Book Review "The Tkt Course Clil Module"

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Introduction

The aim of this book is to provide teachers and trainee teachers with a guide on how best to improve teaching knowledge through an additional module, tagged: CLIL – Content and Language Integrated Learning. The volume is particularly relevant to both teachers who teach different curricular subjects through the medium of English and English language teachers who use curriculum content in their teaching. The book is centrally focused on the fact that Teaching Knowledge Test TKT and Content and Language Integrated Learning CLIL, play a significant role in helping both the trainer and students to achieve success in short term learning outcomes. As a module for development of trainers, the course covers four key areas:

(i)   Knowledge and principles of CLIL

(ii)   Lesson preparation

(iii)   Lesson delivery, and

(iv)   Assessment

The units underscore the usefulness of the TKT: CLIL theory and practice to all teachers and learners working with English as an additional language – the challenges of the bridge period   between L1 and L2 and in other circumstances where English is used for specific purposes.

Divided into two parts of seventeen units, the book begins with an introduction that explains both the content and the target of TKT: CLIL. As a preamble to the module, the introduction further presents objectives and most specifically the theoretical concepts guiding the entire course – 'how each unit is organized and how it can be used'. To achieve this, the author prescribes an extensive use of TKT: CLIL glossary not contained in the book though essential to ELT – English Language Teaching.

Summary

Part 1: Knowledge of CLIL and Principles CLIL

 Knowledge of CLIL and principles of CLIL begins in units 1--5 by stating the aims of CLIL. In doing this, the book attempts a diachronic definition of CLIL as: an approach that contains language(s) in educational development (Marsh 2002); meaning focused learning (Van de Craen 2006); umbrella term which focuses on bilingual education situations (Gajo 2007) and finally, arriving at an operational definition found in (TKT: CLIL 2009) containing an educational approach to teaching and learning where subjects are taught through the medium of a non-native language.

Unit.1 defines and identifies the benefits of CLIL to the development of subject knowledge through L1 (source language) for better understanding in the L2 (target language). The unit clarifies key concepts associated with methodology classified as both **soft** and **hard** "CLILS". Soft CLIL being 'language – led' (some curricular topics and taught during the language course) and Hard CLIL, subject – led (taught in the target language).

The third section of unit 1 focuses on the '4CS' of CLIL made up of Content (the subjects/field of study), Communication (STT as student talking time, TTS teacher talking time and feedback), Cognition (thinking skills which challenge learners) and Culture (citizenship, context and environmental factors). The author insists that the concept of the 4Cs should be integrated into an ideal curricular planning and teaching. The unit finally summarizes the learning outcomes by maintaining the BICS-(Basic Interpersonal Communications Skills) and CALP cognitive Academic Language proficiency) as amenable teaching techniques of CLIL.

Unit 2 which focuses on language across the curriculum and identifies the role of language in CLIL taking into cognizance 'Language Forms' needed to achieve learning outcomes. In this bid, the module highlights the fact that CLIL learners are provided with the opportunities to develop linguistic abilities during lessons. Such abilities include the acquisition of 'vocabulary content-obligatory language' and 'grammar content compatible language as' chunks collectively rather than in parts. Generally, the book emphasizes testing knowledge of grammatical structures and functional language used across the curricular. To answer the question on how learners can achieve accuracy in grammatical expression, the author suggests the use of chunks/vocabulary commonly identified in the subject area; allowing learners at peer level to interact in the target language (English). The unit equally demands for immediate correction of errors commonly made by learners especially 'those induced because of L1 transfer' – when words, phrases and structures are produced as used in the first language.

Unit 3, which is captioned "Communication Skills Across the Curriculum" consolidates the basic fact that CLIL is subject tilted designed to improve both learning and instruction in English. Citing Eurydice survey (2006), the unit stresses the importance of communication for real practical purposes. Out of this learning outcome, learners are expected to develop communicative functions for the purpose of speaking and writing specifically: giving examples; describing a process, expressing conditions, describing trends in the present form, talking about purpose and defining concepts. Central to the communicative approach, the unit also prescribes more of STT than the TTT where the teaching instructor avails learners the opportunity of learning from peers. Rounding the unit with reflection and discovery activity, the author identifies the purpose of communication as follows: to hypothesize, check information, define terms and concepts, describe location, give example and to evaluate work.

Unit 4, on 'Cognitive Skills Across the Curriculum,' describes a range of skills in the order of their corresponding activities and how to organize them for better comprehension by the learner. The unit further defines cognitive skills as the 'processes our brains use when thinking and learning'. In this process, learners organize information into basic compartments of – what, when, which, who and how and even at a more sophisticated levels when attending to hypothetical questions which answer the 'why and what'.

LOTS (lower order thinking skills) and HOTS (higher order thinking skills) are also identified as a way of categorizing information for learning/instruction. In this pattern, the author makes the following categories that lead from LOTS to HOTS.

LOTS	**HOTS**
In remembering information	➢ Developing reasoning skills
Ordering information	➢ Developing enquiry and discussion
Defining objects	➢ Developing creative thinking
Checking understanding	➢ Evaluating one's work and others
Reviewing learning	➢ Hypothesising about what could happen

On explaining the LOTS and HOTS in classifying information, the unit suggests that learners' cognitive skills could be developed through: tasks/challenges appropriate to the subjects and equally by effective questioning to enable learners make associations (make links) and think deeply.

Unit 5, which sums the part 1 of the module, dwells on 'Learning Skills Across the Curriculum'. In this section, learning skills refer to how to learn and develop 'learner – autonomy' in respective fields of study be it mathematics, linguistics, science or any field. Highlight of some of the skills with their corresponding CLIL examples are given ranging from: carrying investigations, cooperating with others, data handling, guessing from context, organizing information, solving problems and summarizing to planning. The unit mentions the immediate and long term objective of a typical CLIL classroom stressing the need for both learner autonomy and consolidation of knowledge defined by target fields of study – problem-based/task-based learning, utilization of information or interpretation of data. Both the reflection and discovery activities of the unit emphasis the need to solicit/elicit responses from the whole class, small groups and individuals with the aim of establishing learners autonomy.

Part 2. Lesson Preparation
Unit 6 'Planning a Lesson or Series of Lessons', stands as an intersection between the knowledge and skills of CLIL. The unit further focuses on the importance of learning outcome in a lesson plan which should be categorized into what learners should know, what they can do and what they should be aware of.

In addition, the key concept "competence" defined as a level of students' attainment is reserved as a starting point that should lead to description of the subject in an area to be developed. By this expectation, lesson preparation requires a description of the basic details in oral and written aspects of communication. In addition, the process of making a CLIL lesson plan must particularly make provision for a 'language-rich environment' to help learners to focus on content language in context. The follow-up activity equally provides six moves in the following priority for a good lesson plan: learning outcomes, procedure, communication, cognition, resources and assessment.

Unit 7, focuses on 'Language Demands of Subject Content and Accompanying Task', and emphasizes the ability of a CLIL lesson planner to identify different text types and their purposes. The language demand by the terms of this unit stresses the knowledge of genre types like forms of language expression – discussion, explanation, instruction procedure, proposals and the traditional genres based on spoken and written forms. The unit also reiterates the fact that the genres language learners need must depend on the curricular subjects. In the reflect activity, the unit demands a co-curricular teaching of Genre based teaching to improve reading and writing in order to meet up defined purpose(s) and objectives of the field of study required in CLIL.

Unit 8 titled 'Resources Including Multi-media and Visual Organizers', prescribes how to use a range of resources for CLIL. The support for the visual based learning includes posters, realia, subject specific dictionaries and ICTs (multi-media facilities) to help learners understand the ideas and experiences from many people, communities and cultures. In addition to audio-visual aids in CLIL classroom, the unit shows how visual/graphic organizers help learners in many ways to connect knowledge and ideas, understand and recall information, select, transfer and categorize information.

Unit 9, 'Materials Selection and Adoption', identifies how instructional materials are selected and converted for a CLIL effective teaching. In this effort, the author differentiates between language use in ELT and CLIL where the materials are selected because of the subject content. In this context, the language is subject oriented and with reference to L1. The unit also emphasizes the need for adaptation of materials with examples largely drawn from local content. In the context, the trainer is advised to consider the levels, age and grade of the learners for the selection of appropriate and applicable material(s).

Unit 10, 'Activity Type', dwells on the need to learn and apply different activities with well defined purposes such as communicating subject content orally; developing listening and reading skills, and supporting written or physical production. In defining the activities, the book requires trainers to engage trainees and students in CLIL compliant activities e.g.

   (i)   Loop or domino games (to develop accuracy and intensive   listening skills);

(ii)   Pyramid discussion (to develop oral communication), collaboration   and   production   of content vocabulary,

(iii)   Hot seat, to develop communicative fluency, questioning skills and   reporting   of   content facts; and,

(IV)   Identification keys – Binary, which involves a progression questions with only two answers, or Lateral, used for comparing features.

Both the discovery activity and reflection in this unit recommend that the trainer should engage the learner in a number of tasks and exercises.

Unit 11 'Classroom Language' under the subtitle 'Lesson Delivery', highlights how teachers/learners used language in the CLIL classroom. In the attempt to get learners to be more expressive in speaking and writing skills, the unit identifies the need to activate prior collaboration, monitor briefs and respond to learning needs. Questioning is also identified as an important part of learning in classroom and therefore recommended to be

used to encourage dialogue with learners. In doing so, learners should take part in meaningful classroom talk – during the whole class, group or pair work: The trainer is also encouraged to attend to questions by eliciting for answers from the learners.

Unit 12 'Scaffolding content and language learning', first defines the concept of Scaffolding as step a teacher takes to support learners when new concepts and skills are introduced. Citing (Gibbons 2008), the author reiterates that Scaffolding provides 'a temporary support to help learners do things now and in the future'. While the emphasis here is the subject oriented learning, the most basic Scaffolding technique rest on: creating interest; breaking tasks into small steps: pre, ongoing and after task support; using visuals and realia; using model texts for predicting of language materials and provision of constructive feedback. The unit effectively explains the two basic Scaffolding key concepts: 'Receptive skills' (dealing with listening and reading) and Productive skills, allowing for (speaking and writing).

Unit 13, 'Methods to Help Learners Develop Learning Strategies' describes the learning strategies used in CLIL. Some of the commonest strategies include: memorizing, drawing images, underlining, key content vocabulary development and sometimes making reference/association to and between L1 and L2 the target language. Introducing meta-cognition or thinking about thinking, the unit presents that learning can be divided into five basic parts: preparation and planning; selecting and using strategies; monitoring learning; integrating strategies and evaluating learning. The key point of the learning strategies in a CLIL classroom however identifies the challenge caused by difference(s) between able learners   and less able learners. Out of this, a trainer should incorporate and suggest all the techniques commonly used by the learners.

Unit 14, 'Consolidating Learning and Differentiation' tracks in context the difficulties found in a CLIL classroom when students find revisiting previous content difficult. It also mentions the difference between the able learners and the less able learners, thereby suggesting ways of improving both the learners input and output. To consider learning and bridge the differences between learners according to needs, the unit advocates that there should be monitoring (observation of learners at all stages), constant reviewing of the content and assigning of home work in order to provide learner autonomy.

Unit 15 focuses on 'assessment' making emphasis on soft and hard CLIL. The unit endorses the assessment of both language and content respectively. Where language is contained as in Soft CLIL, it is scaled on the language need. Hard CLIL which explains the knowledge of subject area, equally focuses on communication skills, cognitive skills, practical skills and learning of grammatical features and lexical terms commonly found in the same field. In assessing both soft and hard CLIL, the author also earmarks two basic assessment criteria: Learning outcomes and the ability to explain the stages clearly. By this expectation, assessment is to determine both the level(s) and abilities of the learners for onward consideration.

Unit 16 'Types of Assessment' identifies summative and formative assessments as typical to a CLIL class. Summative assessment according to this module, is done when a trainer wants to find out what learners already know about the subject content and how well he can use the language of the subject. In another way, it is known

as diagnostic test specifically used to identify problems learners have with the subject areas. Formative assessment unlike the Summative assessment, is here explained as non-formal; used in the process of teaching to rate and improve the students. Most times, the formative assessment includes: both peer and self assessment in order to make learner 'Needs analysis. Concluding this unit with grading and assessment, the author recommends a regular form of marks, levels and grades to decide on the criteria for rating students.

Unit 17 'Support Strategies for Assessment' identifies two basic support strategies: Accommodating – a support strategy to help them learn and Task differentiation to allow them understand a variety of ways to tackle different assignments. In its key concept section, the unit links the support strategies to the summative assessment where a trainer seeks to know the learner's lapses in order to apply an appropriate learning strategy.

The book finally ends with a TKT: CLIL practice section where activities, exercises and objective questions are given as preparatory material for trainers' certificate examination. It is also coupled with an index of key terms, authors and subjects treated in the book.

Evaluation

There is no doubt that this book presents and discusses Teaching Knowledge Test TKT and Content and Language Integrated Learning CLIL in very elaborate terms. With the general concept within the theoretical framework of ELT, English Language Teaching, most of its background reference materials, draw its source credibility from the larger reservoir of the University of Cambridge ESOL Research and Examination. Based on findings from the fallout of English language teaching shown by the performance of students transiting from L1 to L2, and the need for enhanced comprehension in other curricular subjects, the author succeeds in bringing to the ELT forum a most to be adapted module for teacher trainers. He accomplishes this by making the art of training simpler through a workable training manual that guides the trainer with elaborate diagrams, charts and key concepts. As such this module is of particular interest to specialists in both subject and language education where English appears to be the hub/target taught from L1 to L2. While the module is assumed to be addressing universal subject/concept, for teachers of English language as a support to the teachers of other curricular subjects, the pitfall that requires attention, not elaborately attended to however, is the issue of contextualization of the learning materials. Most of the examples and illustrations require formal adaptation of cultural context for trainers to bring to terms the basic expectation and learning outcomes in place where English language is not the L1.

Above all, the benefits of this module for training the trainers, rest on the need and laudable attempt to get students of other field that are taught in English to be more expressive and proficient in the target. In addition by foregrounding the 4Cs of CLIL – Content, Communication, Context and Culture, it becomes commendable expectation to get more of student talking time STT than the teacher talking time TTT, thereby becoming more of a prescriptive text and module for training. Policy makers, school administrators and researchers in the field of education are expected not only to adopt but also to adapt the TKT: CLIL module for training and learning. Most parts of the book are therefore good and original enough. The good parts of the manual however need adaptation and the original parts contextualization.

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