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Content and Language Integrated Learning: Origin, Development and its Possibilities in China

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ABSTRACT

Content and language integrated learning(CLIL) is a teaching method with dual teaching purpose, and its purpose is to learn another subject through foreign language, so that foreign language learning and subject learning can be learned simultaneously. CLIL guides students to study in real, pays attention to both teaching topics and teaching language. Since its introduction, it has attracted the attention of academia and has been popularized in many countries. This article takes CLIL teaching as the research object, summarizes CLIL's foreign research and practice from the aspects of origin, development, application in classroom and current development, and tries to explore the significance of CLIL teaching to the promotion of college English teaching in China.

Keywords: CLIL, applications, current development, college English in China

1. Origin and development of CLIL

"Content and language integrated learning (CLIL)" was initiated in 1994 by David Marsh and Anne Meljes, it originated in European countries and was soon promoted in many countries of the world. "Content" refers to non-linguistic subjects such as geography and biology, and "language" refers to a second language or foreign language other than the mother tongue. As an emerging educational model (Dalton-Puffer, 2007) with dual teaching purpose, it advocates to combine subject knowledge with foreign language learning, it is similar to content-based education, bilingual education, interdisciplinary English learning and whole English teaching. Content and language integrated learning, the idea originated in the mid-1960s Canada's immersion French education model and the United States bilingual education. In Canada, an immersion French teaching experiment was introduced in 1965, mainly for English-speaking students, all of whom were French native speakers and taught non-linguistic courses such as geography and history (Sheng Yunlan, 2002). Bilingual education in the United States is aimed at ethnic minorities, such as immigrants' mother tongue, through the mother tongue knowledge teaching to help them transition to English mainstream education, refers to use foreign languages to teach non-linguistic subject knowledge, it is not pure language teaching, but mainly teach content. Since the 1980s, many Western European countries have followed suit in the United States, using different forms of immersion bilingual education. It is different from professional foreign language teaching, and professional foreign language teaching is carried out by teaching knowledge related to major (Sheng Yunlan, 2002). Immersion bilingual teaching is not a teaching purpose, but the means of teaching.

In the 1990s, the EU experienced the triple pressure of integration, expansion and modernization. Although multilingual system is one of the pillars of European integration, education has become the focus of innovation in adapting to the needs of information in the new era. During this decade, we recognize that there is a great difference between language learning provided by many countries and the ability of people to use these languages in their daily lives. Language barriers that have been identified are hampering the development of multilingualism. Therefore, some aims of European integration have not been fully developed. Professional knowledge learning in different disciplines, including alternative language learning, has become a positive way for young people to prepare for and live in an informative environment in the future. CLIL reflects the multi-ethnic, multi-lingual social

and cultural reality in Europe in the language education needs. Driven by the EU's multilingual policies, CLIL has emerged and developed rapidly in Europe. Educational practice in North America provides a useful precedent for CLIL, especially Canada's immersion French education, whose successful experience has been widely reported in the global language education community. Another factor driving CLIL to develop fast comes from the globalization of education. The New London School pointed out that with the globalization and diversification of language and culture, we need to change the teaching mode of single language in the past, and develop the educational model to cultivate the ability of multiple reading to meet the challenge of the globalization of education (Sheng Yunlan, 2002), so knowledge integration becomes the key word of the development of globalization.

1. The specific applications of CLIL at abroad

In foreign countries, there are two main content and language integrated learning teaching methods. One is content-based teaching, that is, when students have certain language skills, foreign language is used as a teaching language in non-language subjects such as trade, computer and so on. The other is immersion teaching, that is, students acquire language skills by mastering subject skills and subject knowledge that at the level of their grade, the purpose is to master the subject content while being able to apply the teaching language skillfully. Content-based foreign language teaching is widely used in foreign countries, and the specific teaching mode changes according to different learning environments. The model was first applied to primary and secondary schools, mainly to meet the needs of a few students that with mother tongue as non-mainstream language, but in recent years, many universities have also set up content-based foreign language teaching to meet the cultural and language needs of international students. The model is the product of the exploration of knowledge and learning model is a reaction to the process of globalization. This method emphasizes the integration of different factors in learning, overcomes the phenomenon that the separation of language learning and content learning in traditional language teaching, and is an innovation of modern educational model.

CLIL has received extensive attention in European countries, especially in Britain, France, Germany, Holland, Italy and so on. CLIL teaching methods in Europe attach importance to several indicators, such as culture, teaching process, educational and living space, communicative language, subject content and so on. In addition to the study of CLIL related theories, foreign scholars pay more attention to the practical application of CLIL and carry out the curriculum and practice of CLIL ideas. There are two specific models we should learn:

Blossom (2002: 373-374) introduced the content-based learning model in detail in his teaching experiment. The mother tongue of the students he teaches is Hebrew and the second language is English. In giving the students English class, he integrated relevant knowledge in the professional subject into the corresponding unit. For example, when the advanced class gives students the "myth story" unit, the whole class communicates in English, whether oral or written, unless it is a technical term interpretation and ambiguous content will use Hebrew. The content of subject is introduced through a series of activities, which include pre-reading and discussing relevant knowledge, identifying questions, reading related books, explaining language difficulties, role reading, group activities, and students' written or oral expression, etc. In this model, students can combine the language knowledge

they have learned with their professional knowledge, such as comparing their respective texts on a relevant question, stating what they think, paraphrasing the concepts of one subject to another, understanding materials with a high level of information, and sharing knowledge with their peers.

In America, Short's (1993: 629-632) study pointed out that many middle schools in the United States set up a foreign language teaching model based on subject content for minority students. Language teachers usually teach students with subject-specific content rather than grammar or writing, and the teaching plan is developed by subject teachers and language teachers. In courses with high technical requirements, it is often taught by professional teachers and they receive relevant English skills training before specific teaching, so that their teaching can meet the special needs of students' foreign language skills. In the specific teaching activities, teachers properly use the demonstration of pictures or classroom activities to enhance students' interest in learning, and at the same time cultivate students' ability to depict images and think. Through listening, speaking, reading and writing training to increase students' participation in classroom, improve their communicative skills. In addition, using a lot of group cooperation in the classroom, so that students from ethnic minorities can get help from their peers and remove their doubts that they are afraid to speak and communicate in face of unfamiliar languages. This way can create a relaxed and pleasant environment for students, thus helping students to enter the study of professional courses smoothly.

Although the teaching contents and teaching objects of the above are different, the above models combine language teaching with cognitive needs in academic environment, so that teaching can meet the specific needs of students. The model is special in that it recognizes both the professional level and status of teachers and the identity of students, improves their professional knowledge when training their language skills, encourages students to participate in a wide variety of language skills training activities, and encourages them to question academic issues, taking fully into account the challenges that students may encounter in professional classes, and lays a solid foundation for future professional learning.

2. The specific applications of CLIL at home

Through the above two models, we can see that although the teaching content and teaching object are different, they all combine language teaching with the subject knowledge, so that meet students' specific needs. The models have the advantage of recognizing the level of professional knowledge of teachers and taking into account the doubts and difficulties of students, training their language skills while also improving their professional knowledge, encouraging students to challenge academic problems when encouraging them to participate in various language skills, taking full account of the challenges students may encounter in the professional classroom, and laying a foundation for future professional learning.

The cognitive function of language has been paid much attention when cognitive linguistics emerges suddenly. Scholars agree that human cognition and learning are taking language as the carrier, and language ability and human cognitive ability complement each other. This shift in linguistic research and the dialectical unity between language and cognition make scholars have a new understanding of the purpose of foreign language teaching. The teaching method of "language-content

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integrated learning" is a new teaching theory based on the theory of "communicative competence" of American socialinguist Hymes and the theory of functional linguistics of British linguist Halliday (Zhou Dubao, 2004:28). In order to adapt to the new situation of internationalization of higher education, the Ministry of Education of our country promulgated "Some opinions on strengthening undergraduate teaching work in colleges and universities to improve teaching quality "in 2001, which requires "undergraduate education should create conditions for public and professional teaching in foreign languages such as English ". Later, in 2005, the Opinions on Further Strengthening Undergraduate Teaching in Colleges and Universities were published, demanding that "to improve the quality of bilingual teaching courses, we should continue to expand the number of bilingual teaching courses."In 2007, the Ministry of Education promulgated the "Opinions of the Ministry of Finance on the Implementation of the Project on the Quality and Teaching Reform of Undergraduate Education in Colleges and Universities", which continued to emphasize" encouraging and supporting the undertaking of teaching tasks and lectures by leading experts and scholars at home and abroad, promoting the construction of bilingual teaching courses, exploring effective teaching methods and models, effectively improving the professional English level of college students and their ability to use English for scientific research directly." To adapt to the development of higher education, the College English Teaching Committee issued the College English Teaching Guideline (herein after referred to as the Guide) in 2016. The Guideline sets out a three- target system, which is "three levels of foundation, improvement and development ", in which" the development goal is determined according to the special needs of school training plan and the multiple needs of some students ".

Since the relevant documents have been published, many universities have vigorously promoted the teaching mode of all-English or bilingual teaching. More typical is that Chang Junyue of Dalian Foreign Studies University takes the students of English major as the object, and implements the teaching content based on the teaching curriculum system. And with the actual English level of colleges improving, passing CET-4 and CET-6 is far from meeting their needs. Some scholars have done a survey of 180 first-year students with higher English proficiency, and 43% have clearly expressed their "desire to study in Britain and the United States after graduation ". These students need to master enough English to acquire professional knowledge and conduct academic exchanges. At the same time, they also need to "master the knowledge of cross-cultural communication and understand the differences in different world views, values, ways of thinking and so on between China and foreign countries "(Wang Shouren 2016:6).

At present, there are two main problems in CLIL empirical research in China. Firstly, there is a lack of empirical research in the first grade of college English. There are some empirical studies for English majors or non-English majors who have passed the CET-4 examination for college students. Secondly, the scale of empirical research is small, especially for non-English major learners, its universal effectiveness needs to be further demonstrated.

It is recorded in the literature that the first year of English in a university affiliated to Beijing tries to reform the content of the curriculum and carries out a practical study on the integration of subject content and language. The university in accordance with the guiding principles of the Guide, carried out curriculum content reform in the first grade of college English, and carried out research on the integration of subject content and language teaching. Students in grade one participated in this

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experimental study, and the control group was the same grade students in previous years. Using the comparative teaching form to explore the influence of different teaching modes in the experimental group (CLIL) and the control group (EFL) on students' language ability. The teaching time of the two groups is the same, which is 4 hours per week and 16 weeks per semester. But in the teaching content, the experimental group and the control group have great differences. The experimental group (CLIL) chose the original foreign version Communicate, while the control group (EFL) chose the traditional "New Standard College English ". There are also great differences in teaching content, reading time, routine learning tasks, subject-based projects, teaching methods, evaluation methods, evaluation content and CET-4. This study used a combination of quantitative and qualitative research, using questionnaires, reflection logs, grade of CET4 to collect research data. From the collected reflection logs, we can see that students give positive affirmation to the teaching reform, and generally think that after a semester of study, they obviously feel their own progress. "I have had a lot of first time in this semester, first English speaking, first interview, first paper writing ... " he wrote. "During this process, I gained a lot. For example, speaking PPT should only list the key points, the format and skills of writing papers, and also cultivate the awareness of literature review when writing articles, which are more important than final grades." The evaluation of students is consistent with the conclusion of Lingley (2006) research: the effect of integrating task into CLIL teaching is better.

The experimental results show that the model has a positive effect on students' reading ability, which is consistent with the conclusions of Chang Junyue, etc. (2009) and Yuan Huaping (2011). One of the main reasons is that CLIL provide sufficient language input for learners, satisfy the best language input requirements in foreign language learning. The language input in the experimental group in this study was nearly 10 times that of the control group, compared with the limited language input in the traditional foreign language classroom, the CLIL model provides a richer and more conducive language environment for foreign language learning (Coyle 2007). Furthermore, the teaching content is more challenging, raising learners' level of thinking and promoting cognitive development (Ting 2014). Teaching contents in this experiment include awareness of self and others, cultural differences, speech, non-verbal communication and so on. Its difficulty and complexity are far greater than the topics in traditional foreign language teaching, such as campus life, travel, shopping, learners use non-native language to interpret subject knowledge, which is helpful to their cognitive development (Marsh 2014).

This experiment also found that CLIL has a significant effect on students' language output ability, which is inconsistent with Yuan Pinghua's (2011) conclusion. The reasons are as follows: first, the learning tasks in the experiment are all integrated output, which is far more difficult than writing of CET4. Learners use language to think, while promoting language learning through the development of advanced thinking (Huang Fuquan, Li Lingli 2015:17), which greatly improves the quality of language output. Second, the original textbook used in the experiment is pure academic style, which provides students with better language examples from words, sentence patterns, article's structure and so on. As one student wrote in a reflection log," the original textbook is not the same as the domestic textbook I learned before. Each paragraph will have a topic sentence and clear thinking, I not only come into contact with a lot of academic vocabulary, but also will use them in my writing, which improve the quality of my writing." The student's feedback further demonstrates Lo&Murphy's (2010) findings.

4. The Significance of Chinese College English Teaching with CLIL

The theoretical framework proposed by Coyle (2007:545), namely content, cognition, communication and culture. The four elements are independent and complementary to each other, forming an organic unity of subject content learning and language learning.(Table 1)

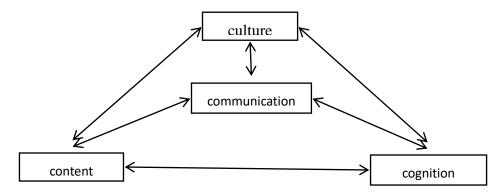


Table 1 CLIL The theoretical framework (From Dalton-Puffer 2008: 141)

Communication becomes the intermediary connecting culture, content and cognitive (Sheng Yunlan 2012:67). In terms of content, learners acquire more real, diverse and rich language input than traditional language classes through foreign language learning subject knowledge. As for communication, CLIL emphasizes the integration of "focus on form" and "focus on meaning ", language becomes the tool to construct and express knowledge, and the content endows the meaning kernel of language expression. In terms of cognition, subject content improves learners' cognitive ability and realizes their mutual transformation with language ability. In terms of culture, learners use English as a common language for cross-cultural communication, and can communicate with native and non-native English speakers.

Although many universities in China have realized the importance of content and language integrated learning, they still face many difficulties in implementing it. The new situation of international social development in the 21st century has brought more challenges to college English teaching in China. One of the most urgent tasks of teaching is to train students who can use English as a tool to obtain information in their fields of professional knowledge and participate in various academic exchange activities. However, the current college English teaching is difficult to achieve this goal, most students and schools still take CET-4 and CET-6 as the only criterion to measure the success of English teaching, the teaching is still focused on the teaching of ordinary English, and the English teaching in the later professional field is not paid enough attention to. Moreover, due to the constraints of various conditions, the teaching of college English majors is not perfect in the aspects of curriculum setting, textbook compilation, teacher allocation, teaching management and evaluation, and the teaching effect is not ideal. The students' actual English level does not match the English level they need to master after they go to the school. So we can learn the teaching methods of content and language integrated learning in order to change the existing teaching mode. Improve the proportion of English teaching in the professional field, combine subject knowledge with English teaching, promote English learning with subject content, and enhance knowledge in professional field with English learning. In order to cultivate talents who can meet the needs of the times, we urgently need to explore

a new teaching mode of college English. But according to our current situation, according to the students' actual foreign language level, in order to achieve the combination of subject knowledge and English learning, with the subject content to drive English learning, use English learning to improve the professional knowledge. We need to solve the following three difficulties:

- 1. Students don't have sufficient understanding of the purpose of English learning. The ultimate goal of learning English is to be able to engage in meaningful communication on real occasions. And English teaching is precisely to cultivate students this ability. Chinese students rarely have the opportunity to use English in real situations, which causes students to have no lasting interest in English learning, and their ultimate goal of learning English is to pass the exam. At the same time, our country lacks the environment of practical English communication, and the communication in class is often artificial and specific. And the implementation of bilingual teaching, the combination of English teaching and subject knowledge, is to create a real communication environment for students, help students get out of the traditional way of learning language. This can greatly improve the efficiency of students learning English, so that excellent students can gain a lot in various subjects.
- 2. Teachers can't balance both subject learning and language learning. The implementation of bilingual teaching must take into account both subject content and language learning. There are two main purposes of bilingual teaching: one is to master professional knowledge, the other is to learn language. Therefore, in addition to a specific language teaching plan, each subject should also have a professional teaching plan. Only in this way, teachers can try their best to meet the requirements of different students, in the existing language of students in English teaching, and will gradually expand their language knowledge according to the teaching plan. In the field of language teaching, each subject should coordinate, cooperate, complement and promote each other in accordance with the teaching plan, and make concerted efforts to improve students' language use and practical competence.
- 3. The number of teachers who are competent for content and language integrated learning is relatively small. Bilingual teaching requires teachers in a high way. The ideal bilingual teachers have a solid knowledge of both Chinese and English, and have a high cultural literacy, but also have sufficient linguistic knowledge, can satisfy the different stages of students' professional knowledge and language learning requirements. Therefore, the school should plan to select a group of teachers with a certain foundation of English for the corresponding training, so as to facilitate the faster bilingual teaching. In addition, the concept and method of teaching management, the means of evaluation and examination, the cooperation between departments and departments are all closely related to the success of bilingual teaching.

5. Conclusion

From above, we can try to carry out CLIL teaching to some excellent students in the basic stage of college English, and expect to be highly recognized by the students. CLIL teaching should integrate tasks, activities, especially subject-based projects, improve students' participation and thus achieve good teaching results; through reasonable planning and design may provide students with another

possibility of language learning, greatly improve students' language level.

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