

Study of the Application of the CLIL Method in Bilingual Macroeconomics Teaching

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Abstract: This article discusses the methods and considerations of applying the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) teaching method to bilingual teaching in macroeconomics. The paper begins by introducing the concept of the CLIL teaching method and its unique features in the context of economics courses in higher education. Subsequently, the article delves into the methods of applying CLIL in bilingual macroeconomics teaching, including bilingual classroom lectures, bilingual textbook design, bilingual group discussions, macroeconomics case studies, bilingual classroom interaction, and bilingual writing. Lastly, the paper highlights key issues in teaching.

Keywords: CLIL teaching method; Macroeconomics; Bilingual instruction

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1. Research background

In the era of globalization, the significance of intercultural communication and multilingual competence has become increasingly prominent. Higher education institutions no longer only focus on their specialized knowledge in specific academic fields but also emphasize the development of multilingual skills and cultural sensitivity. In response to this demand, the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) teaching mode has emerged as an innovative strategy in the teaching practices of universities.

Macroeconomics typically holds a significant position in economics-related majors at universities and is one of the core courses in the field of economics. Adopting a bilingual teaching mode in macroeconomics courses can not only enhance students' proficiency in macroeconomics but also contribute to the cultivation of comprehensive competencies in a cross-cultural and multilingual context. This approach helps students better adapt to the internationalized economic environment. Macroeconomics often involves economic relations between nations and global trends in economic development. Bilingual teaching can assist students in gaining a deeper understanding of macroeconomic policies and development models in different countries. It aids students in directly comprehending and applying advanced international macroeconomic theories, fostering their ability to understand macroeconomic issues with a cross-cultural perspective. Furthermore, bilingual teaching is

conducive to developing students' analytical skills for in-depth analysis of global macroeconomic issues. By using the target language, students can better comprehend and apply complex concepts in macroeconomics. The integration of the discipline and language enables students to apply the theoretical framework of macroeconomics more effectively, thereby better addressing global economic challenges.

2. Overview of the CLIL method

2.1. What is CLIL?

The concept of CLIL was first introduced by David Marsh and Anne Maljers from the European Centre for Modern Languages in 1994. The CLIL method is a teaching approach that closely integrates subject content and language learning. It not only emphasizes the imparting of subject knowledge but also focuses on students learning subject content through the use of the target language (usually the second language). This integrated approach helps enhance students' language proficiency while enabling them to gain a deeper understanding and mastery of subject knowledge.

The introduction of CLIL has had a profound impact on the field of education. Firstly, it emphasizes the importance of language proficiency in the context of comprehensive skills in a globalized environment. By using the target language in subject learning, CLIL naturally enhances students' language skills. Secondly, CLIL promotes interdisciplinary education, where students not only improve their subject knowledge but also cultivate broader comprehensive skills in their second language. The concept of CLIL has been highlighted globally, with schools and educational institutions in many countries actively exploring and implementing this concept in their lessons to achieve cross-cultural and multilingual education.

2.2. Uniqueness of CLIL

The CLIL method offers several distinct advantages compared to traditional teaching methods. Firstly, the CLIL method highlights the integration of language and subject content. Traditional teaching methods often separate language learning from subject content, while CLIL combines the two, making language a tool for subject learning. This integrative teaching method helps improve students' ability to use language in the subject area. Secondly, CLIL teaching emphasizes providing authentic and meaningful language input, exposing students to real contexts and professional terminology in subject learning. CLIL underscores learning a language through a subject, making language learning more practical ^[1]. Additionally, CLIL encourages active participation in discussions, projects, and practical activities. In contrast, traditional teaching methods are more teacher-centered, with lower student engagement. Moreover, CLIL advocates task-based learning, encouraging students to solve problems through practical tasks, thus enhancing their application skills in the subject. CLIL also involves diverse assessment methods, such as project reports, group discussions, and practical applications, to comprehensively evaluate students' language and subject abilities. In comparison, traditional teaching methods may focus more on lectures, exercises, exams, and quizzes within the classroom.

Overall, the application of the CLIL method in higher education emphasizes the integration of language and subject content, student engagement, and practical skill development. This enables students to have a more practical and comprehensive learning experience and be better prepared for future endeavors.

2.3. Applying CLIL in subject teaching

The successful implementation of CLIL requires innovation. By adopting diverse teaching strategies, such as case analysis, group discussions, and practical projects, teachers can stimulate students' interest in learning and improve their expressive and thinking abilities in the target language.

The teaching methods of CLIL are diverse, emphasizing the improvement of proficiency in the target language in a natural context through the integration of subject content and language learning. Below are some common methods of applying CLIL.

(1) Content-based language teaching

The core idea of CLIL is language teaching based on subject content. Through content-based language teaching, teachers can focus on using the target language in subject courses to help students understand and express subject concepts. In this way, the students' listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in the target language will improve.

(2) Language output

CLIL encourages students to speak and write in the target language during subject learning. This includes participating in class discussions, delivering speeches, and writing reports. Language output is a crucial way to improve language proficiency, allowing students to better master the language through practicing it.

(3) Interactive learning

CLIL advocates interactive and cooperative learning through group discussions, collaborative projects, and other methods to stimulate students' interest in learning. Students jointly explore subject issues and share viewpoints, enhancing practical language application skills, while fostering teamwork and communication skills.

(4) Practical projects

CLIL emphasizes practical application, utilizing projects to apply the acquired knowledge to real-life scenarios. This project-based learning not only promotes a deeper understanding of subject knowledge but also enhances students' practical language application skills^[2].

(5) Case analysis

Teachers can guide students to analyze and solve real-world problems through case analysis. This method deepens the understanding of subject knowledge and cultivates students' ability to think logically and analyze problems in the target language.

(6) Integrated design of subject and language

Teachers need to design courses in a way that integrates subject content with language learning. This includes selecting appropriate themes, designing language activities, and ensuring students can improve their language through subject learning.

3. Application of CLIL in bilingual macroeconomics teaching

Applying the CLIL method to bilingual macroeconomics teaching offers numerous benefits, with the most prominent being the consolidation of subject knowledge and the enhancement of professional language proficiency. Specifically, CLIL teaching can be implemented in bilingual macroeconomics courses in several ways.

(1) Bilingual classroom lectures

Teachers should use the target language while teaching macroeconomics concepts, ensuring the authenticity and professionalism of language input. Core concepts of macroeconomics should be gradually introduced using clear demonstrations, charts, and examples to help students understand and adapt to the disciplinary usage of the target language^[3]. Classroom interactions and quizzes should be carried out to assess students' understanding of lecture content. Furthermore, they should be

encouraged to ask questions and engage in discussions in the target language.

(2) Bilingual textbook design

Bilingual textbooks should be designed with a parallel presentation of both Chinese and the target language. Important concepts should be annotated and explained, and bilingual glossaries should be provided so that students can easily comprehend and apply professional terminology related to the subject. Teachers should regularly collect feedback from students on bilingual textbooks so that the materials can be optimized to meet their needs.

(3) Bilingual group discussions

Group discussion in the target language should be held, in which the students analyze and discuss macroeconomic cases in the target language. Students should be assigned to groups and be given cases and questions, and they should be encouraged to share their viewpoints and discuss with their peers using the target language. Student performance in group discussions should be assessed through group reports, discussion records, or peer evaluations.

(4) Macroeconomics case studies

Real macroeconomic cases should be introduced to students and they should be encouraged to analyze and discuss them in the target language. A case analysis framework should be provided, guiding students to understand cases in depth, apply macroeconomic theories to explain phenomena, and present their analyses in the target language. Students' understanding of macroeconomic concepts and their language expression abilities should be assessed through case reports and oral presentations.

(5) Bilingual classroom interaction

Various classroom interaction activities should be designed, including questioning, answering, role-playing, etc., to promote students' active participation in the target language environment. Topics such as students' daily lives, current events, or economic news should be utilized to spark interest and encourage communication and discussion in the target language. Students' performance in the target language environment should be assessed through real-time interactions and observations of student engagement.

(6) Bilingual writing in macroeconomics

Students should be encouraged to write in the target language, including essays, reports, analyses, etc. Students should be guided to use professional terms in macroeconomics, with an emphasis on the importance of logic and structure ^[4]. Their disciplinary expression and language application abilities should be evaluated through their written works and peers' reviews.

Through these application methods, students can better understand the subject and become more proficient in the target language. This approach emphasizes practical application and a close integration with subject content, helping students better gain both disciplinary knowledge and language skills.

4. Considerations when applying the CLIL method in bilingual macroeconomics teaching

When applying the CLIL method in bilingual macroeconomics teaching, teachers need to pay attention to the following issues to ensure the effectiveness of teaching and a positive learning experience for students.

(1) Differences in language proficiency

Students may have varying levels of language proficiency, with some being more proficient in the target language than others. Therefore, teachers should tailor their lessons to challenge advanced

students while also catering to those with lower proficiency levels ^[5]. Designing tasks and activities of different difficulty levels encourages collaboration among students, fostering collective progress.

(2) Introduction of professional terminology

Macroeconomics involves a plethora of professional terms that students may find unfamiliar in a bilingual environment. When introducing new professional terminology, teachers should provide clear definitions and examples of using the terms. Bilingual glossaries and textbooks can help students understand professional terminology related to the subject ^[6].

(3) Balancing task design

When designing tasks, teachers must strike a balance between subject content and language objectives, ensuring that the tasks convey macroeconomics concepts while enhancing students' language abilities. Task-based teaching can be adopted so that students can learn through practical tasks like problem-solving and case analysis. It is essential to ensure that tasks cover both subject knowledge and language skill improvement.

(4) Diverse assessment methods

Traditional exams and quizzes ensure a comprehensive assessment of students' learning outcomes. Therefore, diverse assessment methods should be adopted, including project reports, group discussions, oral presentations, etc., to gain a more comprehensive understanding of students' language application and professional abilities in the field of macroeconomics.

(5) Utilization of teaching resources

Teachers need to effectively utilize bilingual teaching resources to ensure that students receive high-quality subject and language support. Bilingual textbooks, international literature, examples, and cases should be employed to provide students with rich subject and language input. Additionally, online resources and technological tools can be utilized to support student learning.

(6) Maintaining student engagement

Some students may feel uncomfortable in a bilingual environment, leading to decreased participation. Therefore, interactive teaching methods should be employed to encourage student participation in group discussions, case studies, and role-playing. Teacher encouragement and active participation are vital for students to overcome language barriers and boost their confidence.

(7) Establishment of feedback mechanism

Students need timely feedback to comprehend their performance in both language and macroeconomics. An effective feedback mechanism should be established, incorporating regular assessments, personalized guidance, and peer evaluations. Through timely feedback, students can continually enhance their language proficiency and subject knowledge.

The CLIL model provides innovative strategies for the integration of subject content and language learning, particularly demonstrating significant benefits in bilingual teaching of macroeconomics at the university level. In the context of globalization, cultivating economics professionals with a cross-cultural perspective and multilingual abilities is of great significance. Through continuous efforts, the CLIL teaching method will better meet students' learning needs and establish a solid foundation for their future professional and academic development.

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