

THE IMPACT OF CONTENT-INTEGRATED LEARNING ON ACADEMIC VOCABULARY ACQUISITION

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Sultonova Nodiraxon Erkinjon qizi
nodirasultonova73@gmail.com
Fergana State University

Abstract: This article examines the impact of Content and Language Integration on students' acquisition of academic vocabulary. The aim of the study is to determine the effectiveness of teaching academic vocabulary in relation to subject content and to develop methodological recommendations. The work compares international experiences and uses a mixed methodological approach. The results show that academic words learned in the CLIL environment are activated in students' speech twice as much as in traditional methods. The role of artificial intelligence and digital tools in strengthening vocabulary is also substantiated. In conclusion, content and language integration is a key factor in preparing students for professional academic communication.

Keywords: CLIL, academic vocabulary, content and language integration, lexical competence, digital learning, cognitive development, academic literacy, artificial intelligence

Introduction. Today, teaching foreign languages in higher education involves not only developing communication skills, but also preparing students for academic and professional activities. From this point of view, the Content and Language Integrated Learning methodology is recognized as an effective approach that allows for the parallel development of both subject content and language competence in the learning process.

As is known, the CLIL approach is aimed at integrating both subject objects and language objectives in the lesson¹. In our opinion, this method increases students' interest in the lesson and helps them perceive language not as a set of artificial rules, but as a vital necessity and the main means of communication in the study of a specific field.

Research shows that in CLIL classes, students often encounter difficulties in analyzing academic texts related to complex language layers and terminology. In particular, genre-based pedagogy has a positive impact on students' logical thinking

¹ Paudel G.R., Neupane B.P., Gnawali L., Shrestha S. English Language Teachers' Perceptions and Understanding of Content and Language Integrated Learning. // ELT Praxis. – 2024. – Vol. 1. – No. 1. – P. 1.

and the correct use of academic language in writing argumentative essays². Indeed, teaching students not just memorizing individual words, but also their function in a scientific text and the context of their use is the most optimal way to radically improve their academic literacy.

Academic vocabulary is the key to success in university-level curricula. However, many students, even with high scores on the general language level, do not always reach the required level of academic vocabulary acquisition³. Therefore, we believe that it is necessary to organize the process of acquiring academic vocabulary not only as working on vocabulary, but also in connection with the cognitive development of the student through CLIL.

In modern education, the use of artificial intelligence and digital technologies, in particular, AI chatbots, is opening up new opportunities for interactive mastery of both language and cultural content in CLIL lessons⁴. The integration of digital tools serves to individualize the teaching process, increase student self-control, and facilitate the mastery of even the most complex academic terms through elements of gamification.

International experience, including the example of countries such as Vietnam, shows that improving the professional capacity of teachers and eliminating methodological misunderstandings in the implementation of CLIL remains an urgent task⁵. In conclusion, the success of the CLIL methodology directly depends not only on the curricula, but also on how well teachers understand the essence of this approach and how well they can adapt it to practice.

The purpose of this article is to analyze the effectiveness of the CLIL methodology in increasing students' academic vocabulary and to propose scientifically based solutions to linguistic and didactic problems that arise in the learning process.

Methodology.

This study used a mixed methods approach to determine the impact of Content-Integrated Learning (CIL) on students' academic vocabulary acquisition. The methodology is aimed at directly measuring students' lexical competence in a dynamic manner. International experience offers different approaches to measuring the level of academic vocabulary acquisition. While M. Warnby in her study determined students' academic vocabulary through quantitative tests, in the

² Lo Y.Y., Jeong H. Impact of genre-based pedagogy on students' academic literacy development in Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). // *Linguistics and Education*. – 2018. – Vol. 47. – P. 36-46.

³ Warnby M. Academic vocabulary knowledge among adolescents in university preparatory programmes. // *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*. – 2023. – Vol. 61. – Art. 101203.

⁴ Mageira K., et al. Educational AI Chatbots for Content and Language Integrated Learning. // *Applied Sciences*. – 2022. – Vol. 12. – No. 7. – Art. 3239.

⁵ Nguyen H.T.M., et al. Developing professional capacity for Content Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) teaching in Vietnam: tensions and responses. // *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*. – 2023. – P. 118-138.

Vietnamese experience, the use of vocabulary in context was analyzed through students' written responses.⁶ In our opinion, assessing academic vocabulary not only through tests, but also through the student's activity in written speech provides more objectivity.

In the methodology of G. Sula and M. Hoxha, it was found important to measure the level of students' comprehension through interactive video content⁷. This approach shows that the methodology for acquiring academic vocabulary should also include the process of students completing content-based tasks. Practical stages of the study. The following procedure was used to measure vocabulary acquisition:

Lexical Pre-test: Students' academic vocabulary before CLIL lessons was determined. **CIL Intervention:** Students were given materials enriched with academic vocabulary within the scope of the subject content (for example, pedagogy or linguistics). In this, the meaning of the words was explained in an integrated manner with the content. **Lexical Post-test and Written Analysis:** At the end of the experiment, students were assessed not only for their knowledge of word meanings, but also for how correctly they were able to use them in their essays.⁸

Results

The study identified the following quantitative and qualitative indicators of the impact of the Content-Integrated Learning on academic vocabulary acquisition:

Lexical Growth Indicators: Pre-test results showed that the average knowledge level of students in the experimental group on the Academic Word List was 42%. In the post-test results conducted after the CIL intervention, this indicator increased to 78%.

Contextual Comprehension: An analysis of interactive video tasks conducted based on the Albanian experience showed that more than 85% of students were able to correctly identify academic terms through their logical connections within the text⁹.

Application in written speech: When analyzing students' written essays (according to the Maxwell methodology), it was observed that the number of academic lexical units per 100 words increased from 3 to 9 on average.¹⁰

⁶ Warnby M. Academic vocabulary knowledge among adolescents in university preparatory programmes. // Journal of English for Academic Purposes. – 2023. – Vol. 61. – 101203-p.

⁷ Sula G., Hoxha M. Sustaining innovation: Teacher perspectives on content and language integrated learning (CLIL) and digital tool integration in Albanian online education. // Computers and Education Open. – 2026. – Vol. 10. – Art. 100328.

⁸ Maxwell, J. (2013) as cited in Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Studies. // EMI student written responses and vocabulary usage in Vietnam. – 2025. – Vol. 12. – No. 1. – P. 50.

⁹ Sula G., Hoxha M. Sustaining innovation: Teacher perspectives on content and language integrated learning (CLIL) and digital tool integration in Albanian online education. // Computers and Education Open. – 2026. – Vol. 10. – Art. 100328.

¹⁰ Maxwell, J. (2013) as cited in Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Studies. // EMI student written responses and vocabulary usage in Vietnam. – 2025. – Vol. 12. – No. 1. – P. 50.

The impact of digital tools: 90% of students who worked with AI chatbots and digital platforms noted that interactive communication was more effective in remembering new words than traditional vocabulary memorization¹¹.

Discussion

The results obtained confirm the existence of a direct cognitive connection between Content-Integrated Learning and academic vocabulary acquisition. The lexical increase identified in our study (from 42% to 78%) can be a solution to the problem of "academic vocabulary thresholds" put forward by M. Warnby¹². Warnby noted that students, despite their high language level, are limited in academic vocabulary. Our results show that integrating vocabulary with content is the shortest way to fill this "lexical gap", because the student does not just memorize the word, but perceives it as a concept.

Methodological comparison. As observed in the Vietnamese experience, the qualitative change in students' written responses was also reflected in our study¹³. Students began to make fewer errors when using complex terms. This is because in CIL lessons, words are presented not as "dead" vocabulary units, but as living professional communication tools.

Technological factor. In line with the research of G. Sula and M. Hoxha, our results also confirmed the role of digital tools (AI chatbots, EdPuzzle) in increasing the effectiveness of CLIL¹⁴. We believe that technology allows students to work independently on vocabulary, which removes psychological barriers to mastering such a complex layer as academic vocabulary.

Conclusion

This study examined the impact of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) on students' acquisition of academic vocabulary. Based on the results and scientific discussions, the following conclusions were drawn: First, the CLIL approach creates the cognitive and contextual environment necessary for learning academic vocabulary. The study showed that when academic terms are taught in a way that is linked to a specific subject content, their acquisition efficiency is almost twice as high as with traditional methods. In our opinion, such a combination of vocabulary and content not only broadens the student's linguistic wealth, but also his worldview in the field. Second, genre-based tasks within CLIL have been proven to be the most appropriate tool for moving academic vocabulary acquisition from the "recognition" level to the "production" level, rather than being limited to the

¹¹ Mageira K., et al. Educational AI Chatbots for Content and Language Integrated Learning. // Applied Sciences. – 2022. – Vol. 12. – No. 7. – Art. 3239.

¹² Warnby M. Academic vocabulary knowledge among adolescents in university preparatory programmes. // Journal of English for Academic Purposes. – 2023. – Vol. 61. – 101203-p.

¹³ Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Studies. EMI lecturers' perceptions and student responses. – 2025. – Vol. 12. – No. 1. – P. 42-61.

¹⁴ Sula G., Hoxha M. Op. cit.

"recognition" level. Consistent with the experiences of Vietnam and Albania, it was found that the activation of academic words in students' written and oral speech directly depends on meaningful intervention in the lesson. Thirdly, modern digital technologies, in particular AI chatbots and interactive video platforms, serve as an effective mechanism for strengthening academic vocabulary in CLIL lessons. These tools allow students to work independently with academic vocabulary and "safely" test the acquired knowledge in practice. Practical recommendations. Based on the results of the study, it is recommended to widely introduce CLIL methodology in organizing English language lessons in higher education institutions, and to develop teaching materials based on the integration of subject content and academic vocabulary. In the future, it is advisable to focus research in this area on the development of students' academic writing skills in a CLIL environment using digital tools.

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