

The Impact of Grammatical Cohesion instructions through CLIL on the Written Composition at University Level.

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Abstract

This research investigates the impact of content and language integrated learning (CLIL) as a context in teaching how to write composition to Iraqi fourth year students, at university level. The researcher hypothesizes that: (a) fourth year students have weak background about the grammatical cohesion devices. (b) Teaching grammatical cohesion devices as CLIL can be regarded as an important tool in writing coherent composition. (c) The CLIL students who received the grammatical cohesion instructions are much better than the students who follow the traditional way in writing compositions and learning English language. The research questions are: (a) Does grammatical cohesion instructions followed by CLIL approach have any impact on the development of the students' writing composition and learning English language? (b) How the students viewed the type of the instructions they received which related to the grammatical cohesion devices? So, both quantitative and qualitative methods were adopted by the researcher in collecting data. Thirty students were randomly chosen, fifteen will be in CLIL group and the other in non CLIL group. These students are from the fourth class in Translation Department, College of Arts, University of Mosul. The researcher used pre and posttest to ensure the students' ability in writing compositions. In pre –test the researcher ensured the homogeneity of the

groups relating to their ability in writing compositions, whereas, the post test shows the outperformance of the students. After that, the researcher made interviews with the CLIL students to ask them certain questions about their view regarding the grammar cohesion instructions that they received in the lectures. The purposes of these interviews are to provide some understandings about the efficiency of the grammar cohesion instructions that the teacher follows.

أثر تعليمات التماسك النحوي من خلال التعلم المتكامل للمحتوى واللغة في كتابة الإنشاء على المستوى الجامعي.

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المستخلص

يبحث هذا البحث في تأثير المحتوى والتعلم المتكامل للغة كسياق في تعليم كيفية كتابة الإنشاء لطلاب السنة الرابعة العراقيين على المستوى الجامعي. يفترض الباحث أن : ا- طلاب السنة الرابعة لديهم خلفية ضعيفة عن أدوات التماسك النحوي. ب- يمكن اعتبار تدريس أدوات التماسك النحوي كمحتوى وتعلم متكامل للغة أداة مهمة في كتابة إنشاء متماسك. ت- الطلاب الذين يتعاملون مع المحتوى واللغة في آن واحد والذين تلقوا تعليمات التماسك النحوي أفضل بكثير من الطلاب الذين يتبعون الطريقة التقليدية في كتابة الإنشاء وتعلم اللغة. أسئلة البحث هي : ا- هل تعليمات التماسك النحوي التي يتبعها نهج متكامل في المحتوى واللغة لها أي تأثير على تطوير كتابة الطلاب للتراكيب وتعلم اللغة الانكليزية؟ ب- كيف وجد الطلاب نوع التعليمات التي تلقوها والتي تتعلق بأدوات التماسك النحوي؟ وكذلك الأساليب الكمية والنوعية التي اعتمدها الباحث في جمع البيانات . تم اختيار ثلاثين طالبا بشكل عشوائي. خمسة عشر سيكونون ضمن مجموعة التعلم المدمج والباقي بمجموعة أخرى. وهؤلاء الطلاب من الصف الرابع في قسم الترجمة بكلية الآداب جامعة الموصل. استخدم الباحث الاختبار القبلي والبعدي للتأكد من قدرة الطلاب على كتابة المؤلفات. في الاختبار المسبق, تأكد الباحث من تجانس المجموعات فيما يتعلق بقدرتها على كتابة الإنشاء حيث يظهر الاختبار البعدي تفوق الطلاب في الأداء. بعد ذلك , أجرى الباحث

مقابلات مع مجموعة الطلبة الذين تلقوا التعليمات لتعلم المحتوى واللغة ل طرح عليهم أسئلة معينة فيما يتعلق بإرشادات التماسك النحوي التي تلقوها في المحاضرات . الغرض من هذه المقابلات هو اخذ فكرة كاملة حول كفاءة تعليمات التماسك النحوي التي يتبعها المعلم.

1. Introduction :

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) means teaching a content of any subject by using a language which is not the mother tongue of the learners. Heras and Lasagabaster (2015: 71) state that CLIL is an approach which has a dual focus on content and language by which the teachers use additional language. Marsh (2002), also, defines CLIL as educational methods of dual focus on language and content by focusing on learning of content and at one time learning of language. This definition shows that CLIL is not just important for teaching contents through English but also learning language through contents. So, it is important to say that teachers must pay a great attention to the fact that the students are learning a content through foreign language by following certain strategies in their teaching. Accordingly, Ball (2006) describes CLIL as an umbrella term which covers learning through any language that is not the mother tongue of the students. As a result, teachers must be aware that teaching through CLIL means they will use a foreign language when teaching any subject and this means teaching structure,

pragmatics, semantics, vocabulary, etc. Marsh (2003) states that CLIL needs certain procedures if the teachers want to use it as effective implementation. For example, students who learn subjects, say, in history, geography or science by using a foreign language can regard such a language as a vehicle for learning. Thus, teachers should concern not only in content and learning but also the procedures they must follow in their process of teaching.

Lasagabaster (2008) states that CLIL can be regarded as substitute way to traditional path of teaching English as a foreign language. He also explains that CLIL will enhance the process of learning by dealing with both communication and meaning. Marsh & Wolff (2007) explains that the term CLIL begins as European topic, it is educational systems in Europe, and then it is used in different continent. Marsh & Frigols Martin (2013) state that the origin of the CLIL belongs to 1990s when modernization, expansion and integration was experiencing in Europe.

Mehisto, Marsh & Frigols, (2008: 26) show the differences between CLIL and traditional EFL lessons by explaining that CLIL learners will use language to learn and in the same time learn to use language. Accordingly, students of CLIL will focus on form and meaning. In other words, they will concern

with language and communication. Swain (1985) states that CLIL is a method which is based on communication and it is a varied and rich input which enhancing the learners' output. Halbach (2009) explains the main characteristics of CLIL by showing how such method will increase the attention of the students by using certain cognitive strategies and learning new content through a foreign language.

Finally, we can say that CLIL is a process by which both language and content are essential in learning. Language can be regarded as a tool in learning a content and at the same time the content is a medium in learning language.

1.2 Dimensions of CLIL:

For using CLIL as instructional approach, Marsh et al. (2001) describes five major dimensions:

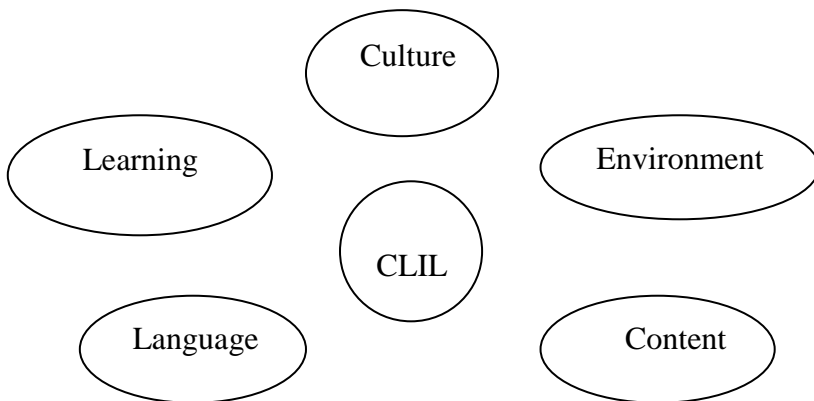


Figure 1. CLIL major dimensions

According to Ball (2006) these major dimensions are the foundation stones of CLIL. Englebert (2004:37) states that teaching foreign language means teaching foreign culture. The process of teaching foreign culture involves teaching how people exist, feel, think, and relate to each others. Agar (1992:28) describes the relationship between language and culture as a complex one. Therefore, when teachers use target contexts in teaching EFL students they will have great responsibilities in supplying cultural information. So , teachers who deal with CLIL must pay attention to their strategies of transmitting culture through language and content. In other words, cultural dimension means students will have intercultural knowledge which results in a cultural understanding.

Environment dimension leads to international goals. Teaching English as a foreign language in CLIL approach will propose meaningful experiences which belong to the fact the importance of knowing environment in which we are immersed result in increasing students' understanding to their environment and communicative skills. Accordingly , teachers must have the ability to wide-ranging with the students' linguistic and cultural background. (Marsh et al.,2001:78-80).

Whereas, content dimension shows another role in CLIL approach. It is a matter of fact, that content dimension plays a fundamental role for all levels of education, from primary to graduate levels. It offers for the students certain access to language terminology. In this way , students will acquire new lexicon to understand concepts. In other words, CLIL can be seen as a tool which is helping in studying content through different viewed. Marsh et al (2001) states that languages and cultures are associated with each other and by studying a content we can reveal different world perspectives.

Sousa (2006) affirms that CLIL in learning dimension is regarded as a core complements element in students' learning strategies. CLIL makes the students the center of the process of learning in terms of social and thinking skills. One side of this focusing is related to how the brain process information. In other words, how the brain learns, for example, the difference between the brain of boys and girls or the differences in styles, etc.

Finally, language dimension in CLIL is important component in the bilingual classroom. Accordingly, teachers must be aware of their students' mastering of language and measuring their progress in learning both content and language (D Marsh and M J Frigols Martain, 2012).

1.3 The role of the teacher:

The language that is used in CLIL classrooms is a typical language according to the fact that it is used as a medium to transport content. The role of the teachers in CLIL classrooms is very significant. Whitty (1996, p89-90) states certain features that should be found in the teacher of CLIL classroom for example, teachers must have qualities such as: they should have professional values, and professional in their developing the relationship between language and content, have the ability to develop the communication, deeply subject knowledge and understanding of their students . Eurydice (2006) affirms that the teacher of CLIL classroom must have the ability to teach any subject in the curriculum by using language other than the usual language of teaching and in the same time teaching the language itself. He also states that teachers must recognize that they need to change certain habits which are used in first language when teaching the same content in the second language. It is a matter of fact that the teacher of CLIL classroom is the center element in the process of learning through another language. Hall (2001: 120) states that teachers of CLIL must develop their linguistic skills in ways that help them managing their class easily since knowing second language doesn't mean knowing how to teach it.

Marsh et al. (2001, p: 78-80) states certain competencies that must every CLIL teachers have: first of all, the teacher must have sufficient information about the language he/she used and the target language knowledge. He adds that, the teacher must recognize the differences and similarities between language learning and language acquisition. Moreover, he refers to the importance of the teacher's ability to distinguish the linguistic difficulties and how the teacher selects a suitable method which must be dual-focus to correct and modeling student's language and teaching them the content of the subject at the same time.

Generally speaking, all teachers of CLIL approach must have the ability to focus both on language and content at the same time. In this way, the students can control the language and the content to the same extent.

2. Method:

2.1 Introduction:

This part of research is considered the most important, as it shows how to collect data and the methods that the researcher used to show the effect of content and language on the process of learning.

2.2 Research Design :

The researcher uses qualitative and quantitative data to support and answer the questions of the research. The quantitative stage of this research is used to show the effect of grammatical cohesion on CLIL students versus non CLIL students, whereas, the qualitative stage is used to make interviews which conducted to understand the students' viewpoints that obtained higher score in the post-test. The main reason for qualitative stage is to give the researcher a clear view of the students' opinions about the instructions they received.

This research adopted four classification of the grammatical cohesion these are: reference, ellipsis, substitution and conjunctions.

2.3 Population and Samples:

The population has been limited to the fourth year stage in the Department of Translation, College of Arts, University of Mosul, during the academic year 2021-2022. The total number of students was (65). Thirty students were randomly chosen to be the sample of the research. 15 students will be with group A (CLIL students) experimental group, whereas, the other 15 students will be with group B (non CLIL students) control group.

2.4 Instrumentation:

The researcher used pre and posttest to show the differences among students' writing before and after CLIL instructions. In the pre-test, the students write about "science role in modern warfare" which shows the ability levels of students in writing composition. Post-test support the researcher's hypothesis about the effect of CLIL instructions on students writing by examining the differences in writing before and after CLIL. The topic that used in post tense is "Human influence on climate change". The researcher also used another instrument which helps in collecting qualitative data, in which the researcher makes many interviews with the students to have a deep understanding about the students' personal experiences with CLIL instructions.

It is important to mention that the researcher used internet to find passages whose topics are varied (chemistry, science, Arts, etc.). some of these topics are : a. The importance of chemistry in our life. B. participating in team sports helps to develop good character, etc.

2.5 The framework of The Study:

This research follows the Lubelska's (1991) framework. She states that reading and writing skills are supported each other through the teaching process.

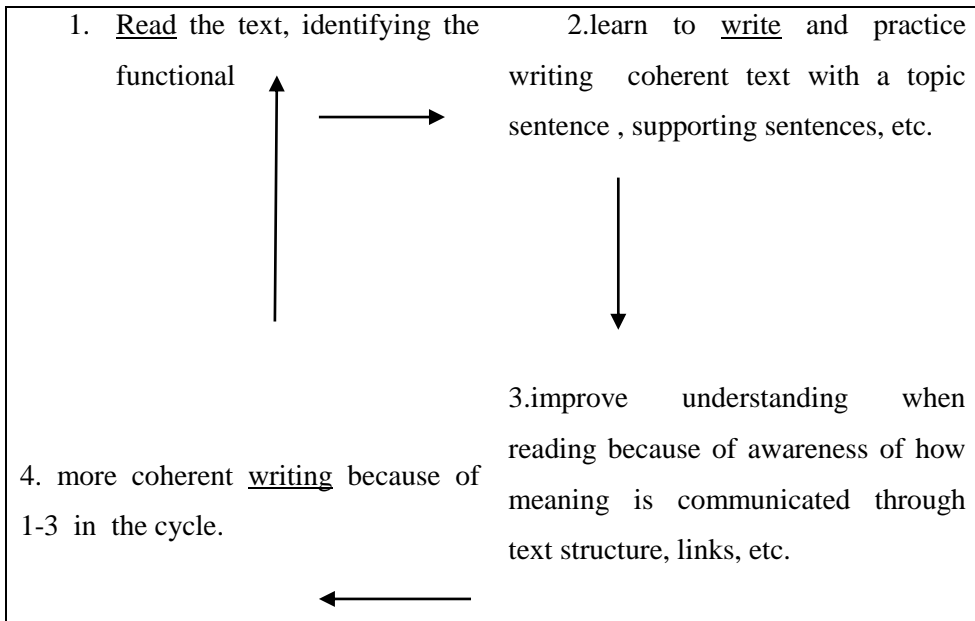


Figure 1. Lubelska (1991)

2.5 CLIL group and Non CLIL group:

The researcher follows many procedures like teaching certain lessons for professional writing, brainstorming and doing different tasks. These tasks designed to be either as a pair or groups to vary in students' understanding and learning. For CLIL students the researcher depends on explicit instructions about perfect writing and how they can use cohesive devices. In each lessons the researcher tries to confirm on certain

category or subcategory of grammar. For instance, in the first lecture the teacher tries to highlight the concept "reference" by writing the following sentence: " my roommate and I became good friends " , here, the teacher can explain that my roommate and I and good friends refer to the same people. The teacher then gives details about the concept of reference, and how will give the text a unity. After that , the teacher asks the students to underline referent words that are found in three paragraphs given by the teacher. Then, the teacher gives the students homework to write paragraphs containing reference about any topics they want but they should use all the cohesive devices they learned in the class. Finally, the teacher will correct the students' writing and give them some notes about their mistakes. Successively, substitution, ellipsis and conjunctions lessons will give to the students and make a review about the previous cohesive devices. Example about the use of substitution: " My husband wants to go to Spain but I don't like it there " . It is worth noting that the teacher uses explicit instruction with the students to clarify all the cohesive devices which help the students writing a cohesive compositions. "explicit instructions" can be regarded as a feature that makes the difference from non CLIL class.

The teacher will deal with CLIL class indirectly. In other words, the teacher will use "implicit instructions", i.e he/she teaches grammatical cohesive devices unconsciously. The role of the teacher here is as facilitator rather than instructor. Accordingly, to make the process of teaching cohesive devices to non CLIL students more easier, the teacher follows certain strategies to ensure the comprehension of the students. Firstly, give the students five passages and ask them to read these passages carefully then ask them many comprehension questions. This step will make the students familiar with the cohesive devices through different texts. The researcher here focuses on narrow reading which means that the students will read about the same topic. Krashen, (1989) states that learners who read about the same topics can comprehend the vocabulary and the main idea of the passages easily. So, the teacher starts the lecture with brainstorming and asks the students some questions about the passages they have already read. Then, the teacher will divide the students either to pairs or groups or work individually depending on the difficulty of the task. Some discussions will take place about the proposed topics, and the questions will be answered by the students, and after this stage, they will move to the stage of writing the compositions. After writing a compositions the teacher will

ask the students to write a summary about their compositions to focus on the main ideas and ensure the cohesive devices of the students.

It is noteworthy that the framework of this study suggests that reading and writing skills are supported each other through the process of teaching , the researcher in pre and post test focuses on these skills. As the researcher started with specific texts to read with direct instructions for CLIL students and indirect one with non- CLIL students. Then the researcher asks the students to write about the same or nearly the same topics that they read. It can be said that the process of combing reading and writing with giving direct instructions to CLIL students helped the researcher to improve the research hypotheses and questions.

2.6 Data Analysis and Description:

The main reasons for this pre and post test are to compare the effect of teaching explicit grammatical instructions and implicit grammatical instructions on writing compositions at university level. Moreover, to explain how the teacher will learn content through a foreign language (CLIL). The results were analyzed by a statistician to show the following:

Group	No.	Mean	SD	SE mean	DF	T-Value	
Non CLIL pre	15	32.00	17	4.3	28	Tabulated 1.83	Calculated 0.43
CLIL pre	15	36.2	14.2	3.6			

$\alpha=0.05$

Table (1) Results of the T-test of the Control and Experimental Groups in the pre –test scores

Table (1) illustrates the mean scores of pre test to both CLIL and non CLIL students. It is clear from table (1) that there are no significant differences among students in the T- Value ,they nearly do the same mistakes in their writing. The mean scores were 32 and 36.2 for both groups. The tabulated t-value shows 1.83 and the calculated shows 0.43. these scores reveal that both groups have the same knowledge about the grammatical cohesion. This fact belongs to the researcher's hypothesis which is " both groups have the same weak background about the grammatical cohesion devices", has been tested and confirmed.

Group	No.	Mean	SD	SE mean	DF	T-Value	
Non CLIL. post	15	37.5	15.8	4.1	28	Tabulated 1.83	Calculated 9.81
CLIL. post	15	62.6	7.9	2.0			

$\alpha=0.05$

Table (2) Results of the T-test of the Control and Experimental Groups in the post –test scores

It is worth noting, that the scores in table (2) were changed. They were 37.5 and 62.6 for CLIL and non CLIL students. These scores indicate that the CLIL students use all the grammatical cohesion instructions in their writing. This is also clear in the calculated result which reads 9.81. This high score indicates to the progress of CLIL students on non CLIL.

Group	No.	Mean	SD	SE mean	D.F	T-Value	
Non CLIL. pre	15	32.00	17.8	4.3	28	Tabulated 1.83	Calculated 0.61
Non CLIL. post	15	37.2	15.8	4.1			

$\alpha=0.05$

Table (3) Results of the T-test of the Control Group in the pre- and post –test scores.

table (3) shows the mean score for pre and post test of non CLIL students which were 32.0 and 37.5. It is clear from these scores that non CLIL students have low performance in both pre and post test. Also, these scores indicate that the

grammatical cohesion instructions that the students studied were not developed through traditional way for teaching English.

Group	No.	Mean	SD	SE mean	DF	T-Value	
CLIL.	15	36.2	14.2	3.6	28	Tabulated 1.83	Calculated 6.73
pre							
CLIL.	15	62.6	7.9	2.0			
Post							

$\alpha=0.05$

Table (4) Results of the T-test of the Experimental Group in the pre- and post –test scores.

The mean scores of table (4) state that the CLIL students have made great progress. These scores also indicate that CLIL students improved their grammatical cohesion instructions in writing compositions. This noticeable change in the scores in pre and post test refers to the success of lectures and strategies of CLIL approach that the teacher follows. It is worth to mention that the hypothesis and the questions of the research have been confirmed and answered.

After finishing the post-test , the researcher moves to qualitative stage by which she asks the CLIL students certain questions to ensure the hypothesis and answer the questions of the research. Such as:

1. Do you think that the grammatical cohesive devices were important in your writing compositions?
2. Did you notice any difference in your writing skill and control of grammatical cohesion before and after joining the class?
3. What do you think of receiving explicit instructions on learning grammatical cohesion, and has this kind of learning helped you get through your writing problems?
4. How did you use the techniques you learned in class in your composing writing?

The students' responses to the above questions were positive, as they indicated that all the techniques they learned made the process of learning easier for them in writing and also in noting their previous mistakes. However, the students appreciated the role of the teacher in facilitating the grammatical cohesion and they agreed that learning grammatical cohesive devices are so helpful and if one wants to be better he/she must practice more and more.

Conclusions

This research concludes the following:

- The explicit teaching is the best method in teaching content through foreign language than implicit one.
- CLIL has a positive impact in the process of learning.
- The differences between pre and post test confirm the importance and impact of grammatical cohesion instructions through CLIL.
- Most of students' responses on the questions of the interviews showed that the explicit instructions of CLIL had been constructive.

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