

Applying Cognitive Linguistics to Content and Language Integrated Learning through L2 Polysemous Lexis Research

Kent Hill

Nihon University

kentokun@hotmail.com

Keywords: conceptual, everyday, genre-specific, metonymical, motivated, sociocultural

This presentation applies cognitive linguistics (CL) to what Llinares et al. (2012) refers to as the three overlapping theoretical perspectives of content and language integrated learning (CLIL): (a) systemic functional linguistics, (b) Vygotskian-based sociocultural theory, and (c) dialogic inquiry. CL is complimentary to these theoretical perspectives because it views language development as conceptually motivated, meaning making, and usage-based (Langacker 2000). Academic genre-based theory is another factor integrating content, language and learning in CLIL. The specific meaning-making under analysis is lexis that has both everyday and academic or genre-specific meanings. Boers and Lindstromberg (2008) outline the CL approach to teaching L2 polysemous lexis as showing how additional senses of the word extend from the core sense by emphasizing the metonymical connections between sense and meaning. Results of an empirical study indicate that CL-based instruction of the metonymically motivated extension in meaning from everyday to genre-specific significantly improves L2 learners' comprehension of both meanings. A two-tailed Mann-Whitney U Test was used to compare the performance in experiment and control groups and it showed that with pre-test scores there was no statistically significant difference between groups ($U = 41.5$, $n_1 = n_2 = 11$, $P = 0.23$); thus, their performance was comparable and homogenous. Post-test results, however, were statistically significant between groups ($U = 28.0$, $n_1 = n_2 = 11$, $*P = 0.03$). As a whole, the better performance of the experiment group can be seen as a consequence of the treatment (i.e., highlighting the extension). This presentation concludes that applying CL as a conceptual link to the theoretical perspectives of CLIL enhances its pedagogical efficacy to further integrate content, language and learning: i.e., content and language *conceptually* integrated learning.

References

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