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RESEARCH ARTICLE

IMPLEMENTATION OF CONTENT AND LANGUAGE INTEGRATED LEARNING IN THE INDIAN CLASSROOM FOR PROMOTING MULTILINGUALISM AMONG LEARNERS

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Abstract

Multilingual classrooms are becoming more common around the globe due to mass migration of people and also because of global trade and commerce. Learners need to be multilingual in order to succeed transnationally as the world is becoming a global knowledge center. India is a linguistically diverse nation where multilingual classrooms are common. But generally, this multilingualism is limited to social conversations. Learners fail to acquire academic language proficiency in their second, third or any other additional language. So, teachers should follow a language teaching approach which can motivate and help the learners in acquiring academic language proficiency in the second or third language. This paper suggests that content and language integrated learning (CLIL) is a viable language teaching approach which can be helpful in teaching second or any additional language in the Indian classroom. The paper explains the benefits of CLIL in language teaching and presents a sample lesson framed by the author to teach English language through Social Science content at the elementary school level. In the discussion part, the author explains that similar lessons can be framed in any language to teach both content and language. Thus, this approach will be helpful in promoting multilingualism in the Indian classrooms.

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Introduction:-

Globalisation, migration and various forms of virtual mobility has accelerated the process of multilingualism across the globe affecting the scenario of language education. Indian society is plurilingual in nature with twenty-two recognized languages as per the eighth schedule of the Indian Constitution. Multilingualism is interweaved in the social system of Indian society as a result of which the Indian educational system follows the “Three language formula”. According to Linguistic Diversity Index reported by UNESCO (2009), India is one of the most linguistically diverse nations in the world. The linguistic diversity creates a rich cultural resource which has its influence on the social, political, economic, and educational system of India. Now, let us have a look at the actual meaning of multilingualism.

According to Li (2008), any individual who has the ability to communicate in more than one language can be termed as multilingual. European Commission (2007) states that, multilingualism is the ability to engage with more than one

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language on a daily basis. British Council(2019) puts forth that, a multilingual classroom is one where learners know and use two or more languages. It is also expected that learners will be learning two or more languages.

The multilingual diversity brings both opportunities as well as challenges to the complex Indian education system (Lightfoot. et.al,2021). The new National Education Policy (MoE, 2020) has laid greater emphasis on the languages in education as compared to the previous policies. The policy also talks about the cognitive benefits of multilingualism to young learners and hence it recommends exposure to languages early on in life. It clearly advocates the need to promote multilingualism. As we all know that Indian classrooms are multilingual in nature, but most often, this remains limited to social conversations. Though Indian education system follows the Three Language Formula, it is noteworthy that learners do not exhibit equal proficiency in the second or third language as compared to first language taught at the school level. For meaningful participation in democratic, social, and economic system, oral and literacy skills are highly desirable in multiple languages (Cummins, & Hornberger, 2008). Therefore, this paper aims to reflect on Content and Language Integrated Learning as a viable approach to promote multilingualism in the Indian classroom.

Benefitsof multilingualism:

UNESCO, Sustainable Development Goal, Education 2030, talks about education for ‘global citizenship.’ In order to become a ‘global citizen’, it is very important to be multilingual and participate in the global knowledge and economic system. Research says that multilingual people exhibit superior metalinguistic and metacognitive abilities as compared to monolinguals (Haukås, 2016). Evans(2018), says that multilingualism plays a very important role in learner’s academic performance. UNESCO highly supports the promotion of ‘multilingual ethos’ and teaching in mother tongue at school level in developing countries (Evans, 2018; Alidou, & Ganz, 2015; Ball, 2010; UNESCO 2008, 2016). NEP 2020 suggests the use of multiple languages in the classroom, focussing on multilingualism as an objective of school curriculum and pedagogy (NEP, 2020). The policy further talks about offering foreign languages such as Korean, Thai, Chinese, Japanese, French, German, etc. to secondary level students so that they get exposed to the cultures of the world and global knowledge. Considering all these one cannot overlook or deny the importance of a pedagogy which caters to the needs of a multilingual classroom.

Do we need an innovative pedagogy for multilingual classrooms?

‘The Three Language Formula’, was first incorporated in the National Policy on Education, 1968. Ever since then, it has always been a part of Indian Education system and has played a very significant role in preparing multilingual citizens as well as managing the language of instruction as well as languages to be taught to learners at school. Even the New Education Policy, 2020 backs ‘the Three Language Formula’ to promote multilingualism and preserve the linguistic diversity of India. But sadly, due to lack of resources, this policy has not been implemented in its true sense. Learners fail to attain the requisite linguistic skill i.e; listening, speaking, reading, and writing in the second and third language. Hence, learners fail to use those languages academically, their ‘multilinguisticity’ is limited only to their social gatherings and conversation. Most learners fail to acquire all the four core linguistic skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) in their second and third language. There can be three probable reasons for this-

1. The language is taught as a subject and not as a language.
2. Teachers do not put focus on all the four linguistic skills.
3. Teachers do not follow an interactive activity based pedagogical style.

Since, multilingual skill is a 21st century skill, it is time we should rethink our teaching strategy in the language classroom. We need to think of a pedagogical approach which would make the teaching and learning of second, third or any language more meaningful and enhance the linguistic skills of the learners in that particular language. Research suggests that CLIL which is an acronym for Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) can be very beneficial in the teaching-learning of second/third or any other foreign language. CLIL can be defined as a dual-focussed educational approach where an additional language is used to teach both content and language. It is an approach which combines the learning of content and second language into a single educational experience (Mehisto et al., 2008). A research study carried out by Merino & Lasagabaster (2015), suggests that content and language integrated learning could be highly convenient in promoting multilingualism in schools. It helps to prepare multilingual and multicultural learners because it gives equal importance to cognition, culture, content, communication which is termed as 4C’s framework (Coyle, 2008).

Emerging needs for promoting CLIL

CLIL is not only about integrating language and content together to teach second or an additional language, it is about cognition of deeper knowledge, learning the art of communication, learning the content through activities and becoming culturally aware. Activities play the major role by motivating learners to use the language as a tool to think critically and communicate for a better understanding of any topic. It is also learner centric which involves a lot of group and pair work, creating sociocultural environment for learning a language. NCERT(2017), states that learners should be able to use the language as an instrument to learn the content subject and create new knowledge. The document also says that the content and other resources related to language teaching should create an environment with which children can identify and connect. CLIL has the potential to cater to all these needs. The growing demand for multilingualism and critical thinking as a 21st century skill is also one of the reasons why our language classrooms need a pedagogical approach like CLIL.

Question might pop up with reference to the implementation of CLIL in the Indian context, when it is an approach developed and experimented in Europe. So, it must be noted that the strength of CLIL is that it can be contextualised and enacted in different types of learning environment with the help of guiding principles (Boweretal, 2020). It is more of a practice or method than a theory. Urban India mainly goes to English medium schools and lacks proficiency in regional or mother tongue while gaining fluency in English language. In rural areas, children learn in mother tongue or regional language, thus lacking acquisition of English language. In today's competitive environment English proficiency is highly required for economic success and one must have proficiency in regional or local language in order to preserve and protect one's culture and heritage. In this case we need a pedagogy which can create a linguistic balance in our society and also bridge the language divide among rural and urban India. CLIL approach can be highly beneficial in this situation as it helps to learn the content through the target language. Content integrated language instruction focusses on the integration of both language and content at cognitive as well as cultural level. The classroom practice of this pedagogical approach, needs proper planning and organization of content in the target language. CLIL is effective enough to promote linguistic competency and enhances cognitive flexibility (Coyle, Hood, Marsh, 2010). It gives learners a natural environment that helps in the acquisition of language, thus helping learners to achieve greater proficiency (Harrop, 2012; Lyster, 2007; Krashen, 1985; Lightbown & Spada, 2006).

It is a dual approach where both language and content are taught parallelly. Content can be adapted from any discipline and hence it can be called as cross-curricular in nature; like, social science content can be used to teach English language. While teaching both the content as well as linguistic goals are taken care of. Each lesson unit contains – Linguistic, Content, Communication and Cognition objectives arranged and planned sequentially (Morgado, 2018). It is also important to prepare content which is locally contextualized for the learners (Griffiths, 2019).

CLIL supports interdisciplinary integration of content and knowledge. It creates a natural environment similar to the one in which a child learns his/her first language. Since it is activity based, learner-centred approach, so the learners are personally engaged with the language to be learnt. In a CLIL classroom, the teacher acts as a facilitator and scaffolds the learners when they find it difficult to express themselves in the target language. CLIL offers an array of benefits to the learners-

1. It helps to learn both the language and the content simultaneously.
2. It is activity-based learning so, it provides motivation for both language and content learning. The activities are designed in such a manner that learners learn to think critically and sensitively. The learning outcomes stated by NCERT(2017,2019), for upper primary and secondary level expects the same from the learners.
3. Since, activities need pairing and sharing, learners learn to work as teams. It provides them greater opportunity for socialization and as a result learners improve their communication skills.
4. It is interdisciplinary in nature.
5. In a CLIL classroom, the content is related to the lives and culture of the learners. Hence, they can connect with the content and find it interesting to learn.
6. It helps to create bilingual, multilingual and globally competent citizens who can confidently participate in the global task force.

How does CLIL work?

For a CLIL classroom, the teacher first needs to assess the language learning needs of learners in the target language. The teacher also assesses the interests of the learners so that he/she can design meaningful and interesting

content for the class. Designing content for CLIL classrooms is very crucial because there is a scarcity of these materials in the market and this concern has been raised by many CLIL researchers. Research says that there is a dearth of readymade CLIL textbooks in the market (Menegale, 2020) and those which are available lack the element of scaffolding which is essential for language support (López – Medina, 2016). Banegas (2017), states that teacher-developed CLIL materials are suitable resources for teaching CLIL because they are designed by assessing the needs of the learners and are contextualized. He also adds that the learning material should be culturally related to the lives of the learners. Hence, teachers mostly prepare the CLIL textbooks and other materials on their own (Banegas, 2017). Self-created CLIL materials are prepared according to the need, age, language level and learning skills of the learners (Banegas, 2017; Menegale, 2020). While planning and preparing the CLIL textbooks and materials, a framework of learning strategies (metacognitive, cognitive, and socio-affective) should be kept in mind.

Since, CLIL has a dual focus both on language and content, the material developers should also focus on The Language Triptych (Coyle, 2010). Language Triptych has three components-

1. Language of Learning
2. Language for Learning
3. Language through Learning

Language objectives and content objectives are both logically connected through the Language Triptych (Martin del Pozo, 2016), which forms a solid framework based on which teachers can prepare their own CLIL material.

McLoughlin (2021), says that the CLIL material designed by the teachers should provide the learners with new knowledge through communicative, task-based learning approach. She also says that, the CLIL material should be competent enough to help the learners acquire academic language proficiency in the target language. The CLIL material can be created by the teacher or adapted. The teaching-learning material used for CLIL classes can also be from current sources like newspaper articles, blogs, vlogs, webpages, or books. It should be activity-based and collaborative in nature with visuals in order to make them interesting. After the content is finalised, the teacher needs to plan her lesson based on both language and content goals. The content is then transacted by the teacher where learners collaborate and the teacher scaffolds them to build their subject-specific vocabulary and understand language usage.

CLIL in the Indian context:

Though the history of CLIL practice is quite old, but it was in the year 1994 that this term was coined in Europe (Mehisto et al., 2008). The European Union adopted this innovative and integrated educational approach at primary, secondary, and university level. According to Griffiths (2019), the idea was to boost bilingualism, multilingualism and to improve the cooperation between European countries. In India, CLIL remains unexplored, both in terms of implementation as well as research. The research is scarce in this area, but the handful of which are available speak positively about the effectiveness of CLIL. Vency (2013, 2016), recommends to administer CLIL approach in the Indian educational system in order to improve communication skills of the learners. Anuradha & Viswanathan (2019), also recommend to use CLIL approach in Indian schools as it is effective in improving not just linguistic skills but also the thinking skills of the learners. In the year 2016, CLIL @ India, a three year project was started in collaboration with Erasmus+ programme of the European Union. The main objective of the project was to implement CLIL as an innovative pedagogical practice in the Indian Education system to boost country's multilingualism. The main target languages covered in this project are Kannada, Marathi, Tamil, Punjabi, Hindi, & English. But this approach has not gained much popularity in India. The practice of CLIL approach has not reached at the school education level in India. This paper aims to suggest the implementation of CLIL in Indian school curriculum in order to improve learner's bilingual as well as multilingual skills. The paper discusses the process of CLIL implementation by giving an example of a self-developed CLIL lesson. The paper aims to provide suggestions which could be followed by teachers without much hassle. They can practice this approach in their classrooms to foster bilingualism and multilingualism and prepare learners with a better level of linguistic proficiency in their second or any other additional language.

The main challenge in CLIL implementation is the unavailability of CLIL teaching material. Banegas (2010, 2013), observes that the dearth of ready-made text-books and other suitable teaching material is considered as one of the disadvantages of CLIL approach. In her master's thesis, Makiranta (2014), too laments about the lack of suitable CLIL material in several European countries. The problem of unavailability of quality CLIL material persists in India also because this pedagogical approach is not practised in India. Since this approach remains unexplored in India,

there is hardly any research addressing this problem. This research article would try to address the issue of CLIL material design in the Indian context.

Now, the question arises as to how to implement this approach in Indian classrooms which lack resources. This approach is prescriptive in nature and can be easily adapted and contextualised in the Indian context. The target language to be taught in the CLIL classroom can be decided by assessing the needs of the learners and also the language policy of that particular state in which the school is located. For example, in the state of West Bengal, in English medium schools, Bengali can be chosen as the target language for the CLIL classroom. Similarly, in Bengali medium schools where English is taught as second language, teachers can choose English language to be taught in the CLIL classroom. After selecting the target language, the teachers need to select, adapt or design suitable CLIL teaching material. This can be done by adapting original text books or selecting portions from the current sources like articles from newspaper, magazines, blogs, or websites. The text should be accompanied with collaborative and task-based activities. Banegas (2017), draws on several CLIL authors and concludes that the activities should be arranged from lower order thinking skill to higher order thinking skill. The material should have the scope for a lot of peer-talk and classroom conversation in the target language. Learners should communicate without caring for grammatical mistakes. In order to make the lesson more engaging, teachers should include ICT and a lot of visual element in the CLIL material. The teachers should practice appropriate pronunciation, expression and gesture to provide scaffolding to the learners. The activities should be based on all the four linguistic skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing) so that the language is acquired for academic purpose and not just for communicating in social gatherings. In this regard, McDonough, Shaw, and Masuhara (2013), believe that the CLIL material should have scope to aid language and cognitive development of the learners. Overall, the goal should be to design and create quality material which can cater to the needs of CLIL approach. Ball (2018), puts forth that quality materials are an essential part of education, especially for those teachers who are dealing with a specialized educational approach such as CLIL. Mehisto (2012), provides ten (10) point criteria for producing CLIL material. He calls them 'principles. As per five (5) of these principles, quality CLIL materials should----

1. Clearly state the learning intentions and process to the learners.
2. Promote the development of learning skills and learner autonomy
3. Have self, peer and other types of formative assessment
4. Promote co-operative learning
5. Encourage critical thinking

Ball (2018), observes that none of these principles are associated with language teaching, all of these are meta-disciplinary in nature. He further adds that CLIL materials should be developed by following these guidelines.

Now for a better understanding of the approach and to practice this in schools with minimal resources, a sample of a self-developed CLIL material is provided. The content of the lesson is based on social science and the target language is English. CLIL lesson can be prepared in any language but since English is a common and popular language offered as second language in most of the Indian schools, so the author has chosen to develop the lesson in English. The same lesson can be developed in any language.

Deforestation

Learning Objectives:

Language goals: Learners will be able to

1. Understand the synonyms and word forms of the new words in the text.
2. Articulate their views regarding the impact of deforestation on our planet.
3. Read the text in the context of meaning-making.
4. Process new, dense or abstract spoken or written information through teacher's scaffolding.
5. Understand the usage of tenses in the text.
6. Use the language learnt to express their views critically and sensitively.
7. Content Goals: Learners will be able to
8. State the factors behind deforestation.
9. Understand the importance of trees in their lives.
10. Explain the process of global warming.
11. Analyse the impact of deforestation on earth.
12. Develop ways in which forest can be conserved and global warming can be controlled.

Deforestation is the process of clearing forest land for some purposeful work. Since time immemorial, forest land has been cleared for agriculture, to collect wood for fuel and construction works like building factories, housing societies, roads, etc. Deforestation has great impact on the landscape of the world. Everywhere, throughout the world, the forest cover is decreasing. This has accelerated the process of global warming because due to the lack of trees, there is more carbon-dioxide in the atmosphere. World's bio-diversity is also threatened due to deforestation. Due to razing of forests, many of the animal species are driven into extinction. Soil-erosion and drought are some other effects of deforestation.

We must conserve our forest land, if we want to slow down the pace of climate change and preserve wild life.

Lexical bank:

Deforestation:

process of clearing forest land for some purposeful work
Global warming: gradual increase in the temperature of Earth's atmosphere
Accelerated: increase the rate
Extinction: reduction to zero in the number of plant or animal species

Activity 1. Running dictation (Reading, writing, listening, speaking)

The class will be divided into groups. The teacher will stick text related to deforestation on the walls of the classroom. One child from each group will run and read two lines from the text stuck on the wall. He/she will run and dictate it to his group members. In this way when the dictation is over, another child will read out the original text and correct their dictation. Then the teacher will ask key concepts about deforestation and draw a concept map to introduce the lesson.

Activity 2. Information gap (Listening)

The teacher will read out the given paragraph twice. Then the learners will be asked to complete the information table.

Excerpt:

17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) came into force on 1st January'2016. These goals aim to make the world a better place by 2030. The whole world needs to participate in order to realize these goals. Government, corporate sector, civil society, and the youth need to act, save, and protect the Earth. No poverty, zero hunger, quality education, gender equality, climate action is some of the important sustainable development goals adopted by United Nations.

Sustainable development goals came into force on	_____
World will be a better place by	_____
Two of the sustainable development goals are:	_____, _____
SDGs were adopted by	_____

Activity 3. Brainstorming ideas (Writing)

Brainstorming ideas for a healthier planet. The class will be divided into groups. Each group will brainstorm ideas based on the given statements and prepare a poster.

1. Only buy what you need and use what you buy.
2. Sustainable food guide
3. Things that you can do from your home to make the world healthier and greener
4. Hazardous plastic

Activity 4. Talk show (writing, speaking)

Work in groups. The class will be divided into groups. Each group will prepare a set of questions related to various aspects of deforestation. The teacher would provide the clue words to frame the questions. Then each group will host a "Green Talk Show", where they would discuss those questions.

Activity 5. Picture talk (writing, critical thinking)

Work in pairs. Look at this image carefully and write down your inference in about 100 words. The teacher will provide a vocabulary sheet in order to scaffold writing.



(Image courtesy: pixabay.com)

Conclusion:-

This paper is limited to suggesting the implementation of CLIL in Indian classrooms for boosting multilingualism among learners. Research suggests that the CLIL approach has the potential to improve the learning outcomes of the learners in the target language. It is a well-known fact that Indian classrooms observe teaching-learning process in more than two languages. But most of the learners are not well-versed in their second or third language. Their knowledge remains limited to only understanding or speaking of the language in social gatherings. They somehow do not acquire academic level proficiency in the second or third language. In order to acquire multilingual skill, one must be proficient in all the four skills of two or more languages. Hence, it is important that an innovative pedagogical approach should be implemented in the Indian classrooms which would make the teaching and learning process of second, third or any language interesting for learners. In this context, teachers can resort to CLIL approach which gives dual focus to both content and language learning goals. Empirical research from European nations gives positive results about its impact on learner's linguistic as well as cognitive skills. It would work in the Indian context too, provided basic CLIL principles are followed and a proper smart and sustainable strategy is prepared to implement this integrative pedagogical approach.

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