An Investigation into Libyan EFL University Teachers' Beliefs and Practices of Content Language Integrated Learning CLIL

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Abstract:

This study investigates the Libyan EFL university lecturers in implementing content and language integrated learning(CLIL) at Omar Al-Mukhtar University. The collection of qualitative data was achieved through class observations and semi-structured interviews with three lecturers, and the quantitative data were collected through questionnaire by forty lecturers. The findings indicated that the lecturers encountered various challenges in implementing CLIL approach. Some of these challenges were related to the student's proficiency level and the vocabulary that was specific to each subject and used repeatedly in every lecture. This may prevent the students to improve their L2 (English). Additionally, some procedures were recommended to assist lecturers in overcoming these challenges in order to facilitate the implementation of CLIL method effectively.

Key words: Language - Content - English - Integrating - learning- university - lecturers.

دراسة استقصائية حول معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية بوصفها لغة أجنبية في الجامعات الليبية وتطبيقهم لمنهجية دمج المحتوى واللغة (CLIL)

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الملخص:

ناقشت هذه الدراسة معتقدات وتطبيقات أساتذة الجامعات في تدريس المناهج باللغة الإنجليزية بوصفها لغة أجنبيه عن طريق دمج تدريس اللغة والمحتوى في آن واحد في جامعة عمر المختار كما ناقشت هذه الدراسة بعض العقبات التي واجهها الأساتذة في تطبيق هذا الدمج ولتحقيق هذا الهدف تم جمع البيانات بطرق متنوعة ألا وهي عن طريق المقابلات الشخصية حضور محاضرات مع الأساتذة وعمل استبيان. ولقد أشارت النتائج إلى أن المحاضرين قد واجهوا بعض العقبات في دمج تدريس اللغة والمحتوى معاً. وأخيراً لقد تم التوصية ببعض الإجراءات لمساعدة المحاضرين على التغلب على هذه العقبات.

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1.0. Introduction:

The primary aim of this research is to discover what lecturers believe and which techniques they use to teach content by using the English language to improve students' English proficiency while communicating in their lectures.

It is widely acknowledged that English has gradually become the preferred language for communication worldwide. This has resulted in an increase in the use of English for specific purposes (ESP) in higher education. In this research, the researchers will investigate a new method to Libyan universities by using content and language integrated learning (CLIL).

This research examines the current method of English language teaching in Libyan universities by using content. This can be done by investigating the relationship between lecturers' beliefs and practices. The research also intends to determine the extent to which lecturers utilize different techniques when teaching English content. Content and language integrated learning(CLIL) is an educational approach that emphasizes both content and language, this approach extensively utilized in Libyan universities in which content subjects or courses are taught via a foreign language which is English.

CLIL is currently a part of the educational systems in Libya. The use of the English language in the instruction of content subjects, typically through content lecturers not language lecturers, has been a familiar practice in Libyan educational systems particularly at universities.

The purpose of teaching content by using the English language in Libyan universities is to enable effective communication with the world for several purposes such as leading to a better knowledge economy, and social development. In Libya, content is taught in English language at universities to facilitate communication.

The term CLIL was coined by David March and Anne Maljers in 1994 as a methodology similar to content based instruction CBI and language immersion. This method of learning content involves using an additional language, foreign or second L2, integrating both content and language teaching.

In an integrated content and language learning context, instructors do not have to be native speakers or language lecturers, they should be professionals in academic and scientific disciplines related to the content subjects.

The instructors in a CLIL context are not native speakers of the foreign language or language teachers, they are professionals in content subjects from academic and scientific disciplines. These instructors major in different fields such as math and physics. They teach the contents of their courses in English.

The central characteristic of CLIL

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is its dual focused method that concentrates equally on teaching and learning both content and language. (Harrop,2012).

1.1.Literature review

A number of studies have been conducted on the effects of the CLIL on learning L2.According to Kok,Yuksel,and Altun(2021) ,CLIL is a way of integration content for the aim of learning a language. The content can be any subject which is taught in a foreign language. The contents of these subjects can be about human sciences, engineering, math etc...

Xanthou(2011) conducted a study that examined the impact of the CLIL method on the learning of vocabulary and content among L2 students. The findings demonstrated that the CLIL method had a positive effect on the participants' content and vocabulary learning.

There are many advantages of CLIL in learning and teaching processes. Harrop (2012) confirmed that CLIL students have better communication skills and are more talented compared to the students who are not taught in a foreign language. Indeed, CLIL leads to a high degree of linguistic proficiency and boosts students motivation. It also enhances intercultural awareness of the students.

Sakellariou and Papadopoulos (2020) pointed out that the many countries use this method of teaching content courses. CLIL has the advantage of not requiring extra time to teach and learn a foreign language.

Therefore, it saves too much time and effort in teaching both content and language.

Diab,Abdel Hq,and Aly(2018) investigated the impact of CLIL on foreign language learning .Their research showed that learning both the lifestyle and learning the language go hand in hand. It is almost impossible to acquire a language without knowing the culture that surrounds it. This is because language is a part of culture.

1.2.Methodology

The present study aims at exploring the perceptions that Libyan EFL university teachers or lectures have about using CLIL. Another purpose is to find out what are the methods used by lecturers to implement CLIL in their classrooms. In addition, the study attempts to explore if teachers' beliefs about CLIL align with their practices or not.

The main idea of all research on teachers` perceptions is that the lecturers' perception of learning content and language is greatly influenced by their prior knowledge and life experiences. These beliefs or perceptions have a significant impact on their classroom practices. Furthermore, teachers' professional advancement may frequently lead to a change in their beliefs and practices.

To achieve the objectives of this research as reliably as possible, it was considered to combine methods from different research orientations. As a result, this study utilizes ethnographic techniques. Methodologically,

"ethnography and methodology have a strong connection"(Wolcott 2008:44).Ethnography is viewed as descriptively "telling it like it is from the inside"(Brewer 2000:10).This study, like ethnographic research, is focused on a particular cultural phenomenon(Riemer 2009),i.e., CLIL teachers' concepts of learning content and language may reflect their practices for CLIL while teaching. The phenomenon is partially approached through ethnographic data collection, e.g., by conducting in-depth interviews, class observations and questionnaire. Consequently, these research tools have been used in this study.

1.3.Aims and research questions

The main aim of this study, finding out what EFL teachers' beliefs and practices about implementing CLIL method in their classes. The first aim is to understand the beliefs that Libyan EFL university teachers have about using CLIL. The second aim is to discover how teachers implement CLIL in their classrooms. The third purpose is to investigate if teachers` beliefs about CLIL align with their practices.

Thus, the research questions of this study are the following:

Q1. What beliefs do Libyan EFL university teachers have about using CLIL?

Q2. How do teachers implement CLIL in their classrooms?

Q3. Do teachers' beliefs about CLIL align with their practices?

1.4.Respondents

The questionnaire was conducted by forty university lecturers who teach English content subjects. They teach different courses in various fields such as math, physics, chemistry etc. The questionnaire was distributed randomly to the participants.

The majority of the participants were Libyans and non-native speakers who teach content by using English language. The objective was to gather a group of lecturers who have varying experiences, CLIL training programs and their courses taught in English.

The participants of the interview and class-observation were three content lecturers. One of them teaches mathematics, and the other two teach in the faculty of medicine. They are non-native speakers of English. All the three participants who were involved in the study have learned English by studying the language at universities.

A permission was given to the researchers by the university president to conduct this research, the researchers informed the participants about their roles. The first step was to distribute the questionnaire to every lecturer. The questionnaire was distributed to the participants in a well-organized manner. The lecturers were informed about the purposes of this study in advance.

During the questionnaire, each lecturer was asked about his/ her teaching background, L1 language utilization in class,

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CBI training programs, language proficiency, teaching both content and language, and the viewpoints concerning the implementation of teaching content classes in English.

In the next step, the researchers conducted interviews with the lecturers. The researchers asked each lecturer questions about the main obstacles they confronted while delivering their content classes in English, which included the integration of content and language, the CBI training programs they had received, and the discussion in class about the use of L2 among students.

At last, the researchers observed three classes (three for each participant).The content lecturers whom we observed taught their classes in an ordinary way. The observation notes were categorized for more detailed analysis according to their stages. It has been noticed that the three content lecturers showed willingness to participate in the study. They were cooperative and their responses were helpful and informative

1.5. Instruments of data collection

For this study, three data sources were utilized, as detailed below:

1 .5.1. Questionnaire

The first research tool was the questionnaire due to the general information it contained about the methodology used in their lectures and the teaching materials. The researchers gained a starting point from this initial information, which would be later used to compare with their actual practices while teaching.

According to Brown(2011.p. 6),"questionnaires are any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting among existing answers ". For Babbie (2010.p.256), questionnaire is defined as "a document containing questions and other types of items designed to solicit information appropriate for analysis".

It is crucial to consider the advantages and disadvantages of the instrument you choose to use in the study. Questionnaires can be utilized to gather a significant amount of information from respondents; conducting a questionnaire is not time-consuming. The outcomes of the questionnaire obtained are easily to quantify and analyze. Their versatility enables them to be used for various purposes. Both quantitative and qualitative data can be gathered using them(Dorney,2010).

Dorney (2010) clarified that researchers may not be able to determine the degree of truthfulness of respondents, which could affect the reliability of questionnaires. Respondents may respond contrary to the researchers' intended meaning of items. In order to prevent misinterpretation, researchers need to choose clear, simple and specific wording while designing a questionnaire. They should keep the length of questions short, arrange

questions logically, and state the purposes of the research clearly.

The questionnaire was designed by the researchers. The researchers reviewed the previous studies and summarized the major challenges in order to use them to construct the questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of 19 multiple-choice questions that were developed to investigate the challenges encountered by lecturers in implementing CLIL approach at Omar Al-Mukhtar university. The questions of the questionnaire were also designed to achieve the purposes of the study.

The questionnaire began with a brief introduction to inform respondents about the aim of the questionnaire and to ensure that the questionnaire is confidential. They were advised to select the responses that totally reflected their beliefs and practices in teaching CLIL.

1.5.2.Class observations

The observations involve "Watching what people do, listening to what they say; and sometimes asking them clarifying questions"(Gilham,2000,p.45).In this instance, the researchers observed nine lectures, paying close attention to the delivery of content by lecturers, the teaching of both content and language, the use of teaching materials, Teacher-talking time compared to student-talking time, language input, error corrections, types of questions asked by lecturers and the language that was used most while communicating between the content lecturers and their students. The main tool used to describe classroom events was class observations, along with lecturer interviews. These research tools were used to complete each other.

1.5.3. Interviews

According to Babbie(2010.p.274), an interview is "a data collection encounter in which one person(an interviewer) asks questions of another(a respondent)".

Perakyla and Ruusuvuori(2011) suggested that researchers use interviews as a helpful tool to reflect the reality of teaching practices and peoples' subjective experiences and attitudes. Interviews can be conducted either face to face or on the telephone, yet various applications can also be implemented nowadays. Interviews have advantages and disadvantages. They are flexible, particularly semi-structured and unstructured interviews. They also enable the researchers to clarify the meaning of a question by paraphrasing it so that it is not misinterpreted. (Kothari,2004;Babbie,2010).

Nevertheless, as for the disadvantages, "The researcher using interviews has to be aware that they are expensive in time, they are open to interviewer bias, they may be inconvenient for respondents".(Cohen,2007. p.349).

Besides, the amount of information in interviews is dependent on interviewers' ability and skills to obtain information from

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respondents(Kumar,2011).This means that the interviewer's ability plays a significant role in eliciting information Interviews are classified into three types: structured, unstructured and semi-structured. These types vary in terms of the extent of flexibility. The type that was adopted in this study was a semi- Structured interviews. The questions of the interview are consistent for all respondents and were asked exactly in the same format and order.

The interviews were conducted to discover what the lecturers thought about their new teaching experiences and how they adapted to the new teaching environment.

The semi-structured interview was chosen because it produces the desired results for this study which is "A qualitative understanding of the topic under study"(Allison et al,1996,p.117).Eight questions were asked to the lecturers, which dealt with the major challenges they faced while teaching classes in English, their previous teaching experience, teacher training in CBI, and the teaching materials they utilized in their classes.

According to Seidman(1990),The participants' words being documented into a written text is believed to be the most trustworthy method to work with data. For this reason, the interviews of this study were transcribed. Hence, interviews were used in this study to gather more in-depth data from participants regarding their experiences in implementing CLIL approach.

1.6.Data analysis

1.6.1. Description of the questionnaire

Three main components were included in the questionnaire, the teaching materials, the methods and the characteristics of the lecturers. The questionnaire was answered by the forty lecturers in accordance with their experiences in teaching content classes in English at Omar Al-Mukhtar University.

Frequency Table

Q1.What is your educational level?			
		Frequency	Percent%
Valid	A. Master degree.	23	57.5
	B. Ph.D. degree	17	42.5
	Total	40	100.0
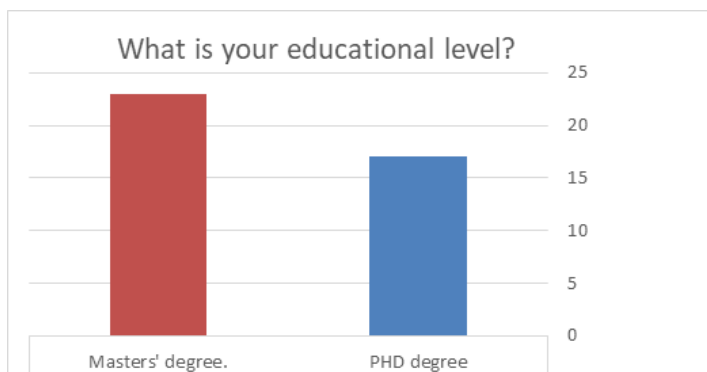
Figure(1) indicates that 57.5% of the participants have master degrees and 42.5% of the participants are Ph.D holders

Q2 .Where did you learn English?			
		Frequency	Percent%
	A. At a university.	14	35.0
	B. I attended English courses	13	32.5
	C. I learned English abroad, but I have never attended a course in Libya.	13	32.5
	Total	40	100.0

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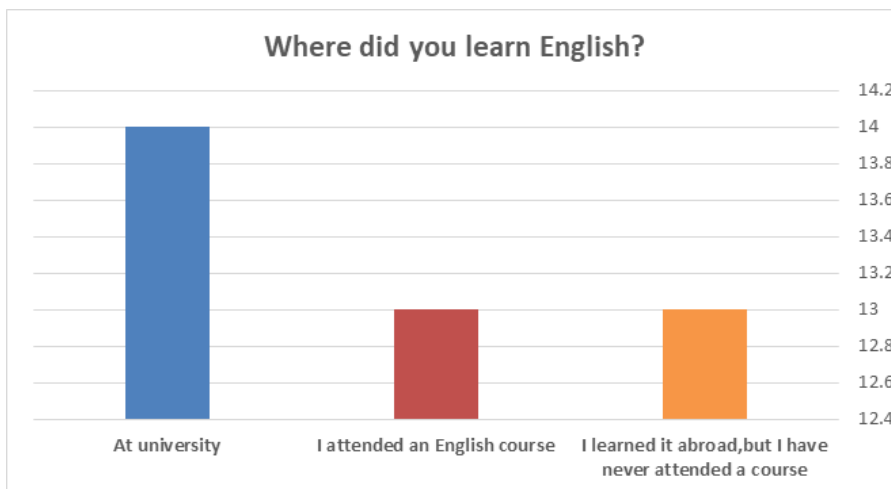
Based on figure (2), 35% of the participants selected A: at a university, 32.5% selected B:I-attended English courses, and 32.5 of the participants selected C: I learned English abroad, but I have never attended a course in Libya.

Q3. Have you attended any training courses before beginning to teach your subject in English?		
	Frequency	Percent %
A. yes	23	57.5
B. No	17	42.5
Total	40	100.0

Have you attended any training courses before beginning to teach your subject in English?
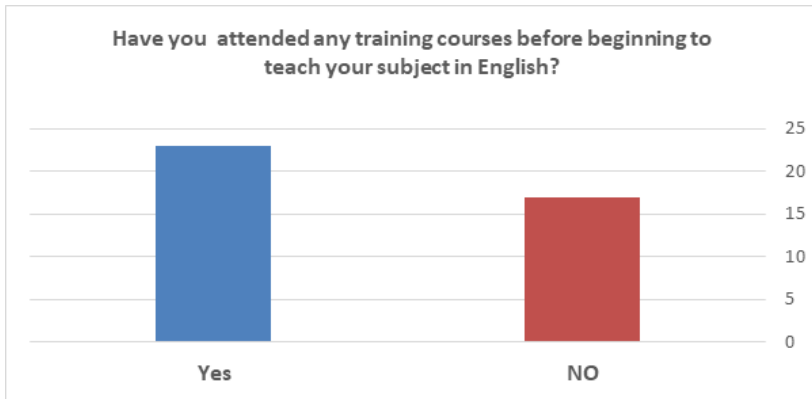

Figure (3) shows that 42.5% of the participants selected B: have not attended any training courses before beginning to teach their subjects in English. But 57.5% of the participants selected A:received training courses before beginning to implement CLIL method at Omar AL-Mukhtar university.

Q4. How many years have you been teaching content subjects in English?		
	Frequency	Percent %
A. 1 - 5	14	35.0
B. 6 -10	16	40.0
C. 11- 15	10	25.0
Total	40	100.0

Q5. Do you think that you have the required competencies to teach your subject in English?		
	Frequency	Percent %
A. yes	20	50.0
B. NO	20	50.0
Total	40	100.0

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Q6. If you do not, what do you think you need to improve?		Frequency	Percent %
A. Your methodology in how to make the students learn both the content and the language in an integrated way.		20	50.0
B. Your methodology related to teaching content in English		20	50.0
Total		40	100.0

Q7. What is the medium of instruction in your college?		Frequency	Percent %
A. students learn all subjects in English.		16	40.0
B. students learn some subjects in Arabic and some in English.		24	60.0
Total		40	100.0

Q8. Do you encourage your learners to interact in English in your classes?	Frequency	Percent %
A. Always	15	37.5
B. Often	10	25.0
C. sometimes	10	25.0
D. never	5	12.5
Total	40	100.0

Q9. How many hours do you teach your course in English?	Frequency	Percent %
A. two hours.	19	47.5
B. Three hours	12	30.0
C. F our hours	9	22.5
Total	40	100.0

Q10. How do you distribute your students in your class ?	Frequency	Percent %
A. Individuality.	21	52.5
B. In pairs	5	12.5
C. In teams.	4	10.0
D. In teams, pairs and individuality.	10	25.0
Total	40	100.0

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		Frequency	Percent %
	A. yes	17	42.5
	B. No	23	57.5
	Total	40	100.0

Q12. Do you switch from English to Arabic when you think it is necessary?

		Frequency	Percent %
	A. yes	30	75.0
	B. No	10	25.0
	Total	40	100.0

Q13. Do you use an English textbook in your class?

	Frequency	Percent %
A. yes	18	45.0
B. No	22	55.0
Total	40	100.0

Q14. Where do you extract your teaching materials from?(More than one answer is possible).

	Frequency	Percent %
A.I select only authentic materials.	8	20.0
B.I develop my own teaching materials.	9	22.5
C.I only use the content textbook in English.	18	45.0
D.I choose my teaching materials and prepare them for the lesson	5	12.5
Total	40	100.0

Q15. Do you have an English certification to attest your proficiency level?

	Frequency	Percent %
A.YES	31	77.5
B.NO	9	22.5
Total	40	100.0

Q16.What is the medium of instruction in your university?

	Frequency	Percent %
A-Students learn all subjects in Arabic.	2	5.0
B-Students learn all subjects in English	16	40.0
C-Students learn some subjects in Arabic and some in English.	22	55.0
Total	40	100.0

Q17. Do you have sufficient knowledge about CLIL?

Frequency	Percent %	
A. Yes, I do.	26	65.0
B. No, I don't	14	35.0
Total	40	100.0

Q18. How many training programs have you participated in order to be able to implement CLIL in class?

Frequency		Percent %
A. One	6	15.0
B. Two	8	20.0
C. Three	8	20.0
D. None	18	45.0
Total	40	100.0

Q19. If you have participated in any CLIL training programs, who were the trainers?

Frequency	Percent %	
A. Other language teachers.	23	57.5
B. Teaching staff members in the English department.	10	25.0
C. Others. If others specify.	7	17.5
Total	40	100.0

1.6.2. Description of the interviews

Upon analyzing interviews with three content lecturers, it can be observed that the lecturers' teaching practices are influenced by the belief that the most important thing for students is to understand subject matter of their courses. It can also be inferred that language teaching is not the first priority in their classes. Based on the content lecturers` responses, correcting their students' grammatical or pronunciation errors is not their duty.

1.6.3.Description of the class observations

Issues arose during class observations related to the following: subject content delivery, classroom resources, language input, accessibility of content and language, and source of knowledge. These issues will be described as follows:

1.Subject content delivery:

The class observations demonstrated how content lecturers delivered their classes. After the lecturers collected information from both the internet and books, they explained the main contents of their courses to the students and gave them the sheet to make copies.

2.Resources:

Some classrooms were equipped with projectors but the lecturers do not use them, they follow the traditional methods such as board, A few printed copies that provide an overview of the key ideas. since teacher-cen-

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tered classrooms predominate, the lecturers served as the primary source of knowledge.

3.Language input:

The language input means that language used by the lecturer while teaching. The students were exposed to classes that were teacher-centered, where lecturers-talking time was significantly higher than students-talking time. Consequently, the English language is not used excessively by students.

4. Accessibility of content and language:

During the observation of the classes, it was noticed that the students had more access to content than to language because the lecturers focused only on vocabulary that was specific to their field. The main focus was on content while language was the secondary priority of the lecturers.

5. Sources of knowledge:

From the observations, it was evident that the lecturers` role was that of "knowledge provider". They were responsible for sharing their knowledge with their students. The student's role was to listen attentively to the lecturers` explanations and write down information they copy from the board in their notebooks. It has been observed that the lecturers did not encourage their students in collecting information from various sources other than their required textbooks.

1.7.Limitations of the study:

This study is primarily concerned with the university lecturers at Omar Al Mukhtar University in AL Beida.

The following are some restrictions that this research has:

1.7.1.Time:

The researchers' limited time during class observation may have prevented them from gaining a broad view of all lectures . It would be beneficial to monitor classes throughout the entire academic semester.

1.7.2.The context of the study:

Visiting many universities and interviewing lecturers in various settings are options for conducting this type of research. By doing this, we can have a broader perspective on the impact that CLIL models and bilingual education have on universities in Libya.

1.7.3.Limited participants:

The teaching practice's implementation was solely depended on a group of content lecturers as the only source of information. It is a fact that students are essential in the learning and teaching process and can provide valuable information to this study.

1.8.Conclusion:

The present study has attempted to present Omar Al –Mukhtar University's lecturers' experiences and their attitudes towards content and language integrated approach to learning and teaching. The idea of Libya becoming a bilingual country (Arabic-English) has been encouraged by the government. The policies in the ministry of Higher education put pressure on lecturers because it is believed

that the success of the bilingual education policy is due to their commitment to achieving the standards of teaching and learning both content and the English language.

Content lecturers in Libya are being under increasing pressure due to the changes that universities are making in the curricula when they teach content subjects in English. while teaching content subjects in English has advantages, it sometimes presents challenges in specific cases.

It is crucial to consider the importance of training programs that enhance the content lecturers while delivering their classes in English, because integrating content and language teaching together is very different from teaching them separately. To implement effectively bilingual education at the universities of Libya, content lecturers must receive training programs that assist them to integrate content and language teaching.

Collaboration between the English language lecturers and content lecturers is another aspect. The CLIL method necessitates the encouragement and strengthening of the relationship between the content lecturers and language lecturers in classes where English is the primary language of instruction. The integration of second language and content learning into content-based instruction (CBI) programs requires collaboration between English language lecturers and content subject lecturers, which has been strongly advocated by the

participants at Omar-Al- Mukhtar University.

Based on our research findings, some of the beliefs that Libyan EFL university teachers have about CLIL are summarized as follows: CLIL is a useful and effective approach to enhance learner's language and content knowledge. CLIL can also motivate learners to engage in the learning process. On the other hand, there is a difficulty in integrating language and content in a balanced way and there is a another challenge as they believe, this challenge is the gap between students who have varying levels of language proficiency. The participants think that they can overcome these challenges easily but when they come to practices it is very difficult as the number of the students is too much.

To implement CLIL in the class, there are some aspects that need to be considered: the students' comprehensive ability and how the students can process information they are learning. The participants think that they should design activities that motivate the students to think creatively and collaboratively and enhance their language development. Unfortunately, the class size and the limited timed of the lecture did not support the lecturers to implement their activities. Based on these challenges, Their beliefs did not align with their practices, and they found themselves teaching the traditional method, (the method they were exposed to at university during their study).

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The students' learning of content or improving their L2 may be negatively impacted if the content and language lecturers work individually. Finally, these collaborative practices between language and content lectures are absent at the university where this study was conducted ,this lack makes the teaching and learning processes difficult .

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