Application of CLIL in Teaching Young Learners about Life Cycle in English

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Abstract. By employing the 4C’s framework in CLIL, this paper aims to set up an example or a pattern of how to integrate the approach CLIL into teaching young learners, esp. primary pupils about the theme of Life Cycle in English. While doing this task, designers need to take seven aspects into consideration: needs of the target group, level of the target group, aims or objectives of materials, teaching and learning activities, instrument for assessment, scaffolding tips, and resources.

Introduction

We believe it is important to offer students stimulating topics that engage their interest and increase their motivation for learning. Learning curriculum subjects in a new language provides a challenge for students. Understanding new concepts and curriculum subjects in another language makes demands on students and teachers, but these can be met with support materials. We adopt Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach in designing these materials.

Teaching Approach

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is a dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language. Eurydice said in 2006 that “achieving this twofold aim calls for the development of a special approach to teaching in that the non-language subject is not taught in a foreign language but with and through a foreign language.”[1] What separates CLIL from some established approaches such as content-based language learning, or forms of bilingual education, is the planned pedagogic integration of contextualized content, cognition, communication and culture into teaching and learning practice [2]

Effective CLIL takes place as a result of the symbiotic relationship that exists between the content, communication, cognition and culture of the 4Cs Framework as Figure 1.

![Figure 1. The 4Cs Framework.](image-url)
The 4Cs Framework integrates four contextualized building blocks: content (subject matter), communication (language learning and using), cognition (learning and thinking processes) and culture (developing intercultural understanding and global citizenship).

CLIL aims at realizing the following goals:
- introduce learners to new ideas and concepts in curriculum subjects
- improve learners’ performance in both curriculum subjects and the target language
- encourage stronger links with the citizenship curriculum
- increase learners’ confidence in the target language
- make the content subject the primary focus of classroom materials
- enable learners to access curriculum subjects by modifying lesson plans to take into account pupils’ ability in the target language
- provide cognitively challenging materials from the beginning
- provide scaffolding to support learning of content and language

Application of CLIL in Teaching Young Learners about Life Cycle in English by Using the 4C’s Framework

Identified Needs of the Target Group

The target group consists of 6-8 year-old children. They are interested in new things, colorful pictures, animation, music and games. They like to learn new things through playing and want to learn for fun and know about the nature. Besides children’s interest in learning English for fun, their parents also want them to lay a good foundation for learning English successfully in the future. So when we plan our lessons, we would like to design various activities with the help of colorful pictures, animation, music and games. In this way, children will be actively involved in learning. Meanwhile tasks will be designed not so difficult nor so easy to achieve, but just a little beyond children’s ability. Therefore, children can have a sense of achievement and be motivated as well.
Identified Level of the Target Group (Beginners/False Beginners)

Students of this level should have the following abilities:
- Can understand simple words and phrases, like “excuse me”, “sorry”, “thank you”, etc.
- Can understand and recognize simple numeric numbers like 1-10.
- Can understand basic greetings and leave taking, like “Hello”, “good bye”, “good morning”, etc.
- Can recognize names, words and phrases they know and use them to understand very simple sentences if there are pictures.
- Can understand very simple instructions if they are supported by pictures and if they know this type of instructions.
- Can use basic greetings and leave taking.
- Can ask how people are.
- Can ask and answer simple personal questions, like “What’s your name?” , “How old are you?” if the other person speaks slowly and is very helpful.
- Can understand simple numbers in everyday conversations (for example in telephone numbers).
- Can give personal information (age).
- Can show by body language when they do not understand.

Aims/Objectives of Materials

After completing this unit, students will be able to acquire the following capabilities:
- Recognize ‘caterpillar’ and ‘butterfly’ in different contexts
- Rank the order of life cycle of animals
- Put the name of 7 days in correct order
- Identify the vocabulary of food with the help of pictures
- Distinguish healthy food from junk food

Teaching/Learning Activities

In this part, we divide the activities into two parts included in the 1st period and second period separately. When design these activities, we refer to Bentley’s (2009) “Primary Curriculum Box: CLIL lessons and activities for younger learners”.[3]

1st period:
1. Warm up: Talk about food. The teacher puts forward two questions for students to discuss. 1) what did you eat yesterday? 2) Which foods you eat are healthy and which are not? The procedure can goes through the following steps: First let students talk with each other in a group of 4; then the teacher calls one group to speak out their answers; third let other groups to complement; finally, the teacher highlights the foods (cupcake, strawberry, ice cream cone, watermelon, plum, apple, orange, lollipop) on the board.

2. Presentation: Teacher reads the story: The Very Hungry Caterpillar written by E. Carle.
   Before reading the story, the teacher should: first introduce a few vocabulary words (egg, caterpillar, cocoon, butterfly) to the students by using L1 if necessary; then, let students have a look at the cover of the story book and keep a prediction in mind about the story; third, remind students to notice the order in the story regarding the days of the week. While reading, the teacher will be sure to stress those vocabulary words.

   Sequent Activities:
   1. Handout worksheet 1, let students recognize egg, caterpillar, cocoon and butterfly in the pictures.
   2. Handout worksheet 2, let students match the name of food with the right picture by drawing lines.
   3. Teacher gives instructions and students act out the changing process of a butterfly with the help of flashcards.

   When the teacher reads “A little egg lay on a leaf” the student who holds the flashcard with the egg on it should answer “I am the egg” and stand out at the same time. When the teacher reads “The tiny caterpillar emerges from the egg” the student who holds the flashcard with the caterpillar on it...
should answer “I am the caterpillar” and stand out at the same time. When the teacher reads “A cocoon forms around the caterpillar”, the student who holds the flashcard with the cocoon on it should answer “I am the cocoon” and stand out at the same time. When the teacher reads “He turns into a beautiful butterfly” the student who holds the flashcard with the butterfly on it should answer “I am the butterfly” and stand out at the same time.

*Ending the lesson:* Students retell the story together.

*Glossary:* Let learners tell the teacher which new words they don’t know.

*Second period:*

*Warm up: Circle the pictures.* The teacher shows the video of the Very Hungry Caterpillar and asks students to circle the pictures in sequential order by reusing handout worksheet 1 and worksheet 2 when the following words are mentioned: egg, caterpillar, cocoon and butterfly, cupcake, strawberry, ice cream cone, watermelon, plum, apple, orange, lollipop.

*Games:*

1. Hand out worksheet 3 (the pictures of food). Then give students the special scissors and let them cut the pictures of food into strips and paste them on the whiteboard in the order the caterpillar ate them through 7 days in a week.

2. Hand out worksheet 4, white pieces of paper and crayons, let Ss draw pictures of egg, caterpillar, cocoon and butterfly in groups of four, then ask them to paste their pictures in the correct order of the life cycle of a butterfly on the worksheet.

*Ending the lesson: Homework Assignment.* Teacher hands out homework sheet on which there is a story that is not in order. Ask the students to read the story and put the following sentences in the correct order after class.

*Instrument for Assessment*

Teacher monitors group and individual activities.
Learners successfully play a matching game.
Learners’ interaction with a partner (speaking creatively)
Learners’ participation in all tasks and activities.

*Scaffolding Tips*

*Language for the teacher:*
Settle down quickly please, let’s get started.
Can you tell me sth. About pets?
Listen carefully!
Form a group of 4.
Is that clear?
You’ve worked well today. Good.
A little egg lay on a leaf.
The tiny caterpillar emerges from the egg.
A tiny caterpillar eats and grows.
A cocoon forms around the caterpillar.
He turns into a beautiful butterfly.

*Language for the learner:*
I don’t know.
My cat is...
Can you help me?
I like/don’t like...
On Monday, the caterpillar ate through..., but he was still hungry.

*Resources*

Story book, sound disc, plush caterpillar, cocoon, and butterfly
Computer, projector and whiteboard
Pictures
Worksheets
Flashcards
Scissors, crayons, white pieces of paper and whiteboard

Conclusion

By employing the 4C’s framework in CLIL, this paper aims to set up an example or a pattern of how to integrate the approach CLIL into teaching young learners, esp. primary pupils about the theme of Life Cycle in English. While doing this task, designers need to take seven aspects into consideration: needs of the target group, level of the target group, aims or objectives of materials, teaching and learning activities, instrument for assessment, scaffolding tips, and resources. We hope our achievements might be useful and referable for primary or kinder garden teachers to teach their pupils about this topic. If this is the first time learners are experiencing the life cycle unit in English, teachers need to focus on learner’s confidence-building, enjoyment and a sense of achievement. In addition, we recommend some extended reading materials for learners: *The Butterfly Alphabet* by Kjell B. Sandved (Scholastic Inc.), *From Caterpillar to Butterfly* by Deborah Heiligman (HarperCollins Juvenile, 1996) is displaying the process of the insect from the little worm to the big butterfly[5], and *The Little Butterfly* by Sherry Shahan (Random House, 1998).

References