

Lecture 1: Content-Based Instruction (CBI: 1980s) and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL: 1990s)

Introduction

Content-Based Instruction (CBI) and its new version Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is an approach that uses the foreign or second language as a medium of instruction (e.g. English as a Medium of Instruction/EMI), and as the vehicle through which subject matter content is learned (e.g. science, geography, history, economics, biology). Content-based Instruction (CBI) emerged in the mid-1980s deriving its origins from immersion education and the Canadian Immersion Movement. CBI has three distinguishable versions:

- 1-The first version is the Canadian School where the whole of the children's schooling experience is taught in the target language.
- 2-The second version is American and there are coexisting models CBI such as the sheltered model, where only a few subjects are taught in L2 at initial stages (such as Math and Science) while others are still taught in L1. Other models, such as the pullout model, have students taking most subjects in L2.
- 3-The third version is the European Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) movement where some subjects are taught in L1 while others are taught in L2.

1. Definition and Characteristics of Content-Based Instruction (CBI)

Leaver and Stryker (1989) claimed that CBI is an instructional approach in which "language proficiency is achieved by shifting the focus of the course from the learning of language per se to the learning of subject matter". Stoller defined CBI as "an umbrella term referring to instructional approaches that make a dual, though not necessarily equal, commitment to language and content-learning objectives" (2008, p. 59). CBI is based on the idea that people learn languages more successfully when they engage in meaningful communicative activities and when the information they are acquiring is seen as interesting, useful, and leading to a desired objective (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). CBI also addresses students' academic needs and builds upon the learners'

previous experience, connecting it to the new information they receive (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). It involves learning by doing, something which implies the assumption of the student as an active participant. CBI seeks to develop language proficiency as well as the mastery of subject matter, critical thinking, and other cognitive skills. The teacher's responsibilities are no less demanding: instructors must not only master the foreign or second language, but must also be knowledgeable in the subject matter.

2. Learning Theories Underlying Content-Based Instruction (CBI)

CBI draws on a set of language teaching approaches or educational initiatives:

1-The natural methods tradition, particularly the Direct Method, where the target language is used as the exclusive means of instruction, and the Natural Approach, which emphasises the same implicit teaching and learning techniques as CBI.

2-Communicative Language Teaching: the same holistic, global, and experiential techniques.

3-Language across the Curriculum: this proposal for language education was put forth by British authorities in the 1970s. It recommended a focus on reading and writing in all subject areas in the curriculum, and not only in the subject called language arts. It laid great emphasis on the teaching of the L1 across the diverse curricular subjects.

4-Language for Specific Purposes (LSP): this movement prepares learners to fulfill specific roles (e.g. engineer, chemist, nurse) and to acquire real-world skills through the medium of a second or foreign language.

5-Bilingual Education Programmes: within them, the foreign or second language is used to teach the regular school curriculum. Canadian immersion programmes or those bilingual ones which have been adopted in many parts of the U.S. have exerted a great influence on the theory of CBI.

6-Immigrant On-Arrival Programmes and Programmes for Students with Limited English Proficiency (SLEP): they focus on the language which newly arrived adult immigrants and their children, respectively, need for survival in the host country.

7-Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA): typically geared at upper elementary or secondary school students, it combines language, content, and learning strategy instruction into the transitional ESL classroom. (Richards & Rodgers, 2001)

3. Views of Language within Content-Based Instruction (CBI)

Regardless of the version applied, all models of language learning through content share the same view of language:

1-Language is a functional, meaning-making system that is systematically linked to the context in which it is used.

2-Language learning is the outcome of a joint collaboration between teacher and learner. Language learners benefit from:

a-explicit course requirements

b-explicit knowledge about language

c-the scaffolded support of the teacher

4. Models of Content-Based Instruction (CBI)

1-Theme-based language instruction: In this model, which is also called theme-based or content-infused language instruction, the course is taught by a language instructor and “is structured around topics or themes, with the topics forming the backbone of the course curriculum” (Brinton et al., 2003, p. 14).

2-Sheltered content instruction: Through this model, the instruction is implemented by a content expert who is a native speaker of the target language. In other words, it is defined as “content courses taught in the second language to a segregated group of learners by a content area expert, such as a university professor who is a native speaker of the target language” (Brinton et al., 2003, p. 15).

3-Adjunct language instruction: Applying this model, students take part in two linked courses, a content course and a language course both of which include the same content in common and complement each other regarding jointly coordinated homework (Richard & Rodgers, 2001, p. 216).

5. Advantages of Content-Based Instruction (CBI)

1. It can be applied successfully in a variety of teaching contexts.
2. It provides input which is just above the students' current level of competence and teaches language in a meaningful context.
3. This presentation of information in a coherent and meaningful way leads to deeper processing, which, in turn, results in better learning.
4. It promotes language development in a more natural way, in conditions similar to those present in L1 acquisition.
5. By emphasising the connection to real life and real world skills, it makes language learning more interesting and motivating.
6. It lends itself to the incorporation of a variety of thinking skills and learning strategies which favour language development.

6. Disadvantages of Content-Based Instruction (CBI)

- 1-For the learners, CBI can pose a greater cognitive challenge. They may have limited time to achieve an adequate academic level. Richards (2005) argued that one of the weaknesses of this approach is that learners may bi-pass grammatical accuracy since their primary concern is mastery of content rather than development of accurate language use.
- 2-CBI is no less challenging for the teacher. They need not only to master the target language, but also knowledge of the subject matter content.
- 3-Collaboration and coordination between L1 content teachers and target language content-based programme teachers are essential.
- 4-Overuse of the students' native language, particularly in monolingual classes, is a potential danger.
- 5-Little material adapted to the students' level is available on the market.
- 6-Assessment is made more difficult, as both subject matter and language skills need to be taken into account.

7. Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)

The term Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) was coined by David Marsh officially in 1994, providing a common term for European bilingual education (Coyle et al., 2010, p. 3). CLIL was practiced in Europe during the last half of the 1900s. According to Dale (2011, pp. 19-21), it is a consequence of the influence of bilingualism, second language acquisition theories, cognitive learning theories, and constructivism. Marsh (2012) explained that:

[The] European launch of CLIL during 1994 was both political and educational. The political driver was based on a vision that mobility across the EU required higher levels of language competence in designated languages than was found to be the case at that time. The educational driver, influenced by other major bilingual initiatives such as in Canada, was to design and otherwise adapt existing language teaching approaches so as to provide a wide range of students with higher levels of competence. (p. 1)

Coyle et al. defined CLIL as “... a dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language” (2010, p. 1). CLIL is a methodology of teaching languages in such a way that the main emphasis is not on the content, but on the integration of both form/language and content. It was used to refer to teaching content subjects in another language over a period of time in a public school-system (Mahan et al., 2018). The particular appeal of CLIL for English language learning is that it creates naturalistic environments for using the L2, targeting communication above all (Dalton-Puffer, 2007, 2011). A holistic methodology is needed that transcends the traditional dualism between content and language teaching. The shift from knowledge transmission to knowledge creation in multilingual settings requires students to be skilled in not only assimilating and understanding new knowledge in their first language, but also in using other languages to construct meaning (Coyle et al. 2010, p. 153).

8. The CLIL-Pyramid

The CLIL-Pyramid is based on the 4Cs-Framework. It was designed to visually represent the idea that quality CLIL can only be achieved when all of the four Cs are considered in lesson planning and materials construction. The 4Cs-Framework includes:

1-Content: Content matter is not only about acquiring knowledge and skills, it is about the learners creating their own knowledge and understanding and developing skills (personalised learning);

2-Cognition: Content is related to learning and thinking (cognition). To enable the learners to create their own interpretation of content, it must be analysed for its linguistic demands; thinking processes (cognition) need to be analysed in terms of their linguistic demands;

3-Communication: Language needs are related to the learning context, learning through that language, reconstructing the content and its related cognitive processes. This language needs to be accessible; interaction in the learning context is fundamental to learning.

4-Culture: The relationship between cultures and languages is complex. Intercultural awareness is fundamental to CLIL.

9. Advantages of the CLIL Model

1-The model enables multifocal lesson planning: content, communication, cognition, and culture are inextricably linked.

2-Higher order thinking skills become an integral part of CLIL lessons.

3-Scaffolding, study skills, and learning strategies are essential parts of the planning and teaching process.

4-The model raises awareness for multi-modal input and leads to highly differentiated lessons and materials.

5-It is very flexible regarding various models of interaction/cooperation (individual/pair/group work).

6-Intercultural communication is taken seriously.

10. Disadvantages of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)

Recent studies also show that there are many unresolved issues in CLIL classrooms:

1-Dalton-Puffer's research revealed that productive language skills, especially speaking, are not promoted in many CLIL-classrooms. Also, she observed a lack of academic discourse functions (Dalton-Puffer, 2007).

2-Many CLIL students show very poor academic writing skills, even at the age of 16. More often than not, they failed to verbalize subject-specific issues in an appropriate way (Vollmer, 2008).

3-Viebrock's analysis of recurring patterns of argumentation in the teachers' mind-sets shows that the CLIL approach runs a risk of being "misused" as a justification of out-dated teaching habits and methodological monotony (Viebrock, 2006).

Conclusion

In spite of these possible problems, all in all, CBI is currently considered as interesting approach in language teaching and learning. As Richards and Rodgers (2001, p. 220) put it, "we can expect to see CBI continue as one of the leading curricular approaches in language teaching". However, there is still a lack of appropriate teaching materials and a comprehensive and integrative CLIL methodology.

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