The Challenges of Implementing Content Language Integrated Learning in Tertiary Education in Thailand: A Review and Implication of Materials

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ABSTRACT

The trends of globalization and intercultural communication influence education in most countries of the world. The implementation of content and language integrated learning (CLIL) is a big challenge for Thai content teachers and professional development programs. It is not easy for both teachers and learners who are non-native speakers of English. In Thailand, English is used as a foreign language, so teachers try to find out the most appropriate teaching approach to develop learners' English skills in order to serve the trends of globalization. This article expresses the idea of CLIL in Thailand, including challenges of implementing CLIL in Thai context, CLIL materials, and steps to successful material development in the Thai context. Additionally, it explains the problems of using CLIL among Thai teachers and learners. The goal is to understand principles that should be considered when adapting or designing CLIL materials for teaching in classrooms. Consecutive steps to implement materials to CLIL class are alternative for teachers to create the successful teaching. It can incorporate elements of the learner's first language and culture effectively. Furthermore, appropriate materials can be used in the classroom to help motivate learners.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, English language teaching has focused on teaching the language rather than teaching how the language is learned because the number of English teachers today tries to teach learners with the correct methodology, like vocabulary, grammar, expression, or collocations. Moreover, the English teachers teach learners through context. Therefore, Contents and Language Integrated Learning (henceforth, CLIL) is used in teaching and learning to enhance the Thai learners' English proficiency, and the content teachers are required to be responsible for teaching content subjects through the foreign language. Unfortunately, Thai content teachers have not been trained to teach their subjects in the foreign language, so they lack the methodological changes required in these contexts. They are unsure about the way they should perform in the CLIL class because these methods differ from the way they have been trained. The focus of this paper aims to propose the challenges of implementing CLIL in the Thai context, and the steps to implement materials to fit the needs of the CLIL classroom are presented.

CLIL IN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Content and Language Integrated Learning is an integrative approach which learners are taught with both content and language simultaneously. It is used as an instructional medium for teaching non-language subject classes (e.g. mathematics, history, geography, etc.). CLIL, therefore, emphasizes the learning and teaching of content and language, related to cultural, environmental, and learning matters based on content-based learning and English teaching methodologies (Coyle, Hood, & Marsh, 2010). Floris (2014) supported that CLIL refers to an educational method in which foreign or, in this case, English is used as a medium of instruction with the content. CLIL is seen as an umbrella term for all those procedures which some forms of specific and academic language support are given to learners so that they are able to facilitate their learning of the content through that language (Nowak, 2011). As a consequence, CLIL is the programs of teaching and learning which convey an innovative idea to enhance the learning of foreign language in the monolingual environment (Coyle, Hood & Marsh 2010). CLIL is renowned throughout Europe; however, adaptation is

required for different cultures and educational contexts in other countries.

CLIL IN THAI CONTEXT

Thai schools and some educational institutes have developed many programs to enhance the English educational curriculum, such as English Program (EP), Mini English Program (MEP), and International English Program (IEP), etc. CLIL was implemented more than a decade in the Thai educational system. Thai-instructed content classrooms were transformed into English integrated classrooms by the Ministry of Education (MOE) of Thailand. MOE promoted the teaching of content subjects in English, communication language teaching, and reinforcing English integrated education to develop Thai learners' English proficiency (Kewara, 2017).

The Ministry of Education of Thailand and the British Council applied the CLIL approach in Thailand in 2006 to improve the Thai educational proficiency level. Regarding this, the Thai learners' English performances in the CLIL project were gradually developed. Therefore, it revealed that the CLIL approach and its procedures were productive for language learning and suitable in Thai contexts. Furthermore, Thai learners had positive attitudes towards learning language (MacKenzie, 2008). Moreover, the government set the key indicators for Thailand in 2025, which are English shall be a core language, and learners will study English through the CLIL approach with the proper standard assessment using Information Communication Technologies (British Council, 2006; MacKenzie, 2008). Therefore, Thai content teachers, who master in subjects, need both the language support and the methods for adapting subject-specific language to complete their teaching. It is arduous and challenging for Thai content teachers who have to implement the CLIL framework into their teaching.

CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING CLIL APPROACH IN THAI CONTEXT

It becomes obvious that English language can be applied to many subjects in the CLIL classroom. However, although there were several advantages of the CLIL approach, some issues still taken into account before applying it to real classroom practices are such as teachers, learners, and materials.

Teachers

Preparing teachers is a key to success; however, the obstacle for Thai content teachers is the English language. CLIL teachers are required to teach one or more subjects in the curriculum in the other language rather than the usual language of instruction. Thai teachers lack English language skills and interpersonal communication skills. Language teachers are not trained for specific-subject teaching, and vice versa, content teachers are not trained to teach language. In the role of content and language teachers in the CLIL framework, CLIL teachers should teach the content with the way to enhance the learners' understanding of content through its manipulation, and change classes from the instructional to participa-tive classes. Moreover, CLIL teachers should try to motivate learner-learner interaction through collaboration and cooperative work not only teacher-learner interaction (Cummins, 1994). Some teachers misunderstand the CLIL concept that leads some teachers to think that they can implement CLIL simply by switching the language of that content into their target language (Pavon, 2013). Therefore, the Strategic Plan for Reforming the English Learning Process to Accelerate National Competitive Ability (2006-2010) was set by the Ministry of Education. The plan aims to establish the English Language Institutions and Training for in-service Teachers of English. Besides, two training centers which are English Language Institution and English Resource and Institutional Center are established by the Office of the Basic Education Commission to improve Thai teachers' English skills in all regions in Thailand (Punthumasen, 2007). Moreover, there are some training programs for CLIL teachers or bilingual teachers, and the professional development program has been designed for changing from traditional classes to CLIL based classes. Furthermore, Wolff (2007) described that content teachers do not need to speak like native speakers but they have to pay attention to the most important thing which is the language accuracy used in the content class.

Learners

The learners are actively involved in the CLIL classrooms. They have to participate in the preparation and presentation stages. These stages provide them the opportunities to take on authentic roles and follow real-world situations. Passive learners cannot activate active learning. CLIL approach encourages learners to work cooperatively with others. The learners have to work as a group effectively and should accept a person's strengths and weaknesses. Thai learners with low English proficiency can be an obstacle to implementing CLIL in class. They need to develop specific operating skills such as solving problems, together with thinking skills such as describing, classifying and matching and analyzing, interpreting and applying and all this has to be done in a language that is not mother language (Bentley, 2010). Learners have to be more interactive in class to enhance cooperation and collaboration with others and learn to practice problem-solving skills. It means the CLIL lesson is concerned with encouraging the learners to develop their thinking skills. However, it is not easy for learners who use English as a foreign language (EFL) to speak English fluently in an environment where English is rarely used outside the classroom.

Materials

The appropriate materials are an important tool for the teacher to teach a lesson effectively. The appropriate teaching material with the learners' level might determine the success of the teaching and learning process. While the CLIL literature is rich in positive experiences, some authors argued that one drawback was the lack of context-responsive CLIL materials in the market (Maley, 2011). Textbooks from other countries are not recommended because they are very different from the Thai context. Many materials are written for na-

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tive speakers. Additionally, commercial materials for CLIL teachers are not sufficient to support the CLIL learning management in a class. For this reason, teachers have to create their teaching materials or develop what is existing around them based on the 4Cs guidelines. It is new and difficult for Thai teachers in the Thai context. Thai educational institutes import native speaker textbooks because these books can be guaranteed quality. However, the content and context of the books become a challenge for CLIL teachers and learners. Smit (2007) remarks that the drawback of this type of authentic material is lack of contextualization as most examples may be American/British-based and, therefore, may not be connected to the learners' curriculum.

CLIL FRAMEWORK

To design a CLIL lesson, the four elements in the 4Cs pedagogical framework of CLIL including content, cognition, communication, and culture must be focused. The effective CLIL class needs both the acquisition of content knowledge and skill and learners' self-creation on their learning and thinking. Thinking process or the cognition has to be considered for the linguistic demands. Moreover, learners need to learn language through communication. The fundamental learning is the interaction in the learning context. CLIL requires intercultural awareness. The relationship between culture and language is needed in class. Coyle (2007) presented CLIL as the framework below.

There are also the challenges of planning CLIL teaching activities. Teachers have to select content, material, and activities, based on 4Cs, provided for learners' learning appropriately to maximize the usefulness of the CLIL approach.

MAIN CHARACTERISTIC OF CLIL MATERIALS

The availability and nature of the materials used to deliver the lesson is an important variable determining the success of a CLIL course. There are several principles that teachers need to consider when designing their teaching materials. These core features of CLIL material should be considered before choosing or adapting material for the CLIL classroom. All features integrated the 4Cs framework is integrated into the features as follows:

Multiple Functions

CLIL materials support content learning in language classes, and it should support language learning in content classes. It can organize learning through cross-curricular themes and projects. The language demands of materials will not be just the general academic language, but also subject-specific language. CLIL materials need to be involved practice in all skill of language such as reading, listening, writing, and speaking.

Authenticity

Authentic materials are the materials that learners encounter in their daily lives, such as daily newspapers and brochures which are not produced to teach modern foreign languages. In the CLIL classroom, making a regular connection be-

tween learning and learners' lives is important, so teachers can use authentic materials such as climate graphs, maps, and documentary extracts. The authentic materials develop an obvious connection between knowledge and the learners' learning styles. Nowadays, there are a lot of productive materials from media or online sources where it can be interesting options for teachers.

Enhancing Active Learning

Effective materials have to foster learners' communication in class more than teacher, and learners should be able to help set content, language, and learning outcomes. Besides, fostering creative and critical thinking of learners is important. The materials should support the active activities, and the individual, pair, small group, and large group activities, as well as presentations, have to be provided for learners.

Scaffolding

The materials should be constructed based on learners' existing knowledge, skills, attitudes, interests, and experiences. Then, information should be compiled in user-friendly ways and understandable. The benefit of scaffolding helps learners to master the content, task, and language by experiencing the understandable material they are using. Then, they can move forward to master the higher level of content confidently and understandably.

FOUR STEPS TO SUCCESSFUL MATERIALS IN THAI CONTEXT

There are consecutive steps to implement materials to fit the needs of CLIL learners across various contexts.
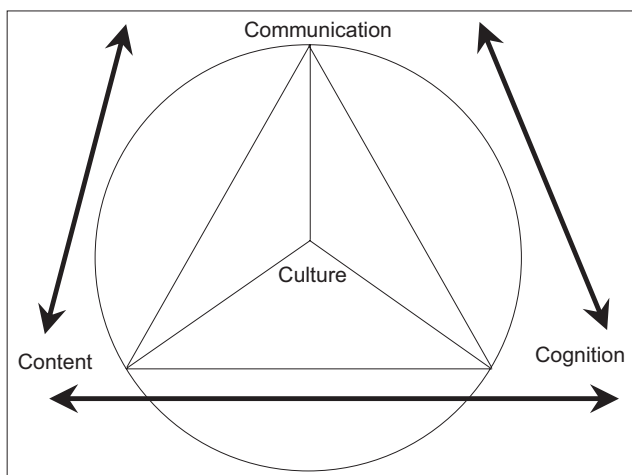
1) Planning

Firstly, teachers should clearly decide the subject-matter objectives. They have to know the language competency of each learner in the class and set the activities and lesson plan to meet the learners' needs.
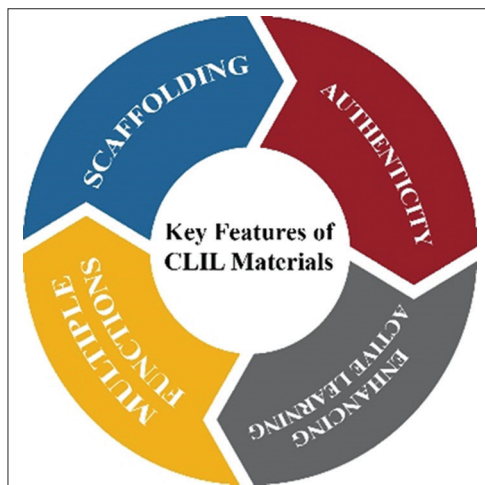
2) Selecting

Secondly, teachers find both authentic online and printed resources and materials. While selecting materials, the teachers should choose the materials which meet and match the objectives. In fact, teachers should consider whether or not the selected materials are too difficult to be used for learners.

3) Using

Thirdly, the materials can be adapted to suit the designed activities. Creating communication in the target language cannot be overlooked during the class. Teachers have to provide activities that encourage the learners' cognition and enhance their problem-solving skills. Learners might be asked to share their own experiences and ideas about the content or concept of the materials and connect it to their real lives by

The CLIL 4Cs Framework (Coyle, 2007)

Key features of CLIL materials

native speaker countries cannot be effective for all contexts. Therefore, teacher-produced materials are more useful. The teachers can tailor content to the teaching context and consider individual needs. Moreover, teachers can incorporate elements of the learner's first language and culture effectively. In addition, teacher-produced materials are able to develop the learners' motivation. Harrop (2012) pointed out that it can refresh motivation by providing a logical and essential context for language use. Moreover, CLIL encourages learners to engage and have the opportunity for using the foreign or English language in content properly. Hence, it reduces the learners' anxiety and panic in studying English or foreign language.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

CLIL materials could be implemented with adopting an appropriate style of instruction in the classroom, identifying learners' prior linguistic knowledge and skills, making use of group work and cooperative learning strategies, supporting the learner to develop strategies to cope with a lesson in different situations. Materials designed following the above steps would foster learners to achieve what they could do on their own, and make meaningful learning. It is the potential preparation in the aspect of globalization, striving to prepare learners for mobility and internationalization of their future professional and personal life (Dafouz and Guerrini, 2009).

Teachers, learners, and materials are considered the key challenges of implementing CLIL in the Thai context. Even though there were several teachers training programs, teachers should understand that in the CLIL classroom they should balance both content and language by promoting communication and culture in classrooms. The findings and implications of the present study are useful in that they inform teachers and learners about the features of the CLIL teaching and learning contexts which have not yet been widely researched in the Thai context. The consecutive steps to produce materials for the CLIL classroom can be utilized in the Thai context to create successful teaching. As Pavón and Rubio (2010) pointed out that the effectiveness of CLIL depends on the training of teachers, learner's individual characteristics, the teaching methodology, the type of curriculum, the available materials, and importantly, the social context in which this teaching and learning occurs.

using the target language. Sometimes teachers may have to offer hints and suggestions to lead them to gain the content and language. When they get the concept, they will grasp the content and language on their own.

4) Evaluating

Finally, the evaluation of materials is the vital stage to move forward to constantly respond to our learners' needs and wants in both micro and macro contexts (McGrath, 2001). For CLIL material, the evaluation focuses on either content or language. It should be focused on both the content and language. The teachers should oversee how well the contents are integrated and how effective learners can be used for communication. Creating the set of checklist when working on CLIL materials and lesson plans might be helpful for the CLIL teachers. Moreover, teachers are able to correct any mistakes found in terms of language and content.

ADVANTAGES OF TEACHER-PRODUCED MATERIALS

The CLIL classrooms is related to content, cognition, communication, and culture, so the commercial textbook from

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