Grass Roots' Voices on the CLIL Implementation in Tertiary Education

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Abstract

Twenty-first Century era has brought great challenges in Indonesian education system, i.e. the increasing demand for the students to have foreign language skills to succeed in global world competition. Particularly in the higher education, the awareness of learning English leads some lecturers in Accounting Department Faculty of Economics State University of Malang to apply the concept of Content-and-Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) during the classroom instruction (CLIL) – dual-focused education in which the content subject is delivered through foreign language. It is expected that students are benefited from content and language integration so that they can compete in the real global market. This study, then, elaborated the CLIL practice reflections in Accounting Department as seen from the students' viewpoint. The data were collected by means of questionnaire and interview. The respondents were students of accounting department class QQ 2012. The result of this current study, then, is aimed at examining students' general attitude toward CLIL and the effect of English instruction on their language competence. Moreover, the findings in this present study are also intended for evaluating CLIL implementation for further betterment.

Keywords: CLIL, higher education, students' response

A. Introduction

English, nowadays, is a language which does not only belong to the inner circle usersbut also outer and expanding circle users. It is also one of official working languages used by United Nations. Honna (2008) strengthened the position of English among other languagesthat:

> Functionally speaking, English has conspicuously spread among nonnative speakers as a sizable number of Asian, African, Pacific, and Caribbean countries designate it as their official or working language. English is used as such in 70 countries (around 36%) of 193-nation world.

Based on those rationales, there is no doubt that English is considered as the most important foreign language taught in schools and universities of non-English speaking countries, including Indonesia.

It is believed that learning English is very vital to succeed in the global market.As stated by Deepak & Junichi (2011) English is necessary for survival economically, culturally, psychologically, as well as politically (p. 49). Since education is the bridge for preparing the students in the real global world, the language classroom is expected to fulfill the demandsas well as challenges of 21st Century. Language teaching and learning, particularly, is expected to reach 5Cs goals which are communication, cultures, connection, comparison, and communities (Theisen, 2011)

The demand of 21st education in language teaching and learning, then, leads to the emergence of Content and Language Integrated Learning (henceforth CLIL) which is dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching both content and language (Dale and Tanner, 2012). Marsh (2000) stated that CLIL provides wide variety of opportunities for meaningful tasks and helps the students to speak more in the classroom as students do not learn about the language, yet how to use the language in the real communication. So, this concept is considered as one of the answers of 21st century demands in the language teaching and learning and has been implemented in many countries.

In its application, CLIL subject teachers interweave language into the lessons while CLIL language teacher interweave the subject into the language lessons. Furthermore, CLIL offers a number of benefits for learners, such as: (1) learners are motivated; (2) learners developed their cognitive and communication skills; (3) learners' communication skills progress more due to meaningful communication; (4) learners receive a lot of language input and output; (5) learners develop intercultural awareness. Besides, CLIL also benefits for teachers and school, for instance: (1) teachers and school are encouraged to have development and innovation; (2) it is as powerful impulse for renewal and reflection in a school. School thinks about language policy; (3) teachers often become enthusiastic as they think about and discuss learning, curriculum development and materials; (4) teachers broaden their understanding of both the subject and the teaching of the subject; (5) teachers start to collaborate more Dale & Tanner (2012).

Based on the background above, this current paper tried to investigate the CLIL practice in Indonesian higher education context. The researcher tried to examine Indonesian students' general attitude toward CLIL implementation and its effect

toward their language competence. The research questions, then, are formulated as follows:

a. What are the students' perceptions about CLIL practice in the process of teaching and learning content course?
b. What strategies do students' use to improve their learning of English?
c. What are the effects of CLIL implementation on students' language acquisition of disciplinary content?

B. Research Methodology

This current study is qualitative study which data obtained through questionnaire and interview. The subject of this current study is students of Accounting Department in the Faculty of Economics State University of Malang Offering Q Class 2012. When the researcher conducted the study, they were in the fourth semester. This class was chosen since some lecturers use English during the process of teaching and learning content subjects. Twentytwo respondents (14 females and 8 males) participated in filling out the questionnaire and5 out of 22 voluntarily participated in the interview session which was set in the form of semi-structured interview. For the data analysis, the collected datawere transcribed, summarized, and related to the relevant theories to answer the research problems formulated.

C. Findings and Discussion
1. Students' Language Background

Based on the data obtained from questionnaire as well as interview, it was found out that all students are multilingual speakers. They have different mother tongue, as shown in the Figure 1:
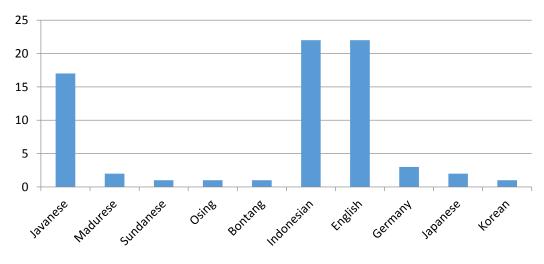

Figure 1. Students' Language Background

From the Figure 1, it is no doubt to say that English is the most important foreign language among other foreign languages in the educational system. This fact is in line with Beacco & Byram (2007) statement that English is the first foreign language in almost all educational systems.As it is very vital, it has been taught since primary

school (even pre-school) till university level while the other foreign languages usually started to be taught electively in the Senior High School. From Figure 1, it can also be concluded that all students are multilingual. The phenomenon of multilingualism is also expected to benefit the students' cognitive development (Saville-Troike, 2006:p. 93) in order to help them in the process of instruction as CLIL classroom requires higher cognitive ability since the contents are delivered in other language.

The students' self-assessment on the English proficiency revealed that 5% students are in the basic level, 9% students are in pre-intermediate, 77% students are in the intermediate level, 9% students are in the post-intermediate, and 0% students are neither in the pre-advanced nor advanced level. This finding is quite unique since all students have been learning English for more than 13 years, but more than three quarters of the samples are still in the intermediate level. Moreover, some students also stated that English is still considered difficult for them to learn. Based on the researcher's analysis, this condition is due to the position of English as a foreign language which is only used in the context of classroom without any further exposure in daily communication. Students rarely have comprehensible input as well as output which are of course vitally required in the process of acquiring language. It is also supported by Ismail's statement (1991) that "language exposure is crucially important in enhancing students' target language", the more frequent the exposure the better the target language acquisition, and vice versa.

Based on the students' TOEFL score which the test was taken in the third semester, it was revealed that the students' TOEFL score range from 337 to 459 which is equal to 0 – 4.0 in IELTS test or level of A1 – B1 (basic to independent user) based on CEFR (Common European Framework References for Language). CEFR describes the characteristics of language competence of students in this level as the following:

> Students understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance. They can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters, describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.

Based on the descriptor given, it could be concluded students are still able to use the language in simple form. To be sure, it becomes the challenges in implementing CLIL since CLIL poses a higher cognitive challenge to students. Students have to comprehend the content at the same time struggle to understand the language used.

2. Students' Perception on CLIL Implementation

Based on the findings on the students' language background, it can be concluded that engaging the content and overcoming language barriers is a big challenge for both students and teachers (Pinner, 2013). Bozdogan & Karlidag (2013) in their research about CLIL in Turkey also stated that students complained because there are numerous unknown vocabulary items hampering them. Hellekjaer (2010) added that CLIL brings some challenges to the students, subject matter difficulty as well as language (particularly learning and understanding new terms). However, in this present study, it was found that some students stated that terminology is not the problems since

they have had it in the previous educational level. Students from Vocational School majoring Accounting and students from social program of Senior High School stated that there was no significant difficulty in absorbing the materials since they have learned it for three years.On the other hand, students from Science program of Senior High School felt difficult since they had to be accustomed to new terminologies and concepts which were new for them. Thus, this finding proves that schemata or background knowledge plays pivotal roles in second language communication (Brown, 2007). In general, although vocabulary becomes one of the challenges in implementing CLIL, this current research reveals that students get the advantage from the CLIL practice, particularly in vocabulary development.

Moreover, 68% students realized that English is very important in their daily life, 27% students think that English is important, that 4% said neutral, 0% stated that English is either less or not important. This percentage told us that there is self-awareness on the importance of English amidst global communication. The respondents stated that English is vital to be learned for some reasons, *inter alia:* globalization which demands the use of English for international business, technology development; being able to communicate in English will give them the better position in the future career. Based on those reasons, 72% students are motivated to learn accounting integrated with English. Almost all students consider CLIL instruction advantageous as a means to study and even work abroad (Bozdogan & Karlidag, 2013). It is also related to English which can link to the outer world; they can reach more and up-to-date materials, find abundant examples on the subjects predominantly in English. Some students' excerpts related to their motivation in learning English are attached as the following:

Student A
Sesuatu yang maju datangnya dari luar negeri.
Perusahaan banyak yang menggunakan bahasa Inggris untuk berkomunikasi.

Student B
Semakin berkembang jaman, IT berkembang, IT menggunakan bahasa Inggris sehingga kita harus bisa bahasa Inggris.
Karena dengan bahasa Inggris, saya bisa mencuri ilmu orang luar

Student C
Dunia sekarang ini mengglobal. Saya ingin mendapatkan beasiswa luar negeri dan bahasa Inggris adalah bahasa yang digunakan secara global.Untuk mendapatkan pekerjaan yang bagus, banyak perusahaan yang mensyaratkan kita pintar bahasa Inggris.

Furthermore, regarding to the use of English in the content courses, 100% respondents stated that fully English is not effective. 72% of students (16 out of 22) prefer using Indonesian rather than English, 5 students (23%) chose bilingual and only one student (0.5%) chose full English. In other word, Indonesian (actually) is more comfortable to be used in understanding the lecture as well as materials related to the content matters. When the materials are delivered in English, of course, students will

find a lot of vocabulary which they have not been accustomed with. Students have to look up the dictionary on and on which will lead the students to the boredom.

Related to this case, students suggested the proportion on the use of Indonesian and English respectively on the CLIL implementation in Indonesian contexts. The ratio of English: Indonesian which students proposed were75%:25% (10 students), 50% :50% (9 students), 25%: 75% (3 students). From the suggestion that students gave, it could be concluded that they were (actually) motivated to learn English which is proven by the higher proportion for English rather than Indonesian, but they still need Indonesian as the bridge to meaning confirmation, i.e. through code switching or mixing. In fact, in the implementation of CLIL in Accounting Department Faculty of Economics State University of Malang, code-switching is used whenever students do not understand. It was also found that some lecturers used English slide show presentation but explained it using Indonesian. In addition, since the main goal of CLIL is communication, language accuracy did not become the main concern. It was found that lecturer does not concern or explain about the grammar explicitly. However, once in time lecturers also give feedback on students' spelling and pronunciation, but not in grammar.

To be noted, some lecturers who implemented CLIL in Accounting Department Faculty of Economics State University of Malang weresubject specialists and researchers in their professional domain which was economic graduated from Australian university graduates so that they had the enough exposure of English. Since CLIL combined between content and language, cooperation between subject teacher and language teacher is highly recommended. It is also suggested by Bozdogan & Karlidag (2013) that CLIL teachers need to pay as much attention to language output as they do to provide input and help students feel comfortable with their linguistic mistakes. Fang in Lin & Xie (2009) also considered collaborative teaching as an innovative method of teaching. Moreover, collaborative teaching will give a lot of advantages, such as provide teachers more opportunities to overcome teaching difficulties, and develop teaching professionalism.

3. Learning Activities and Strategies in the CLIL Classroom

During the CLIL implementation, students used English for some activities, such as: reading English references, English lecturing, English presentation, in-class English discussion, out-class English discussion, English test, and English paper writing.
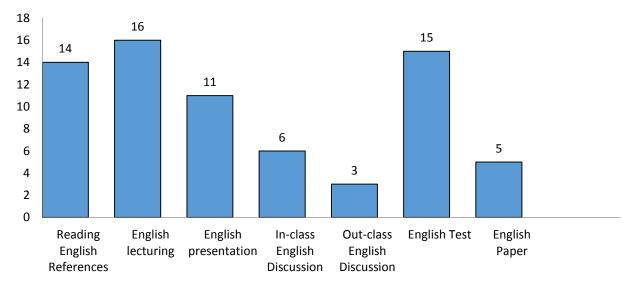
Figure 2. Activities in CLIL Classroom, Accounting Department Faculty of Economics Universitas Negeri Malang

Diagram above shows us that the students rarely practicing English with others for communication purposes – they seldom have discussion activity. In addition, based on the interview to some students, it was revealed that students knew idea on what to say but were reluctant to discuss using English since they face difficulties in conveying the meaning using English. Further, the students stated that the lively discussion only happens if only it was conducted in Indonesian. Since the English was merely used by the teacher, there was no doubt that most of students are able to communicate passively. Ideally, real communication should have been done inside and outside the class referring to the theory of interactionist which requires us to have the real communication with others. Lightbown & Spada (1999) believed that second language acquisition takes place through conversational interaction. The reluctance of students to speak up was caused by the theory that productive skills (speaking and writing) are the more difficult than the receptive ones. Speaking and writing are difficult since they involve not only how to organize ideas. Then, this condition was also strengthened by the students' low confidence.

Then, some strategies that students do in the CLIL classroom are using dictionary, reading aloud, taking a note from the lecture, underlining important points, discussing with others, reading translated book, asking the lecturers, employing *google* translate. Among them, using dictionary is the highest among all strategies.It is due to the comprehension difficulties among unfamiliar vocabulary is a major case. In CLIL classroom, as we know, there are a lot of specific terminologies. It is also revealed that students like to use electronic dictionary installed in their smartphone. Besides, they alsouse calculator-dictionary, bilingual dictionary, and monolingual dictionary. The complete learning strategies employed by students are summarized in the Figure 3.
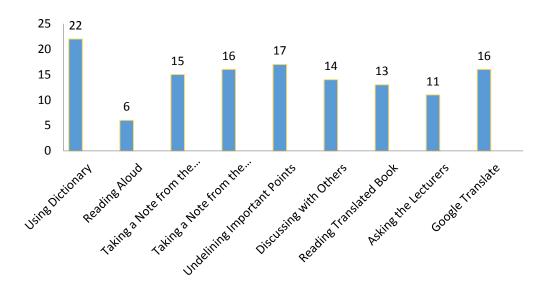
Figure 3. Learning Strategies in CLIL Classroom Used by the Students

In addition, in order to improve students' ability in English communication outside the classroom, students do some activities, such as: watching movies, listening to the music, reading books and/or novels, discussing with friends, noting new vocabularyin the notebook, joining private course, and browsing some information through the Internet. Movies and music are the most popular for students since it offers enjoyment as well as education at the same time. It is also categorized as authentic materials which can provide comprehensible input, provide the language model (accent, grammar, syntax, vocab, and discourse), cross-cultural window, and motivational means (Hidayati, 2013).

4. The Effect of CLIL Implementation on Students' Language Competence

CLIL provides vast opportunities with abundance meaningful input which increases the linguistic competence. Table 1 shows the students' opinion on the CLIL contribution toward their language skills.

Table 1. Percentage of Language Skills and Components

Language Skills and Components	SA		A		N		D		SD	
	F	%	f	%	F	%	f	%	f	%
Listening	8	36%	10	45%	4	18%	0	0%	0	0%
Speaking	4	18%	12	55%	5	23%	0	0%	1	5%
Reading	2	9%	12	55%	6	27%	2	9%	0	0%
Writing	2	9%	11	50%	6	27%	1	5%	2	9%
Vocabulary	7	32%	10	45%	5	23%	0	0%	0	0%
Pronunciation	5	23%	12	55%	5	23%	0	0%	0	0%
Grammar	2	9%	9	41%	10	45%	1	5%	0	0%

Note:

SA	: Strongly Agree	D	: Disagree
A	: Agree	SD	: Strongly Disagree
N	: Neutral		

According to the Table 1, it can be inferred that most studentswere helped by the implementation of CLIL. It helps them to improve their language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing) vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar.

To be more specific, the contribution of CLIL toward the grammar improvement is quite little. It is logical as the lecturers do not expose much on grammatical accuracy during the teaching and learning, yet emphasize more on the content. The result of the students' responses on grammar is line with Arevalo & Romero (2013) concluded that grammar accuracy did not benefitted in CLIL classroom because it does not explicitly focus on language issues, yet meaning. However, when the students have to give general reflection, whether or not the implementation of CLIL affects their general ability in English communication, it is surprisingly found that both sides have the equal proportion: 50% students stated No while the other 50% stated Yes.

D. Conclusion and Sugggestions

Overall, all students are motivated toward English use in content subject. Most students stated that CLIL is interesting, challenging, improving vocabulary, and motivating. However, CLIL implementation sometimes become annoying and boring as students have to look up dictionary many times to check the meaning of particular word. Further, it is suggested that the lecturers should pay attention not only on the content but also the language. The proportion of language ratio and the activities given in the CLIL classroom should promote students communication skills and suit to the students' characteristics.

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