

Lexical Reiteration Instruction Through CLIL and L2 Composition Writing of High School Students

 Mojgan Rashtchi,¹

 Maryam Baniardalani,²

¹ Associate Professor at Islamic Azad University, North Tehran Branch, Iran

² Islamic Azad University, North Tehran Branch, Iran

Corresponding Author: Mojgan Rashtchi; Islamic Azad University, North Tehran Branch

Phone: +98 9121255347

e-mail: mojgan.rashtchi@gmail.com

Article citation: Rashtchi, M. & Baniardalani, M. (2019). Lexical reiteration instruction through CLIL and L2 composition writing of Iranian high school students, *Applied Linguistics Research Journal*, 3(4): 45–58.

Received Date: April 26, 2019

Accepted Date: June 8, 2019

Online Date: 5 September, 2019

Publisher: Kare Publishing

© 2018 Applied Linguistics Research Journal

E-ISSN: 2651-2629

ABSTRACT

This study examined the efficacy of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) as a context for teaching writing to Iranian high school girls. The researchers of the present study assumed that teaching lexical reiteration could contribute to writing coherent compositions. Lexical reiteration was manipulated through explicit and implicit instructions. Both quantitative and qualitative data collection procedures were employed. Thirty students were randomly assigned to two groups of Explicit Instruction Content group (EIC) and Implicit Instruction Content group (IIC). The participants had been grouped in English classes based on the Preliminary English Test (PET) at the beginning of the academic year by the school administrators, and therefore they were homogeneous. The writing pre-test ensured the homogeneity of the groups regarding the writing ability. During the treatment, which took ten 90-minute sessions in five weeks, EIC was exposed to the explicit reiteration instruction through teacher explanations, reading, and writing, and IIC engaged in the implicit instruction through narrow reading and writing compositions. The writing post-test showed the outperformance of EIC. The interviews with EIC group explored their views regarding employing lexical cohesive devices. The analysis of the interviews provided some understandings about the efficacy of the explicit teaching of lexical reiteration in enhancing coherence in EFL high school students' compositions.

Keywords: CLIL, Explicitly Instructed Content, Implicitly Instructed Content, Lexical Reiteration, Writing Compositions.

1. Introduction

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is “an educational approach within which non-language school or curriculum subjects are introduced through a foreign/second language instruction and communicative context” (Hurajová, 2015). Marsh and Lange (2000) suggest that CLIL can help teachers to provide “a more natural situation for language development which builds on other forms of learning” and can enhance a learner’s “motivation and hunger towards learning a language” (p. 76). The naturalness of CLIL reflects its importance and success in teaching both language and content. Since it is not always possible for teachers to provide situations in the classroom that can lead to learning the language, classrooms instructed via CLIL can take a prominent role in the process of language learning.

Likewise, developing the writing skill is a prerequisite for achieving academic goals because through writing learners can express their ideas and think appropriately (Rashtchi, 2007; Paul & Elder, 2003). Thus, language teachers' responsibility is to help learners create high-quality compositions. Coherence and cohesion are among the characteristics which add to the integrity of the text and should be taught in writing classes. Coherence concerns the relevance of the concepts and relations that underlie the text while cohesion refers to the sequential interconnectedness of the components of a text or the organization of ideas (De Beaugrande & Dressler, 1981) and can be taught through different techniques such as repetition, substitution, and transition. According to Halliday and Hasan (1976), grammatical cohesion and lexical cohesion are the two types of cohesion that exist in a well-written composition. Grammatical cohesion is stated through the "grammatical system of a language such as reference, substitution, ellipsis, and conjunction" while lexical cohesion can be obtained by the "selection of appropriate vocabulary" (p. 274). Lexical reiteration is "the repetition of a lexical item, at one end of the scale; the use of a general word to refer back to a lexical item, at the other end of the scale; and a number of things in between- the use of a synonym, or superordinate" (Halliday & Hasan, 1976, p.278).

The present study intended to explore the role of implicit/explicit teaching of lexical reiteration as a technique for the establishment of cohesion in the compositions of high school girls who were learning English as a foreign language. The dichotomy selected in this study is significant because in CLIL language learning occurs implicitly (Van de Craen & Surmont, 2017). However, what this study aimed to address was whether explicit teaching of some linguistic elements could be useful for EFL students and could improve the writing skill when content and language are integrated. The researchers assumed that direct teaching of lexical reiteration could be beneficial in teaching students to use organization and relatedness in their writings. Since CLIL "induces the learner to be more cognitively active during the process of learning" (Van de Craen, Mondt, Allain, & Gao, 2007, p.73), it is consistent with what the writing skill necessitates (Paul & Elder, 2003).

2. Literature Review

CLIL integrates content and language learning in a way that is particular to it and to the techniques it uses in such classes (Coyle, 2005). Therefore, As Coyle argues, CLIL requires teachers to look for more useful ways of planning and teaching. CLIL programs have been implemented with the belief that "using the target language as a medium of instruction to learn the content of other subjects" would help learners become more proficient in the target language (Llach & Catalan, 2007, p. 86). CLIL is based on meaningful learning (Van de Craen & Surmont, 2017) and intends to use students' prior knowledge to teach new materials in the target language. However, as the review of literature portrays, the efficacy of CLIL especially in L2 development seems to be controversial. Van de Craen and Surmont (2017) and Van de Craen et al. (2007) refer to several studies with unexpected findings regarding CLIL which leads the researchers of the present study to quote Llach and Catalan (2007) who assert that studies on the efficiency of CLIL in the "development of learners' target language competence is scarce, inconclusive, and very disperse" (p. 86). It is worth mentioning that inconclusiveness regarding CLIL findings makes it an appealing domain in the process of second/foreign language learning and points to its multi-dimensional nature as it focuses on different issues such as cognitive development, L1 acquisition, bilingualism, and L2 learning.

Lexical cohesion and grammatical cohesion are two types of cohesive devices that relate different parts of a text. Several studies have addressed the use of cohesive devices by second/foreign language learners though most of them have focused on grammatical cohesion rather than lexical cohesion (Llach & Catalan, 2007). Liu (2000) argues that the focal point in ESL classrooms has mostly been on teaching functional connectives instead of trying to broaden students' lexical knowledge.

Selecting appropriate vocabulary, as Halliday and Hasan (1976) state, can lead to lexical cohesion in two forms of reiteration and collocation. Reiteration, as mentioned above, consists of four types of repetition, synonym, near-synonyms, and superordinate. Mojica (2006, p.110) provides the

following examples to signify lexical reiteration:

- Close family friends attended Kay's birthday *party*.
- Everyone enjoyed *the party*. (repetition)
- Everyone enjoyed *the gathering*. (Synonym)
- Everyone enjoyed *the event*. (Superordinate)

Student writers fail to remedy discourse-level problems in their revision mainly because they do not have the requisite knowledge to fix the errors (Hacker, Plumb, Butterfield, Quathamer, & Heineken, 1994). Thus, it is worth investigating how teachers by instructing their learners to use lexical reiteration can address the problem of cohesion in writing. However, not much is known about the extent to which teachers should focus on these discourse features, nor is it clear how teaching lexical reiteration can improve EFL learners' writing skill. One solution is that teachers should not burden themselves with solving discourse problems by making corrections or suggestions. Instead, they need to focus on providing students with opportunities to become involved in the monitoring of their language use beyond the sentence level.

The present study implemented explicit and implicit instructions of reiteration through CLIL to help Iranian EFL high school girls produce cohesive compositions. The researchers were interested in examining whether addressing cohesive devices within the framework provided by CLIL would improve the writing skill of high school students. Thus, they formulated the following research questions:

RQ1. Does explicit versus implicit teaching of lexical reiteration through CLIL have any impact on the development of Iranian high school students' L2 composition writing?

RQ2. How do the participants who have a better performance in the first phase of the study view the type of instruction they received regarding lexical reiteration?

3. Method

3.1. Research Design

Both quantitative and qualitative data collection procedures were employed to provide answers to the research questions. The quantitative phase of this study was quasi-experimental with non-equivalent pre-test-post-test control group design to study the effects of explicit and implicit teaching of reiteration in the writing of the participants. For the qualitative phase, unstructured, open-ended interviews were conducted to understand about each learner's viewpoints in the group, which obtained higher mean score in the post-test. The purpose of the qualitative phase was to provide a broader understanding of how the participants viewed the instruction they received.

As mentioned above, the present study followed the four classifications of lexical reiteration; that is repetition, superordinate/ hyponyms, synonyms/ antonyms, and pronouns. However, without teaching coordinating and subordinating conjunctions it was impossible to manipulate lexical reiteration or help the participants understand the concept of cohesion. It is worth mentioning that the instances of lexical reiteration were identified and classified by an experienced teacher as well as the researchers to guarantee the reliability of the process.

3.2. Participants

Thirty girls whose ages were between 15 and 17 years old were selected based on convenience sampling. They were members of two intact classes ($n_1=n_2=15$) and were studying in a high school in the north of Tehran, Iran. The high school was employing the CLIL approach to teaching English. The participants studied their lessons in Persian from eight o'clock in the morning until one o'clock in the afternoon and were exposed to English as an extra program until four o'clock in the afternoon.

All of the students had participated in a placement test at the beginning of the school year and were placed in classes based on their scores on the test. Therefore, it did not seem necessary to

administer a general language proficiency test to ensure their homogeneity.

The two intact classes were randomly assigned to Explicit Instruction Content group (EIC) and Implicit Instruction Content group (IIC). The EIC Group was exposed to the explicit reiteration instruction, and IIC Group received the implicit instruction of L2 composition writing both through CLIL but with different types of tasks.

3.3. Instrumentation and Materials

The writing pre-test on "*What I know about animals?*" was used to examine whether the participants were at the same level regarding the writing ability. Also, the students' writing post-test on "*Describe how plants grow*" was utilized to investigate the difference between the writing performances of the two groups. The learners were supposed to write their compositions in about 280-320 words.

Two raters rated the writings of the students before and after the treatment. One rater was one of the researchers, and the other was a trained rater. The raters had an M.A. in TEFL and were supervising ELT courses in different language schools in Tehran for more than five years. For scoring the writings, the scale for rating the writing section of the Examination for the Certificate in Proficiency in English (ECPE) developed by the University of Cambridge (2014) was used (Appendix A). Before rating the writings of the participants in the pretest and posttest, the two raters examined the rating scale, discussed its components, and agreed upon the rating procedure. For increasing the conformity between the ratings, a mock trial scoring was conducted by the raters on two student-written compositions. Then the participants' writing pretests were rated. The inter-rater reliability computed through Pearson's *r* for the writing pre-test was 0.93 and for the writing posttest was 0.96.

Another instrument was a semi-structured open-ended interview which aimed to collect qualitative data. The questions helped the researchers to have a deeper understanding of the participants' personal experiences during the instruction. The interviews were done during a specific time length and were tape-recorded and later transcribed for further analysis. Interviewing each student lasted about ten minutes and was conducted at a time and place suitable for the participants.

Discover Science (Scott Foresman, 1991) was the course book used in both of the classes. Also, the researchers used the Internet to find some passages whose topics were similar to those of the official school curriculum. The passages were generally related to science (physics, chemistry, and biology) and literature. The purpose was to examine how familiarity with the content might draw the participants' focus from content to the use of cohesive devices in writing. Some of the topics were "*How a track is made in a bubble chamber,*" *Solids and liquids,*" *How bees make honey,*" *The Arctic Ocean,*" and "*Do dolphins talk.*" Lubelska (1991) sample materials helped the researchers prepare worksheets for the IIC group.

3.4. Setting of the Study

As stated above, the participants were selected from a high school in Tehran. In this CLIL-based school, the subjects of the curriculum were taught both in Persian (students' L1) and English. That is, the subjects taught in Persian were used to teach English as well. Therefore, the content and the words were familiar to the students. For example, words such as mitochondria, osmosis, appendix, electric motor, piston machines are quite familiar to Iranian students. However, when Persian words used in the textbooks were different from their English equivalent, the English words and expressions were introduced in their classes (e.g., element, bladder, blood pressure, windmills).

3.5. Procedure

3.5.1. Phase One: Quantitative Phase

At the onset of the study, the learners were assigned to EIC and IIC groups randomly. Before the treatment, the participants wrote a composition as the pre-test. The whole procedure of instruction

consisted of ten 90-minute sessions, each week two sessions.

3.5.1.1 EIC Group

The teaching procedure consisted of different activities including brainstorming, teaching the lesson of the day, and doing tasks and assignments. The tasks were designed for pair and group work to enhance the participants' learning and receiving their feedback. The familiarity of the participants with the content of the lessons was a privilege since the teacher (who was one of the researchers) could concentrate on the explicit instruction of the cohesive devices and raise the learners' awareness toward lexical reiteration while they were engaged in reading. Each session, the teacher focused on one specific subcategory of reiteration. For example, the first session was allocated to "repetition." The teacher wrote the following sentences on the board:

Americans use a lot of energy in homes, in businesses, and industry. Americans also use energy for personal travel and for transporting goods. (Taken from <https://www.readworks.org>)

Then she elaborated on the concept of repetition, how it could occur in different sentences, and add to the unity of the text. In the next 50 minutes, the teacher asked the students to underline the repeated words which existed in one- or two-paragraph texts she had given to them. As homework, the students wrote a paragraph on the same topic they had read in the class and tried to use the cohesive device(s) they had learned. The teacher corrected the participants' writings and handed in the following session. Accordingly, synonyms/antonyms, conjunctions, superordinates, and pronouns were covered each session while reviewing the previous cohesive devices. The following is another example of the use of synonyms:

No matter how *far away* the sun is from Earth, it does not make much difference to our *weather*. That is to say; weather conditions do not depend on whether Earth is *distant* or near. (Taken from <https://www.readworks.org>)

The researchers followed Lubelska's (1991) model. Within her framework, as shown in Figure 1, reading and writing support each other in the process of teaching.

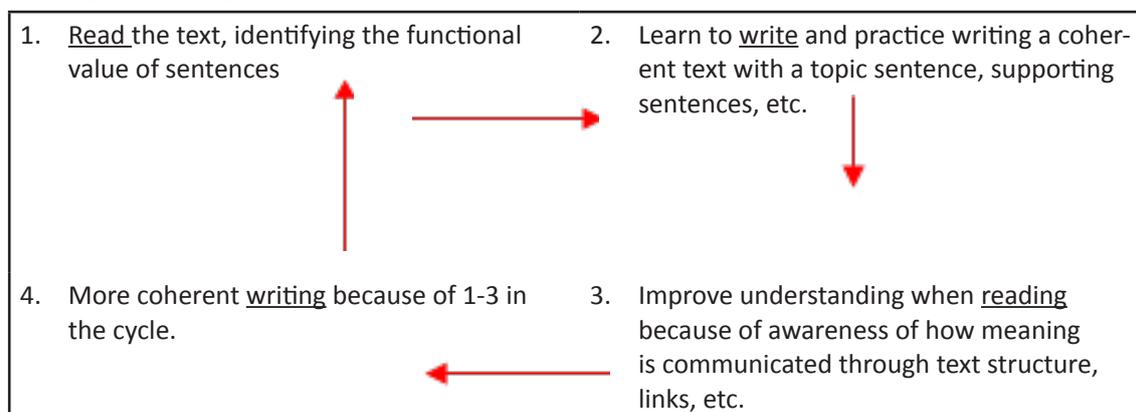


Figure 1. Lubelska (1991)

3.5.1.2 IIC Group

The members of this group were exposed to the cohesive lexical items indirectly. The teacher did not allocate any time for explicit instruction; nor did she raise the learners' consciousness toward the grammatical cohesive devices. However, she interfered when the learners encountered problems. She was a facilitator rather than an instructor and intended to create an environment in which a complex structure could be acquired without conscious effort. Two types of tasks were used in the class. The first task was reading passages which were followed by comprehension questions. The purpose of this task was to expose learners to the lexical cohesive devices within different contexts. The second task was writing compositions, by which the teacher could elicit

and enhance reiteration implicitly. Similar to EIC, in this group, there were ten sessions of treatment with the same duration. However, instead of ten different reading comprehension passages, five lengthier ones were used as the purpose was to engage students in narrow reading. In narrow reading, which is a good source for incidental reading (Krashen, 1989), students read about the same topic. The underlying theory is that by reading about the same topic, the main ideas and the vocabulary could be comprehended easily. As Olateju (2006) argues, repetition of words can contribute to understanding and remembering the words and their meaning.

Each session started with 10 minutes of brainstorming and eliciting the participants' knowledge about the content of the reading passages. Then without any direct instruction, the teacher gave the students some reading comprehension worksheets (Lubelska, 1991) and based on the complexity of the task, she divided them into pairs, groups, or individual working. The tasks were mainly narrow reading (as explained above) and reading comprehension to provide students with access to coherent texts and cohesive devices. Then implicitly through the reading comprehension questions, the teacher examined the participants' comprehension and writing.

The participants worked on the worksheets and reported their answers to the class. The teacher helped the students with writing answers if they needed. After reading the passages, the participants engaged in writing compositions on a given topic in about 250 words and submitted them to the teacher. As homework, each session the students were supposed to search about one or two topics on the Internet and find at least two related passages, read them, write a summary, and submit it to the teacher. The teacher asked some of the students to read aloud their summaries.

3.5.1.3. Phase Two: Qualitative Phase

The researchers implemented the qualitative phase after the results of statistical analysis showed that the EIC group had outperformed the IIC group regarding the writing ability. The interviews with the EIC group were conducted five days after the writing post-test, and the participants' voices were recorded for further analysis. After data collection, the process of axial coding was performed to reduce data into easily locatable segments and was arranged in the form of discussion (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

4. Results

4.1 Results of the Quantitative Phase

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) test was run to ensure the normality of the distribution of the scores. A non-significant result ($p > 0.05$) indicates the normality of the results of the writing pretest and post-test.

Table 1. One-Sample K-S Test for Writing Pre-test & Post-test

		Pre-Writing Test	Post-Writing Test
N		30	30
Normal Parameters ^a	Mean	2.23	2.90
	Std. Deviation	.72	.92
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.25	.25
	Positive	.22	.25
	Negative	-.25	-.21
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		1.39	1.40
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.421	.38

a. Test distribution is Normal.

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics of the writing pre-test for EIC (M=2.33, SD=0.72) and IIC (M= 2.13, SD=0.74).

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for the Writing Pre-test

	Groups	N	M	SD	SEM
Pre-test	EIC	15	2.33	.72	.18
	IIC	15	2.13	.74	.19

An independent samples *t*-test was run to ensure that there was no statistically significant difference between the writing ability of the EIC and IIC groups at the onset of the study (Table 3). The Levene's test ($p = 0.75$) showed that the assumption of the homogeneity of variances was met, and thus independent samples *t*-test could be run. The result of the independent samples *t*-test shows no statistically significant difference ($t(28) = 0.747, p = .46$) between the EIC and IIC before the treatment.

Table 3. Independent Samples *t*-Test for the Writing Pre-test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Dif- ference	SEM
Pre- Writing Test	Equal Variances Assumed	.09	.75	.74	28	.46	.20	.26

After the treatment, another independent samples *t*-test was run to examine whether there was any statistically significant difference between the means of the groups. Table 4 shows the descriptive statistics for the writing post-test. As the table signifies, the mean of EIC group ($M = 3.33, SD = .89$) is higher than that of the IIC group ($M = 2.46, SD = .74$) regarding writing performance.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics for the Writing Post-test

	Groups	N	Mean	SD	SEM
Post-Writ- ing Test	EIC	15	3.33	.89	.23
	IIC	15	2.46	.74	.19

Table 5 shows the results of the independent samples *t*-test between the means of EIC and IIC groups. As shown in the table, the Levene's test ($p = 0.62$) indicates the homogeneity of the variances. The result of the independent samples *t*-test shows statistically significant differences ($t(28) = 2.87, p = .008$) between the EIC and IIC groups. Therefore, it can be concluded that EIC group ($M = 3.33, SD = .89$) outperformed the IIC group ($M = 2.46, SD = .74$) regarding the writing performance. The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference = .86, 95% CI: .249 to 1.48) was very large (eta squared = .22).

Table 5. Independent Samples t-Test for the Writing Post-test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Differ- ence	Std. Error Dif- ference
Posttest	Equal variances assumed	.244	.62	2.87	28	.008	.86	.30

4.2 Second Research Question

The purpose of the interview was to investigate the participants' views regarding the classes and the development of their writing ability. The researchers transcribed the responses and extracted the critical themes to come up with the main topics of the respondents' ideas. Therefore, the recurring words, phrases, and ideas were identified and categorized according to the relationship they had with each other and were reported. Researchers' interpretations were also added separately. The results of learners' ideas are presented for each interview question as follow (the words and phrases in brackets are added by the researchers to increase their intelligibility).

1-Do you think the use of repetition, synonym or near-synonym, conjunctions, superordinate and related words were useful in your writing development? Explain your answer.

Learners' responses to this question were highly positive reflecting the effectiveness of lexical reiteration in helping them improve their writings. One student, for example, stated:

"Our teacher's explanation was very useful. Now I understand that whatever I write should [be] related to [the previous] sentences."

This remark shows that the teachers' explanations could raise learners' consciousness toward the role of cohesion in writing compositions. Another student said:

"I think learning how to use repetition, synonyms and [the like] was very useful because I think if I [did] not know about all these, my writing would not [be] as O.K. [as it should be]. Now I think my compositions are clos[er] to the passages I read than before."

Another student said:

"Our teacher taught us to use connections to relate sentences to each other [in order to] write meaningful paragraphs."

It can be inferred that the teacher's explicit explanations were very useful regarding creating coherent compositions. One of the participants stated:

"The use of repetition was [much] easier for me. Now... after I write, I try to review [my composition] to see [if] I have used it."

It seems that learning lexical reiteration was easy to learn and could boost participants' writing. Overall, the students particularly those who had gained lower scores in the writing pre-test verified the constructive effect of the explicit teaching of lexical reiteration and believed that explicit teaching could help them concentrate on their compositions.

2-Did you have any problems with the lexical concepts before attending the classes? Do you think the class helped you learn a new concept?

The analysis of the writing pre-tests showed that the participants were not able to use a variety of lexical items and repeated the same words all through their compositions. However, most of the participants believed that the instruction of the lexical reiteration technique could be facilitative. One student declared:

"I never thought that I was repeating the same words for expressing ideas while writing. But now I try to avoid [too many] repetitions."

Being conscious of using synonyms instead of repeating the same words gives variety to the learners' compositions and adds to its unity. One of the students stated:

"I repeated the same words all through my composition because no one before [had] told me to look for synonyms. It seems funny, but sometimes you need [to be reminded]."

Learners also understood the role of lexical concepts in their writings:

"My writings were simple before this class but after [I realized] we should produce meaningful papers, I started to write differently."

This answer indicates that simply teaching students how to follow steps in improving their writings is not sufficient. It is necessary to equip them with some solutions to solve their writing problems:

"Before this class, I wrote whatever came to my mind without paying attention to the order they [should be] arrang[ed]. In this class, I learned to write in different steps using more [complex] sentences. But it was very difficult to do so."

On the whole, learners appreciated the value of the explicit instruction in enhancing their knowledge of lexical items. This inference is evident in another students' response:

"I knew a little number of words, but the teacher told me to learn several words with the same meaning. This helped me express more idea[s] in my compositions. I learned words with their parts of speech, a very useful thing [to do]."

One idea which was asserted by many students was that using synonyms and superordinate could "give a more native-like tone" to their writings.

3-Do you think learning the lexical devices helped you improve your writing?

Learners appreciated that their teacher instructed the lexical concepts to them. They agreed that learning the lexical devices was helpful. However, it seemed that learners believed they needed more practice if they wanted to achieve better results. For example, one interviewee expressed:

"I think I need more practice. I like to have more samples and explanations [on] them."

4- How do you employ the techniques you learned in your writings? Please explain.

The answers to the fourth question of the interview were quite illuminating. One of the students said:

"First, I write my ideas and try [to] organize them. Then, as [we did] in the class, I try to find the words I [have] repeated more than two times. I underline them and try to find a synonym for it. Sometimes, I cannot find good really good synonyms, so I try to [edit] my sentence."

Another student stated:

"When I wanted to write: [The weather is getting warm. The warmth of the weather is because of several reasons.] Based on what I [have] learned, I notice that I cannot use the word 'warm' again; therefore, I use 'temperature' and then I notice that I have to change my sentence."

One issue which almost all students pointed to was that while reading a passage, they tried

to focus on the words and the way they were used in the sentences. They asserted that they attempted to find synonyms, antonyms, superordinate or repetition in the passages. Some also mentioned that they took notes and underlined the instances of reiteration while reading to use in their writings. Another student explained:

"When I was supposed to write about wildlife, I started with the following sentences (I collected many pictures. All of the pictures were about wildlife. I tried to study the pictures and learn something from them.) Since I was [conscious about] the words I used, I noticed that the word 'picture' has [been] repeated and my writing sounds funny. This way [of looking into] my writings is something new for me."

Most of the students stated that they had learned to organize their ideas and put them together in a sequential order using different lexical devices.

5-Do you like to learn more about these lexical choices in future classes?

Almost all of the interviewees affirmed that they needed this type of instruction in their English learning courses. One of the students said:

"Yes, and I am still learning more vocabularies and superordinate by myself. But I prefer [the] teacher [to] explain more [about them]."

This comment underlines the positive effect of explicit instruction of lexical concepts to students. Another noteworthy answer came from an interviewee who said that she would have preferred the teacher to emphasize the lexical concepts in other skills such as reading:

"I wish the teacher help[ed] us understand the vocabulary in our reading too. For example, how they are used in different ways."

This point substantiates the efficacy of explicit teaching and calls for more practice by teachers in integrating them in different skills.

6- What do you think about the passages you read in the class?

The participants approved the content of the passages and asserted that the repetition of what they had learned in their L1 could facilitate learning English. The comparison between Persian (their L1) and English could help them not only to learn the subject matter but also the language. They underlined the use of academic words and terms as the highlight of the course. Some mentioned that the classes were helpful because they could be successful if they went abroad to study.

5. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to compare the effectiveness of Explicitly Instructed lexical reiteration and Implicitly Instructed lexical reiteration on high school students' writing improvement via CLIL. The results show that CLIL is a desirable context for teaching the English language writing. This conclusion is also stated by Dalton-Puffer (2008, p. 4) who by referring to different studies (e.g., Kliem, 2006; Wesch, 2000; Wode, 1994) maintains that CLIL has a positive impact on students' "language learning outcomes" although its effect on writing, as research findings show, is imprecise.

The statistical analysis showed that the means of the compositions of both groups had improved from the pre-test to the post-test which signifies the efficiency of CLIL as it cultivates meaningful learning (Van de Craen & Surmont, 2017) and draws on students' cognitive structure (Lefrancois, 1991). Students' familiarity with the content of the reading materials can lead to the activation of the related schemata and boost the understanding of linguistic relations. It can be argued that higher level concepts (the known content) "incorporate meaningful material into existing cognitive structure" or what Ausubel calls subsumption (Lefrancois, 1991, p. 91) which is consistent with Van de Craen et al. (2007) who suggest that in CLIL programs the learners' cognitive involvement enhances learning.

This study also finds support from "the knowledge hypothesis" proposed by Anderson and

Freebody (1981) which underscores the role of readers' topical knowledge in understanding a text. Learners' familiarity with concepts and the related words, as was the concern of the present study, facilitates comprehension of a text, leads to the knowledge of the different forms of words (lexical reiteration in this study) and facilitates their use in writing.

Furthermore, it was found that explicit teaching of cohesive devices was more effective than the implicit way since it provided the participants with an understanding of both lexical reiteration and cohesion. This finding is in agreement with what researchers in the field have put forward regarding the importance of the explicit teaching of cohesive devices (e.g., Kafes, 2012; Lee, 2002; Witte & Faigley, 1981). Focus on such devices while teaching writing leads learners to understand that using conjunctions for connecting sentences is not the ideal choice. If learners do not possess a substantial size of active vocabulary, they will resort to the use of conjunctions and produce unnatural and non-cohesive compositions. Therefore, writing teachers should include vocabulary as a primary component of cohesion in their writing syllabuses.

The results imply that learners whose attention is drawn toward particular lexical items as they implement them while writing compositions are more prone to learn them than those who do not use such techniques. By raising students' consciousness, not only they learn the lexical devices but also expand their vocabulary learning ability (Scott, Skobel, & Wells, 2008). In the present study, the combination of receptive explicit instruction activities and productive writing helped EIC group learn the lexical devices compared to the IIC group that was implicitly directed toward attention to such devices through narrow reading. As suggested by research findings, an acute consciousness of words is generated during direct instruction and is shown to enhance vocabulary learning (Scott, Miller, & Leigh Flinspach, 2012).

Another point to mention is the role of reading in expanding the vocabulary knowledge of L2 learners (e.g., Hiebert & Kamil, 2005) together with providing explicit clues to unfamiliar words (Scott, 2005) which were employed in the present study and could provide a theoretical basis for the findings. Reading can enhance language learners' consciousness regarding the lexical structure of the texts and can pave the way toward awareness regarding the structure of writing (Rashtchi & Aghajanzadeh, 2008).

The majority of students' responses to the interview questions revealed that the instruction had been constructive, as they had realized the importance of cohesion. They also came to the understanding of differentiating between a qualified and an unqualified piece of writing. In their answers, the participants verified that one factor that contributes to producing meaningful texts is being aware of lexical cohesive devices. The responses suggested that instead of overloading students with complicated information to follow as the steps in writing, giving awareness regarding the use of cohesive devices (i.e., reiteration) would be more reasonable. Becoming aware of such devices can enable learners to perceive their development in creating high-quality compositions. The familiar content and the techniques used in the present study seem to facilitate creating coherent compositions.

6. Conclusions

This study compared the effects of explicit and implicit teaching of lexical cohesive devices on Iranian high school girls' writing ability through CLIL. The results showed a significant difference in favor of explicit teaching. Also, the responses of the interviewees provided a deeper understanding of the EIC groups' views regarding the explicit teaching. However, the fact that the participants were only girls should be regarded as a factor that could have affected the results. Overall, the findings could have implications for writing classes and could provide teachers with some suggestions regarding teaching writing. High schools can employ CLIL to enhance the learning of content and language and meanwhile boost students' cognitive involvement in learning.

References

- Anderson, R. C., & Freebody, P. (1981). Vocabulary knowledge. In J. Guthrie (Ed.), *Comprehension and teaching: Research reviews* (pp. 77-117). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Coyle, D. (2005). CLIL Planning tools for teachers. Retrieved from https://www.unifg.it/sites/default/files/allegatiparagrafo/20-01-2014/coyle_clil_planningtool_kit.pdf
- Dalton-Puffer, C. (2008). Outcomes and processes in Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL): Current research from Europe. In W. Delanoy & L. Volkmann, (Eds.). *Future perspectives for English language teaching* (pp. 139-157). Heidelberg: Carl Winter.
<https://doi.org/10.1075/llt.20>
- De Beaugrande, R., & Dressler, W. (1981). *Introduction to text linguistics*. London: Longman.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315835839>
- Examination for the Certificate of Proficiency in English (ECPE) Writing Scale (2014). Developed by the University of Cambridge.
- Hacker, D. J., Plumb, C., Butterfield, E. C., Quathamer, D., & Heineken, E. (1994). Text revision: Detection and correction of errors. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 86(1), 65-78.
doi.org/10.1037/0022-0663.86.1.65
- Halliday, M.A.K., & Hasan, R. (1976). *Cohesion in English*. London: Longman.
- Hiebert, E.H., & Kamil, M.L. (Eds.). (2005). *Teaching and learning vocabulary: Bringing research to practice*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Hurajova, A. (2015). Content and language integrated learning as a bilingual educational approach in the European context. *European Journal of Science and Theology*, 11 (6), 5-14.
- Kafes, H. (2012). Lexical cohesion: An issue only in the foreign language?
<https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v5n3p83>
English Language Teaching. 5 (3), 83-94. doi:10.5539/elt.v5n3p83
<https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v5n3p83>
- Krashen, S. (1989). We acquire vocabulary and spelling by reading: Additional evidence for the input hypothesis. *The Modern Language Journal*, 73(4), 440-464. doi.org/10.2307/326879
- Lee, I. (2002). Teaching coherence to ESL students: A classroom inquiry. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 11(2), 135-159.
[doi.org/10.1016/S1060-3743\(02\)00065-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1060-3743(02)00065-6)
- Lefrancois, G. R. (1991). *Psychology for teaching*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Liu, D. (2000). Writing cohesion: Using context lexical ties in ESOL. *English Teaching Forum*, 38(1), 28-33.
- Llach, M. P. A., & Catalan, R. M. J. (2007). Lexical reiteration in EFL young learners' essays: Does it relate to the type of instruction? *IJES*, 7(2), 85-103. doi: 10.6018/ijes.7.2.49001
- Lubelska, D. (1991). An approach to teaching cohesion to improve in reading. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, 7(2), 33-51.
- Marsh, D., & Lange, G. (Eds.). (2000). *Using languages to learn and learning to use languages. An introduction to content and language integrated learning for parents and young people*. Jyväskylä: The University of Jyväskylä.
- Mojica, L. (2006). Reiteration in ESL learners' academic papers: do they contribute to lexical cohesiveness? *The Asia-Pacific Education Research*, 15(1), 105-125.
<https://doi.org/10.3860/taper.v15i2.83>
- Olateju, M. A. (2006) Cohesion in ESL classroom written texts. *Nordic Journal of African Studies*, 15(3), 314-331.
- Paul, R. W., & Elder, L. (2003). *The thinker's guide to how to write a paragraph*. Tomales, CA: The Foundation for Critical Thinking.
- Rashtchi, M. (2007). A pathway toward critical thinking through cooperative writing in an English college course in Iran. *The Near and Middle Eastern Journal of Research in Education*, 2(1), 1-11.
<https://doi.org/10.5339/nmejre.2007.2.1>
- Rashtchi, M., & Aghajanzadeh, M. (2008). Comparative critical reading strategy and writing achievement of

- Iranian EFL learners. *The Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 1(2), 117-130.
- Scott, F. (1991). *Discover science*. Blackline Masters. Scott Foresman & Company.
- Scott, J. A. (2005). Creating opportunities to acquire new word meanings from text. In E.H. Hiebert & M. L. Kamil (Eds.). *Teaching and learning vocabulary* (pp.69-94). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Scott, J. A., Skobel, B.J., & Wells, J. (2008). *The word-conscious classroom: Building vocabulary readers and writers need*. New York, NY: Scholastic.
- Scott, J. A., & Miller, T. F., & Leigh Flinspach, S. (2012). Developing word consciousness: Lessons from highly diverse fourth-grade classrooms. In E. Kame'enui & J. Baumann (Eds.), *Vocabulary instruction: Research to practice* (pp. 169-188). New York, NY: The Guilford Press.
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research techniques and procedures for developing Grounded Theory*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Van de Craen, P., & Surmont, J. (2017). **Innovative education and CLIL**. *Research Papers in Language Teaching and Learning*, 8 (1), 22-33.
- Van de Craen, P., Mondt, K., Allain, L., & Gao, Y. (2007). Why and how CLIL works. An outline for a CLIL theory. *Vienna English Working papers*, 016(3), 70-78.
- Witte, S. P., & Faigley, L., (1981). Coherence, cohesion, and writing quality. *College Composition and Communication*, 32(2), 189-204. doi:10.2307/356693
<https://doi.org/10.2307/356693>

Appendix A Writing Scale



Writing Rating Scale

	Rhetoric	Grammar/Syntax	Vocabulary
Exceeds Standard	5 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic richly, fully, complexly developed • Organization well-controlled; appropriate to the material • Connection is smooth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible use of a wide range of syntactic (sentence level) structures; morphological (word forms) control nearly always accurate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broad range; appropriately used
	4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic clearly and completely developed, with acknowledgment of its complexity • Organization is controlled and shows appropriateness to the material • Few problems with connection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both simple and complex syntax adequately used; good morphological control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocabulary use shows flexibility; is usually appropriate • Any inappropriate vocabulary does not confuse meaning
Standard	3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic clearly developed, but not always completely or with acknowledgment of its complexity • Organization generally controlled; connection sometimes absent or unsuccessful 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both simple and complex syntax present • For some, syntax is cautious but accurate, while others are more fluent but less accurate • Inconsistent morphological control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate vocabulary, but may sometimes be inappropriately used
Below Standard	2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic development usually clear but simple and may be repetitive • Attempts to address different perspectives on the topic are often unsuccessful • Overreliance on prefabricated language and/or language from the prompt • Organization partially controlled 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morphological errors are frequent • Simple sentences tend to be accurate; more complex ones tend to be inaccurate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocabulary may be limited in range, and is sometimes inappropriately used to the point that it causes confusion
	1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic development may be unclear and/or limited by incompleteness or lack of focus • Might not be relevant to topic • Connection of ideas often absent or unsuccessful 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pervasive and basic errors in sentence structure and word order cause confusion • Problems with subject-verb agreement, tense formation or word formation • Even basic sentences are filled with errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorrect use of vocabulary causes confusion • Even basic words may be misused • May show interference from other languages
Not Scored	A Not on Topic rating is awarded to any essay that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is written on a topic different from those assigned; or • is connected to the prompt so loosely that the essay could very well have been prepared in advance; or • requires considerable effort to see any connection between the composition and the prompt. 		