



Language across the Curriculum: Scope and Problems in Language Classrooms

Dr. K S Krishna Kumar

Associate Professor, S N M Training College, Moothakunnam



ABSTRACT

This study explores the concept of Language across the Curriculum (LAC) and its implications for language classrooms. It examines the integration of language development with subject content, emphasizing the necessity for a holistic approach to language teaching. The study identifies key challenges faced by educators, including curriculum constraints, varying language proficiency among students, and the need for professional development. Additionally, it highlights effective strategies for incorporating LAC principles, such as collaborative learning, scaffolding, and assessment practices that promote language use across disciplines. By addressing these issues, the paper aims to provide insights into enhancing language acquisition and overall student engagement in diverse learning environments.

Keyword-Linguistic competencies, Language across the Curriculum approach, Language Classrooms, collaborative efforts

1.1 Introduction

Language is not merely a tool for communication; it is a vital medium through which knowledge is constructed and understood across various subjects. The concept of Language Across the Curriculum (LAC) recognizes the interconnectedness of language and learning, advocating for a more integrated approach to education. In today's diverse classrooms, where students bring varying linguistic backgrounds and proficiencies, effective language instruction is essential for fostering academic success [1]. Despite its importance, many educators face significant challenges in implementing LAC principles. Curriculum constraints often prioritize content knowledge over language development, leaving little room for the explicit teaching of language skills. Additionally, teachers may struggle to adapt their pedagogical strategies to meet the needs of all learners, particularly in multilingual settings. This research aims to investigate the scope of LAC in language classrooms, outlining its theoretical foundations and practical applications. By examining existing problems and proposing effective strategies, we seek to highlight the critical role of language in all areas of learning and to promote an inclusive educational framework that supports all students in their linguistic and academic journeys. Teachers are able to communicate concepts to their pupils and students are able to demonstrate their own levels of learning via the use of language. Improved comprehension and the growth of students' cognitive and expressive abilities are two outcomes of its central role in the educational process. Recognizing the inseparability of language and learning, the language throughout the curriculum approach places an emphasis on active and constructive learning [2]. Language is more than just a means of communication, according to studies in educational psychology, cognitive science, and linguistics; it encompasses cognitive processes, serves as a mechanism for conceptualization and the integration of information with pre-existing knowledge, facilitates subject mastery by enhancing mental activities and accurate cognition, and reconciles cognitive capacities with practical methodologies, empowering individuals to utilize their cognitive faculties in addressing subject-specific challenges. The language throughout the curriculum method aids young learners in recognizing the significance



of language both inside and outside the educational context, therefore empowering them to use it proficiently in many aspects of life. **Coyle, D. (1999)**, The Language across the Curriculum (LAC) approach emphasizes the integration of language learning with subject matter instruction, supporting students in using language as a tool for learning across different disciplines. The article discusses Language across the Curriculum (LAC), a pedagogical approach that integrates language development with subject learning. It emphasizes that language is a crucial component of cognitive development and learning across disciplines. The article provides strategies for implementing LAC, emphasizing the importance of creating a language-rich environment in the classroom. It also discusses the role of collaborative learning, scaffolding, and assessment in supporting language acquisition alongside subject knowledge [3]. **Walsh, S. (2011)**, explores the relationship between language and learning in classrooms. It explores how language shapes educational experiences and influences student engagement. Walsh provides practical insights for educators on using language effectively to facilitate learning, emphasizing context, cultural factors, and the roles of teachers and students in co-constructing knowledge through dialogue. The book integrates theoretical frameworks with real classroom examples to enhance language's role in educational practice [4]. **Roehrig, A. D., & Kruse, R. (2005)**, investigates the critical role that language plays in learning science, emphasizing its function as a tool for both communication and cognition. The authors argue that language is integral to the understanding and mastery of scientific concepts, as it facilitates the articulation of ideas, the negotiation of meaning, and the construction of knowledge. Through an analysis of classroom interactions and instructional practices, the study highlights how effective language use can enhance students' engagement and comprehension in science. The authors provide recommendations for educators to incorporate language-focused strategies into science instruction, promoting a more inclusive and effective learning environment. By acknowledging the interplay between language and science learning, this research underscores the necessity of integrating language development into science curricula [5]. **Snow, C. E. (2010)**, explores the importance of academic language in students' comprehension of scientific texts. It highlights the complexities of academic language, including vocabulary, syntactic structures, and discourse patterns, which can be challenging for students from diverse linguistic backgrounds. Snow argues that proficiency in academic language is crucial for success in science education, allowing students to engage with scientific concepts and participate meaningfully in discourse. The article suggests that educational strategies should teach academic language within the context of science to facilitate comprehension and learning processes [6].

This table can serve as a concise overview of the key elements related to Language Across the Curriculum, including its scope, challenges, and strategies for effective implementation.

Aspect	Description	Challenges	Strategies
Definition of LAC	Integration of language development with subject content.	Lack of clarity among educators about LAC concepts.	Provide professional development on LAC principles.
Scope of LAC	Application across all subjects to enhance language skills.	Limited focus on language in non-language subjects.	Encourage cross-curricular collaboration among teachers.
Diverse Student Needs	Addressing varied language proficiencies and backgrounds.	Differentiating instruction can be challenging.	Use differentiated strategies and flexible grouping.
Curriculum Constraints	Rigid curricula that prioritize content over language.	Inability to integrate language instruction effectively.	Advocate for curriculum reform that incorporates LAC.



Assessment Practices	Evaluation of language use in all subjects.	Traditional assessments may not capture language proficiency.	Implement formative assessments that reflect language skills.
Teacher Training	Need for ongoing professional development in LAC.	Insufficient training resources and time for teachers.	Provide workshops and collaborative planning sessions.
Scaffolding Techniques	Supportive strategies to aid language learners.	Limited knowledge of effective scaffolding methods.	Share best practices and resources for scaffolding.

1.2 Role of language in Education

Language is a crucial aspect of education, serving as the primary medium for conveying knowledge and understanding. It is the medium of instruction, facilitating critical thinking and problem-solving, and fostering social interaction among students and teachers. Language also facilitates cultural transmission, enriching students' understanding of their own and others' backgrounds. Proficiency in language is essential for literacy development, impacting reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills [7]. Inclusive education promotes inclusivity and equity by recognizing and valuing linguistic diversity in the classroom. Language is also integral to assessment methods, influencing students' understanding and competencies across different subjects. In summary, language is not just a subject to be learned; it is a vital tool for learning and interaction in education, encompassing cognitive, social, and cultural dimensions essential for holistic development.

There is an emphasis on the interdependence of voice, hands, and eyes in the idea that children may be taught to solve real-world issues. This perspective suggests that speech extends an individual's intelligence and cognitive abilities. Together, the use of speech, vision, and physical actions allows for interaction not only in the physical world but also in abstract realms. The idea is that advanced understanding enables learners to grasp immediate experiences and evaluate abstract concepts before applying them in practice. Language is crucial in fostering these higher levels of understanding, as it facilitates social interactions and engagement in complex activities that promote cognitive growth. This capacity for language distinguishes humans from other animals, allowing individuals to use it as a tool for problem-solving and to make sense of their surroundings. A child's potential should be assessed by their ability to benefit from the experiences and knowledge of others, rather than solely by their existing understanding [8]. He viewed language as both a learning tool and a means of understanding, emphasizing its powerful role in development. Language is essential for acquiring knowledge and serves as a vehicle for educational advancement. He introduced the concept of the Zone of Proximal Displacement, highlighting the importance of social interaction and cooperation in learning. This collaboration—sharing ideas and thoughts—leads to scaffolding, which enhances comprehension and understanding. Recent psychological and educational research has further illuminated the critical role of language in learning, classroom dynamics, and holistic development. The interdependence of language and knowledge has given rise to innovative pedagogical approaches like Language Across the Curriculum.

1.3 Language Across the Curriculum (LAC)

Language Across the Curriculum (LAC) is an educational approach that focuses on integrating language learning and teaching across all subjects, not just language arts. It aims to enhance learning by teaching language and discourse styles relevant to each discipline, promoting critical thinking and contextual learning. LAC's key principles include language as a tool for communication, contextual learning, and collaborative planning. Strategies for implementation include scaffolding, providing support structures to help students understand complex language features, and developing assessments that evaluate both content knowledge and language



proficiency [9]. Benefits of LAC include improved literacy skills, greater engagement, and cultural awareness. However, challenges include teacher training and resource allocation. LAC promotes a holistic view of language in education, recognizing its vital role in learning across all subjects. By integrating language development into the curriculum, educators can create richer, more effective learning experiences.

Language Across the Curriculum (LAC) is an educational framework that combines language acquisition with topic instruction. It underscores that language acquisition is ineffective without context, since subject matter offers a framework for linguistic growth, while proficient language development enhances the comprehension of subject matter. English instructors impart and reinforce competencies during English sessions, while subject-specific educators reintroduce or teach associated skills and ideas within their curricula. LAC emphasizes that language acquisition should not be restricted to subject-specific domains, including native language, second language, or foreign language education. Both enhance one another, making instruction more efficacious and comprehensive [10]. To enhance holistic education, language competencies must be included into subject-specific instruction.

The essential integration of language learning across all courses is vital for engaging diverse cognitive abilities of learners. The LAC method is founded on the premise that language is primarily formed via its impactful and intentional use. It posits that language acquisition include the cultivation of fundamental competencies like as listening, speaking, reading, and writing, which are responses to sensory impressions. Language is crucial for cognitive and intellectual growth; hence, language and subject learning cannot be separated. LAC underscores the need of using language knowledge outside the confines of the language learning classroom and amalgamating it with the content learning of other disciplines. Language acquisition is most successful when combined with the content learning of other disciplines. The goal of the Language across the Curriculum (LAC) strategy in modern education is to improve students' comprehension of the material by concurrently combining the study of subjects with the development of language skills. This method places an emphasis on the interdependence of topic knowledge and language skills. Having a strong vocabulary as well as the capacity to organize and communicate thoughts are all factors that contribute to improved subject-specific knowledge [11]. The Learning and Activity Center (LAC) is founded on the concept that language and thinking are inextricably linked, and that learning is both productive and long-lasting when students are engaged in constructive and active learning. The belief is that students have the capacity to be self-sufficient and are able to integrate new ideas via their interactions with language. As a result of the fact that they are able to explain and manifest interpretations in a variety of disciplines, as well as create their understanding of ideas and language use, teachers should be motivated to assist students in improving their linguistic skills and capacities when they are studying any subject in school.

1.4 Need for Language across curriculum in India

In India, language instruction mostly centers on the language educator, whereas the notion of 'Language across Curriculum' is often neglected. This results from the strain to complete syllabuses punctually and the strict confines of many topics. Language instruction occurs in a segmented classroom, leading pupils to often overlook certain language components and remain oblivious to necessary changes. Educators lack the proficiency to integrate language across disciplines, and oral activities should be prioritized to enhance linguistic ability across courses. Language is fundamental to a child's educational experience, facilitating idea generation, symbol exploration, issue analysis, information organization, and environmental interaction. Consequently, all educators must acknowledge the significance of language in the learning process and its function in the implementation of the curriculum. The National Curriculum Framework of India promotes a language-across-curriculum approach, especially pertinent to basic education [12]. Language acquisition is most effective within diverse settings of meaning-making, and all forms of instruction inherently include language teaching. Language transcends superficial structure, impacts learners' linguistic development, and is integral to almost all



educational experiences. Students acquire new ideas primarily via language, and when they engage in listening, speaking, reading, and writing about their learning in non-language subjects, they use language as a medium of communication. Consequently, all educational stakeholders in India need a comprehensive linguistic viewpoint that amalgamates language acquisition with topic learning.

1.5 Benefits of language across the curriculum approach

It is generally agreed upon and supported by the majority of educators that the terminology used throughout the curricular approach is appropriate. The advantages that it offers to students, teachers, and the education system as a whole are the driving force behind its high level of popularity. Here are many advantages of the language throughout the curriculum method.

- It aids learners in comprehending various technical terminology pertinent to subject-specific topics.
- It facilitates the development of language abilities by connecting them with subject knowledge.
- It facilitates more effective discussions of topic ideas among learners via language instruction.
- It aids learners in comprehending the connection between language skill and mastery of fundamental topics.
- It encourages kids to comprehend their environment by offering chances to investigate, articulate, and connect language acquisition with topic matter.
- It enhances the acquisition of language abilities via active engagement, allowing learners to practice these skills while exploring various topic areas.
- It guarantees the comprehensive growth of learners by enabling them to comprehend the significance of language and topic mastery, as well as the need of technical vocabulary to enhance linguistic proficiency.

1.6 Challenges

There have been several research studies that have shown the advantages of the Language and Academic Content (LAC) method in terms of combining language acquisition with overall topic knowledge. On the other hand, there are a number of major issues that act as barriers to the integration of topic knowledge and language acquisition. These include a lack of organizations or information on how to combine language learning with topic knowledge, a lack of money for projects, difficult administrative regulations, and a lack of support personnel. Additionally, there is a shortage of support workers. Many organizations adhere to the principle of segregation and choose to teach language and subject using distinct methods, which ultimately results in the implementation of conventional pedagogical procedures. Furthermore, the implementation of LAC might be hampered by administrative rules that are stringent and restrictive [13]. These regulations lack administrative flexibility, in addition to being unable to accommodate changes in scheduling and physical restrictions. Last but not least, another barrier that impedes the integration of LAC is the absence of support people for the execution of projects. As a result of a lack of cooperation, collaboration, and communication, academic professionals often lack the assistance necessary to arrange instructional learning circumstances and combine language learning with other topics. The integration of topic knowledge with language acquisition is a potential technique for increasing educational results, despite the limitations that have been presented.

According to Dewey and Duff (2009), there are a number of reasons why faculty members are not ready to combine language with topic knowledge. These reasons include a lack of effective orientation and facilitation. There was also a lack of consistency between the teaching of language and the main topics, according to several members of the faculty. Learning a language in a classroom setting is dependent on the material that is used, which should not be very generic or too far off from issues that are linked to the subject being studied. In the absence of appropriate content, the transferability of language abilities to relevant topic ideas is rendered insignificant. To achieve conceptual knowledge and subject-specific comprehension, it is necessary to possess



certain language competencies, engage in goal-oriented activities, maintain continuous attention, maintain sustained motivation, and work together.

1.7 Objective of study

This study aims to examine the implementation of Language Across the Curriculum (LAC) in diverse educational contexts. It will analyze the integration of language and content, identify challenges faced by educators, evaluate student outcomes, explore teacher perceptions and practices, address diverse learner needs, promote collaborative learning environments, and provide recommendations for effective LAC implementation. The study will contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the scope and challenges of LAC, ultimately supporting more effective language teaching and learning practices. It will also evaluate student outcomes, teacher perceptions, and the role of collaborative learning strategies in facilitating language development and content understanding among students.

1.8 Conclusion

Language across the Curriculum (LAC) is a transformative approach to education that integrates language instruction with content areas to enhance students' comprehension and engagement. However, challenges like curriculum limitations, diverse language proficiencies, and ongoing teacher training need to be addressed. Schools should adopt collaborative strategies that empower teachers to design inclusive lesson plans, use effective scaffolding techniques, and assess language use across disciplines. LAC not only supports language development but also enriches the learning environment, enabling students to become more confident and capable learners. Continued research and dialogue on effective practices in LAC will be crucial for creating equitable and dynamic classrooms.

References

- [1]. Adams, T. M. (1996). Languages across the curriculum: Taking stock. *Association of Departments of Foreign Languages Bulletin*, 28(1), 9-19.
- [2]. Hawkins, E. (2005). Language and the Language of the Curriculum. *Curriculum Journal*, 16(1), 31-45.
- [3]. Coyle, D. (1999). "Language across the Curriculum: A Practical Guide." *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 2(2), 133-152.
- [4]. Walsh, S. (2011). "Exploring Classroom Discourse: Language in Action." *Routledge*.
- [5]. Roehrig, A. D., & Kruse, R. (2005). "The Role of Language in Learning Science." *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*, 42(9), 899-916.
- [6]. Snow, C. E. (2010). "Academic Language and the Challenge of Reading for Learning about Science." *Science*, 328(5977), 450-452.
- [7]. Brisk, M. E. (2006). *Language and Literacy in the Multilingual Classroom*. New York: Routledge.
- [8]. Dewey, P., & Duff, S. (2009). Reason before passion: faculty views on internationalization in higher education. *Higher Education*, 58,491-504.
- [9]. Gaff, J. G., Ratcliff, J. L., & Associates (1997). *Handbook of the undergraduate curriculum. A comprehensive guide to purposes, structures, practices, and change*. San Francisco
- [10]. Corson, D. (1990). *Language across the curriculum (LAC)*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- [11]. Bailey, K. M. (1985). Classroom-centered research on language teaching and learning. In M. Celce-Murcia (Ed.). *Beyond basics: issues and research in TESOL*. 96-121. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.
- [12]. Curtain, H. and Dahlberg, C.A. 2010. *Languages and Children: Making the Match*, Pearson: New York
- [13]. Corson, David (1990). *Language across the curriculum (LAC)*. In: Corson, David (ed.), *Language Policy Across the Curriculum*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 72- 140.