,

The fact that CLIL offers the opportunity to use language 'as a tool' for L2 learning,

rather than act as the actual target of the learning context, can be seen as one of its most promising characteristics (1999:14).'

This proposal acquires the name that the promising characteristics of internationalization of the language. There are so many approaches towards CLIL basing on its level of intensity. One among them is constructivist approach. It provides rationale for CLIL because it is holistically oriented and meaning based. Generally holistic approaches allow students to see how the parts fit into the whole right from the



start. In this approach students' participation is active and incorporates a learning centered process. It also increases potential for taking account of different learning styles and multiple intelligences which helps to uncover learners' talent and potential. It leads to improve the self sustainability, collective responsibility, interpersonal skills (develop independence and interdependence and self-sufficiency and collective consciousness) in students through the use of individual, group or pair work.

It is quite natural that at the primary level there is still a need of published materials available to teachers, though there are course books are widely available. ELT course books provide a lot of information regarding CLIL. As per my observations on International Course books they provide topics such as Food, Animals and so on. A primary ELT course books such exceed and others introduce topics such as the Five Senses, My Family. Here what I observe is that these topics are not new in depth in terms of learning and providing grammatical continuity at the expense of content continuity. It helps in emphasizing on thinking skills or learning strategies. A major problem observed by the linguists with CLIL at the primary level is that there is a scarcity of published teaching materials to the teachers as against to the English Language Teaching course books which provide bulk of resources on language teaching.

Hong Kong English Language Curriculum Guide (2003) focuses highlighting thinking skills and learning strategies as its main focus is on the processes of language and learning. They provide key learning areas like critical thinking, classifying and organization of information, understanding deductions and logical conclusions. Increasing recognition of the importance of these kinds of skills and strategies has led to their inclusion in other primary curricula of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. It is interesting to note how far language curricula are beginning to reflect content curricula. I would like to place a few points which I observed in certain text books.

- i. These books use previous knowledge of the word with visual or textual clues
- ii. These books observe, compare, contract and classify the resources
- iii. These books follow sequence and offer priority-based information
- iv. These books record and interpret information by understanding cause and effect
- v. At the end they draw conclusions and communicating results

Tasks in CLIL promote the use of a range of linguistic and cognitive processes, much of which is transferable across subjects/topics and even from the L2 to the L1. Task-based learning (TBL) is recognized as a key construct where tasks are defined as, 'purposeful and contextualized activities which draw together a range of elements in their framework of knowledge and skills to fulfill the task set. Naturally, without well-designed materials and teachers well-trained in this kind of approach, it is always difficult to match practice with rhetoric.

My own view of tasks for CLIL is that they will work well if they tend to have the following characteristics:

- i. The focus is on language for thinking and school learning.
- ii. There is no emphasis on a presentation, practice and production of stages.
- iii. A Task Based Learning approach presents a scenario holistically and systematically works backwards through its components parts.
- iv. These tasks draw on a range of integrated skills, with numerous opportunities for listening, speaking, reading and writing. These skills are carefully sequenced to provide task continuity.
- v. Language processes include providing evidence of learning such as meticulous listening or reading to label diagrams or underline key words, speaking and writing to produce models or a quiz.



- vi. Thinking process includes those such as predicating, making and checking hypotheses, matching causes and their effects.
- vii. There has been a careful analysis of the linguistic and cognitive demands of the tasks.
- viii. The skills work is supported by clearly focused and contextualized activities which support the development of language and thinking process.

### CONCLUSION

In India, the teaching of English to the primary learners begins at an earlier stage of 3 or 4 years with LKG and UKG. A major pedagogic issue will be in this regard is how to keep students motivated and challenged by their learning, especially if the linguistic content of their learning remains basically critical to them. Teachers, curriculum planners, materials writers and teacher educators need to work together to find the right content and tasks which provide suitable levels of motivation, challenge together with appropriate forms of scaffolding or support to allow such challenges to be properly encountered. In this way the implementation of curriculum targets will be reached with fruitful results.

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