

Chapter 1

Introduction to Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)

1.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach and sheds some light on the vocational and skill education sector. This chapter aims to shed light on the CLIL approach and its importance, followed by an introduction and scope of the vocational and skill education sector in India, the background of the study, a statement of the problem, research questions, and a hypothesis. These sections are followed by the need for CLIL, the purpose of the study, the aim and objectives of the study, and finally ending with the study's possible outcomes.

1.2 Introduction to CLIL

English language education in most countries, especially in India, is seen as a curriculum-based subject with the sole purpose of scoring good marks and clearing examinations. The inadequacies of the above come into focus once the learners reach their higher education and plan their careers. English is no longer a subject but a medium of communication, both in the verbal and written context. The dichotomy of what is taught in classes and what the learners need functionally is apparent and alarming.

Thus, traditional methods of English language teaching fail to yield the desired results for most learners. Traditional methods fall short of balancing content and language elements to help learners succeed in both areas. Hence, over the years, the ecosystem of English language teaching has felt the need for a robust approach that would help in teaching both the English language and content together without any disparity.

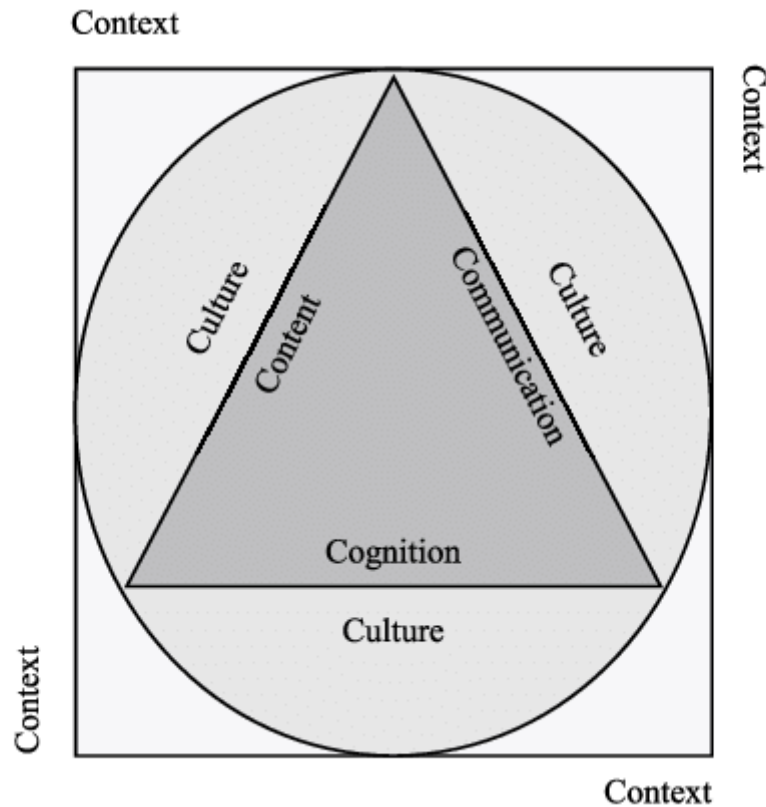
An approach that is unique and works on balancing the focus elements of content and language can definitely help. Hence, Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), with its focus on integration, communication, culture, cognition, and communication, can be an excellent approach to test and put to use in today's result-driven educational context.

As defined by Coyle et al., (2010) and Richards & Rodgers (2016), CLIL is a dual-focused educational effort that promotes simultaneous learning of academic material and a foreign language. Coyle et al. (2009) had mentioned how CLIL has been viewed as a means of increasing knowledge and ability in foreign language learning and teaching and revitalising schoolchildren's enthusiasm and drive. The crux of CLIL is to improve the communicative expertise of the learners, along with their content knowledge. As stated by Coyle et al., (2010) the approach of CLIL is different from the traditional and well-known language teaching approaches such as The Grammar – Translation Method, The Reform Movement, and The Direct Method as CLIL is an educational strategy that employs a variety of language-supportive approaches, resulting in dual-focused instruction that pays attention to both the language and the subject.

According to Coyle et al. (2010), CLIL instruction accommodates the 4Cs curriculum.

The 4Cs Framework focuses on four contextualised building blocks: content (the subject area), communication (language development and use), cognition (learning and cognitive processes), and culture (fostering intercultural understanding and global citizenship). Language and communication are synonymous terms in the 4Cs Framework. In CLIL, the content matter is related to the learner's prior knowledge and on how they create this knowledge and understanding and develop their skills. Cognition and content are related and help learners with their individual needs both in content and language. Language needs are content-driven, and language must be learned in relation to the learning context; through that language, the content and related cognitive processes must be reconstructed. This language as mentioned by Coyle et al.,(2010) must be transparent and understandable.

Figure 1.1 shows that the 4Cs are interrelated and help expedite language learning through effective language use. CLIL forms a convergence that helps learners reach their language goals through their content needs. As mentioned by Dalton-Puffer (2007) CLIL classrooms are distinguished from traditional language classes in that language serves as the vehicle for conveying other content rather than the defined subject or content of the interaction. According to Coyle et al. (2010), the CLIL approach does not differentiate between form and meaning. It leaves the choice on the CLIL surroundings by giving importance to both in equal measures. This allows the learners to learn form and meaning, as both are important and in CLIL, the language is taught holistically.

Figure 1.1*The 4Cs Framework*

Note. The 4Cs Framework (Coyle et al., 2010, p. 42)

1.3 Importance of CLIL

CLIL is an approach that accepts learners from all social backgrounds and makes learning an experience in which both literacy and cognitive skills are addressed adequately. In this approach, all the stakeholders of education, viz. learners, teachers, parents, material developers, and educational administrators, are considered to make it an impactful learning approach.

CLIL works on the concept of conceptual sequencing, which is not very common in language teaching. However, for CLIL, conceptual sequencing is vital as "CLIL, on the other hand, always has conceptual sequencing, largely because in its 'hard' guise it is teaching the official content, and because in its 'soft' guise it must also deal with a sudden importation of real thematic content" (Ball et al., 2015, p. 33).

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In the CLIL classroom, every activity moves in a sequence in order to form a cohesive succession of related activities, tasks, and information that leads to the final goal of each lesson. "There is always a 'before' and 'after' " (Ball et al., 2015, p. 33).

Content is the driving force in a CLIL classroom, and there are no limitations to the use of language or working with a content area. According to Bentley (2010), the CLIL approach could draw associations between various content subjects across the modules designed. The content area in CLIL helps learners gain knowledge and express what they have learnt with the help of language. This integration of content and language helps the learners become more comprehensible and even aids the teachers in their classroom communication.

CLIL supports the unhindered learning and use of language. Savignon (2004) suggested how the final goal of language learning includes language use and further emphasised how important the use of language is in natural settings that are authentic and not scripted.

Language use helps in the development of communicative skills in all its elements. Coyle et al. (2010) had drawn up the principles of CLIL, which were in relevance with the principles highlighted by Savignon (2004) for communicative language learning. They summed up the ideas that were all pertinent to CLIL since language acquisition is conceptualised in authentic situations for application.

The principles state that language is a communication instrument. Diversity is acknowledged and embraced as a component of language development. Genre, style, and accuracy all contribute to learner competence. Multiple languages are recognised. Coyle et al., (2010) mentioned that culture is essential.

Dalton-Puffer (2007) shares a few points about CLIL from The CLIL Compendium, which refers to these points as:

- CLIL's language dimension focuses on improving target language competency.
- It develops spoken communication abilities.
- It increases understanding of both mother tongue and the target language.
- It develops interests and attitudes towards multiple languages.
- It introduces the target language.

CLIL is seen as a departure from traditional English educational settings. Marsh & Frigols (2007) share that "Some CLIL initiatives have been driven by the need to enable change in educational practice concerning English language learning. In such cases, levels of student competence in English have been considered too low, given the investment of time within the curriculum. In addition, the teaching approaches used for subjects other than English have also been considered suitable for further methodological development" (pp. 33-37).

CLIL enhances learning concerning both language and content. In the CLIL classroom, support is provided for effective learning, peer communication, collaboration among the stakeholders, and realistic opportunities for teaching and learning. The materials in the CLIL classroom are closely linked to the real-life situations a learner may encounter, which helps learners understand and apply their content and knowledge of the language. The teaching and learning are application-based, making the CLIL approach beneficial for life, and it acts as a stimulus for motivation. The approach's flexibility based on the learners' progress and needs makes CLIL quite different from the traditional approaches.

The transparency of the learning outcomes is another gain for the CLIL approach, favouring both the teacher and the learner. This clarity helps in the teaching and learning process, assessment and goal setting. According to Bentley (2010), informed learning outcomes help teachers with their lessons and planning.

CLIL supports cognition, as mentioned in the 4Cs Framework. Tasks and activities are crucial in the CLIL classroom as they strengthen cognition. Bentley (2010) suggested how demanding tasks and activities suitable to the content area aid in developing cognitive abilities. Thinking skills in both the lower and higher order help the learners with the application of their knowledge. Constant growth from lower to higher-order thinking also helps build motivation in learners.

The approach also aids guided multimedia input, which is a need of the present times. Authentic content-based materials and practice materials are an essential part of the CLIL approach; the Web and other multimedia resources can be very positive aids to meet this need, making the teaching and learning experience more effective. According to Ball et al. (2015), "It seems odd to simply limit the processing skill to listening, especially since the majority of contemporary media is experienced through a more natural combination of

aural and visual stimuli... In CLIL, the same principle applies, and teachers of any subject can find plenty of good materials on the Web to support their syllabus" (pp. 41-42).

Developing both Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) and Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) can be achieved with the CLIL approach. A CLIL classroom works towards a balanced language skill development that includes the four basic language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing, stressing vocabulary building, and pronunciation.

Ball et al., (2015) had mentioned that CLIL teachers need a set of clear principles for dealing with language skills in class. The teachers need to experience language in their classrooms from the perspective of their learners. This means teachers need to be aware of what language they use (and what language typifies their subject), what the component parts of this language are, and the challenges it causes for learners. The teachers then need a wide range of techniques and strategies to help learners manage these challenges.

CLIL helps build intercultural knowledge and understanding, as Culture is also one of the 4Cs mentioned in the 4Cs Framework. Mehitso (2012) had put the focus on Culture while discussing the criteria for the development of 'quality CLIL materials'.

According to sociocultural learning theories suggested by Dale & Tanner (2012), language, thinking, and culture are all taught through social contact and are inextricably linked. These principles emphasise the need to know a subject's language, as well as its unique culture. As a result, CLIL teachers educate students not only on subject-specific material but also on how to think, write, and communicate like subject specialists.

1.4 Introduction to Vocational and Skill Education in India

According to the Business Dictionary, a skill is an ability and capacity gained via a purposeful, systematic, and prolonged effort to carry out complicated activities or job functions involving several areas.

According to the Collins English Dictionary, "A vocation is a specified occupation, profession, or trade. It also means a special urge, inclination, or predisposition to a particular calling or career."

Agrawal (2013) shared that the All India Council for Technical Education defines vocational education as Vocational education or Vocational Education and Training

(VET), also known as Career and Technical Education (CTE). This type of education trains students for employment that needs manual or practical skills related to a certain trade, occupation, or vocation. Technical education focuses on developing competency in specific skills and technologies. It is frequently referred to as technical education since the learner gains proficiency in specific skills or technology.

In 2015, the Honourable Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi, launched the Skill India Mission, which has a clear agenda of training over 40 crore people in India in various skills by the year 2022. The Skill India Mission aims to provide vocational training and certification to young Indians, providing them with a better livelihood option and dignity of labour. The National Education Policy of 2020 states:

This policy seeks to address the social rank hierarchy linked with vocational education. It's necessary to gradually integrate vocational education curricula into regular education across all institutions. Quality vocational education will be easily integrated into higher education, starting with early occupational exposure in middle and secondary school. It will ensure that each child learns at least one vocation and is exposed to several others. This would result in a greater emphasis on the dignity of employment and the value of varied careers involving Indian arts and crafts.

1.5 Scope of Vocational and Skill Education in India

According to research on market economy, an individual's skill and knowledge are the driving forces of a country, both in terms of economic growth and social development. A skilled individual contributes towards a productive economy, which leads to further innovation and healthy competition. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of a country, which is a widely used yardstick to measure the economic value of any country, increase with the rise of a skilled labour force finding gainful employment, as these members contribute revenue to the government through taxes and, in turn, contribute towards the growth of the country's economy.

According to Palmer (2007) there is a compelling need to promote the informal sector's VET (vocational education and training) programmes. To achieve positive developmental outcomes from education and skill development, promoting an 'enabling environment' in the informal economy is crucial, which also has an explicit strategy and supports decent work.

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Unemployment is a pertinent issue in India, and people commonly blame the rise of educated individuals as a reason, but in reality, the picture is different. According to the India Skills Report 2021, India's young employability has declined to 45.9%, with 40% of the most employable talent falling between the ages of 18 and 21. This is substantially lower than last year's youth employability analysis in terms of overall employable youth, but it is a good indication of India's rising professional landscape's average age. This urges the need for reformative measures at the roots of education to equip younger students with skills necessary for in-demand career opportunities in various industries. This highlights the fact that the Indian workforce is not appropriately skilled for the contemporary job market. This lack of skill sets makes the role of vocational and skill education even more relevant, given the times and changes in the employability domains over the years. The importance of the matter was even noted in the National Education Policy of 2020:

According to the 12th Five-Year Plan (2012-2017), less than 5% of the Indian workforce between the ages of 19 and 24 received formal vocational education. The number is 52% in the United States, 75% in Germany, and up to 96% in South Korea. These figures highlight the urgent need to accelerate the expansion of vocational education in India.

Under the 2020 National Education Policy, the Indian government aims to overcome the prejudices associated with vocational and skill education by gradually integrating vocational education programmes into mainstream education at all levels and institutions. The Government also aims to expose at least 50% of learners by 2025 to vocational education through the school and higher education system. The focus areas for vocational education integration into schools and higher education institutions will depend on the skills gap analysis and the availability of local opportunities. The current running sectors, according to the QP-NOS list available on the National Skill Development Corporation website include Aerospace & Aviation, Agriculture, Apparel, Made-Ups & Home Furnishing, Automotive, Banking, Financial Services and Insurance, Beauty & Wellness, Capital Goods, Construction, Domestic Worker, Electronics & Hardware, Food Processing, Furniture & Fittings, Gems & Jewellery, Green Jobs, Handicrafts & Carpets, Healthcare, Hydrocarbon, Infrastructure Equipment, Instrumentation, Automation, Surveillance and Communication, Iron & Steel, IT-ITES, Leather, Life Sciences, Logistics, Management and Entrepreneurship & Professional, Media & Entertainment, Mining, Paints and Coatings, People with Disability, Plumbing, Power, Retail, Rubber,

Sports, Telecom, Textile & Handlooms, Tourism & Hospitality. Agrawal (2014) had shared the list of Schemes and Initiatives under the National Skill Development Corporation includes Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY), Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendra (PMKK), India International Skill Centre (IISC) Network, Technical Intern Training Program (TITP), Seekho aur Kamao, and Skilled Workers Arrival Database for Employment Support (SWADES). The list of Schemes and Initiatives under the Directorate General of Training includes- Craftsmen Training Scheme (CTS), Crafts Instructor Training Scheme (CITS), Apprenticeship Training under the Apprentices Act, 1961, Advanced Vocational Training Scheme (AVTS), Vocational Training Programme For Women, Skills Strengthening for Industrial Value Enhancement (STRIVE), Initiatives in the North East and LWE affected areas, Trade Testing, Current Initiatives in the DGT Landscape, Dual System of Training (DST), and Polytechnics.

1.6 Background of the Study

This research stemmed from the researcher's observation and understanding while teaching vocational and postgraduate students. During the teaching experience, the researcher observed how the learners of various content areas and vocational skills distanced English as a language and felt hesitant to use it even in casual classroom dialogue. The divide between language and content was overpowering, and the utility of the language in their content area was unseen. The learners would attend the English classes either out of compulsion or fear of failing miserably in the language during their exams or interviews. However, learning the language and using it to communicate was hardly ever the intent for most learners.

The English paper was seen as an alienated course in the postgraduate environment, which offered nothing to the content area and was merely an additional paper to score marks. For vocational learners, the English language was essential only for the purpose of getting a suitable placement, and rote learning was the means to learn possible answers to common questions. In both scenarios, learning and connecting the language to the content area was never observed.

Teachers in both postgraduate and vocational educational settings mainly emphasised content as the central area. Teachers would like a grammatically correct and well-written submission, but there was negligible emphasis on language development in classrooms. In vocational classrooms, teachers aided most of the rote learning as the students would come

for a limited time, and placements were the goal of the course. These background instances resulted in the researcher choosing CLIL as the area of research.

1.7 Statement of the Problem

English is taught and learnt as a subject during the formative years without much attention being given to language skills, viz. listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Over the years, reading and writing skills have been tested, but listening and speaking skills have failed to garner any attention. Also, the content subjects are taught in isolation without mentioning English as the language tool, thus creating a divide between content and language learning. However, better employability is driven by all four language skills and content-driven language use, which becomes a hindrance for most learners.

1.8 Research Question

This study investigated the following research questions:

1. What were the responses of the learners towards the CLIL approach?
2. What were the responses of the trainers towards the CLIL approach?
3. Does an integrated content and language approach help in building learners' confidence?

1.9 Hypothesis

The ruling hypothesis of this study was that CLIL is an effective and welcoming approach to helping learners with their language and content development. The study is a quasi-experimental intervention research study based on fieldwork. It is dual in nature, both exploratory and experimental, with mixed-method research designs and the research questions as the central focus.

1.10 The Need for CLIL

According to Coyle et al., (2010) CLIL is a dual-focus educational approach in which an additional language is used to acquire and teach both topic and language. An additional language may be a learner's 'foreign language' or a second language.

CLIL is a needed approach, as content and language cannot be taught in isolated separation; they need to be taught as an integrated whole for learners to be able to apply

what they have learnt. The use of language to communicate one's knowledge is seen as a significant hurdle among learners in India. Learners' content and language knowledge individually is strong, but many learners falter when it needs to be combined. Thus, an approach like CLIL shall help bridge the gap between content and language knowledge for learners, wherein a learner can use the language skills effectively to share and understand the content.

Vocational and skill courses emphasise active application and communication of content knowledge with correct language ability, as these sectors are market-driven. The learners in these sectors need to use language effectively in all four - listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills to convey and apply their content knowledge for day-to-day functioning. A deficiency in language skills leads to unemployment or underemployment, which is a significant issue for most learners, even though they may be competent in their content knowledge. The inability to express one's knowledge is a big concern for learners, teachers, and trainers. Hence, if CLIL is used as the teaching and learning approach in the classrooms, and if it yields positive results for the learners, CLIL may help bridge the content and language gap and help reduce unemployment.

1.11 Purpose of the Study

The study was driven by the purpose of assessing the response of the learners and trainers in the vocational and skill sectors about the CLIL approach. The study even tried to find how effective the approach was in helping the learners gain the confidence to use language effectively for their content usage and communication. This assessment would help to promote CLIL as a practical approach in the vocational and skill sector, where there is no uniform approach to language teaching. As India promotes the vocational and skill sectors, a well-defined and tested approach to language and content teaching would be a way forward for the learners and the vocational and skill sectors. Research in the field of CLIL has gained momentum in India, and with a research focusing on the views of learners and trainers towards the approach shall help the teaching and learning process, along with securing a great understand towards the approach which can be used to promote the vocational and skill sector.

1.12 Rationale of the Study

A biased view towards content superiority is quite the norm, where most learners focus solely on the technicalities of a subject and completely ignore the language that aids the understanding of the content subject. The CLIL approach shall help balance the norm and promote the integration of essential and impactful content and language. Through the CLIL approach, learners shall focus on the need to understand and use their content knowledge with the help of language.

Marsh (2009) shared that CLIL is seen as an approach that enables learners to access subject-specific jargon and even prepares them for the future, which may be in higher studies and/or works. CLIL is holistic in nature, as seen in its 4Cs curriculum, and it can be applied to every field of learning. Thus, the approach of CLIL is highly effective, making research in this field extraordinarily vital and making the present study needful.

1.13 Aims of the Study

Aims are guidelines that help the study reach its desired outcome. The aims of the following study conducted are:

- To find an approach widely accepted by the learners.
- To understand the needs of the trainers when choosing an approach.
- To help learners bridge the gap between content and language learning.
- To help trainers integrate content and language teaching.
- To raise sensitivity towards the importance of language skills.
- To introduce CLIL as a workable approach.
- To increase learners' confidence with the help of the CLIL approach.
- To generate interest among learners and trainers in the CLIL approach for future use in the vocational and skill sectors.

1.14 Objectives of the Study

Research objectives focus on how the aims of the study will be achieved. The following are the research objectives of the present study:

- Introduce the CLIL approach through the intervention study to showcase its utility in helping learners with content and language learning.
- Assess the learners' progress in confidence after the CLIL intervention.
- Analyse the learners' responses towards the CLIL intervention with the help of questionnaires and semi-structured interviews.
- Analyse the trainers' responses to the CLIL intervention using a classroom observation checklist, questionnaires, and interviews.

1.15 Possible Outcomes of the Study

This study may introduce CLIL to the learners and trainers as a new teaching and learning approach that will help them achieve their content and language goals. The CLIL intervention for the study was designed for a limited time frame. However, its outcome would help the learners with their confidence in both the content and language areas and develop listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. The learners and trainers may positively respond to the CLIL approach, though training for CLIL classes and developing CLIL materials would be needed. This research would shed light on the positive aspects of CLIL and the limitations and work that would be needed to make this approach a more commonly used teaching and learning practice.

1.16 Conclusion

This chapter examined the research's primary characteristics in detail. It introduced CLIL and its prominence and shed light on vocational and skill development education in India and its scope. This chapter marks good precedence for the next chapter, which elaborates upon the literature available on CLIL and its theoretical framework.