

Exploration and Practice of Bilingual Teaching Model under the CLIL Pedagogy at a Provincial University

Zhonghui Huang

Hubei University of Technology, Wuhan, 430068, China

Abstract: Based on the content language integration learning (CLIL) teaching practice in the third-year language and culture bilingual course for undergraduate students majoring in international Chinese education at our university, this study aims to investigate the construction process of high-quality bilingual classrooms. Specifically, it focuses on three key dimensions: curriculum objectives, classroom discourse, and teacher-student community. The ultimate objective is to facilitate the cultivation of students' advanced cognitive abilities and foster their comprehensive development.

Keywords: Content and language integration learning (CLIL); Classroom discourse; Advanced cognitive abilities; International Chinese education

1. Introduction

The increasing globalization has posed significant challenges to the internationalization of education in China. In response to this trend, bilingual teaching has emerged as a crucial approach for colleges and universities to adapt. The 2021 *New Liberal Arts Research and Reform Teaching Practice Project Guide* has proposed the exploration of the “major + foreign language” training model, which emphasizes the contribution of higher education institutions to national strategic development and the cultivation of high-quality international talents. In the context of the ongoing educational reform aimed at connotative development and quality enhancement, further exploration and optimization of the bilingual teaching mode, particularly within the classroom setting, can effectively enhance students' deep learning abilities, language proficiency, critical thinking skills and cross-cultural communication competencies, in line with the needs of the country for the training of international bilingual talents in the new era.

2. The concept and research status of content language integration learning (CLIL)

CLIL refers to “educational situations with a dual focus on language and content, with foreign languages as a medium for teaching non-verbal content” (Coyle 2010) ^[1]. The content-language integration education concept takes into account subject knowledge and language learning, has dual educational goals, and is an innovative integration of foreign language education concepts and subject education concepts (Coyle et al 2010) ^[1]. This concept emphasizes the mutual promotion between the two, and ultimately achieves an overall learning effect greater than the sum of the content of learning a foreign language alone or learning subjects separately, and achieves the balance and compatibility of subject knowledge and language knowledge (Coyle 2010; 2007) ^[2, 3], creating more favorable conditions for the coordinated development of language and thinking (especially higher-order thinking) (Dalton-Puffer 2011 ^[4]).

The theory and applied research of bilingual teaching in the context of Chinese and Chinese shows a trend of diversification (Cai Jigang 2005^[5]; Jiang Hongde 2004^[6]; Wu Ping 2007^[7]; Qin Danyang, 2021^[8]). Some universities have explored and summarized the local practice of CLIL (Chang Junyue et al., 2020^[9]; Wang Binhua 2005^[10]; Zhou Jiayang 2018; ^[11] Zhang Lian et al., 2019^[12]); teacher development research focuses on the comparison of CBI or CLIL concepts, the enlightenment of the European teacher education framework and professional development (Zhang Shanxin, He Xueqin, 2019^[13]).

3. Bilingual teaching practice for international Chinese education majors

3.1 Classroom teaching scenarios

This study focuses on the classroom teaching scenario of the *Chinese-English Contrastive Study*, a core bilingual course designed for third-year undergraduate students specializing in international Chinese education. Employing a content and language integration framework, the course aims to concurrently address subject knowledge and language acquisition objectives. Through a combination of theoretical instruction and practical application, students are guided to explore two distinct pathways: the examination of phonetic, lexical, semantic, and grammatical similarities and disparities between the two languages, as well as comprehending the linguistic, cultural, and psychological rationales embedded in the unique expressions of both languages. The bilingual course is taught by Gloria, a native Chinese speaker, who has been the main teacher of the course for a long time, with a dual disciplinary background both in foreign language education and international Chinese education, not only has more than ten years of bilingual teaching experience, but also four years of overseas international Chinese teaching experience. By the beginning of the teaching practice, all 39 students in the class had passed the CET-4 exam, and 26 of them had passed the CET-6 exam. Most students can express their views fluently in English, complete tasks such as group discussions and personal reports, and have a good English level and Chinese knowledge.

3.2 Theoretical basis

(1) Content language integration 4Cs framework

Utilizing the 4Cs framework of bilingual teaching (Coyle, 2010^[2]), this study integrates content, communication, cognition, and culture into the teaching objectives and instructional design. The primary objective is to facilitate students' mastery of bilingual-related knowledge and the development of effective communication skills through various activities, enabling them to engage in successful communication and collaboration with others. Additionally, the study aims to foster students' critical thinking and creative thinking skills, enabling them to analyze and solve problems, as well as understand and respect diverse cultural backgrounds and values. This comprehensive approach equips students to effectively communicate and collaborate within cross-cultural environments, ultimately achieving the goal of content and language integration education and promoting mutual enrichment, as shown in Figure 1:

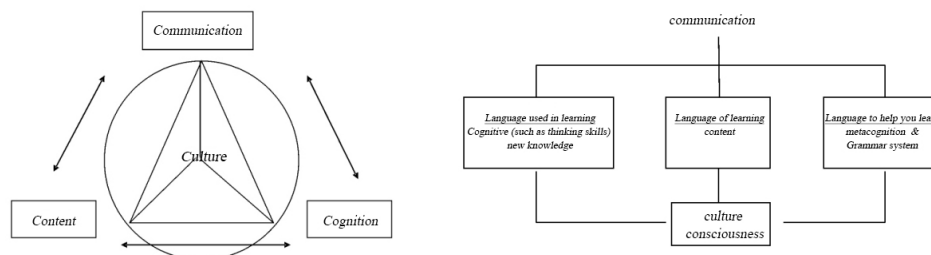


Figure 1: Analytical framework for communication in CLIL

(2) Classroom discourse and cognitive discourse function

Classroom Discourse refers to the interactive process of negotiating meaning and constructing knowledge between teachers and students within the context of classroom instruction. This encompasses oral interactions between teachers and learners, as well as among learners themselves, and extends to written feedback discourse and interactions on various information communication or network interactive platforms (Dalton, 2018^[14]). The exchange of ideas and information through Classroom Discourse plays a crucial role in facilitating effective teaching and learning experiences, promoting active engagement, and fostering the co-construction of knowledge within the educational setting, as shown in Figure 2:

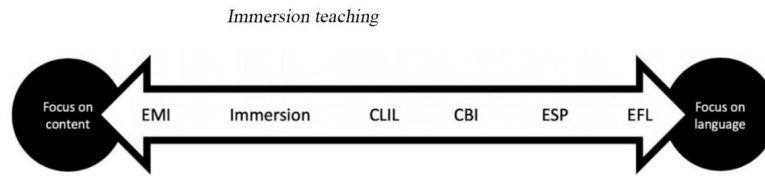


Figure 2: EMI practice continuum (adapted from: Thompson & McKinley, 2018)

Cognitive Discourse Function (CDF) pertains to the establishment of subject-specific cognitive learning objectives with linguistic representations during classroom interactions, achieved through the analysis of teaching materials, test tasks, and natural classroom discourse (Dalton-Puffer, 2018 [14]). This concept draws upon the theoretical foundations of Bloom’s six-level classification of cognitive goals, as well as the work of Anderson and other scholars (Anderson et al., 2001 [15]), who released an updated version of Bloom’s taxonomy in 2001. This revised taxonomy aligns cognitive goals with the Cognitive Process Dimension, which progresses from lower-order thinking skills such as Remembering and Understanding, to higher-order skills like Applying, Analyzing, Evaluating, and Creating. Consequently, the ability to effectively identify CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) knowledge within specific disciplines and describe the cognitive construction process through the extraction and analysis of linguistic representations is crucial for educators in designing and evaluating curriculum and teaching activities.

3.3 Teaching practice of Chinese-English Contrastive Study course

(1) “Student-centered” approach

The philosophy of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is rooted in social constructivist theory, which prioritizes a “student-centered” approach to teaching. This approach encourages active student participation, inquiry, and discovery, rather than passive acceptance of knowledge (Cummins, 2000 [16]). Within the CLIL classroom, teachers have the flexibility to design a range of instructional activities that simultaneously address content and language objectives. These activities may include promoting communication between teachers and students through group work, classroom presentations, discussions, and problem-solving tasks. Additionally, teachers can leverage classroom discourse and other available teaching resources to enhance the learning experience for students, as shown in Figure 3:

Theme	sub-theme
1. define	(1) Bilingual teaching (2) For English and / or bilingual instruction (3) English teaching
2. Policy purpose	(1) Cultivate talent / students (2) Globalization and internationalization (3) Teaching and curriculum quality (4) National and / or provincial policies (5) Higher education and university development
3. Teaching and curriculum setting	(1) teacher (2) student (3) course offered (4) Teaching and evaluation
4. Management and financial support	(1) Application and supervision (2) Financial support and incentives

Figure 3: Encoding architecture

(2) Deconstruction and Reconstruction of teaching content

To effectively integrate content and language in the teaching process, teachers undergo a process of deconstructing and reconstructing the original curriculum content based on the knowledge objectives outlined in the curriculum guidelines. This involves integrating both online and offline teaching resources, organizing multiple textbooks and bibliographies, and incorporating the latest research findings to continually enhance the teaching content through iterative rounds of instruction. In order to meet the bilingual proficiency requirements of students in this course, a two-pronged approach is adopted. Firstly, the textbook serves as the foundation for increasing students' professional vocabulary and providing comprehensible input. Secondly, leveraging extracurricular reading platforms, additional content related to Chinese language or cultural comparisons is introduced in alignment with the chapter's content. This approach aims to expand students' background knowledge in the subject area and deepen their understanding and retention of relevant concepts.

(3) Task-driven classroom

In the teaching process, task-driven classrooms are utilized to promote contextualized learning and purposeful communication. This approach enables students to develop foreign language skills and cross-cultural understanding by exploring language and cultural differences. Through the use of rich examples, students are encouraged to analyze the similarities and differences between language and culture. Moreover, students are guided to approach problems from multiple perspectives, actively listen to the viewpoints of others, and engage in the negotiation of meanings during cooperative learning activities. This approach fosters the development of language proficiency, cultural competence, and critical thinking skills among students.

(4) Practical reflection

Once knowledge construction and language goals have been achieved, students are tasked with engaging in small group teaching practice activities, focusing on the comparison of language elements. These activities include predicting the teaching difficulties of Chinese as a second language, analyzing biases in second language acquisition, and selecting appropriate teaching content for instructional design. Additionally, professional competitions are introduced to encourage students to apply the knowledge acquired in the classroom to create competition content, develop micro-lessons, and write lesson plans. Moreover, students are actively guided to participate in competitions with topics derived from the curriculum, fostering practical reflection and promoting the overall enhancement of students's abilities.

4. Conclusion

Following a semester of teaching reform, the implementation of CLIL bilingual teaching practice based on the 4Cs model has yielded positive outcomes. This reform has not only effectively enhanced students' language proficiency and critical thinking skills but has also contributed to the formation of a cohesive course group and the establishment of a multi-level talent development model. Furthermore, it has comprehensively nurtured students' professional qualities. Additionally, this reform has facilitated the advancement of bilingual courses in non-English majors within our institution, thereby improving the overall quality of bilingual teaching. Ultimately, it plays a crucial role in cultivating internationally competent professionals who possess expertise in their respective fields along with foreign language proficiency, aligning with the nation's demand for "major + foreign language" international compound talents.

Acknowledgement

Information of author: Zhonghui Huang, Department of Language and Culture Communication, School of Foreign Language, Hubei University of Technology, lecture.

1) "Research on the Design and Optimization Path of Classroom Practice for Chinese International Education Classroom", 2022 Teaching Reform and Innovative Talent Training Project of Graduate Education at Hubei University of Technology, Project Number (2022003).

2) "Exploration and Practice of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) Model in English-Chinese Bilingual Classroom", Key Project Supported by Hubei Provincial Education Science Planning, Project Number (2022ZA14).

References

- [1] Marsh D. (2002) *CLIL/EMILE: The European dimension Actions, trends and foresight potential*. European Commission.
- [2] Coyle D., Hood P., & Marsh D. (2010). *CLIL: Content and language integrated learning*. Cambridge University Press.
- [3] Coyle D. (2007). *Content and language integrated learning: Towards a connected research agenda for CLIL pedagogies*. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 10 (5), 543–562.
- [4] Dalton-Puffer, C. (2011) *Content-and-Language Integrated Learning: From Practice to Principles?* *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 31, 182–204. Cambridge University Press. doi: 10.1017/S0267190511000092
- [5] Jigang Cai. *Foreign Language Teaching and Research*, 2005(02):83-91+160.
- [6] Hongde Jiang. *Construction and Practice of “Immersion” Bilingual Teaching Mode [J]*. *Educational Development Research*, 2004(06):32-34.
- [7] Ping Wu. (2007). *A Review of Bilingual Teaching Research in the Past Five Years [J]*. *China University Teaching*, 2007 (1): 37-45.
- [8] Danyang Qin. *Exploration and Practice of Professional Bilingual “Golden Course” Construction based on EIC [J]*. *Heilongjiang Education (Theory and Practice)*, 2021(05):1-2.
- [9] Junyue Chang, Zhaohao Liu. *The Theoretical Support of the Concept of Content-language Integration Education [J]*. *Foreign Language and Foreign Language Teaching*, 2020(06):85-95+150.
- [10] Binhua Wang. *Comparison between China and Foreign Countries: The Definition, Attributes and Objectives of Bilingual Education [J]*. *Education Development Research*, 2005(11):49-53.
- [11] Jiayang Zhou. *The Enlightenment of CLIL Concept to Bilingual Teaching in Middle Schools [J]*. *Journal of Mudanjiang Institute of Education*, 2018(05):35-36+65.
- [12] Lian Zhang, Dongying Li. *Collaborative Development of Language, Critical Thinking and Subject Ability under the Framework of CLIL [J]*. *Frontiers of Foreign Language Education Research*, 2019, 2(02):16-24+90-91.
- [13] Shanxin Zhang, Xueqin He. *European CLIL Teacher Education Framework and Training Model and Its Enlightenment [J]*. *Ethnic Higher Education Research*, 2019, 7(02): 70-75. DOI:10.14045/j.cnki.rhen.2019.02.014.
- [14] Dalton-Puffer C, et al. (2018) *Cognitive discourse functions in Austrian CLIL lessons: towards an empirical validation of the CDF Construct*. *European Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 5.5-29.doi: 10.1515/eujal-2017-0028
- [15] Anderson L. W., Krathwohl D. R., & Bloom B. S. (2001). *A taxonomy for learning, teaching, and assessing: A revision of Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives*. Addison Wesley Longman.
- [16] Cummins J. (2000). *Language, Power and Pedagogy: Bilingual Children in the Crossfire*. Bristol, Blue Ridge Summit: Multilingual Matters. <https://doi.org/10.21832/9781853596773>