

Teaching Design for the Integration of Senior High School English and Local Culture under the Guidance of CLIL

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Abstract: Learning and using English is of great significance and plays an important role in spreading Chinese culture and enhancing mutual understanding and communication between China and other countries. With the continuous increase of foreign economic and cultural exchange activities in Western ethnic minority areas, the importance of cultivating foreign languages among ethnic minorities has been highlighted. The CLIL concept has received high recognition in foreign language teaching at all stages in China. However, there are currently not many discussions and studies on cultural content in CLIL. Therefore, based on the guidance of the CLIL concept, this study wants to design a teaching plan for the integration of high school English and local culture in the Xizang region, aiming to enhance the English learning interest and oral English expression ability of high school students in the Xizang region.

Keywords: CLIL; Local culture; Teaching design

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1. Introduction

It is stated in the English Curriculum Standards for General High Schools (2022 Edition) that based on compulsory education, the English curriculum for general high schools should assist students in further learning and applying the basic knowledge and skills of English, develop their cross-cultural communication ability, and create favorable conditions for them to study the knowledge of other subjects, absorb the essence of world culture, and disseminate Chinese culture^[1]. The ethnic minorities in China have not only politically joined the Chinese nation but also culturally joined it^[2]. Therefore, strengthening the integration of ethnic cultural content and the training of cultural communication skills in teaching can cultivate the cross-cultural communication ability of ethnic minority students, helping them better participate in international exchanges and enhancing China's international competitiveness. In recent years, the field of English teaching has encouraged teachers to create a

CLIL teaching suitable model for the Indigenous culture of China. It is expected that the CLIL concept will be promoted and implemented in foreign language teaching at all levels, stages, and types. Therefore, based on the teaching concepts and principles of CLIL, that is, CLIL emphasizes that teaching content (content and language) should be designed with communicative teaching activities that cultivate students' cognitive development characteristics (Bloom's stages of cognitive development) based on certain teaching situations. With cross-cultural communication as the teaching concept, this study has designed teaching activities integrating high school English and local culture in the Xizang region, in the hope of providing some reference value for teaching in this aspect.

2. CLIL concept

Content and language integrated learning (CLIL) is a dual-focused educational approach that involves the learning and teaching of content and language through the use of an additional language. An "additional language" usually refers to the "foreign language" of the learner, but it can also be a second language or some kind of heritage or community language^[3]. The concept of "content" is much more flexible than choosing a subject from traditional school curricula, such as geography, music, biology, or physics. Dalton-Puffer Tarja Nikula pointed out that in CLIL, the exact meaning of "content" will depend on the learning system in different contexts. "Content" should be based on different contextual variables, such as teacher availability, language support, the age of learners, and the social needs of the learning environment, which may mean that it is more appropriate to choose different content.

The 4Cs contents of CLIL include Content (subject matter), Communication (language learning and using), Cognition (learning and thinking processes), and Culture (developing intercultural understanding and global citizenship)^[5].

It can be seen that CLIL emphasizes that teaching content (content and language) should be based on a certain teaching context to design communicative teaching activities that cultivate students' cognitive development characteristics (Bloom's stage of cognitive development), and cross-cultural communication is the basis of CLIL.

3. Feasibility of CLIL concept in cultural teaching

The CLIL teaching concept plays a guiding role in the cultivation of cross-cultural communication skills. Li and Huang pointed out that the cultivation of compound foreign language talents is a specific practice under the paradigm of "Content and Language Integrated Learning"^[6]. Do Coyle et al. proposed that the success of CLIL is also closely related to the cross-cultural atmosphere in the classroom^[5]. Content and language integrated learning (CLIL) aims at cross-cultural understanding and integrates rich cultural resources and various teaching methods, opening a "window" for cross-cultural understanding education^[7]. Furthermore, Zhang pointed out that it is of great practical significance to examine the localized practice of the CLIL teaching mode in foreign language teaching in the country. Therefore, the application of the CLIL teaching concept in the teaching of local culture in the country has a theoretical guiding role.

4. The necessity of integrating CLIL with local culture

Intercultural dialogue involves using skills to mediate between one's own and other cultures. It starts with raising awareness about one's own culture, including culturally learned attitudes and behaviors^[5]. Therefore, the ability

to express one's own culture is the basis of cross-cultural communication. Moreover, Lin et al. proposed that integrating the CLIL concept scientifically into the foreign language curriculum and teaching system and taking advantage of the language advantages of ethnic regions is beneficial to achieving the diversified training goals of foreign language compound talents of ethnic minorities. It is also a scientific strategy for maintaining the diversity of language and culture in ethnic regions and promoting the construction of cultural ecology^[8]. Xu proposed that the application of the concept of content and language integrated learning in the reform practice of foreign language education is conducive to solving the problems that have long existed in the country, such as the single content of foreign language professional courses, the overly narrow knowledge scope of students, and the insufficient critical thinking ability.

CLIL conforms to the new demands of China's foreign language education reform under the new situation. It is highly necessary to promote and implement it nationwide, with the expectation of providing important inspiration for the reform of foreign language education and teaching at all levels, stages, and types in China^[9]. Therefore, the CLIL teaching concept deserves continuous exploration and research in foreign language education and teaching at all stages and of all types.

5. Teaching design of English integration with local culture under the guidance of CLIL

Based on the teaching concepts and principles of CLIL, that is, CLIL emphasizes that teaching content (content and language) should be designed in a certain teaching situation to carry out communicative teaching activities with the characteristics of cultivating students' cognitive development (Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives in the Cognitive Domain), and emphasizes that cross-cultural communication is the basis of CLIL, the study has designed the following teaching contents and teaching activities.

5.1. Teaching materials

The author, in response to the theme of Unit 4 "History and Traditions" of Compulsory 2 of PEP, selected the article "How tea came to Tibetan"^[10]. The author also added the process of making tea, the customs when drinking tea in a Tibetan family, and the content about the ancient tea horse road to this article as the extended reading materials for the theme of this unit.

5.2. Teaching target: Grade two students

With the quote "A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin, and culture is like a tree without roots." by Marcus Garvey as the unit theme, the study emphasizes the importance of understanding one's own ethnic history, culture, and origin.

5.3. General objective

Students can confidently, clearly, and fluently tell short stories about Tibetan tea to foreigners; the Ancient Tea Horse Road; the process of making tea; and the related customs of drinking tea in a Tibetan family.

5.4. Teaching content and teaching objectives

According to Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives in the cognitive domain, the following teaching contents and teaching objectives have been formulated from the 4Cs (Content, Communication, Cognition,

Culture) of CLIL.

5.5. Content

5.5.1. Short story “How tea came to Tibetan”

Cause: Long ago, King Dusong Mangbo je became very sick. One day when the king was in solitary confinement due to his illness, he saw a beautiful bird carrying a few leafy twigs in its beak and making a beautiful sound on the railing of the upper story of the palace. Though the king saw the bird, he did not pay too much attention to it. For the next few days, the bird came at sunrise carrying twigs and making a beautiful sound. The king became very surprised and tasted leafy twigs and his thirst was quenched. Realizing that this would make an excellent drink.

Process: After that, the king let his ministers and subjects find that kind of leafy twig. They looked all over Tibet for the tree, but they could not find it. One of the king’s very sincere ministers looked all around the border areas of Tibet and finally, he came to China, in a very thick forest full of bamboo. Thinking to himself that the forest over yonder would definitely have the tree, he went towards the forest, but there was a large stream beside the forest that he thought he could not cross. Then a little while later, he saw a great fish jump out of the water right beside him and he realized that the river was wide but it was not very deep. Then he crossed the river and came to the forest. He found the same kind of twig that the bird had brought. He merrily cut a load to carry on his back. He was thinking how nice it would be if someone could help him carry the loads since it was a long way away from Tibet. Just as he was thinking that, a doe, who was not afraid of people, appeared beside him.

Result: Though it took them about a month, the deer carried the loads all the way until it was within sight of the Tibetan king’s palace. The king was very delighted and gave the minister a great gift. The king was also cured of his sickness. From then on, the practice of drinking tea became widespread in Tibet.

5.5.2. Ancient tea horse road

Tibetan Plateau’s severe environment made it difficult for tea to grow, so Tibetan people had to use sturdy horses and other items to exchange tea with the outside world. The “Tea Horse Ancient Road” refers to the trade route that has been used since the Tang and Song dynasties up to the Republic of China period for the exchange of tea and horses between the Han and Tibetan people.

5.5.3. Make Tibetan tea at home

There is a simple alternative recipe available for one to make Tibetan tea at home. The ingredients include 2 pinches of tea leaves or 2 bags of tea, 2 cubes of unsalted butter, a quarter cup of milk, a pinch of salt, and 2 cups of water. Step 1: Boil the water in a pot and then turn the heat down. Step 2: Put the two pinches of tea or tea bags into the water and continue to boil for a couple of minutes, then separate the tea leaves or take out the tea bags. Step 3: Combine the tea, salt, butter, and milk in the blender and blend for 2–3 minutes. Step 4: Pour it into the cup and enjoy the delicacy.

5.5.4. Tibetan tea-drinking customs

Tibetan people are accustomed to using butter tea or sweet tea to serve guests. If one has the opportunity to visit a Tibetan family, there are certain rules and traditions that the person might want to know in advance. While drinking tea in the Tibetan family, one should drink in separate sips and avoid draining the bowl. After several sips,

the host usually refills the bowl. If the person does not want to have more tea, use their hands to cover the bowl or leave the tea untouched. When leaving, it is okay to leave the tea unfinished. That means a good wish to meet again in the future.

5.6. Communication

5.6.1. Communication of learning

Noun: King Dusong Mangbo je; nutrition; experimentation; medical; solitary confinement; leafy twigs; quenched; ministers and subjects; merrily; load; doe; Noun: King Dusong Mangbo je; nutrition; experimentation; medical; solitary confinement; leafy twigs; quenched; ministers and subjects; merrily; load; doe; delighted; cured; widespread; recipe; ingredients; Verb: Heat; Boil; gets thick; separate; Stir; blend together; drain the bowl; Measure word: ... pinches of; ... bags of...; ...cubes of...; ...quarter of...; ...cup of...; unsalted butter; Grammar: ...and...; v+ing.

5.6.2. Communication for learning

Long ago; For the next few days; They looked all over Tibet for the tree; Then a little while later; Just as he was thinking that; Though it took them about a month; From then on; If one wants to make Tibetan tea at your home. The ingredients include.....; There are some certain rules and traditions that one might want to know in advance; While drinking; After several sips; When leaving; communication through learning: Students retell the cause, process, and result of the short story in front of their classmates. Students communicate why the story is full of mythical elements. Students act as foreigners and locals to have a conversation in groups.

5.7. Cognition

Memory: Recall the existing experience related to the teaching content.

Comprehension: Understand the teaching content and related descriptive terms.

Application: Be able to express the taught content clearly and accurately.

Analysis: Analyze the reasons for the mysterious elements in the story.

Evaluation: Evaluate the historical significance of the ancient Tea Horse Road.

Transfer and Innovation: Be able to think of cultural contents and cultural customs in other aspects

5.8. Culture

Cultivate students' awareness of telling about local culture and understanding other cultures.

5.9. Teaching steps

Teaching activities are designed based on Bloom's Taxonomy of Cognitive Domain. To enable students to fully participate in the class content and activities, the teaching is divided into two lessons so that the teaching tasks can be completed thoroughly and completely (**Table 1** and **Table 2**).

Table 1. The first lesson

Steps	Purpose
Lead in: T: What did you eat for your breakfast? Let me see who eats tsampa with Butter tea. Does anyone know about how tea came to Tibet? The teacher shows on the PPT a picture of foreigners sitting in a Tibetan-style teahouse with buttered tea on the table and says to the students “Suppose when you were enjoying a bowl of Tibetan noodles and sipping sweet tea at a Tibetan restaurant, a group of foreigners come in and sit next to you. After a while, they start asking you some questions, and you begin a fascinating conversation.” In this conversation, you will talk about the following topics in English: show the teaching content to the students.	Create situations, perceive teaching content, and enhance students’ learning motivation and interest.
The teacher asks the students to find out how many paragraphs there are in the article by themselves and try to summarize the main content of each paragraph.	Exercise students’ independent reading ability.
The teacher follows the students paragraph by paragraph to discuss the new words and the main content.	To give all students a clearer understanding of the structure and content of the text, to prepare for the next clear story to foreigners.
Students discuss “Why there are mythical elements in the story?” —To praise tea and express gratitude to the people who bring tea to Tibet.	Exercise students’ communication ability and inference ability.
Students can get enough time to practice and get ready for the next role-play.	Students can get enough time to practice and get ready for the next role-play.

Table 2. The second lesson

Steps	Purpose
Review the story content from the last class together. Then introduce the historical background of the “Tea-Horse Ancient Road” and discuss the historical significance of the Tea-Horse Ancient Road.	Learn about other stories behind tea and practice evaluation skills.
Students recall how to make butter tea, then show and explain how to express it in English. Students recall and say the custom of drinking tea in Tibetan homes, and then show and explain how to express it in English.	Students can clearly and fluently express the process of making butter tea and the customs of drinking tea in English.
Ask students to role-play what they have learned.	Complete a holistic role-playing task that reinforces the content and language knowledge students have learned.
Homework: Learn about one of the following three aspects from elders or books and express them in English. Other theories about how tea was introduced to Tibet, why Tibetans value tea so much, and what other Tibetan food customs are.	To enable students to understand cultural content and cultural practices from a diverse perspective.

5.10. Teaching evaluation

The author referred to the evaluation form in the book *Teaching Language and Content in Multicultural and Multilingual Classrooms* by Begoña bellés-fortuño and María Luisa Carrió-Pastor and let students themselves, classmates, and teachers evaluate the performance of students (**Figure 1**)^[11].

Category	Excellent (10-9)	Good (8-6)	Fair (5-4)	Poor (3-0)	Comments
Pronunciation 25p	Pronounces all words correctly and speaks clearly. Appropriately uses correct vocabulary and grammar	Pronounces most of the words correctly and speaks clearly. Uses some correct vocabulary and grammar	Speaks clearly; mispronounces some words. Uses some correct vocabulary and grammar	Difficult to understand, is struggling or mispronounces most words. Does not use correct vocabulary and grammar	
Vocabulary and grammar 25p	Appropriately uses correct vocabulary and grammar	Appropriately uses correct vocabulary and grammar most of the time	Sometimes appropriately uses correct vocabulary and grammar	Rarely uses or does not appropriately use correct vocabulary and grammar	
Grammar mistakes and types (slides) 20p	The presentation has no grammar mistakes	The presentation has no more than 2 grammar mistakes	The presentation has 3 grammar mistakes	The presentation has 4 or more grammar mistakes	
Content 15p	Addresses all or more of the topics on the assignment sheet	Addresses most of the assigned topics on the assignment sheet	Addresses between 40 and 50% of the topics on the assignment sheet	Addresses less of 40% on the topics on the assignment sheet	
Body language and poise 10p	Student displays relaxed, self-confident nature, with no mistakes	Makes minor mistakes, but quickly recovers from them: displays little or no tension	Displays some level of inflection throughout delivery	Consistently uses a monotone voice	
Eye contact 10p	Holds attention of entire audience with the use of direct eye contact	Consistent use of eye contact with audience	Displayed minimal eye contact with audience	No eye contact with audience	
Use of graphics, tables and images 20p	Includes visual elements such as tables, illustrations and graphs. Images are relevant to the topic, have the right size, are of good quality and increase the reader's interest	Includes visual elements such as tables, illustrations and graphs. Images are not relevant to the topic or do not have the right size	The visuals are poor and do not help the presentation. The images are randomly selected, are of poor quality and distract the reader	No visual elements	
Creativity 15	Presents the material creatively and spontaneously	There is some kind of originality, with good choice of text and graphics	Little or no variation; little originality and interpretation	Repetitive with little or no variety	
Total score: 150					

Figure 1. Evaluation form

6. Conclusion

At present, a small number of literature have theoretically pointed out that the integration of foreign language teaching and local culture in ethnic minority areas under the guidance of the CLIL concept helps to improve student's learning interest and expression ability, thereby promoting students' cross-cultural communication awareness and cross-cultural communication ability. However, there is no specific description of how to implement this. Therefore, taking the teaching design of the integration of high school English and local culture in the Tibet region based on the CLIL teaching concept as an example, the author has designed the above teaching content and teaching activities, in the hope of providing reference value for the teaching in this aspect.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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