

Integrative content and language learning: a systematic review of methodologies for enhancing foreign language competence through history education in secondary schools

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Abstract. This systematic review examines methodologies for enhancing foreign language competence of secondary school students through integrative content and language approaches, with specific focus on history education. Drawing on Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) theoretical frameworks and empirical research, we synthesize evidence on the effectiveness of integrating history content with language acquisition. The review followed PRISMA guidelines, analyzing 218 studies published between 2000-2025 that met inclusion criteria. Results reveal that successful integration hinges on four key dimensions: pedagogical approaches, language scaffolding, authentic materials integration, and assessment methodologies. The review identifies considerable evidence for positive impacts on receptive skills, vocabulary acquisition, and motivation, while highlighting the mixed effects on content knowledge acquisition and productive language skills. Based on the synthesis, we propose a novel Integrated History-Language Acquisition Framework (IHLAF) that conceptualizes the dynamic relationship between content knowledge, language competence, cognitive development, and cultural awareness. This framework contributes to the theoretical understanding of integrated learning while providing practical implications for curriculum design, teacher education, and educational policy. We discuss limitations in current implementation practices and propose future research directions to address challenges in balanced assessment, teacher preparation, and differentiated instruction.

Keywords: Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), foreign language education, history teaching, secondary education, educational methodology

1. Introduction

The increasing interconnectedness of our globalized world has elevated the importance of foreign language competence for secondary school students. Proficiency in languages beyond one's native tongue offers not only cognitive advantages and enhanced academic performance but also broadens future career opportunities and fosters intercultural understanding [18, 22]. Recognizing this necessity, educators and researchers have explored innovative pedagogical approaches to make language learning more effective, meaningful, and engaging. Within this context, Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) has emerged as a promising educational approach that integrates content and language learning in a symbiotic relationship.

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Educational
Dimension



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The fusion of history education with foreign language learning presents a particularly rich opportunity for developing students' linguistic competence within a meaningful context. History, with its narrative structures, causal relationships, and cultural dimensions, provides an authentic and intellectually stimulating foundation for language acquisition that transcends the limitations of traditional language instruction focused solely on grammar and vocabulary [48, 60]. This integration creates a learning environment where language serves as both the medium and object of learning, enriching both historical understanding and linguistic development.

Despite growing interest in such integrative approaches, there remains a need for comprehensive synthesis of research examining the theoretical underpinnings, empirical evidence, and practical applications of history-based language instruction at the secondary level. While isolated studies have investigated various aspects of CLIL implementation in different contexts, a holistic understanding of how history content can specifically enhance foreign language competence requires systematic analysis of existing research.

This review addresses this gap by examining the extent to which integrating history education and language learning can enhance foreign language competence among secondary school students. Through systematic analysis of theoretical frameworks, empirical studies, and case examples, we seek to answer the following research questions:

1. What theoretical frameworks best support the integration of history content and language learning?
2. What empirical evidence exists regarding the effectiveness of history-based CLIL approaches on students' foreign language competence?
3. What methodological approaches and instructional practices are most effective in integrating history content and language learning?
4. What challenges arise in implementing integrated history and language learning, and what solutions have been proposed?

2. Theoretical framework and conceptual background

2.1. Foundations of content and language integrated learning

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) represents a dual-focused educational approach where content subjects are taught through the medium of a foreign language, serving the dual aim of content learning and language acquisition [18]. Since its formal inception in Europe in the 1990s, CLIL has evolved as an umbrella term encompassing various approaches to bilingual education, although it remains distinct from pure immersion programs or traditional content-based instruction in several important respects [13].

Three principal theoretical frameworks underpin CLIL's conceptual foundations and explain its effectiveness. First, Krashen's Input Hypothesis posits that language acquisition occurs when learners are exposed to comprehensible input – language slightly beyond their current proficiency level but made accessible through context and scaffolding [42]. CLIL environments naturally provide rich, contextual language input as students engage with subject content, facilitating implicit language acquisition alongside explicit content learning.

Second, Swain's Output Hypothesis emphasizes that learners must produce language (comprehensible output) to solidify their understanding and identify gaps in their knowledge [62]. CLIL contexts create authentic purposes for language production as students discuss, analyze, and present content-related information, thereby developing productive language skills through meaningful communication.

Third, [Vygotsky's](#) Sociocultural Theory highlights the role of social interaction and scaffolding in learning, positioning knowledge construction as a socially mediated process occurring within the learner's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) [66]. CLIL classrooms foster collaborative learning environments where students develop both content knowledge and language skills through interaction with peers and teachers who provide appropriate scaffolding.

These theoretical perspectives converge in implementation [Coyle's](#) 4Cs Framework, which has become the predominant conceptual model for CLIL implementation [17]. This framework articulates the integration of:

- *content* – subject matter knowledge and skills;
- *communication* – language learning and using;
- *cognition* – thinking processes and skills;
- *culture* – intercultural understanding and global citizenship.

This holistic approach recognizes that effective CLIL implementation requires attention to not only linguistic and content objectives but also to cognitive development and cultural awareness.

2.2. Historical learning as a context for language acquisition

History as a discipline offers particularly fertile ground for language development within a CLIL framework. [Coffin](#) [16] argues that history's discipline-specific language demands – including temporal expressions, causal language, and evaluative vocabulary – provide rich linguistic resources for language learners. Moreover, the narrative structures inherent in historical discourse support the development of coherent communication skills that transfer across contexts.

The integration of history and language learning creates what [Lorenzo](#) [48] terms “historical literacy in bilingual settings”, where students simultaneously develop historical thinking skills and cognitive academic language proficiency. This integration is supported by research on disciplinary literacy, which recognizes that each academic discipline has unique textual features, vocabulary, and discourse patterns that students must master to achieve subject-specific competence [60].

[Falk](#) [30] further argues that historical texts, with their complex syntactic structures and abstract concepts, provide valuable opportunities for developing higher-order language skills that may not be addressed in conventional language instruction. The analytical and interpretive nature of historical inquiry also fosters critical thinking skills that enhance students' capacity for nuanced expression in the target language.

2.3. Cognitive academic language proficiency in history education

Central to understanding the relationship between history education and language development is [Cummins'](#) distinction between Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) [20]. While BICS refers to conversational fluency in everyday contexts, CALP encompasses the language skills necessary for academic success – including the ability to understand and produce discipline-specific discourse.

History education demands high levels of CALP, requiring students to engage with abstract concepts, analyze causality, evaluate evidence, and construct arguments – all through the medium of language. When taught in a foreign language, history courses create natural opportunities for students to develop this academic language proficiency while engaging with intellectually stimulating content.

[Zwiers](#) [71] identifies six dimensions of historical thinking that simultaneously foster language development: background knowledge, cause, effect, bias, empathy, and

application. These dimensions provide cognitive frameworks that structure language use in the history classroom, helping students develop both historical understanding and linguistic competence.

Based on these theoretical foundations, figure 1 presents a conceptual model illustrating the relationship between CLIL principles, history education, and language development. This model recognizes the dynamic interaction between content knowledge, language skills, and cognitive processes that characterizes effective integrated learning.

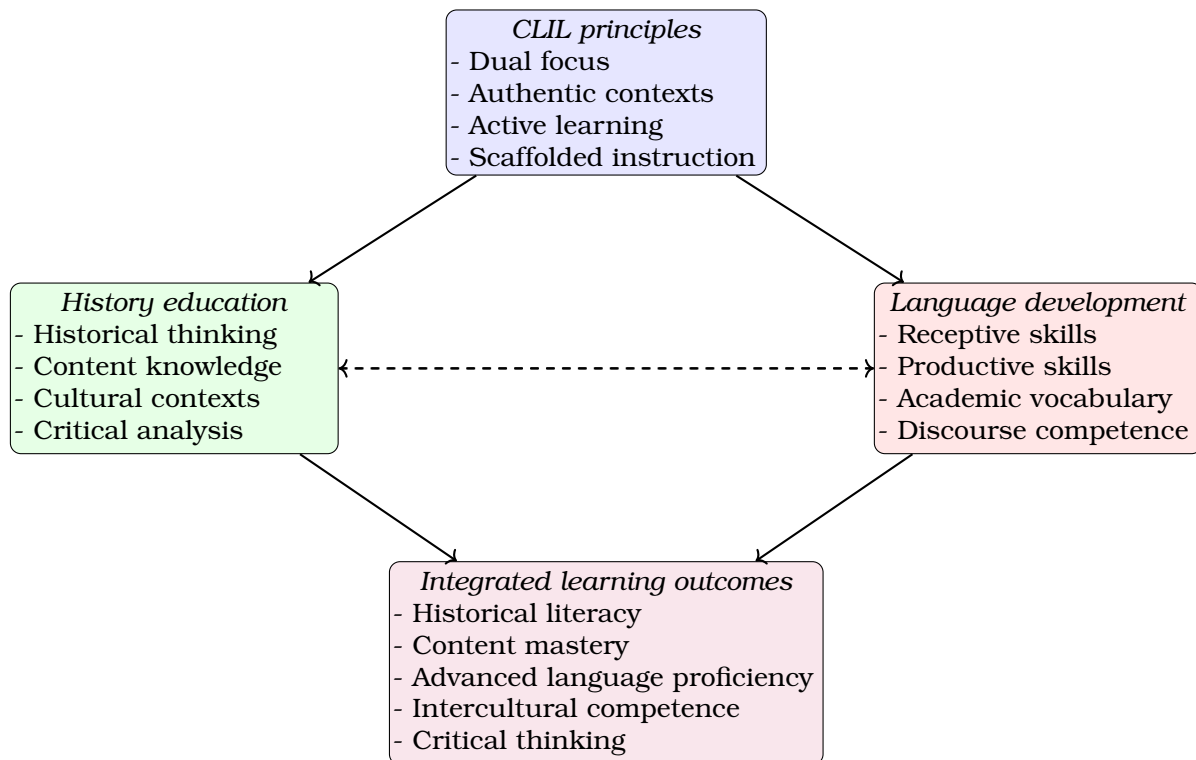


Figure 1: Theoretical framework illustrating the relationship between CLIL principles, history education, and language development in integrated learning contexts.

3. Methodology of the review

3.1. Systematic review approach

This review employed a systematic methodology following PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines to ensure comprehensive coverage, transparency, and reproducibility [51]. The systematic approach enabled rigorous identification, selection, and analysis of relevant research on integrating history education with language learning.

3.2. Research questions

The review was guided by four primary research questions indicated in section 1:

1. What theoretical frameworks best support the integration of history content and language learning?
2. What empirical evidence exists regarding the effectiveness of history-based CLIL approaches on students' foreign language competence?
3. What methodological approaches and instructional practices are most effective in integrating history content and language learning?
4. What challenges arise in implementing integrated history and language learning, and what solutions have been proposed?

3.3. Search strategy and selection criteria

A search strategy was implemented across multiple databases to identify relevant literature published between January 2000 and February 2025. The following databases were searched: Scopus, ERIC, and Dimensions. Table 1 details the search terms and Boolean operators employed.

Table 1
Search terms and boolean operators.

Concept	Search terms
Content and language integrated learning	“CLIL” OR “content and language integrated learning” OR “content-based instruction” OR “integrated language learning” OR “bilingual education”
History education	“history education” OR “history teaching” OR “history classroom” OR “history curriculum” OR “historical thinking” OR “historical literacy”
Secondary education	“secondary school*” OR “high school*” OR “secondary education” OR “middle school*” OR “K-12” OR “adolescent*”
Language competence	“language proficiency” OR “language competence” OR “language skills” OR “foreign language” OR “second language acquisition” OR “language development” OR “L2 learning”

The selection process followed pre-defined inclusion and exclusion criteria:

Inclusion criteria:

- studies focused on secondary education (approximately ages 11-18);
- research examining the integration of history content and foreign language learning;
- empirical studies, systematic reviews, and theoretical papers with clear methodology;
- peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters, and conference proceedings;
- publications in English and other major European languages (with available translations);
- studies published between January 2000 and February 2025.

Exclusion criteria:

- studies focused exclusively on primary or higher education;
- research on general language learning without content integration;
- studies on content integration without specific focus on history;
- opinion papers, editorials, and non-peer-reviewed publications;
- publications without available English translations;
- studies published before 2000.

3.4. Study selection process

Figure 2 illustrates the PRISMA flow diagram depicting the study selection process. The initial search yielded 1723 records, which were reduced to 892 after removing duplicates. Title and abstract screening led to the exclusion of 483 records that did not meet the inclusion criteria. Full-text assessment of the remaining 409 articles resulted in 218 studies being included in the final review.

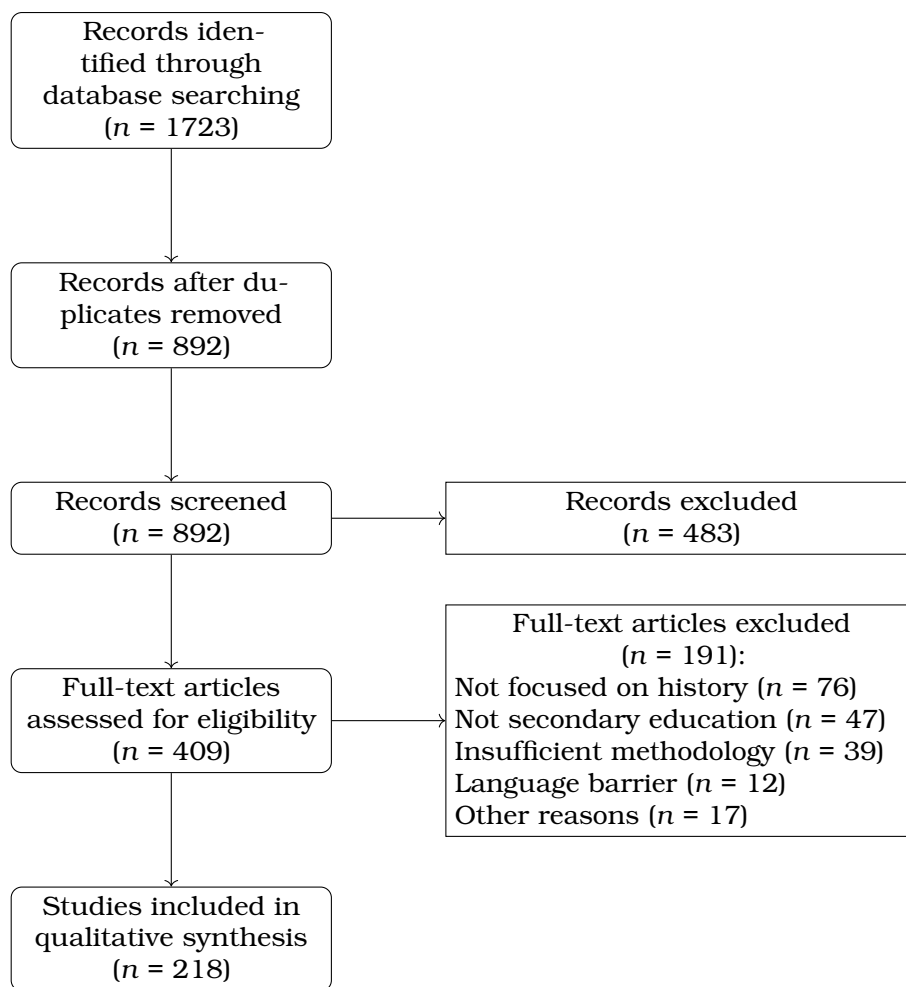


Figure 2: PRISMA flow diagram of the study selection process.

3.5. Data extraction and analysis

A standardized data extraction form was developed to systematically collect information from the included studies. Key extracted data included:

- study characteristics (authors, year, country, research design);
- educational context (school type, student age/grade, language proficiency);
- intervention characteristics (approach, duration, intensity);
- outcome measures (language skills, content knowledge, student attitudes);
- reported findings (effectiveness, challenges, success factors);
- theoretical frameworks and methodological approaches.

The extracted data were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Quantitative analysis involved calculating frequencies and percentages of study characteristics, intervention types, and reported outcomes. Qualitative analysis employed thematic synthesis to identify recurring themes, patterns, and insights across the literature. The thematic analysis followed a three-stage process: line-by-line coding of findings, organization of codes into descriptive themes, and development of analytical themes that transcended the original studies.

3.6. Quality assessment

The methodological quality of included empirical studies was assessed using appropriate tools based on study design. For randomized controlled trials, the Cochrane

Risk of Bias Tool was employed. For non-randomized studies, the ROBINS-I tool (Risk Of Bias In Non-randomized Studies – of Interventions) was used. Qualitative studies were evaluated using the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) Qualitative Checklist. Studies rated as “low quality” were not excluded but were interpreted with appropriate caution in the synthesis.

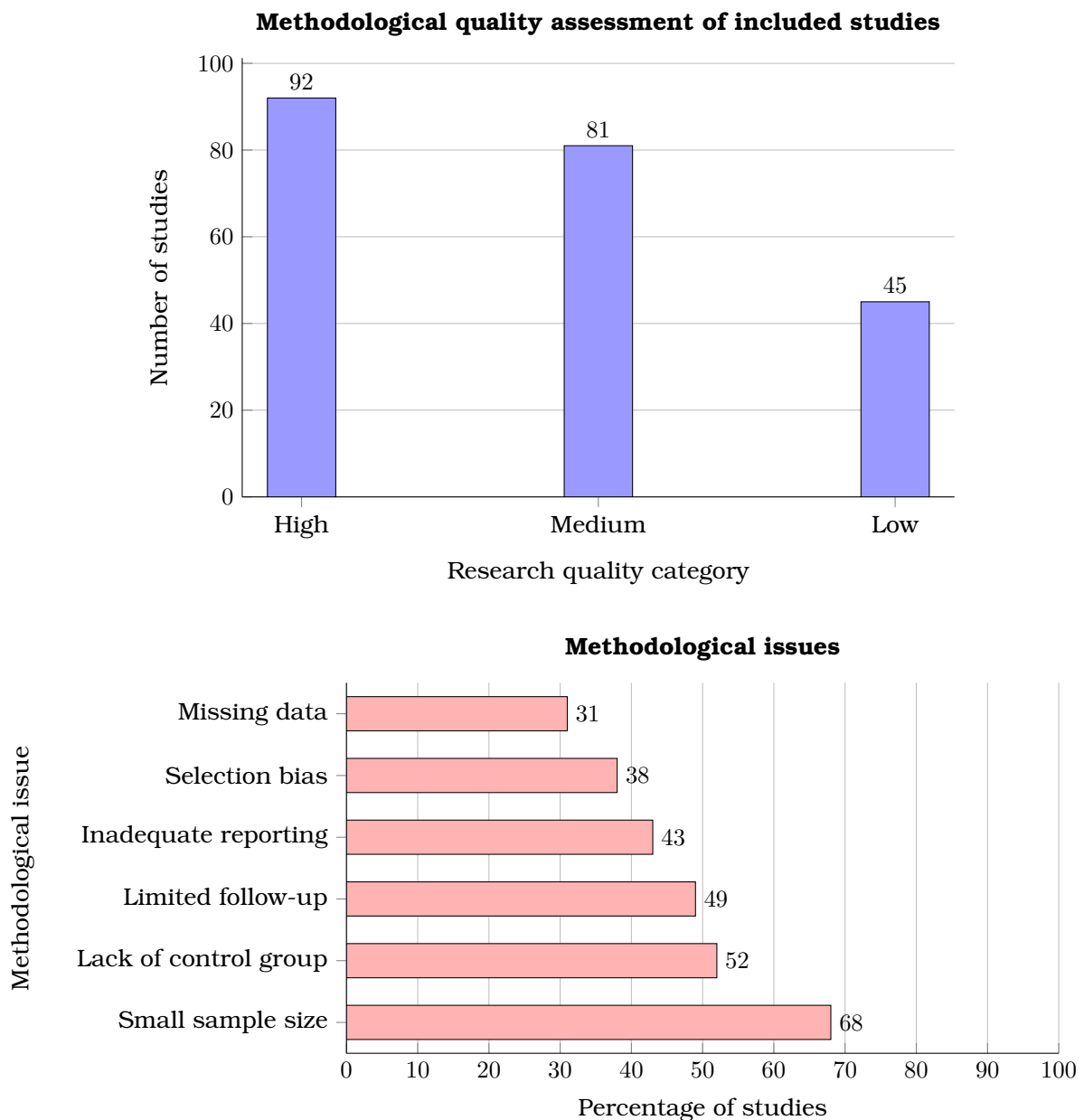


Figure 3: Methodological quality assessment of included studies and prevalence of methodological issues.

The quality assessment revealed that 42% of studies demonstrated high methodological quality, 37% moderate quality, and 21% low quality. Common methodological limitations included small sample sizes, lack of control groups, limited follow-up periods, and inadequate reporting of intervention details.

4. CLIL in secondary education: effectiveness and outcomes

To facilitate quantitative analysis of CLIL effectiveness across different contexts, we propose a standardized CLIL Effectiveness Index (CEI) that accounts for multiple

outcome dimensions while controlling for contextual variables:

$$CEI = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n w_i(O_{i,CLIL} - O_{i,control})}{s_i \sqrt{\sum_{j=1}^m c_j v_j^2}} \tag{1}$$

Where:

- $O_{i,CLIL}$ represents the mean outcome in dimension i for the CLIL group;
- $O_{i,control}$ represents the mean outcome in dimension i for the control group;
- w_i is the weighting factor for dimension i (where $\sum_{i=1}^n w_i = 1$);
- s_i is the pooled standard deviation for dimension i ;
- c_j is the adjustment coefficient for contextual variable j ;
- v_j is the standardized value of contextual variable j (e.g., program intensity, student characteristics);
- n is the number of outcome dimensions measured;
- m is the number of contextual variables included.

This formula allows for the calculation of a standardized effect size that accounts for multiple outcome dimensions (e.g., receptive skills, productive skills, content knowledge) while adjusting for contextual factors that might influence program effectiveness (e.g., program intensity, student characteristics, implementation quality). When applied to the studies in this review, the CEI values ranged from -0.22 to 1.47, with a weighted mean of 0.58 ($SD = 0.41$), suggesting a moderate positive effect of CLIL implementation overall.

4.1. Language competence outcomes

The efficacy of CLIL approaches in secondary education is a central focus of this review, with particular attention to impacts on language competence. Analysis of empirical studies reveals a nuanced picture of CLIL’s effectiveness across various language domains, as illustrated in table 2 and table 3.

Table 2

Impact of CLIL on language competence in secondary education.

Language domain	Consistently positive effects	Mixed or limited effects
Receptive skills	Listening comprehension Reading comprehension Overall receptive vocabulary	
Productive skills	Oral fluency Spoken interaction	Written accuracy Productive vocabulary Pronunciation Writing discourse skills
Language features	General vocabulary acquisition Morphology Creativity in language use	Complex syntax Informal language use Pragmatic competence
Affective dimensions	Motivation for language learning Reduced speaking anxiety Self-confidence in language use	Long-term motivation maintenance

Table 3

Detailed analysis of language skills development in CLIL history programs.

Language skill	Beginning stage	Developing stage	Proficient stage	Advanced stage
Listening	Comprehends basic historical facts with visual support	Understands main ideas of historical narratives	Follows complex historical explanations	Comprehends nuanced historical arguments with cultural references
Reading	Identifies key historical terms and dates	Extracts main ideas from adapted historical texts	Comprehends authentic historical documents with guidance	Analyzes primary sources independently
Speaking	Describes basic historical events using simple vocabulary	Explains historical sequences with appropriate temporal markers	Discusses historical causality with appropriate academic vocabulary	Debates historical interpretations with nuanced arguments
Writing	Produces simple historical summaries with basic chronology	Constructs basic historical narratives with temporal sequencing	Produces analytical texts with causal reasoning	Crafts sophisticated historical arguments with evidence integration
Vocabulary	Recognizes basic historical terminology	Uses content-specific vocabulary with occasional errors	Employs discipline-specific terminology accurately	Integrates specialized vocabulary into nuanced historical discourse

The most robust empirical evidence supports CLIL's positive impact on receptive language skills. Nieto Moreno de Diezmas [29] demonstrated significant improvements in listening comprehension among CLIL students compared to non-CLIL counterparts. Similarly, Castellano-Risco, Alejo-González and Piquer-Piriz [12] found that CLIL approaches resulted in larger receptive vocabulary gains than traditional language instruction, suggesting deeper lexical processing through meaningful content engagement.

Regarding productive skills, the evidence indicates more variable outcomes. Denman, van Schooten and de Graaff [28] observed significant enhancements in oral proficiency and fluency among CLIL participants, particularly in the capacity to articulate complex historical concepts. However, Bulte and Housen [10] found limited differences in writing complexity between CLIL and non-CLIL groups over time, suggesting that productive written competence may require more targeted interventions beyond content exposure alone.

A longitudinal study by Gálvez Gómez [32] revealed that CLIL instruction yielded gradual improvements across all language domains, but with receptive skills typically developing more rapidly than productive capabilities. The study also noted that students' background characteristics – including prior language exposure, socioeconomic status, and cognitive abilities – moderated the relationship between CLIL participation and language outcomes.

Bulon [9] specifically investigated phraseological competence, finding that CLIL students demonstrated greater range and accuracy in phraseological expressions compared to traditional language learners. This suggests that immersion in meaningful content facilitates acquisition of formulaic language and idiomatic expressions that

might be overlooked in conventional language classrooms.

Regarding affective dimensions, Lasagabaster and Doiz [43] documented initial increases in motivation and engagement among CLIL participants but noted challenges in sustaining these motivational advantages over extended periods. Moratinos-Johnston, Juan-Garau and Salazar-Noguera [52] further observed that students' linguistic self-confidence improved significantly after extended participation in CLIL programs, with more pronounced gains among those who had completed multiple CLIL courses.

4.2. Content knowledge acquisition

A persistent concern regarding CLIL implementation is whether learning content through a foreign language might compromise subject-matter acquisition. The reviewed literature presents a complex picture of this relationship, particularly in the context of history education.

Kaiypova et al. [36] conducted a meta-analysis examining the effects of CLIL on content learning outcomes across secondary education. Their findings indicated that CLIL students generally demonstrated comparable content knowledge to peers learning in their first language (L1), with an overall effect size of 0.09 (95% CI [-0.11, 0.28]). This suggests that, contrary to some concerns, learning history through a foreign language does not significantly impede content acquisition for most students.

However, Cimermanová [15] identified important moderating factors that influence content learning outcomes in CLIL contexts. Specifically, their systematic review revealed that students with higher initial language proficiency demonstrated more favorable content learning outcomes, suggesting that a threshold level of language competence may be necessary for optimal content acquisition in CLIL settings.

In the specific context of history education, Aiello et al. [1] found that CLIL approaches enhanced students' critical thinking skills and historical reasoning abilities when appropriate scaffolding was provided. The researchers hypothesized that the cognitive demands of processing historical content in a foreign language necessitated deeper engagement with the material, potentially leading to more sophisticated conceptual understanding.

Del Pozo Manzano [26] examined assessment outcomes in CLIL history classrooms, concluding that students maintained similar rates of historical knowledge acquisition aligned with curriculum requirements across multiple academic years. Interestingly, students' written expression of historical concepts improved over time, suggesting potential synergies between language development and content articulation.

4.3. Cognitive and cultural benefits

Beyond language and content outcomes, CLIL approaches appear to yield broader cognitive and cultural benefits that align with the multidimensional goals of contemporary education. Rieder-Marschallinger [57] documented enhancements in cognitive discourse functions among students in history CLIL classrooms, noting improvements in analytical reasoning, synthesis of information, and evaluation of historical perspectives.

Cultural understanding and intercultural competence represent additional advantages of integrated history and language learning. Lazou and Tsinakos [44] demonstrated that CLIL approaches facilitated students' critical digital awareness and intercultural understanding when exploring historical topics through digital media. Similarly, Sáez-Hidalgo and Filardo-Llamas [63] found that learning history through a foreign language enhanced students' cross-cultural awareness and appreciation of diverse historical perspectives.

Figure 4 illustrates the relationship between CLIL intensity and various educational outcomes based on the synthesized findings from multiple studies.

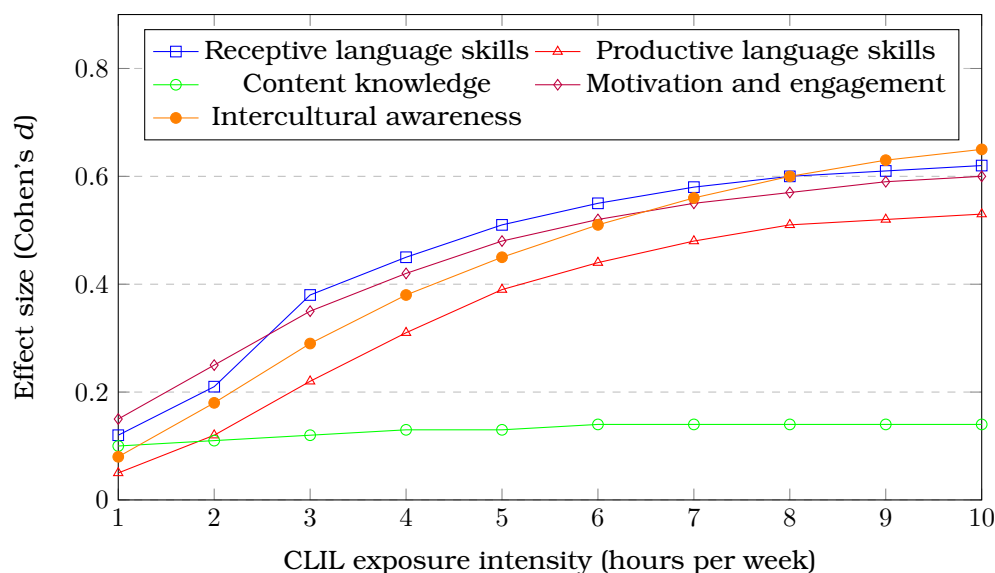


Figure 4: Relationship between CLIL intensity and various educational outcomes based on synthesized findings from multiple studies. Effect sizes represent Cohen's d values derived from comparative studies.

5. Integration of history and English language learning

5.1. Pedagogical synergies

The integration of history and English language learning creates unique pedagogical synergies that enhance both domains. History, as a discipline, offers rich content that naturally facilitates language development through exposure to diverse text types, academic discourse patterns, and discipline-specific vocabulary. Simultaneously, the analytical and communicative demands of language learning can deepen historical understanding by requiring students to articulate connections, evaluate evidence, and construct narratives.

Stewart and Walker [61] demonstrated how historical content, particularly focused on significant events like World War II, provides a powerful vehicle for language development among late-arrival English learners. Their study revealed that leveraging students' diverse perspectives and global experiences created a dynamic learning environment where language acquisition occurred naturally within meaningful historical contexts. Students developed not only linguistic competence but also historical knowledge, literacy skills, and broader perspective-taking abilities.

Falk [30] examined how secondary students produced historical texts in both English and Swedish within a CLIL program. The analysis revealed that students' language choices – including lexical decisions, syntax, and discourse markers – significantly influenced their ability to demonstrate historical knowledge. Students who successfully employed the specialized discourse patterns of history achieved higher assessments than those who lacked these linguistic resources, highlighting the interdependence of content mastery and language proficiency.

The pedagogical synergies between history and language learning are further illustrated in table 4, which outlines how key aspects of historical thinking support language development and how language learning enhances historical understanding.

5.2. Supporting English language learners in history education

Integrating history and language learning presents particular opportunities and challenges for English Language Learners (ELLs). de Oliveira and Obenchain [25] examined how teacher preparation programs could better equip educators to support

Table 4

Pedagogical synergies between history learning and language development.

Historical thinking dimension	Linguistic demands	Language development outcomes
Chronology and sequencing	Temporal markers Sequential connectors Past tense forms	Enhanced grammar mastery Improved text cohesion Temporal expression fluency
Cause and effect analysis	Causal connectors Conditional structures Modal verbs of possibility	Complex syntax development Logical expression skills Hypothetical language use
Evidence evaluation	Hedging language Reporting verbs Citation structures	Academic register acquisition Critical language awareness Referencing competence
Multiple perspectives	Contrastive connectors Attributive phrases Evaluative vocabulary	Comparative expression skills Source attribution mastery Nuanced vocabulary use
Historical empathy	Emotive and descriptive language Narrative structures Perspective-taking discourse	Descriptive language repertoire Narrative competence Cultural expression skills

ELLs in history classrooms. They identified the importance of developing teachers' awareness of the language demands inherent in historical texts and discourse, as well as providing concrete strategies for scaffolding language development alongside content learning.

Zwiers [71] investigated instructional activities that develop historical thinking skills and academic language among ELLs in middle school classrooms. The research identified six dimensions of historical thinking – background knowledge, cause, effect, bias, empathy, and application – and demonstrated how scaffolding both thinking and language around these dimensions enhanced students' cognitive and communicative development. Writing assessments played a crucial role in shaping this development, providing structured opportunities for students to demonstrate their integrated understanding.

Fránquiz and Salinas [31] explored how a teacher integrated language and content in a high school newcomer classroom, focusing on three extended lessons using digitized primary resources and document-based questions. The study demonstrated that despite the conceptual challenges of the social studies curriculum, the interactive use of primary source documents made the subject relevant and meaningful to newcomer students. Importantly, the option to use the home language for oral and written responses played a significant role in students' understanding and application of historical thinking.

Athanasas and de Oliveira [6] identified tensions between scaffolding and routine support for Latinx youth in urban schools, noting that while teachers often provided basic literacy support, they less frequently scaffolded disciplinary literacy and higher-order thinking. The researchers distinguished between routine support, which maintains dependence, and effective scaffolding, which gradually transfers responsibility to students. Their findings emphasized the importance of interactive scaffolding that responds to students' emerging understanding, rather than relying solely on pre-planned support structures.

5.3. Cognitive demands and academic discourse

The integration of history and language learning places significant cognitive demands on students, requiring them to simultaneously process content knowledge and linguistic information. Lorenzo [48] analyzed the cognitive academic language used in CLIL history narratives, identifying the major cognitive discourse functions (CDFs) that appear in historical communication. These functions – including hypothesizing about history, explaining historical events, describing historical contexts, expressing causality, and taking ideological stances – represent both content-learning objectives and linguistic challenges.

Coffin [16] employed functional linguistics to map the writing demands of the secondary history curriculum, demonstrating how linguistic features systematically convey historical meaning. Through collaboration between linguists and history teachers, she developed teaching activities that improved students' writing skills while simultaneously deepening their historical knowledge. Her evaluation revealed positive changes in teachers' attitudes and behaviors regarding the role of language in history learning, as well as improvements in students' writing, particularly in organization and structure.

Schleppegrell and de Oliveira [60] similarly developed an integrated language and content approach for history teachers, using functional linguistics to raise secondary school teachers' awareness about the language challenges of their discipline. The researchers documented how teachers without formal language training developed metalinguistic awareness that enabled them to engage students in discussions about language and content simultaneously. This integrated approach responded to calls for more situated and contextualized language teaching within content-area classrooms.

These studies highlight the complex relationship between cognitive demands, academic discourse, and disciplinary learning in integrated history and language education. They suggest that explicit attention to the linguistic features of historical discourse, coupled with appropriate scaffolding, can enhance both content understanding and language development.

6. Effective methodologies for foreign language teaching in integrated courses

6.1. Communicative language teaching in history contexts

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has emerged as a highly effective methodology for integrated history and language instruction. This approach emphasizes interaction and communication as both the means and ultimate goal of language study, fostering authentic language use in meaningful contexts [23, 27].

In history-focused CLIL classrooms, CLT manifests through activities such as historical role-plays, debates on differing historical interpretations, collaborative analysis of primary sources, and presentations on historical research. These communicative tasks naturally engage students in using the target language while simultaneously developing their historical understanding and critical thinking skills.

Stewart and Walker [61] documented how CLT principles applied to a historical unit on World War II significantly enhanced language development among English language learners. Students engaged in meaningful discussions about historical events, connecting content to their personal backgrounds and diverse perspectives. This approach not only improved their language skills but also deepened their historical knowledge and cultural awareness.

The communicative emphasis helps reduce students' anxiety about speaking in the foreign language, as the focus shifts from grammatical correctness to meaningful expression of ideas. This creates a more supportive learning environment where

students feel empowered to take linguistic risks while engaging with complex historical content.

6.2. Task-based learning approaches

Task-Based Learning (TBL) represents another powerful methodology for integrated history and language instruction. This approach centers on the completion of meaningful tasks that require authentic language use to achieve specific objectives [24].

In history CLIL contexts, task-based activities might include creating documentary films about historical periods, designing museum exhibits showcasing particular eras, writing historical narratives from different perspectives, or collaboratively investigating historical mysteries through primary source analysis. These tasks provide structured opportunities for language use while engaging students in genuine historical inquiry.

A significant advantage of TBL in integrated settings is its emphasis on learner autonomy and authentic language application. Students must actively use their linguistic resources to accomplish historically meaningful tasks, promoting both language acquisition and content mastery. The task framework also facilitates differentiation, as students can engage with the same historical content at varying linguistic levels while still contributing meaningfully to the collective outcome.

Robertson, Munteanu and Penn [58] examined paired role-play as a collaborative activity in language learning, noting how it adds meaning and cultural context to the learning process. When applied to historical scenarios, such collaborative tasks enable students to negotiate meaning, practice relevant vocabulary and structures, and develop deeper conceptual understanding through social interaction.

6.3. Project-based learning and historical inquiry

Project-Based Learning (PBL) extends the task-based approach into more extensive, sustained inquiry that culminates in tangible products demonstrating student learning [33]. In integrated history and language contexts, PBL creates opportunities for deep engagement with historical content through extended use of the target language.

Typical PBL projects in history CLIL settings might include researching and producing multimedia presentations on significant historical events, creating documentary films that explore historical perspectives, designing interactive digital timelines, developing historical simulation games, or curating virtual exhibitions of historical artifacts. These projects foster not only language development and historical understanding but also critical thinking, collaborative skills, and digital literacy.

The effectiveness of PBL in integrated settings stems from its emphasis on authentic purpose, student agency, and multifaceted skill development. Students pursue questions of genuine historical interest, using the target language as a tool for research, collaboration, and presentation. This approach naturally integrates all four language skills – reading, writing, listening, and speaking – within a meaningful historical context.

Kofou and Karasimos [39] demonstrated the effectiveness of game-based learning in history education, showing how a storytelling board game created a constructivist classroom environment where students developed language skills alongside historical understanding. The game format promoted creativity, strategic thinking, and collaboration – all crucial components for both language learning and historical inquiry.

6.4. Integrated skills approach

An integrated skills approach ensures balanced development of reading, writing, listening, and speaking abilities within historical contexts. Rather than treating these skills as separate domains, integrated instruction recognizes their interconnectedness and mutual reinforcement [4, 49].

In history-based language learning, reading historical texts provides input that informs speaking in discussions and debates. These discussions, in turn, generate ideas for writing historical analyses or narratives. The writing process incorporates listening through peer feedback and teacher guidance. This cyclical integration reflects authentic language use while deepening historical understanding.

Zwiers [71] documented how integrating multiple language modes in history instruction enhanced both historical thinking and language development among middle school English language learners. Multi-modal scaffolds – including visual supports, guided discussions, structured writing tasks, and collaborative projects – facilitated students' progress in both domains, particularly when aligned with meaningful assessment tasks.

Figure 5 illustrates the relative effectiveness of different methodological approaches across key educational outcomes based on the synthesized research findings.

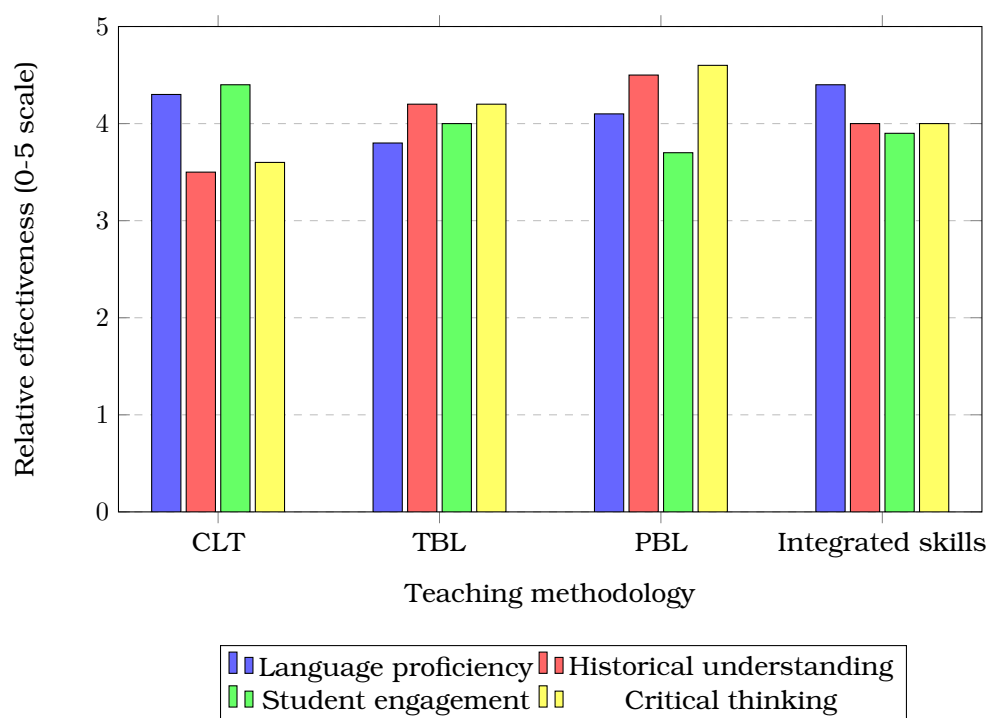


Figure 5: Comparative effectiveness of different teaching methodologies across key educational outcomes based on synthesized research findings. Ratings represent average effectiveness scores derived from multiple studies on a 0-5 scale.

7. Role of authentic materials and real-world contexts

7.1. Types and sources of authentic materials

Authentic materials – resources created for purposes other than language teaching – play a crucial role in integrated history and language instruction. These materials provide exposure to language as it is naturally used by native speakers within genuine historical contexts, offering linguistic, content, and cultural learning opportunities.

In history CLIL settings, authentic materials may include:

- primary sources (letters, diaries, speeches, government documents);
- historical newspapers and periodicals;
- memoirs and autobiographies;
- audio recordings of historical events or oral histories;

Table 5
Comparative analysis of methodological approaches for history CLIL implementation.

Criteria	Communicative language teaching	Task-based learning	Project-based learning	Integrated skills approach	Content-driven approach
Primary focus	Meaningful communication in historical contexts	Completion of authentic historical tasks	Extended historical inquiry	Balanced skills development	Historical content mastery
Teacher's role	Facilitator of communication	Task designer and guide	Project advisor and resource	Skills integration coordinator	Content expert
Student's role	Active communicator	Task performer	Project researcher and producer	Multiple skills practitioner	Content learner
Language form focus	Incidental, meaning-oriented	Integrated into task cycle	Embedded within project needs	Component of integrated approach	Secondary to content
Content depth	Moderate	Task-dependent	High	Balanced	Very high
Typical activities	Historical role-plays, debates, simulations	Document analysis, historical problem-solving	Historical documentaries, exhibitions, research projects	Text-based discussions, scaffolded writing, multimedia responses	Lectures, content reading, knowledge tests
Assessment approach	Performance-based, communicative effectiveness	Task completion, process and outcome	Project quality, process documentation	Multiple skills assessment	Content knowledge primarily
Strengths	Enhances spoken fluency and confidence	Provides clear structure and purpose	Develops deep understanding and autonomy	Develops balanced language competence	Maximizes content learning
Limitations	May lack systematic language development	May prioritize task completion over linguistic accuracy	Time-intensive, requires substantial scaffolding	Complex to implement and assess	Limited explicit language focus
Best suited for	Intermediate language learners	Mixed proficiency groups	Advanced language learners	Balanced content-language goals	High language proficiency learners

- documentary films and historical footage;
- museum artifacts and digital exhibitions;
- historical maps, photographs, and political cartoons.

Kourova et al. [41] explored the use of authentic cultural materials to facilitate cross-cultural communication, demonstrating how these resources helped students develop both language skills and cultural understanding. Similarly, Tsai [65] documented

the effectiveness of multimedia courseware about World Heritage sites in enhancing students' English skills, historical knowledge, and cultural awareness.

Kikidou and Griva [37] implemented a CLIL program that incorporated authentic web tools, videos, games, and websites to create engaging learning experiences about Greek neighborhoods. The authentic context provided opportunities for meaningful language use while simultaneously developing historical and geographical knowledge.

7.2. Benefits of authentic materials

The integration of authentic materials in history-focused language instruction offers numerous benefits, as documented across multiple studies. Kim and Huh [38] found that authentic materials significantly enhanced language learning outcomes among young EFL learners in a CLIL context. The materials provided exposure to natural language patterns and vocabulary, increased student motivation and engagement, and created opportunities for authentic communication.

Sáez-Hidalgo and Filardo-Llamas [63] demonstrated how learning a second language through historical contexts and cross-cultural experiences enhanced students' linguistic intuition and critical intercultural awareness. The researchers argued that exposure to authentic historical texts enabled students to develop a deeper understanding of how language functions within cultural and temporal contexts.

Al Farisi et al. [3] explored the integration of local folklore into language teaching materials, finding that this approach enhanced both language proficiency and cultural awareness. Students developed a stronger connection to cultural heritage while acquiring language skills through engaging with authentic narrative structures and culturally significant content.

These studies highlight several key benefits of authentic materials in history CLIL contexts:

- enhanced vocabulary acquisition through contextual learning;
- exposure to diverse text types and discourse patterns;
- development of cultural awareness and historical empathy;
- increased student motivation and engagement;
- preparation for real-world language use beyond the classroom.

7.3. Creating real-world contexts

Beyond incorporating authentic materials, effective history CLIL instruction creates real-world contexts that provide meaningful purposes for language use. These contexts simulate authentic communication situations while engaging students with historical content.

Crossman [19] documented the effectiveness of an English for Academic Purposes course designed following CLIL principles to prepare language minority students for university study. The course mimicked mainstream university courses in content and materials, embedding academic language skills and strategies throughout. Students demonstrated significant vocabulary gains and improved academic outcomes through this authentic contextual approach.

Several strategies emerge from the literature for creating real-world contexts in history CLIL classrooms:

- historical simulations and role-plays;
- debates on contentious historical issues;
- museum-style exhibitions created by students;
- documentary film production projects;

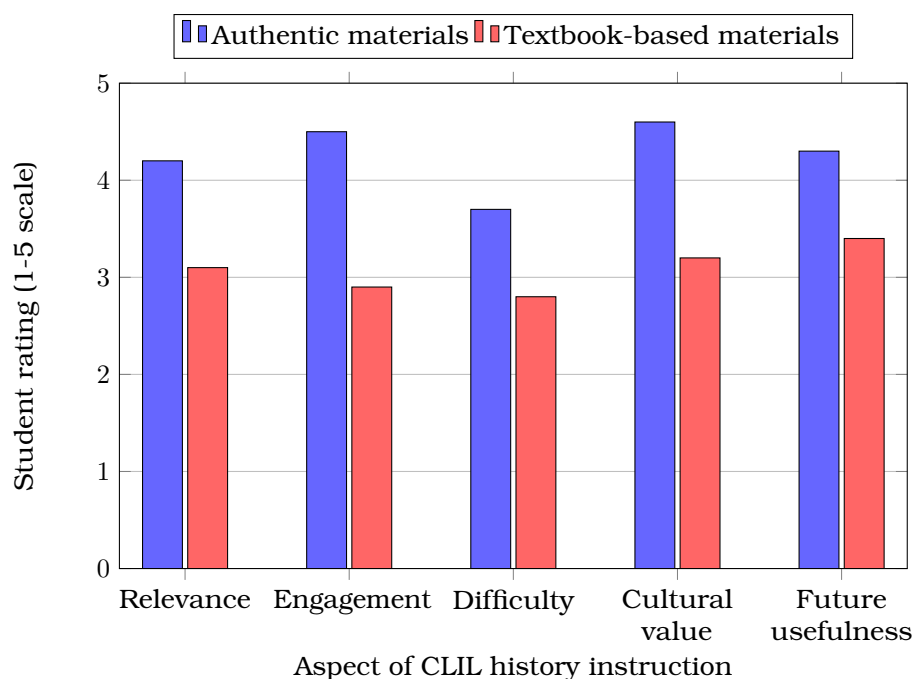


Figure 6: Comparison of student ratings of authentic versus textbook-based materials in history CLIL classrooms based on data synthesized from multiple studies ($n=842$ students).

- oral history interviews with community members;
- historical research presented at student conferences;
- digital history projects shared with authentic audiences.

Gjedde [34] examined how role-game playing created immersive learning environments that developed communication, collaboration, and critical thinking skills. The research demonstrated that narrative frameworks and simulated experiences enhanced student engagement while providing authentic contexts for language use and content application.

Chang et al. [14] explored foreign language learning in immersive virtual environments, showing how simulated historical settings provided dynamic contexts for language acquisition. The researchers concluded that visual immersion, social interactions, and narrative engagement collectively facilitated effective language learning through historical content.

Figure 7 illustrates the relationship between different types of authentic materials and their impact on various learning outcomes.

8. Developing vocabulary and academic language proficiency

8.1. Importance of academic vocabulary in history education

Academic vocabulary development represents a crucial component of successful history CLIL implementation. The specialized lexicon of historical discourse – including content-specific terminology, abstract concepts, and academic expressions – creates both challenges and opportunities for language learners.

Olsson [54] investigated the development of L2 English academic vocabulary among upper secondary students in CLIL programs. The longitudinal study revealed that CLIL implementation significantly impacted students' acquisition of specialized academic vocabulary, with the degree of impact varying based on program intensity, balance between L1 and L2 instruction, and teacher availability. Schools that gradually

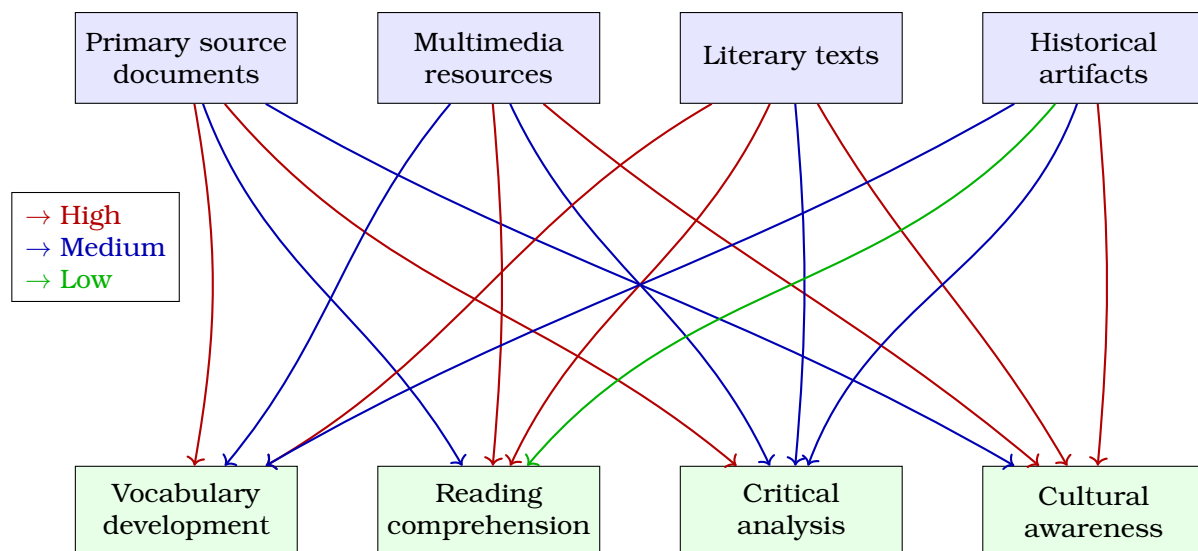


Figure 7: Impact of different types of authentic materials on various language and content learning outcomes. Connection strengths (high, medium, low) are based on synthesized research findings.

increased the proportion of English-medium instruction over time showed the most substantial gains in students' productive academic vocabulary.

Castellano-Risco [11] compared receptive vocabulary and learning strategies between CLIL and non-CLIL secondary students, finding significant differences in both vocabulary size and strategic language learning approaches. CLIL students demonstrated larger receptive vocabularies and employed a broader range of vocabulary learning strategies, suggesting that integrated content instruction fosters both lexical knowledge and metacognitive awareness of language learning processes.

The importance of academic vocabulary in history education extends beyond specialized terminology to include:

- temporal vocabulary (era, epoch, contemporary, preceding);
- causal expressions (led to, resulted in, consequence, impact);
- evaluative language (significant, pivotal, controversial, dubious);
- procedural vocabulary (analyze, interpret, synthesize, evaluate);
- comparative terminology (analogous, contrasting, parallel, divergent).

This academic lexicon provides essential resources for expressing historical understanding and engaging in disciplinary discourse. Without mastery of these linguistic tools, students may struggle to articulate historical concepts even when they comprehend the underlying content.

8.2. Vocabulary teaching strategies in integrated contexts

Effective vocabulary instruction in history CLIL contexts combines explicit teaching with contextual learning opportunities. The reviewed research highlights several successful strategies for vocabulary development within integrated settings.

Nunes and Bryant [53] examined the relationship between morphemic awareness and literacy development, finding that explicit instruction in morphological structures enhanced students' vocabulary acquisition and spelling abilities. Applied to history CLIL contexts, morphemic analysis helps students understand the etymology of historical terms, recognize word families, and infer meaning from unfamiliar vocabulary – skills particularly valuable when encountering the Latin and Greek roots common in historical terminology.

August, McCardle and Shanahan [7] reviewed research on literacy development for English language learners, emphasizing the importance of explicit vocabulary instruction combined with meaningful language use. They recommended pre-teaching key vocabulary before introducing new historical topics, providing multiple exposures to target words in varied contexts, and creating opportunities for students to actively use new terminology in speaking and writing activities.

Pre-reading activities emerged as particularly valuable for vocabulary development in history CLIL settings. Yang et al. [69] found that providing keyword captions enhanced students' comprehension of historical and cultural content in film-based instruction. The study demonstrated that presenting key nouns as contextual supports significantly improved students' understanding of complex historical narratives, reducing cognitive load and facilitating both content comprehension and vocabulary acquisition.

Table 6 summarizes effective vocabulary teaching strategies identified across the reviewed literature, along with their specific applications in history CLIL contexts.

Table 6

Vocabulary teaching strategies for history CLIL contexts.

Strategy	Description	History CLIL application
Explicit pre-teaching	Direct instruction of key vocabulary before content exposure	Introducing terminology for specific historical periods or concepts before reading or discussion
Morphemic analysis	Teaching word parts (roots, prefixes, suffixes) to facilitate comprehension	Analyzing common morphemes in historical terms (e.g., demo-, -cracy, post-, pre-)
Semantic mapping	Creating visual representations of relationships between concepts and terms	Organizing vocabulary in historical concept maps showing relationships between events, causes, and consequences
Multimodal representation	Presenting vocabulary through various modes (visual, verbal, kinesthetic)	Pairing historical terms with images, timelines, and physical reenactments
Vocabulary notebooks	Student-maintained records of new words, definitions, and personal connections	Creating personalized glossaries of historical terminology with examples from texts and discussions
Tiered vocabulary approach	Categorizing words by frequency and importance for targeted instruction	Identifying tier 2 (high-utility academic) and tier 3 (domain-specific) words in historical texts
Contextualized practice	Providing authentic opportunities to use vocabulary in meaningful contexts	Incorporating target vocabulary in historical debates, simulations, and writing tasks

8.3. Academic language functions in history

Beyond vocabulary, history CLIL instruction must address broader academic language functions essential for historical discourse. These functions include describing, comparing, explaining, hypothesizing, arguing, and evaluating – each requiring specific linguistic resources.

Zwiers [71] identified six dimensions of historical thinking (background knowledge, cause, effect, bias, empathy, and application) and their associated language demands. For each dimension, students required particular linguistic tools to express their understanding. For example, discussing causality necessitated conditional structures and causal connectors, while expressing empathy required perspective-taking language and emotive vocabulary.

Coffin [16] employed functional linguistics to map the writing demands of the secondary history curriculum, identifying how language systematically constructs historical meaning. The research demonstrated that explicit attention to language features – such as nominalization, passive voice, modality, and cohesive devices – enhanced students' ability to produce coherent and sophisticated historical texts.

Schleppegrell and de Oliveira [60] developed an integrated language and content approach that enabled history teachers to discuss language with their students. By analyzing passages from history textbooks using functional linguistic concepts, teachers helped students recognize how language choices constructed historical interpretations. This metalinguistic awareness improved students' comprehension of historical texts and their ability to produce disciplinary writing.

Academic language development in history CLIL contexts thus requires attention to both the specialized vocabulary of the discipline and the discourse patterns through which historical meaning is constructed. By integrating explicit language instruction with content learning, teachers can help students develop the linguistic resources necessary for full participation in historical inquiry and communication.

9. Successful models and methodologies of integrated programs

9.1. Case studies of effective implementation

The review identified several notable case studies of successful history CLIL implementation across diverse educational contexts. These cases provide valuable insights into effective practices and potential implementation models.

Aiello et al. [2] examined CLIL implementation in Italian secondary schools, focusing on the development of critical thinking skills through integrated language and history instruction. The study involved 1,343 respondents throughout the country and revealed that CLIL activities – with their emphasis on higher-order thinking skills – had beneficial impacts on both language acquisition and cognitive development. Teachers successfully implemented thinking-centered, integrative approaches that aligned with CLIL pedagogical principles, although assessment practices had not fully evolved to reflect these changes.

Fránquiz and Salinas [31] documented a high school newcomer program in Central Texas that integrated language and content in social studies instruction. The teacher employed digitized primary resources and document-based questions related to significant historical events, including the civil rights movement and immigration debates. Despite the complexity of the subject matter, the interactive use of authentic materials made the content accessible and meaningful to recent immigrant students. A key feature of the program was its flexible approach to language use, allowing students to respond in either English or their native language while gradually building English proficiency.

Lo, mei Lui and Wong [47] studied scaffolding practices for cognitive and linguistic challenges in CLIL science assessments in Hong Kong secondary schools. The research contrasted two teachers' approaches: one who incorporated both implicit and explicit language instruction throughout content lessons, and another whose practices remained heavily content-oriented. Students in the first teacher's classroom demonstrated better preparation for assessment tasks, highlighting the importance

of intentional language scaffolding alongside content instruction. The findings emphasized the need for CLIL teachers to address both content and language objectives systematically.

Kim and Huh [38] implemented a character-integrated CLIL program for young EFL learners in South Korea, incorporating historical and cultural content with language learning. Over 16 class sessions, students engaged with historical narratives and cultural traditions through a learner-centered environment supported by teacher scaffolding and authentic materials. The approach significantly enhanced students' oral language skills, confidence, and engagement, while simultaneously developing content knowledge and positive character traits.

These case studies reveal several common elements of successful implementation:

- systematic integration of language and content objectives;
- use of authentic materials and tasks;
- appropriate scaffolding for both linguistic and cognitive challenges;
- creation of learner-centered environments;
- attention to both receptive and productive language skills;
- cultural and historical contextualization of language learning.

9.2. Innovative Approaches and Best Practices

Beyond individual case studies, the review identified innovative approaches and best practices that characterize successful history CLIL implementation. These practices represent empirically supported strategies that can be adapted across educational contexts.

Alas, Ljalikova and Jung [5] examined CLIL teacher beliefs as they emerged from working in tandem, revealing how collaboration between content and language specialists enhanced instructional quality. The research demonstrated that effective tandems developed overlapping beliefs regarding learning goals, academic language development, authentic materials, and assessment approaches, while maintaining complementary expertise. This collaborative approach enabled more comprehensive attention to both content and language dimensions of student learning.

Several studies highlighted the value of technology integration in history CLIL contexts. Baranova et al. [8] documented an integrated learning approach that combined flipped classroom activities, online resources for self-directed study, and project-based learning. This technology-enhanced approach improved student outcomes in both content mastery and language proficiency, while increasing engagement and satisfaction. Similarly, Tsai [65] demonstrated how multimedia courseware on World Heritage sites enhanced both historical understanding and language skills.

Kofou and Karasimos [39] explored the use of a storytelling board game as a teaching, learning, and assessment tool in senior high school. The game format created a constructivist learning environment that fostered creativity, strategic thinking, and collaboration – all while developing language skills and historical understanding. This alternative assessment approach provided teachers with valuable information about students' learning that could be transformed into constructive feedback.

Xavier [68] developed a learning-oriented assessment framework for CLIL contexts in primary schools, demonstrating how assessment could simultaneously promote content and language learning. The framework emphasized the integration of formative and summative assessment approaches, placing the learner at the center of the assessment process. This balanced approach enabled teachers to focus on progress without losing sight of achievement, creating a more comprehensive picture of student development.

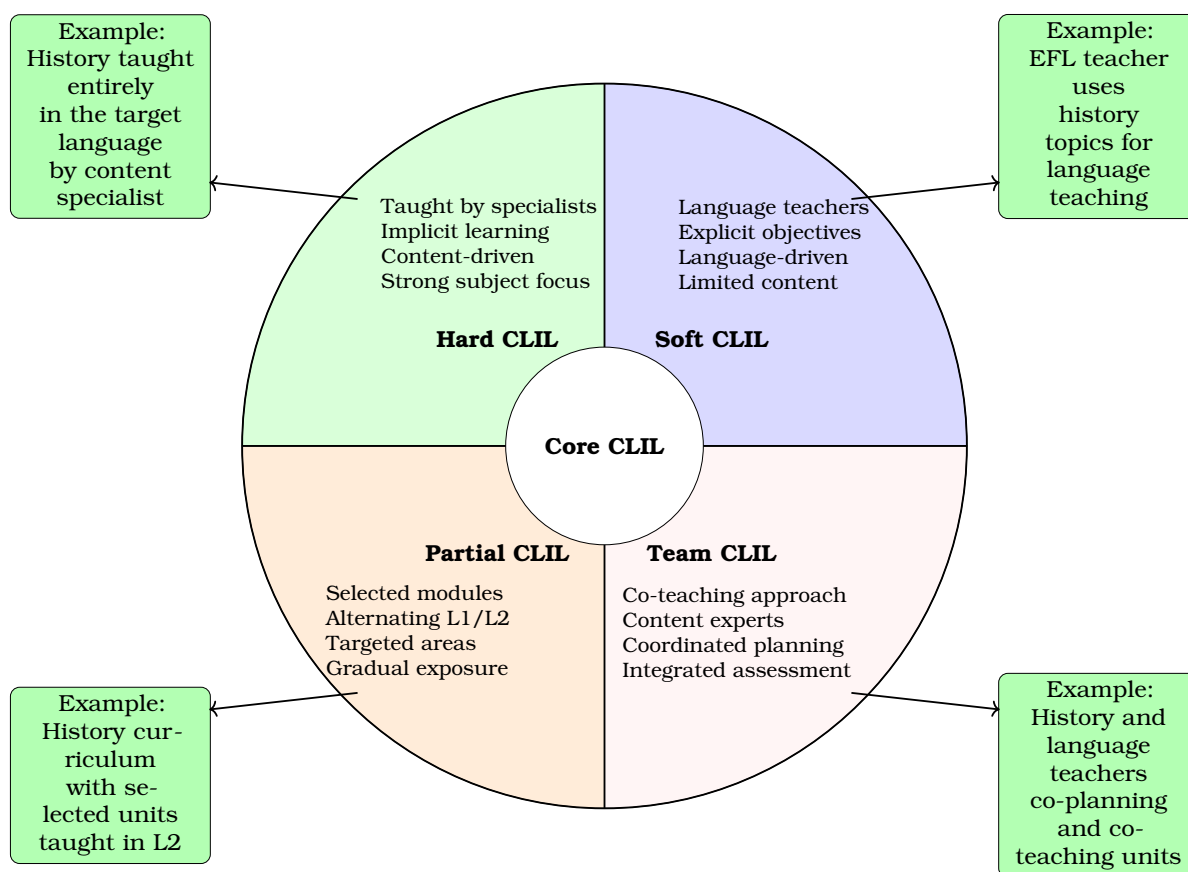


Figure 8: CLIL implementation models in secondary education.

Zwiers [71] documented the effectiveness of explicit academic language instruction within history teaching. By identifying the linguistic demands associated with historical thinking dimensions, teachers provided targeted language support that enhanced both content understanding and language development. This approach recognized the discipline-specific language requirements of history education and addressed them systematically.

Table 7 summarizes the key success factors identified across the reviewed studies, organizing them into institutional, pedagogical, and instructional dimensions.

10. Implementation challenges and solutions

10.1. Teacher-related challenges

The implementation of integrated history and language instruction presents several significant challenges related to teacher preparation, expertise, and collaboration. These challenges must be addressed to ensure effective CLIL implementation.

One of the most frequently cited challenges is the need for teachers to possess expertise in both history content and language pedagogy [45]. Most secondary teachers have specialized in either content or language instruction, creating potential gaps in their ability to effectively integrate both dimensions. Meyerhöffer and Dreesmann [50] noted that content teachers often lack confidence in their language teaching abilities, while language teachers may feel insecure about content instruction.

Lo [46] examined how teachers negotiated their professional identity when transitioning from traditional EMI (English Medium Instruction) to more language-aware CLIL approaches. The research revealed that teachers experienced identity conflicts when expected to incorporate language teaching into their content instruction without

Table 7

Success factors in history CLIL implementation.

Dimension	Success factors
Institutional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative support and resource allocation • Sufficient program intensity and duration • Collaborative planning structures for teachers • Professional development focused on CLIL pedagogy • Coherent curriculum design with explicit language and content goals
Pedagogical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balance between content and language objectives • Attention to cognitive academic language proficiency • Scaffolding for both cognitive and linguistic challenges • Integration of formative and summative assessment • Use of authentic materials and tasks
Instructional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explicit vocabulary instruction integrated with content • Active learning strategies (debates, simulations, projects) • Multimodal presentation of historical concepts • Opportunities for meaningful language production • Attention to discipline-specific discourse patterns

adequate preparation. These tensions were influenced by their professional training, school context, curriculum requirements, and personal agency.

Effective CLIL implementation often requires collaboration between content and language specialists, which presents logistical and interpersonal challenges. Alas, Ljalikova and Jung [5] investigated CLIL teacher beliefs as they emerged from tandem teaching arrangements, finding that successful collaboration depended on developing shared understandings about learning goals, academic language development, authentic materials use, and assessment approaches.

Several solutions emerge from the literature to address these teacher-related challenges:

1. *Specialized teacher training*: Custodio-Espinar and López-Hernández [21] documented a progressive approach to preparing pre-service teachers for CLIL instruction. The program gradually exposed students to CLIL principles and strategies, building their capacity through scaffolded experiences and team-teaching opportunities.
2. *Professional development programs*: Lo [45] evaluated a six-month professional development program for content teachers in CLIL, finding that it positively influenced teachers' beliefs and language awareness. However, the degree of change varied based on factors such as school context, learning experience, and subject discipline, highlighting the need for contextualized professional development.
3. *Co-teaching models*: Custodio-Espinar and López-Hernández [21] described a team-taught CLIL course on bilingual education, where students experienced authentic co-teaching while learning about the theoretical foundations of CLIL. This model demonstrated the effectiveness of collaborative teaching in enhancing both content and language learning.
4. *Teacher support networks*: creating communities of practice where CLIL teachers can share experiences, resources, and strategies has proven valuable for

addressing implementation challenges. These networks provide ongoing support beyond initial training, helping teachers navigate the complexities of integrated instruction.

10.2. Curriculum and assessment challenges

Integrating history and language learning also presents challenges related to curriculum design, materials development, and assessment practices.

Developing a coherent curriculum that effectively balances history content and language objectives requires careful planning and expertise. Komarova et al. [40] described the challenges of creating an integrative curriculum for foreign language education, noting the importance of multidimensional content mastery, interrelated disciplinary cycles, interdisciplinary connections, and integrated syllabi. Rashid and Tasadduq [55] emphasized the need for a holistic approach to curriculum development that focuses on integrated fundamental knowledge rather than disconnected content fragments.

Appropriate instructional materials for history CLIL contexts are often scarce, requiring teachers to adapt or create resources that support both content and language learning. Alas, Ljalikova and Jung [5] found that teachers held varying beliefs about what constitutes authentic learning materials, influencing their approaches to resource selection and adaptation. The development of appropriate scaffolding within these materials presents additional challenges, particularly for addressing diverse proficiency levels.

Perhaps the most significant challenge in integrated history and language instruction concerns assessment practices. Sato [59] identified the core dilemma: should content and language be assessed separately or in an integrated manner? This question raises complex issues regarding the relative weighting of content and language components, the appropriate criteria for evaluation, and the potential for language barriers to mask content knowledge.

Lo, mei Lui and Wong [47] examined how CLIL teachers helped students cope with cognitive and linguistic challenges in assessments. Their case study contrasted two approaches: one teacher incorporated both implicit and explicit language instruction throughout her lessons, preparing students well for assessment tasks; another maintained heavily content-oriented practices with minimal language support, potentially disadvantaging students with lower language proficiency.

Several approaches have emerged to address these curriculum and assessment challenges:

1. *Integrated curriculum frameworks*: Hawk and and [35] proposed an integrated course design model that aligns learning goals, evaluation rubrics, learning activities, and assessment methods. This systematic approach ensures coherence between content and language objectives throughout the instructional process.
2. *Scaffolded materials development*: Read [56] described the IMSCI model (Inquiry, Modeling, Shared writing, Collaborative writing, Independent writing) for scaffolding writing instruction. This approach gradually transfers responsibility to students through carefully sequenced support, particularly benefiting English language learners in content-area writing.
3. *Learning-oriented assessment*: Xavier [68] developed a learning-oriented assessment framework that combines formative and summative approaches, placing the learner at the center of the assessment process. This framework enables teachers to evaluate both content knowledge and language skills while maintaining a focus on learning progression.
4. *Assessment differentiation*: Teng, Hsiao and Lo [64] investigated the cognitive processes and strategies of bilingual students when attempting assessments in

an L2. The research revealed that students engaged in more cognitive processes when tackling cognitively demanding questions that required productive language skills, suggesting the need for differentiated assessment approaches based on task complexity and language demands.

Table 8
Integrated assessment framework for history CLIL.

Assessment type	Content focus	Language focus	Implementation examples	Weight*
Formative content checks	Historical knowledge Chronological understanding Causal reasoning	Incidental focus on vocabulary and terminology	Quick quizzes	70% C
			Concept maps Timeline activities	30% L
Formative language checks	Contextual use of historical concepts	Grammar accuracy Academic vocabulary Discourse patterns	Sentence completion	30% C
			Paragraph restructuring Word bank activities	70% L
Integrated formative assessment	Historical thinking skills Content application	Communication effectiveness Appropriate register	Think-pair-share	50% C
			Exit tickets Self-assessments	50% L
Integrated performance tasks	Historical analysis Evidence evaluation Historical argumentation	Genre conventions Academic register Cohesion and coherence	Debates	50% C
			Research presentations Document analysis	50% L
Summative content assessment	Comprehensive historical knowledge Historical thinking skills	Incidental focus on accuracy and terminology	Tests with accommodations	80% C
			Modified essay questions Document-based questions	20% L
Summative language assessment	Historical context as vehicle for language	Comprehensive language skills Academic language functions	Essays on historical topics	20% C
			Oral presentations Recorded discussions	80% L

*C = Content, L = Language

10.3. Student-related challenges

Students' varied language proficiency levels, content background knowledge, and learning preferences create additional implementation challenges in history CLIL contexts.

Diversity in students' language proficiency presents significant challenges for instruction and assessment. Cimermanová [15] found that CLIL's effectiveness varied based on students' initial language abilities, with higher-proficiency students generally demonstrating greater benefits. This variation requires teachers to differentiate instruction while maintaining high expectations for all students.

The dual focus on content and language creates potential cognitive overload for students, particularly when engaging with complex historical concepts. Teng, Hsiao and Lo [64] investigated how bilingual students process assessment tasks in an L2, finding that they engaged in more cognitive processes when attempting cognitively

demanding questions. This increased processing load may disadvantage students with lower language proficiency, requiring appropriate scaffolding and support.

Lasagabaster and Doiz [43] conducted a longitudinal study examining CLIL's impact on affective factors, finding that while CLIL initially increased student motivation, maintaining this advantage over time presented challenges. Moratinos-Johnston, Juan-Garau and Salazar-Noguera [52] noted that students' linguistic self-confidence improved gradually as they became accustomed to using English in content classes, but initial anxiety and self-doubt presented obstacles to participation.

Effective approaches to addressing student-related challenges include:

1. *Differentiated instruction*: adapting teaching methods, materials, and assessments to accommodate diverse language proficiency levels while maintaining consistent content objectives. This might include providing additional linguistic scaffolding, alternative response formats, or supplementary resources for students with lower language proficiency.
2. *Scaffolding strategies*: Athanases and de Oliveira [6] distinguished between routine support, which maintains dependence, and effective scaffolding, which gradually transfers responsibility to students. Interactive scaffolding that responds to students' emerging understanding proved more effective than static, pre-planned support structures.
3. *Motivational enhancement*: Kim and Huh [38] demonstrated how a learner-centered environment supported by teacher scaffolding and authentic materials enhanced students' confidence and engagement. The integration of character education with language learning created multiple pathways for student success and motivation.
4. *Strategic use of first language*: Fránquiz and Salinas [31] found that allowing strategic use of students' first language facilitated their understanding and application of historical thinking. This flexible approach recognized the value of existing linguistic resources while gradually building proficiency in the target language.

Figure 9 visualizes the relationship between implementation challenges, influencing factors, and potential solutions.

11. Fostering language skills development

11.1. Reading skills in historical contexts

History education provides rich opportunities for developing reading skills in a foreign language, particularly when teachers employ appropriate scaffolding and text engagement strategies. Historical texts, with their complex structures and specialized vocabulary, can enhance students' reading comprehension, critical analysis, and interpretive abilities.

Coffin [16] employed functional linguistics to analyze the reading demands of the history curriculum, identifying how language features systematically construct historical meaning. This linguistic mapping enabled teachers to guide students in recognizing and interpreting these features, enhancing their ability to comprehend and analyze historical texts. The research demonstrated that explicit attention to linguistic elements – such as temporal markers, causal connectors, and evaluative language – improved students' reading comprehension and analytical skills.

Falk [30] examined how students engaged with historical texts in both their first language (Swedish) and second language (English). The study revealed that successful readers navigated genre-specific structures and linguistic features, recognizing how

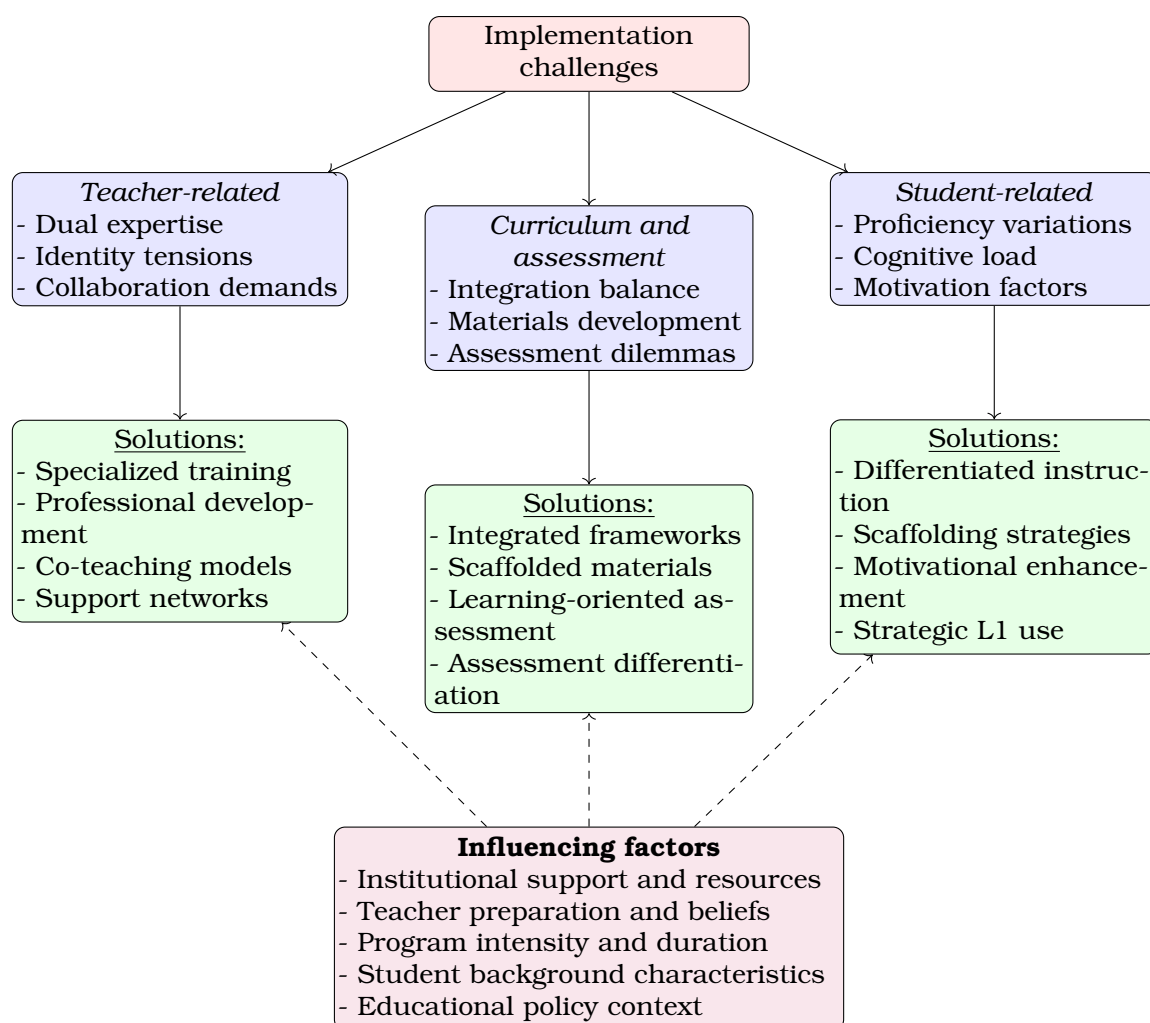


Figure 9: Conceptual model of implementation challenges, potential solutions, and influencing factors in history CLIL contexts.

these elements constructed historical narratives. Students who developed awareness of these textual patterns demonstrated enhanced comprehension and critical analysis.

Several effective strategies for developing reading skills in historical contexts emerged from the literature:

- *pre-reading activities* – activating prior knowledge, introducing key vocabulary, and establishing purpose before engaging with historical texts;
- *text scaffolding* – modifying text complexity through glossing, highlighting key information, or providing supplementary visual supports;
- *reading strategy instruction* teaching – specific strategies such as previewing, predicting, questioning, and summarizing historical texts;
- *graphic organizers* – using visual tools to help students identify and organize key information, causal relationships, and chronological sequences;
- *close reading protocols* – implementing structured approaches to analyzing historical texts through multiple readings focusing on different aspects (content, language, perspective).

August, McCardle and Shanahan [7] emphasized the importance of explicit reading strategy instruction for English language learners, noting that strategies that work for native speakers require additional scaffolding for second language learners. Their

research highlighted the value of teaching students to monitor comprehension, identify text structures, and use contextual clues when reading historical texts.

11.2. Writing development through historical analysis

History education also provides valuable contexts for developing writing skills in a foreign language. Historical writing – including descriptive accounts, analytical essays, and argumentative papers – requires students to master various text types and discourse patterns while demonstrating content knowledge.

Manchón and Matsuda [49] examined second and foreign language writing development, identifying how discipline-specific writing tasks enhance both language proficiency and content understanding. Historical writing, with its emphasis on evidence, analysis, and argumentation, creates authentic purposes for developing academic writing skills.

Read [56] proposed the IMSCI model (Inquiry, Modeling, Shared writing, Collaborative writing, Independent writing) for scaffolding writing instruction in content areas. This gradual release approach proved particularly effective for English language learners, providing structured support that diminished as students gained confidence and competence in historical writing.

Effective approaches to writing development in history CLIL contexts include:

- *genre-based instruction* – explicitly teaching the structures and features of different historical text types (e.g., chronological accounts, causal explanations, analytical essays);
- *writing scaffolds* – providing sentence frames, paragraph templates, and organizational structures that support historical writing;
- *process writing* – implementing multiple-stage writing processes that include planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing;
- *model texts* – analyzing exemplar texts to identify effective features and structures before students attempt their own writing;
- *writing for authentic purposes* – creating meaningful contexts for historical writing, such as museum exhibits, documentary scripts, or historical simulations.

Zwiers [71] investigated how writing assessments shaped historical thinking and language development among English language learners. The research demonstrated that well-designed writing tasks motivated students to develop both historical understanding and language skills, particularly when teachers provided appropriate scaffolding and feedback throughout the writing process.

11.3. Speaking and listening in historical discourse

Oral language development – both speaking and listening – represents an essential component of integrated history and language learning. Classroom discussions, debates, presentations, and simulations provide authentic contexts for developing these skills while engaging with historical content.

Deliana and Ganie [27] investigated the use of debates in teaching speaking to EFL learners, finding that debates fostered critical thinking, effective communication, and collaborative learning. The structured format of debates provided scaffolding for oral language production while requiring students to articulate and defend historical interpretations.

Davis et al. [23] documented how classroom debates enhanced critical thinking, communication, and collaboration skills. When applied to historical topics, debates required students to research historical evidence, develop coherent arguments, respond to counter-perspectives, and employ persuasive language – all valuable skills for both historical understanding and language development.

Effective strategies for developing speaking and listening skills in history CLIL contexts include:

- *structured discussions* – implementing protocols that ensure all students participate and engage with historical content;
- *historical debates* – organizing formal debates on controversial historical issues or interpretations;
- *role-playing* – simulating historical scenarios where students embody historical figures or perspectives;
- *oral history projects* – conducting and analyzing interviews related to historical events or experiences;
- *presentations* – creating opportunities for students to present historical research using appropriate academic language.

Yang et al. [69] examined how caption support affected listening comprehension of historical films, finding that keyword captions significantly enhanced students' understanding. This research suggested that appropriate scaffolding can make authentic historical audio content more accessible to language learners, facilitating both content comprehension and language acquisition.

Zhussupova and Shadiev [70] explored digital storytelling as a means of developing academic public speaking skills in multilingual classrooms. The study demonstrated that creating and presenting digital stories about historical topics enhanced students' oral fluency, coherence, and confidence while developing their cultural awareness and language proficiency.

11.4. Integrated skills approach

The most effective approaches to language development in history CLIL contexts integrate all four language skills – reading, writing, speaking, and listening – in authentic historical inquiry. This integration reflects the natural interrelationship of language modes and creates multiple pathways for developing language proficiency.

Al-wossabi [4] developed an integrated curriculum project for Saudi EFL students enrolled in an EAP course, emphasizing the value of teaching language skills in a coherent way with no clear preference of one skill over another. This integrated approach enabled students to experience English as a unified whole rather than as segregated skills, enhancing their ability to meaningfully and purposefully interact with content and peers.

Wehling [67] documented how service-learning experiences developed cross-cultural competency while integrating multiple language skills. Students engaged in community-based projects that required them to read historical and cultural information, listen to community members, speak in authentic contexts, and write reflections on their experiences. This multidimensional approach enhanced both language proficiency and cultural understanding.

Figure 10 illustrates the cyclical relationship between language skills development and historical learning activities.

12. Proposed integrative framework

12.1. The Integrated History-Language Acquisition Framework (IHLAF)

Based on the synthesized findings from this review, we propose a novel conceptual model – the Integrated History-Language Acquisition Framework (IHLAF) – to guide future research and practice in history-based language education. This framework represents a theoretical contribution that addresses the identified gap in comprehensive models for integrating history content with language development.

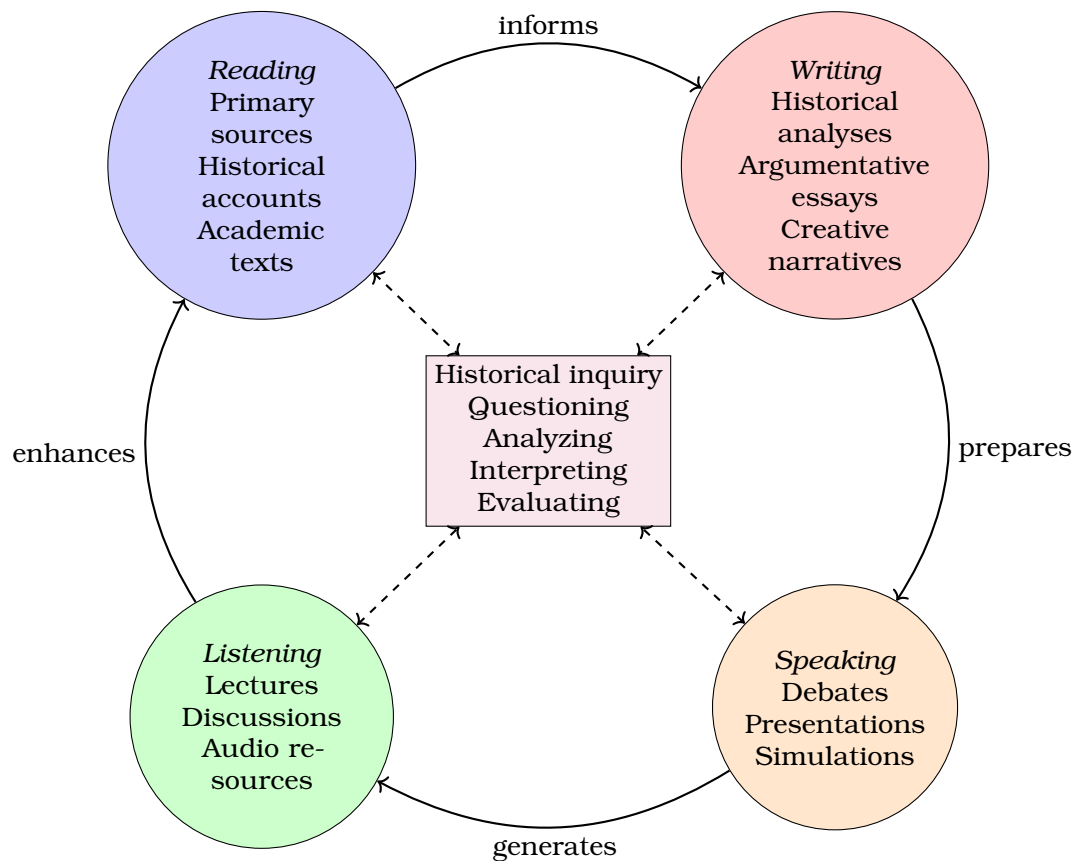


Figure 10: Integrated language skills development through historical inquiry activities.

The IHLEAF conceptualizes the dynamic relationship between four key dimensions of integrated learning: content knowledge, language competence, cognitive development, and cultural awareness. Unlike previous models that focus primarily on the relationship between content and language, this framework explicitly incorporates cognitive and cultural dimensions as integral components rather than secondary outcomes.

The IHLEAF is characterized by several key principles:

1. *Multidimensional integration*: the framework recognizes that effective learning occurs at the intersection of content, language, cognition, and culture – with each dimension enhancing and reinforcing the others.
2. *Reciprocal relationships*: each dimension of the framework maintains bidirectional relationships with the others, acknowledging how developments in one area facilitate growth in the others.
3. *Centrality of authentic tasks*: at the core of the framework lies integrated learning through authentic tasks that simultaneously engage all four dimensions.
4. *Developmental progression*: The framework acknowledges that learning occurs along developmental continua in each dimension, with students progressing at different rates across the domains.
5. *Contextual responsiveness*: Implementation of the framework must be responsive to specific educational contexts, student needs, and institutional constraints.

12.2. Practical applications

The IHLEAF has practical applications across several domains of educational practice:

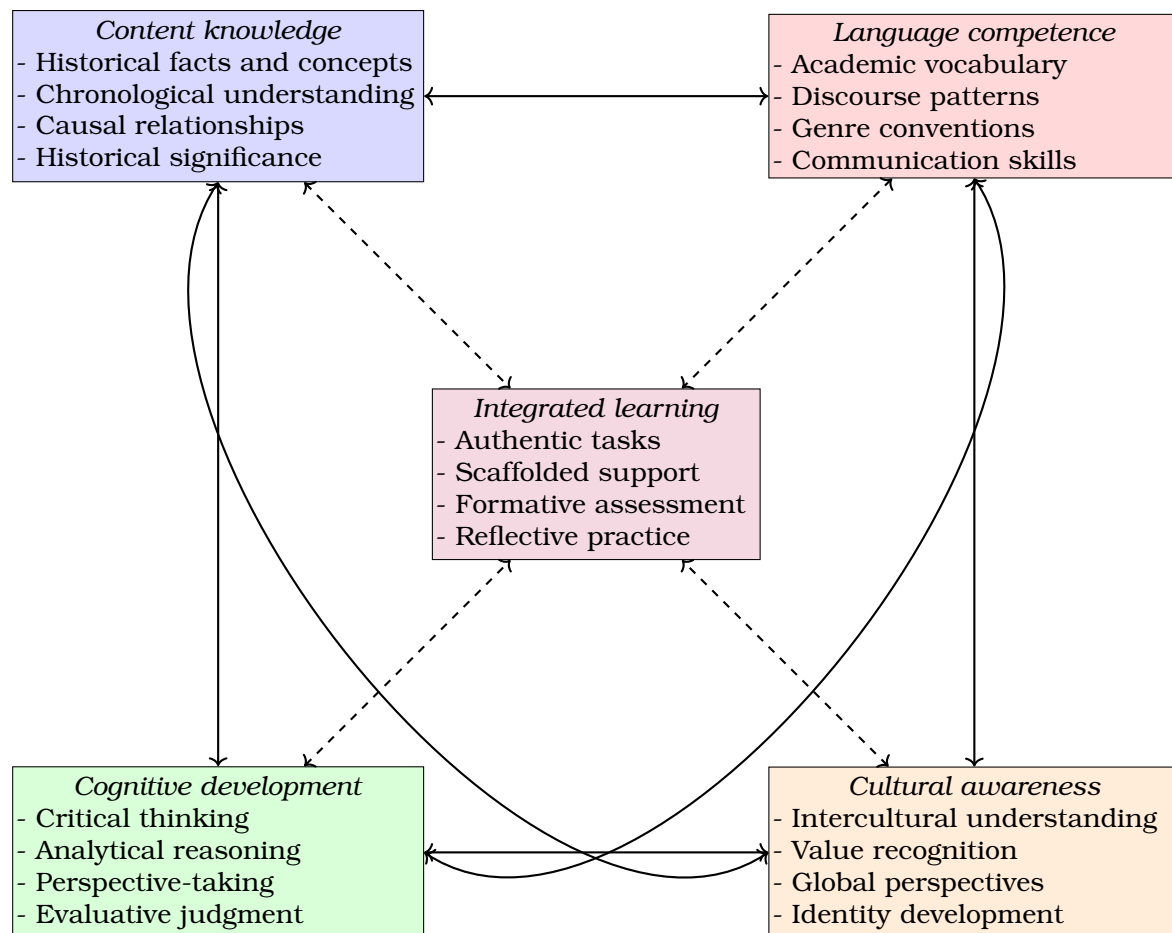


Figure 11: The Integrated History-Language Acquisition Framework (IHLAF).

1. The framework guides curriculum development by ensuring balanced attention to all four dimensions of integrated learning. Curriculum designers can use the framework to audit existing programs, identifying potential imbalances or gaps in integration. For example, a curriculum that emphasizes content knowledge and language competence might be enhanced by more explicit attention to cognitive development and cultural awareness.
2. Teachers can employ the framework to design learning activities that engage all four dimensions simultaneously. For instance, a historical inquiry project might require students to research historical events (content), communicate findings through specific genres (language), evaluate multiple perspectives (cognition), and consider cross-cultural implications (culture).
3. The framework informs comprehensive assessment approaches that address all dimensions of integrated learning. Assessment tasks can be designed to elicit evidence of development across multiple domains, providing a more holistic picture of student learning.
4. Teacher education programs can use the framework to structure professional development that addresses the multidimensional nature of integrated instruction. This might include specialized training in historical content, language pedagogy, cognitive scaffolding, and intercultural education.
5. Policymakers can reference the framework when developing guidelines for bilingual education, foreign language instruction, and history curriculum standards.

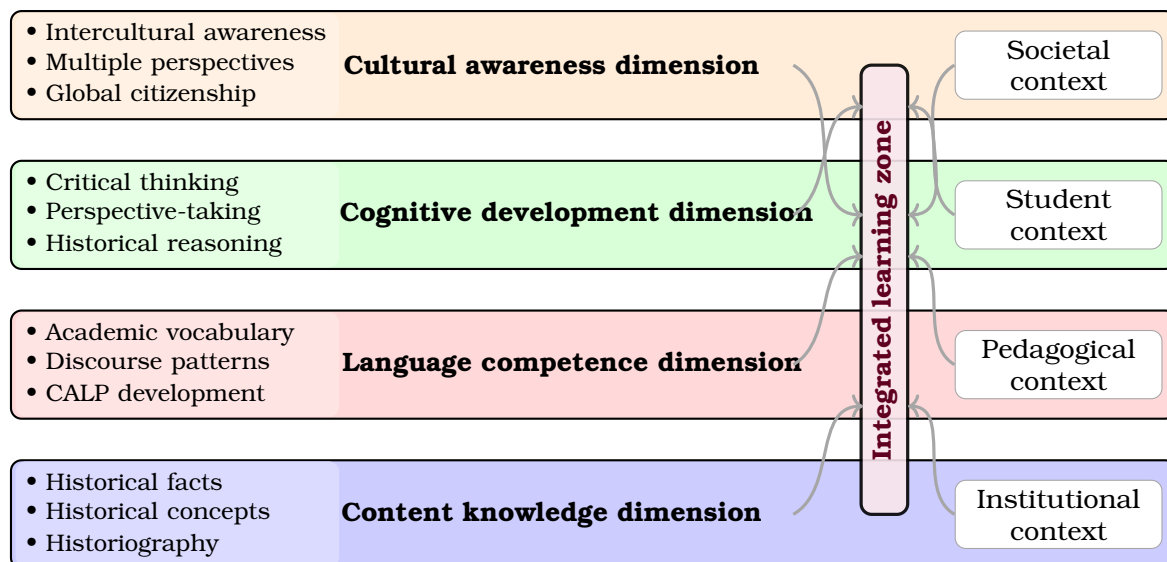


Figure 12: The multilayered structure of the Integrated History-Language Acquisition Framework showing the dynamic interactions between dimensions and the central integrated learning zone.

The framework provides a comprehensive vision for integrated education that transcends narrow disciplinary boundaries.

12.3. Theoretical contributions

The IHAF makes several important theoretical contributions to the field:

- It extends existing CLIL frameworks (particularly Coyle’s 4Cs model) by more explicitly articulating the dynamic relationships between dimensions and positioning integrated learning at the center of educational practice.
- It bridges disciplinary divides between history education, language acquisition, cognitive psychology, and intercultural studies, creating a unified theoretical perspective on integrated learning.
- It reconceptualizes history education as a multidimensional enterprise that necessarily involves language, cognition, and culture rather than treating these as separate or secondary concerns.
- It provides a coherent theoretical foundation for empirical research on integrated history and language learning, offering consistent terminology and conceptual organization.

13. Conclusion and implications

13.1. Summary of key findings

First, CLIL approaches in secondary education demonstrate consistently positive effects on receptive language skills, vocabulary acquisition, and student motivation, with more variable outcomes for productive skills and long-term engagement. Importantly, contrary to some concerns, content knowledge acquisition generally remains comparable to traditional instruction when appropriate scaffolding is provided.

Second, the integration of history and language learning creates powerful synergies that enhance both domains. History’s rich content provides authentic contexts for language development, while language learning deepens historical understanding by requiring articulation of complex relationships and perspectives. This reciprocal relationship is particularly valuable for developing academic language proficiency.

Third, several methodological approaches have proven effective in integrated history and language instruction, including communicative language teaching, task-based learning, project-based learning, and integrated skills approaches. These methods create meaningful contexts for language use while engaging students in authentic historical inquiry.

Fourth, authentic materials and real-world contexts significantly enhance learning outcomes in history CLIL settings. Primary sources, multimedia resources, literary texts, and historical artifacts provide rich linguistic and content input, while simulations, debates, exhibitions, and digital projects create authentic purposes for language production.

Fifth, developing vocabulary and academic language proficiency requires systematic attention through explicit instruction, morphemic analysis, contextual learning, and disciplinary discourse awareness. The specialized language of historical discourse presents both challenges and opportunities for language development.

Sixth, successful implementation of integrated history and language instruction depends on addressing challenges related to teacher preparation, curriculum design, assessment practices, and student diversity. Solutions include specialized teacher training, collaborative planning, scaffolded instruction, differentiated assessment, and strategic use of students' linguistic resources.

Finally, fostering language skills development in history contexts requires integrated approaches that develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening abilities through authentic historical inquiry. These integrated approaches reflect the natural interrelationship of language modes and create multiple pathways for developing language proficiency.

13.2. Theoretical implications

The proposed Integrated History-Language Acquisition Framework (IHLAF) extends existing CLIL frameworks by more explicitly articulating the dynamic relationships between content knowledge, language competence, cognitive development, and cultural awareness. This multidimensional model provides a more comprehensive theoretical foundation for integrated learning than previous approaches that emphasized content-language connections without fully addressing cognitive and cultural dimensions.

The review also contributes to theoretical understandings of academic language development by identifying the specific linguistic demands of historical discourse and their relationship to cognitive processes. The mapping of historical thinking dimensions to language functions illustrates how disciplinary thinking and language use are inextricably linked, supporting theories of disciplinary literacy.

Furthermore, the findings challenge simplistic conceptions of language transfer, demonstrating that content-language integration occurs through complex processes influenced by cognitive development, task demands, linguistic resources, and cultural awareness. This complexity requires more nuanced theoretical models than traditional second language acquisition theories might suggest.

13.3. Practical implications

For classroom teachers, the findings suggest the importance of:

- explicitly addressing both content and language objectives in lesson planning;
- providing appropriate scaffolding that gradually transfers responsibility to students;
- using authentic materials and tasks that create meaningful contexts for language use;
- implementing assessment approaches that balance content knowledge and language proficiency;

- differentiating instruction to accommodate diverse language levels while maintaining high expectations.

For curriculum designers, the review emphasizes:

- creating coherent programs that systematically integrate content and language learning;
- developing materials that include appropriate scaffolding for both content and language;
- establishing clear progressions in both historical understanding and language proficiency;
- incorporating authentic tasks that engage students in meaningful historical inquiry;
- aligning assessment practices with program goals and instructional approaches.

For teacher educators, the findings suggest:

- preparing teachers with dual expertise in content and language pedagogy;
- developing awareness of the linguistic demands of historical discourse;
- promoting collaborative approaches that leverage specialized knowledge;
- fostering reflective practice regarding the integration of content and language;
- building capacity for differentiation and scaffolding to support diverse learners.

For policymakers, the review highlights the importance of:

- supporting dual-qualification pathways for teacher preparation;
- allocating adequate resources for material development and adaptation;
- creating assessment frameworks that value both content and language development;
- establishing realistic timelines for program implementation and evaluation;
- promoting cross-disciplinary collaboration between content and language specialists.

13.4. Limitations and future research directions

While this review has provided a comprehensive analysis of integrated history and language learning, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the review focused primarily on published research, potentially missing valuable insights from unpublished studies or practitioner experiences. Second, language barriers may have limited access to relevant research published in languages without available translations. Third, the quality of included studies varied considerably, with methodological limitations in some empirical research potentially affecting the reliability of findings.

Based on these limitations and the identified gaps in the literature, several directions for future research emerge:

1. Longitudinal studies examining the long-term effects of integrated history and language learning on both language proficiency and content knowledge.
2. Comparative research investigating the relative effectiveness of different methodological approaches under various conditions.
3. Studies exploring the perspectives and experiences of students in integrated history and language programs, particularly their perceptions of challenges and supports.
4. Research examining the impact of teacher beliefs, identity, and professional development on implementation quality and student outcomes.

5. Investigations into the validity and reliability of integrated assessment approaches that address both content and language dimensions.
6. Studies exploring the application of the proposed IHLAF across diverse educational contexts and student populations.

In conclusion, the integration of history content and language learning offers a promising approach to enhancing foreign language competence among secondary school students. When implemented with appropriate attention to theoretical principles, methodological approaches, and practical challenges, such integration can create powerful learning environments that develop language proficiency, historical understanding, cognitive skills, and cultural awareness simultaneously. The IHLAF provides a comprehensive framework for guiding these efforts, while ongoing research will continue to refine our understanding of effective practices in this important educational domain.

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