

Research on English Teaching in Higher Vocational Education with Perspective of Content and Language Integrated Learning

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Abstract: This paper theoretically compares other known teaching models, introduces the CLIL (content and language education learning) teaching concept based on the language teaching method, cognitive psychology and learning theory to illustrate the feasibility of the teaching concept in China, and puts the multi-dimensional CLIL teaching concept into the reform. This paper takes the connection between basic English and professional English as the starting point to apply CLIL theory to constructing English teaching in higher vocational colleges, thus establish a teaching mode that meets the national conditions of Chinese country, and provide theoretical and practical guidance for the scientific training of comprehensive higher vocational talents from the perspective of English teaching.

Keywords: Content and Language Integrated Learning; Higher Vocational College English; Teaching Research

Since the last century, the teaching of second language abroad has long departed from the teaching of simple language skills and has gradually formed a new teaching concept – CLIL (content and language education learning) by organically integrating the subject or professional knowledge with the second language. Since the reform and opening up, our university English teaching level has made great progress, college students' English ability on a new level as a whole, but the problem of "time-consuming and inefficient" foreign language education in China still exists, and the contradiction between the shortage of social demand for language-composite talents and the lagging teaching mode of higher vocational English is becoming more and more significant. Basic English in higher vocational colleges and universities focuses on the communicative language of life and its professionalism is not strong. Non-English majors pay little attention to basic English because of its lack of professional practicality, and their interest is low; Professional English requires higher level of English in subject content, which is a great challenge to students' acceptability and teachers' teaching ability. Later professional background academic English (Content-based Instruction, for CBI), specialized purpose English (English for Special Purposes, for ESP) and professional English (English for Occupation Purpose, for EOP) also gradually showed the disadvantages of "content language two skins". This paper seeks the goal of English teaching to explore how to combine the advanced language integration concept and teaching practice, solve the existing problems of vocational English teaching and better realize the goal of vocational talent training.

1. Social background of the CLIL (content and language education learning) teaching philosophy

Any rising teaching philosophy was inseparable from the social environment at that time, economic globalization and the regional integration of Europe, and the close combination of politics and economy between countries thus promoted the development of culture and education between countries. With the advent of globalization, second languages are not just meeting the needs of everyday life, different groups are focusing on diverse professional fields, and second languages are closely linked to industries. These changes have had a profound impact on the changes in traditional language teaching

The teaching modes of both schools are language learning independent from the subject knowledge field. The academic circle has conducted a lot of discussions and tried to solve them, but the actual effect is not ideal. European scholars combine the advantages of the two schools and bred the CLIL model. CLIL is the acronym for content and language integrated learning (Subject Content and Language Integration Learning, or Course Language Integration). The basic meaning is to use one or more foreign languages as the teaching language of non—language subjects, and in this process, language and discipline will play a role together. CLIL provides macro guidance for teacher teaching design and student content learning with a 4Cs classroom framework, and its core includes four levels: Content (content), Communication (communication), Cognitive (cognition), and Culture (cultural).

2. Characteristics of CLIL (content and language integrated learning)

CLIL is mainly carried out from two aspects: On the one hand, non—English departments concentrate on teaching in knowledge subjects, and professional teachers systematically introduce professional knowledge to provide students with professional basic knowledge. For example, higher vocational colleges often offer professional courses for half a year or a year in China. On the other hand, the CLIL with language as a tool, follow the second language study theory in the students from listening, speaking, reading, writing ability cultivation at the same time through the teaching materials comparison learning, make students in the learning process to read, and language learning ability, the ability to acquire professional knowledge and advanced thinking ability the three are closely combined with mutual influence complement each other.

3. The necessity and feasibility of CLIL in higher vocational colleges in China

China’s Ministry of Education is launching the construction of “first—class vocational colleges”, among which the level of international education is an important measurement index. Vocational colleges need to put skills training in the same important position as students’ foreign language level, and require students to be able skillfully in using foreign languages to conduct professional knowledge exchange. Traditional Chinese foreign language teaching focuses on the language form and ignores the language content and meaning, which separates the professional knowledge from the language ability.

3.1 Promote learning, enhance confidence and stimulate interest

According to the theory of second language acquisition “acquisition” is a subconscious process, which is the result of natural communication with attention to meaning. With English as a tool, CLIL creates a foreign language environment and a context for the content of the subject, which positively contributes to the students’ learning of explicit knowledge. With a vivid double context, it avoids the empty learning language, and also reduces the boredom of learning pure professional knowledge.

3.2 Develop students’ thinking skills and learning strategies

Under the guidance of CLIL, diversified knowledge requires high thinking ability, which requires teachers to teach the knowledge of explicit attributes, but also to teach the skills and thinking mode of hidden attributes in the classroom. Teachers’ thinking and behavior have a guiding effect on students can not only cultivate students’ unique metacognitive ability, but also promote the formation of metacognitive understanding, and cultivate students’ advanced thinking ability, which can help to develop efficient learning and effective memory.

3.3 Explore and expand the English teaching mode in higher vocational colleges

According to the successful experience of CLIL in western countries, we can try to combine advanced curriculum integration concept and teaching practice to effectively explore, solve the existing problems of English teaching in higher vocational colleges, can better realize the talent training goal of higher vocational students, is conducive to improve the learning ability, innovation, practice, communication and social adaptability, explore a practical, extension and portable teaching model.

4. Difficulties and countermeasures for the implementation of CLIL in higher vocational education

Based on the analysis of the current situation of the existing similar English teaching models (ESP English,

EOP English and CBI English) in undergraduate and higher vocational institutions, the multidimensional integration teaching concept is implanted into the reform of higher vocational English teaching, and the teaching of higher vocational English is explored according to the 4Cs framework system to establish an integrated teaching model with Chinese characteristics that meets the needs of higher vocational English teaching, which can be based on the details of the study can be based on three aspects: teaching contents, teachers and teaching strategies as follows:

4.1 How to effectively connect the basic English with the professional English

The content of students' learning in mode of CLIL comes from two aspects: the subject itself and the language system. At present, the content of higher vocational English teaching is "empty, complicated, difficult, and not close enough to the reality". Therefore, based on the analysis of students' existing ability and acceptability, the demand of employers for vocational English language, the demand for vocational English skills, and the satisfaction of graduates' vocational English ability, we determine the teaching objectives and select the teaching content. Teaching content and optimization of teachers.

4.2 English teachers' teaching needs under the CLIL

The linguistic demands of analyzing subject content in the CLIL environment are based on the concept of CLIL. This is a challenge in terms of the selection of content, the balance between linguistic and content goals, and the micro-level analysis of teaching strategies.

4.3 Methods to promote the construction and thinking ability of higher vocational students.

One of the premise of CLIL theory is that students should have enough cognitive learning level, and higher vocational students have a certain knowledge reserve, which is a good foundation, but there is still a big gap with the acceptance level of undergraduate students. We have reasons to believe that the cognitive level of higher education students can identify and avoid the negative effects of bilingualism, but whether the second threshold can be reached and whether CLIL can effectively help students to move away from purely communicative low-level language learning and develop higher-level and more refined cognitive and academic language levels is subject to further empirical research. The CLIL encompasses both the integration between subject content and language, and the integration between language and cognition. Culture runs through the main teaching line. The relationship between them is not a single linear relationship but a multi-dimensional integration relationship. In the face of the complexity of the 4Cs structure at all levels, we will study domestic and international teaching theories and combine them with teaching practices in terms of classroom goal setting, classroom discourse analysis and teaching enhancement strategies. We will summarize a set of suitable methods and strategies for teaching English at higher education level to guide teachers and students to integrate and build in order to adapt to different students' learning styles and stimulate diverse language skills, promote the construction of new literacy, and promote the improvement of advanced thinking skills.

To sum up, the concept of CLIL has important guiding significance for the reform, which will be the future reform trend. We should leverage its advantages, but CLIL has many obstacles in higher vocational colleges, lack of support of top-level design, but its successful practice in Europe and other regions and some universities in China, and its outstanding advantages undoubtedly provide some experience for the reform of higher vocational English teaching.

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