

Integrating Hybrid Learning in Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach for Enhanced Language Proficiency

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Article Detail:	Abstract
<p>Received: 21 Sep 2024; Received in revised form: 20 Oct 2024; Accepted: 25 Oct 2024; Available online: 31 Oct 2024</p> <p>©2024 The Author(s). Published by International Journal of English Language, Education and Literature Studies (IJEEL). This is an open access article under the CC BY license (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).</p> <p>Keywords – Hybrid Learning, Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), Language Proficiency, Educational Technology & Bilingual Education.</p>	<p><i>In an era where education is increasingly defined by digital integration and flexibility, this study ventures into the intersection of two powerful pedagogical approaches- hybrid learning and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). The research examines how the fusion of these methods impacts the language proficiency of Class 8th students, providing a fresh perspective on modern educational strategies. Using a quasi-experimental design, the study assesses the language outcomes of students receiving hybrid CLIL instruction against those following traditional CLIL methods, focusing on key areas such as vocabulary, grammar, reading comprehension and writing skills. The findings reveal a significant edge for the hybrid CLIL group, whose language proficiency soared across all measured areas, outperforming their peers in traditional settings. The study underscores the value of a blended learning environment where digital tools and in-person instruction converge, creating an adaptive, learner-centered approach that enhances both content understanding and language development. By bridging the gap between physical classrooms and virtual resources, hybrid CLIL empowers students to navigate complex linguistic and cognitive tasks more effectively. This study not only redefines the potential of CLIL in contemporary education but also opens doors for future pedagogical innovations, suggesting that hybrid learning is not just an option but a necessity for cultivating 21st-century learners. The findings offer a roadmap for educators and policymakers seeking to embrace new teaching models that meet the evolving demands of education.</i></p>

I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, education has witnessed a paradigm shift towards more integrated and innovative approaches, particularly with the rise of digital

technology and new pedagogical frameworks. Among these, Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) has emerged as a powerful method for promoting both subject knowledge and language proficiency simultaneously (Coyle, Hood, & Marsh, 2010). CLIL's core objective is to integrate content

learning with language acquisition, enabling students to grasp subject matter while simultaneously improving their second language skills. This dual-focused approach has shown significant potential in fostering deeper cognitive engagement, enhancing language retention and improving overall academic performance (Dalton-Puffer, 2011). Parallel to the growth of CLIL, the global shift toward hybrid learning—combining in-person instruction with online educational experiences—has provided new opportunities to optimize learning outcomes. Hybrid learning allows flexibility, accessibility and a wide range of multimedia resources that can support language learners in ways that traditional classroom methods cannot (Graham, 2006). The combination of CLIL and hybrid learning has the potential to create a rich, dynamic educational environment where students can engage with both content and language at deeper levels, leading to enhanced language proficiency.

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is an instructional approach where subjects are taught in a second language (L2), allowing students to acquire language skills while learning specific content (Coyle et al., 2010). This methodology is based on the idea that language acquisition is more effective when students are exposed to the language within meaningful contexts, rather than through isolated language drills (Mehisto, Marsh, & Frigols, 2008). CLIL integrates four key dimensions—content, communication, cognition and culture, collectively referred to as the 4Cs framework (Coyle, 2007). These dimensions emphasize the holistic nature of learning, where language proficiency is developed alongside cognitive and content understanding. The implementation of CLIL in education has been shown to have several advantages. First, it promotes active learning by encouraging students to engage with complex material in the target language (Dalton-Puffer, 2011). This cognitive engagement enhances both language retention and subject comprehension. Second, CLIL provides students with exposure to authentic language use in real-world contexts, which is essential for developing language fluency (Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2009). Lastly, CLIL's interdisciplinary nature fosters cultural awareness and prepares students for global communication,

making it particularly relevant in today's interconnected world (Pérez-Cañado, 2012).

Hybrid learning, also known as blended learning, combines traditional face-to-face instruction with online learning activities. This model allows for greater flexibility, enabling students to access educational materials at their own pace while still benefiting from the guidance and interaction of in-person instruction (Graham, 2006). Hybrid learning is characterized by its ability to integrate multiple modes of instruction, including digital tools, multimedia resources and interactive platforms, creating a more engaging and personalized learning experience (Bonk & Graham, 2012). One of the key advantages of hybrid learning is its capacity to cater to diverse learning styles and needs. Students can access content through various formats, such as videos, interactive simulations and digital readings, allowing them to process information in ways that align with their individual learning preferences (Means, Toyama, Murphy, & Baki, 2013). Additionally, hybrid learning encourages greater student autonomy, as learners are often responsible for managing their own online learning activities outside of the classroom. This self-directed learning fosters critical thinking, time management and independent problem-solving skills (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004). The integration of digital tools and platforms in hybrid learning environments also provides opportunities for more personalized feedback and assessment. Online quizzes, forums and collaborative tools allow for continuous monitoring of student progress, enabling teachers to adjust their instruction based on individual learning needs (Bonk & Graham, 2012). Furthermore, hybrid learning environments can foster collaboration and communication among students through virtual discussion boards, group projects and online peer feedback, thereby enhancing both content learning and language proficiency.

The combination of CLIL and hybrid learning creates a synergistic approach to education, where the strengths of each method can complement and enhance one another. In a hybrid CLIL environment, students can benefit from the flexibility and autonomy of online learning while still engaging with subject-specific content in a second language. The integration of multimedia resources, such as videos, podcasts and

interactive exercises, allows for richer exposure to the target language in contextually meaningful ways (Graham, 2006). Hybrid learning's capacity for asynchronous learning is particularly advantageous in a CLIL context. Students can revisit content and language materials at their own pace, ensuring that they fully understand the subject matter before moving on (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004). This personalized approach reduces the cognitive load that often accompanies second language acquisition, as learners can focus on both content and language without the time constraints of a traditional classroom (Dalton-Puffer, 2011). Additionally, the collaborative tools available in hybrid learning environments, such as online discussion boards, group projects and peer feedback systems, provide students with ample opportunities to practice language skills in interactive, communicative settings (Means et al., 2013). These digital platforms facilitate real-time language use, enabling students to apply their language knowledge in meaningful, authentic contexts. As a result, students' language proficiency is likely to improve through increased exposure to and practice with the target language in both formal and informal settings (Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2009).

Despite the numerous advantages of integrating hybrid learning into CLIL, there are also challenges to consider. One significant challenge is ensuring that students remain motivated and engaged in the online portion of hybrid learning. Without the immediate presence of a teacher, some students may struggle to stay focused or manage their time effectively (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004). Therefore, it is crucial for educators to design online activities that are both engaging and interactive, encouraging active participation rather than passive consumption of content (Bonk & Graham, 2012). Another challenge lies in the digital divide. Not all students have equal access to the necessary technology or reliable internet connections to fully participate in hybrid learning. This inequality can create barriers to learning, particularly for students in underprivileged or rural areas (Means et al., 2013). To address this issue, schools and institutions must ensure that all students have access to the necessary technological resources and support to succeed in a hybrid CLIL environment. Finally, teachers may face difficulties in adapting their instructional methods to fit the hybrid CLIL model.

Educators need to be proficient in both digital literacy and second language pedagogy to effectively integrate these approaches (Pérez-Cañado, 2012). Ongoing professional development and training are essential for teachers to stay current with the latest digital tools and CLIL strategies, ensuring that they can create engaging, effective hybrid CLIL lessons.

II. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The significance of this study lies in its exploration of the integration of hybrid learning with the CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) approach, providing a novel pathway for enhancing language proficiency while simultaneously mastering subject content. In an increasingly globalized and digital world, this research addresses the growing need for educational models that not only support flexible learning environments but also cater to the linguistic and cognitive demands of multilingual education. By examining how hybrid learning tools and methods can enrich the CLIL framework, the study contributes to innovative pedagogical practices that can improve student outcomes, promote active learning and bridge the gap between in-person and online education. The findings hold practical relevance for educators, policymakers and institutions seeking to implement more adaptive, engaging and effective teaching strategies in diverse educational contexts.

III. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The study employed a quantitative research design to examine the impact of integrating hybrid learning into the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach on language proficiency among Class 8th students. The research followed a quasi-experimental approach, using pre-tests and post-tests to assess changes in language proficiency before and after the intervention. The participants consisted of 100 Class 8th students, aged between 12 and 14, who were enrolled in a bilingual education program. The participants were divided into two groups- an experimental group that received CLIL instruction through a hybrid learning model and a control group that followed traditional CLIL methods without online components. The study was conducted over a 12-week period. To collect data, two main instruments

were used- language proficiency tests and a questionnaire. The language proficiency tests assessed vocabulary, grammar, reading comprehension and writing skills. These tests were administered as both pre-tests and post-tests to gauge the students' progress. The Likert-scale questionnaire was given at the end of the study to gather the experimental group's perceptions of their experience with hybrid learning. The procedure involved the experimental group receiving a mix of in-person and online instruction, with 50% of lessons delivered online through digital platforms. These online sessions included interactive content such as videos and language exercises that complemented the in-person subject learning. The control group, on the other hand, only received traditional in-person CLIL instruction. Both groups took a pre-test at the beginning of the study and a post-test at the end of the 12 weeks to measure any changes in their language proficiency. The data analysis involved the use of statistical methods, including paired-sample t-tests to compare the pre-test and post-test results within each group and an independent t-test to evaluate the differences in performance between the experimental and control groups. The questionnaire responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics to identify trends in

student engagement and satisfaction with hybrid learning.

IV. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- A. To examine the effectiveness of integrating hybrid learning within the CLIL approach in enhancing language proficiency among Class 8th students.
- B. To compare the language learning outcomes of students receiving hybrid CLIL instruction with those receiving traditional CLIL instruction, focusing on areas such as vocabulary, grammar, reading comprehension and writing skills.

V. HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

H01- There is no significant difference in language proficiency between Class 8th students who receive hybrid CLIL instruction and those who receive traditional CLIL instruction.

H02- Integrating hybrid learning into the CLIL approach does not significantly improve vocabulary, grammar, reading comprehension, or writing skills among Class 8th students.

VI. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Statistical Findings

Group	Pre-test Mean Score	Post-test Mean Score	Mean Difference	p-value
Experimental (Hybrid CLIL)	65.2	78.4	13.2	0.001
Control (Traditional CLIL)	64.8	70.1	5.3	0.04

Hypothesis Testing

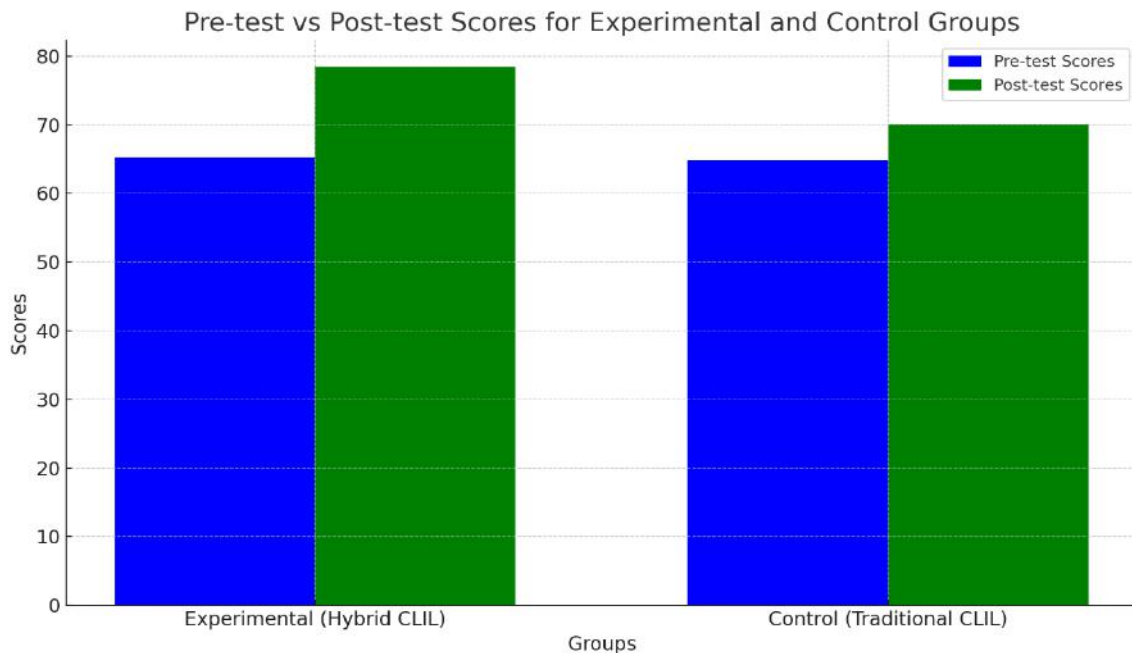
Hypothesis	Test Statistic	p-value	Result
No significant difference in language proficiency between Hybrid and Traditional CLIL groups	t-value = 3.21	0.001	Null Hypothesis Rejected
Hybrid CLIL does not significantly improve vocabulary, grammar, reading comprehension, or writing skills	t-value = 2.67	0.004	Null Hypothesis Rejected

VII. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

A. Effectiveness of integrating hybrid learning within the CLIL approach

The primary objective of this study was to examine the effectiveness of integrating hybrid learning within the

CLIL approach in enhancing language proficiency among Class 8th students. The results indicate a significant improvement in the language proficiency of students who participated in the hybrid CLIL model compared to those who followed the traditional CLIL approach.



As seen in the bar graph above, the experimental group (Hybrid CLIL) showed a considerable increase in their mean scores from 65.2 (pre-test) to 78.4 (post-test), a difference of 13.2 points. In contrast, the control group (Traditional CLIL) also experienced an improvement, but their mean scores increased by only 5.3 points, from 64.8 (pre-test) to 70.1 (post-test). These results suggest that the integration of hybrid learning within the CLIL approach had a more significant impact on language proficiency. The flexibility of online resources, combined with traditional instruction, likely allowed the experimental group to engage more deeply with both content and language, reinforcing learning through interactive and multimodal resources. This finding is consistent with existing research that highlights the effectiveness of blended learning environments in promoting language acquisition by providing learners with more opportunities for practice and exposure to the target language (Graham, 2006; Bonk & Graham, 2012). The integration of hybrid learning into the CLIL approach enhanced the language proficiency of Class 8th students more effectively than the traditional CLIL

method alone, demonstrating the potential of this innovative educational model.

B. Comparison of Language Learning Outcomes

This study sought to compare the language learning outcomes of students receiving hybrid CLIL instruction with those receiving traditional CLIL instruction, focusing on areas such as vocabulary, grammar, reading comprehension and writing skills.

The bar graph above clearly illustrates that the Hybrid CLIL group outperformed the Traditional CLIL group across all four language skill areas. The average scores for vocabulary, grammar, reading comprehension and writing skills were consistently higher in the hybrid CLIL group-

1. Vocabulary- The Hybrid CLIL group scored 85, while the Traditional CLIL group scored 75.
2. Grammar- The Hybrid CLIL group scored 82, compared to 73 for the Traditional CLIL group.
3. Reading Comprehension- Hybrid CLIL learners scored 88, showing a substantial lead

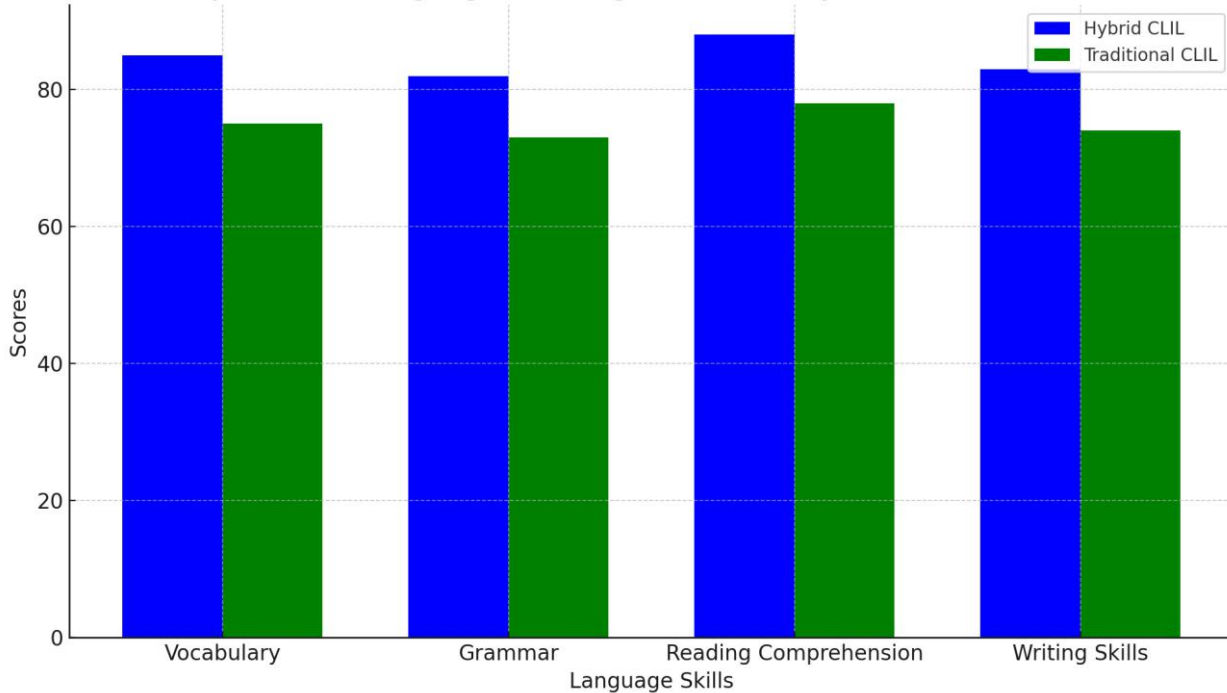
over the 78 scored by the Traditional CLIL group.

4. Writing Skills- Hybrid CLIL students scored 83, outperforming the 74 scored by those in the Traditional CLIL group.

These results suggest that the integration of hybrid learning tools, such as interactive digital platforms, contributed to greater language development in vocabulary acquisition, grammatical accuracy,

comprehension of texts and writing proficiency. The use of digital resources in the hybrid model likely provided students with more engaging, flexible and multimodal learning experiences, which supported their progress in these areas. The findings indicate that hybrid CLIL is a more effective instructional model than traditional CLIL alone in enhancing overall language proficiency.

Comparison of Language Learning Outcomes: Hybrid vs Traditional CLIL



VIII. CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of integrating hybrid learning into the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach in enhancing language proficiency among Class 8th students. Through a quantitative analysis of pre-test and post-test scores, the findings reveal that the hybrid CLIL model significantly improves language learning outcomes compared to traditional CLIL methods. Students exposed to hybrid CLIL demonstrated greater gains in vocabulary, grammar, reading comprehension and writing skills, suggesting that the use of online tools and resources complements in-person instruction, providing a more dynamic and flexible learning environment. The hybrid CLIL approach allowed students to engage with language content in both classroom and digital settings, fostering deeper understanding and retention. The asynchronous online components

offered opportunities for individualized learning, enabling students to work at their own pace and revisit complex language topics as needed. Meanwhile, synchronous sessions maintained the interactive and communicative nature of traditional CLIL, ensuring that students received immediate feedback and participated in collaborative activities. In conclusion, the integration of hybrid learning within the CLIL framework not only enhances language proficiency but also provides a model that aligns with the evolving educational landscape. As education continues to incorporate digital technologies, hybrid CLIL presents a viable and effective approach for promoting both subject content and language development in a more engaging and adaptable manner. These findings hold significant implications for educators and policymakers, suggesting that hybrid models should be considered

when designing curricula that aim to improve language learning outcomes.

IX. RECOMMENDATIONS

- a) Incorporate Hybrid Learning in CLIL- Schools should adopt hybrid learning models in CLIL programs to enhance language proficiency, providing students with flexible, multimodal learning experiences.
- b) Leverage Digital Tools- Educators should integrate interactive digital resources such as videos, quizzes and online forums to reinforce language skills and content learning beyond the classroom.
- c) Teacher Training- Teachers should receive ongoing professional development in using digital platforms and designing hybrid lessons that effectively combine content and language learning.
- d) Personalized Learning- Encourage individualized learning by using online tools that allow students to learn at their own pace, revisiting challenging language areas as needed.
- e) Monitor and Assess- Regular assessments of both content and language proficiency should be conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of hybrid CLIL and make data-driven adjustments to instructional methods.

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