



EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR DEVELOPING PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN PROSPECTIVE TOUR GUIDE-INTERPRETERS THROUGH THE CLIL APPROACH

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Annotation: This article examines effective strategies for developing professional communicative competence in prospective tour guide-interpreters through Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach. The study analyzes how CLIL methodology facilitates the simultaneous acquisition of professional knowledge and foreign language skills essential for tour guide-interpreter training. Through empirical research involving 120 students from tourism and translation programs, the article demonstrates that CLIL-based instruction significantly enhances learners' linguistic proficiency, intercultural communication skills, and professional terminology mastery. The findings reveal that integrated content-language teaching methods improve students' ability to perform authentic tour guide tasks including site interpretation, cultural mediation, and multilingual communication.

Keywords: CLIL approach, professional communicative competence, tour guide-interpreter training, content and language integration, intercultural communication, tourism education

Introduction

The globalization of the tourism industry and the increasing demand for qualified tour guide-interpreters necessitate innovative approaches to professional education. Tour guide-interpreters serve as cultural mediators, language facilitators, and information providers, requiring a unique combination of linguistic proficiency, cultural knowledge, and professional expertise. The development of professional communicative competence in this field presents particular challenges, as it demands the integration of specialized content knowledge with advanced language skills across multiple domains. Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) has emerged as a promising pedagogical approach that addresses these challenges by simultaneously teaching subject content and foreign language skills. Unlike traditional foreign language instruction that separates language learning from content acquisition, CLIL creates authentic contexts where language serves as a medium for learning professional knowledge. This dual-focused approach aligns particularly well with the needs of tour guide-interpreter education, where trainees must master both tourism-related content and the linguistic tools to communicate this content effectively. The research aims to identify effective CLIL strategies for developing professional communicative competence in tour guide-interpreter training, evaluate the impact of CLIL methodology on students' linguistic proficiency and professional knowledge, and provide evidence-based recommendations for implementing CLIL in tourism and translation education programs.



Literature review

Content and Language Integrated Learning represents a paradigm shift in foreign language education, grounded in sociocultural learning theory and constructivist approaches to knowledge acquisition. Coyle, Hood, and Marsh (2010) conceptualized CLIL through the "4Cs Framework," emphasizing the integration of Content, Communication, Cognition, and Culture. This framework recognizes that effective CLIL instruction must balance subject matter learning with language development while promoting higher-order thinking skills and intercultural awareness. Research demonstrates that CLIL enhances both content knowledge and language proficiency without compromising either domain. Mehisto, Marsh, and Frigols (2008) argue that CLIL's effectiveness stems from providing learners with authentic, meaning-focused contexts for language use, thereby increasing motivation and engagement. The approach aligns with comprehensible input theory, as learners receive input slightly beyond their current proficiency level while focusing on meaningful communication rather than linguistic form alone.

Professional communicative competence for tour guide-interpreters extends beyond general language proficiency to encompass specialized discourse competence, sociolinguistic appropriateness, and strategic communication skills. Хайитова (2021) emphasizes that tour guides must possess tourism discourse competence – the ability to structure information narratives, adapt language to diverse audiences, and manage intercultural communication challenges. Research by Salimova (2019) identifies key components of tour guide communicative competence: linguistic competence involving grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation, sociolinguistic competence covering register and cultural appropriateness, discourse competence including coherence and narrative structure, and strategic competence encompassing communication repair and clarification strategies. These components must be developed through authentic practice in professional contexts rather than isolated language drills. Weiler and Black (2015) note that tour guide communication involves simultaneous performance of multiple functions including information provision, entertainment, relationship building, and cultural interpretation, requiring sophisticated language skills combined with deep content knowledge.

Recent studies have documented CLIL's effectiveness in various professional education contexts. Lasagabaster and Sierra (2010) found that CLIL students in vocational programs demonstrated superior motivation and linguistic confidence compared to traditional language learners. In the tourism education context, Қосимова (2018) investigated CLIL implementation in Uzbek higher education institutions, finding that students in CLIL-based tourism programs showed significant improvements in professional terminology acquisition and oral presentation skills. Similarly, Исмаилова (2019) documented enhanced intercultural communication abilities among tourism students taught through CLIL methodology. However, Dalton-Puffer, Llinares, Lorenzo, and Nikula (2014) emphasize that effective CLIL requires careful scaffolding, explicit attention to language demands, and ongoing formative assessment.

Methodology



This study employed a mixed-methods quasi-experimental design to investigate the effectiveness of CLIL strategies for developing professional communicative competence in prospective tour guide-interpreters. The research involved 120 undergraduate students enrolled in tourism management and translation studies programs at two universities in Uzbekistan during the 2023-2024 academic year. Participants were divided into an experimental group receiving CLIL-based instruction and a control group receiving traditional content-based instruction with separate language courses. The experimental group consisted of 60 students with intermediate English proficiency participating in CLIL-based courses where tourism and cultural heritage content was taught through English medium instruction with explicit language support. The control group of 60 students with comparable characteristics received traditional instruction where professional content was taught in Uzbek and Russian with separate English language courses.

The experimental group participated in a specially designed CLIL program over two academic semesters totaling 128 contact hours. The curriculum integrated Central Asian Cultural Heritage, Tour Guide Techniques, Intercultural Communication, and Tourism Industry Knowledge with English language instruction. Key CLIL strategies implemented included content-obligatory language teaching, scaffolding techniques such as graphic organizers and vocabulary pre-teaching, task-based learning through authentic professional tasks, collaborative learning activities, multimodal input including videos and virtual tours, and formative assessment providing regular feedback on both content understanding and language development.

Data collection and analyzes

Pre-test and post-test assessments measured language proficiency through adapted Cambridge English for Tourism tests, professional terminology through specialized vocabulary assessments, content knowledge through written examinations, and oral performance through simulated tour guide presentations evaluated by external examiners. Qualitative data was gathered through student questionnaires, focus group discussions, teacher interviews, classroom observations, and student reflective journals. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS with independent and paired samples t-tests and ANCOVA analysis, while qualitative data underwent thematic analysis following established protocols. The study received ethical approval and all participants provided informed consent with assurances of confidentiality.

Result and discussion

Independent samples t-tests confirmed no significant differences between experimental and control groups at baseline across all measures, establishing group equivalence. After the 32-week intervention, ANCOVA analysis controlling for pre-test scores revealed significant differences favoring the experimental group across all measures. The experimental group achieved a mean language proficiency score of 81.7 compared to the control group's 69.4, representing a large effect size of Cohen's $d = 1.53$. Professional terminology scores showed even larger differences with the experimental group scoring 42.8 versus the control group's 34.2, yielding an effect size of 1.70. Content knowledge scores reached 78.6 for the experimental group compared to 72.3 for controls with a medium effect size of 0.71, while oral performance demonstrated substantial



differences with experimental group scoring 41.3 versus control group's 32.8 and an effect size of 1.54. All differences were statistically significant at $p < .001$.

Within-group analysis showed that the experimental group achieved 31.1% improvement in language proficiency, 50.2% improvement in professional terminology, 45.0% improvement in content knowledge, and 56.4% improvement in oral performance. While the control group also showed significant gains, their improvements were notably smaller at 12.5%, 21.7%, 35.1%, and 25.7% respectively. These quantitative results provide strong evidence that CLIL-based instruction significantly enhances professional communicative competence development in prospective tour guide-interpreters. The particularly large effect size for professional terminology supports assertions that CLIL facilitates specialized vocabulary acquisition more effectively than decontextualized language instruction, as students encounter terminology within meaningful professional contexts.

The oral performance results are especially significant for tour guide-interpreter preparation, as external examiners noted that experimental group students demonstrated superior fluency, more sophisticated vocabulary use, better discourse organization, and greater confidence in managing interaction with audience members. Interestingly, the experimental group showed moderately better content mastery despite learning through a foreign language, contradicting concerns that language demands might compromise content learning. This suggests that processing information through a foreign language may enhance cognitive engagement with content through the increased mental effort required for comprehension and production.

These findings have important implications for curriculum development in tour guide-interpreter education. The results suggest that institutions should integrate content and language instruction rather than maintaining separate tracks, invest in teacher professional development to support CLIL implementation, develop materials that scaffold both content and language learning, create opportunities for authentic professional task practice, and establish assessment systems that evaluate integrated competence rather than isolated skills. The study also highlights the importance of adequate scaffolding and explicit language focus alongside content instruction, as students benefit from strategic attention to linguistic features while maintaining focus on meaningful communication.

Conclusion

This research demonstrates that CLIL-based instruction offers a highly effective approach for developing professional communicative competence in prospective tour guide-interpreters. The significant improvements observed across linguistic proficiency, professional terminology, content knowledge, and oral performance provide empirical support for integrating content and language instruction in tourism and translation education programs. The identified strategies – including scaffolded task-based learning, collaborative activities, authentic professional tasks, and explicit language focus within content contexts – offer practical guidance for educators implementing CLIL approaches. The study's findings are particularly relevant for Central Asian higher education institutions seeking to enhance the quality of tour guide-interpreter preparation programs to meet international tourism industry demands.

However, several limitations should be acknowledged. The study focused on intermediate-level learners and may not generalize to beginners or advanced learners. The 32-week intervention period, while substantial, may not capture long-term retention and transfer of learning. Future research should examine CLIL effectiveness at different proficiency levels, investigate long-term impacts on professional practice after graduation, explore optimal ratios of explicit language instruction to content focus, and examine CLIL implementation challenges and teacher professional development needs. Additionally, comparative studies examining CLIL effectiveness across different target languages and cultural contexts would provide valuable insights for diverse educational settings.

Despite these limitations, this research contributes important evidence supporting CLIL as a pedagogical innovation for professional education in tour guide-interpreter training. As the tourism industry continues to grow and diversify, educational institutions must adopt approaches that effectively prepare graduates for the complex communicative demands of intercultural professional practice. CLIL methodology, with its integrated focus on content, language, cognition, and culture, offers a promising framework for achieving this goal.

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