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**THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CLIL APPROACH IN FOREIGN
LANGUAGE TEACHING**

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***Abstract.** Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is a pedagogical approach that combines the teaching of content subjects with foreign language instruction. This article explores the significance of the CLIL method in foreign language teaching, drawing on research and opinions from prominent scholars in the field.*

***Key words.** CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning), approach, strategies.*

Foreign language teaching has evolved significantly over the years, with various methodologies being developed to enhance language acquisition. One such approach is CLIL, which not only focuses on language learning but also integrates subject matter, fostering a more immersive and contextual learning experience.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical underpinnings of CLIL are grounded in several key principles:

1. **Cognitive Load Theory:** Sweller et al. (2011) argue that integrating content with language can help manage cognitive load, enhancing learning efficiency.
2. **Communicative Language Teaching (CLT):** CLIL aligns with the principles of CLT, emphasizing real-life communication and interaction (Littlewood, 1981).
3. **Constructivist Learning:** Vygotsky's (1978) theories on social interaction and the Zone of Proximal Development support the idea that language acquisition is enhanced through collaborative learning experiences.

There are some important and plus points of CLIL in Foreign Language Teaching that a lot of scholars consider:

Firstly, CLIL promotes a more profound understanding of the language as students engage with authentic materials in context (Coyle, 2007). Research by Dalton-Puffer (2007) indicates that students in CLIL programs often outperform their peers in traditional language classes. Secondly, integrating content with language learning increases student motivation. According to Marsh (2002), students are more likely to engage with the material when they see its relevance to their studies and future careers. In addition, CLIL also fosters cultural understanding, as students learn about the cultures associated with the target language (Kramersch, 1993). This is crucial in a globalized world where intercultural communication skills are increasingly important. Last not least the dual focus on content and language encourages higher-order thinking skills. According to scholar Auerbach (1993), students develop critical thinking and problem-solving abilities, which are essential for academic success.

Furthermore, there are some interesting and instructional strategies for implementing CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning):

I. Integrated Planning

Curriculum Mapping: Create a curriculum map that outlines specific language and content objectives for each unit. Identify overlaps where language skills can support content learning and vice versa. For example, when teaching a science unit on ecosystems, include vocabulary related to habitats, organisms, and ecological processes.

Backward Design: Start with the end goals in mind. Determine what students need to know and be able to do by the end of the unit and plan activities and assessments that align with those outcomes.

II. Scaffolding

Gradual Release of Responsibility: Use a model where the teacher first demonstrates a task (I do), then guides students through it (We do), and finally allows them to complete it independently (You do).

Language Supports: Provide sentence frames or starters (e.g., "The main idea of this experiment is...") to help students articulate their thoughts. Use visual aids like word walls for key vocabulary.

III. Authentic Materials

Real-World Texts: Utilize newspapers, scientific articles, and videos from native speakers related to the content area. For instance, when studying geography, use travel blogs or documentaries.

Field Trips and Guest Speakers: Organize visits to local businesses, museums, or nature reserves where students can interact in the target language and apply content knowledge.

IV. Collaborative Learning

Group Roles: Assign specific roles within group activities (e.g., researcher, presenter, note-taker) to ensure all students participate and use the target language.

Jigsaw Activities: Divide a topic into segments and assign each group a segment. After researching, groups teach their segment to the rest of the class, promoting both language use and content mastery.

V. Task-Based Learning

Project-Based Learning: Create projects that require students to investigate a topic and present their findings. For example, students could research renewable energy sources, create a presentation, and propose a plan for their school.

Simulation Activities: Engage students in simulations that require them to use language and content knowledge, such as a mock debate on climate change policies.

VI. Interactive Activities

Language Games: Use games like vocabulary bingo or role-playing scenarios to reinforce content knowledge while practicing language skills. Incorporate elements of competition to increase engagement.

Creative Arts: Integrate art projects where students create posters or digital presentations that combine language and content elements, such as illustrating a

historical event with captions in the target language.

VII. Visual Supports

Graphic Organizers: Use tools like mind maps, Venn diagrams, and flowcharts to help students organize information visually. This can aid comprehension and retention of both language and content.

Multimedia Resources: Incorporate videos, infographics, and interactive simulations to present complex concepts visually, catering to different learning styles.

Conclusion

By implementing these strategies within a CLIL framework, educators can create a dynamic and effective learning environment that enhances both language proficiency and content knowledge. This holistic approach prepares students for real-world application and fosters a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness of language and content.

In conclusion, the CLIL method represents a significant advancement in foreign language teaching, offering an integrative approach that enhances language proficiency, motivation, and cognitive development. As educational frameworks continue to evolve, the adoption of CLIL can play a pivotal role in preparing students for a globalized world.

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