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CLIL PROGRAMMES IN HIGHER AGRARIAN AND TECHNICAL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN UKRAINE

The paper considers the effectiveness of CLIL programmes in higher agrarian and technical educational institutions in Ukraine. CLIL courses are compared with ESP (English for Specific Purposes) and EMI (English as a Medium of Instruction) courses. Current status of CLIL, ESP and EMI in Ukraine has been analyzed and CLIL ideas implementation strategy has been considered: what is a CLIL course in higher educational institutions, why CLIL, teacher and course materials preparation, requirements for students entering the course, motivation and scaffolding, current difficulties and problems, expected linguistic outcomes and content achievements. The results of the investigation show that CLIL approach proved to be effective, however, there is a lack of teacher training programmes and developed course materials for CLIL teaching in agrarian and technical higher educational institutions today.

Keywords: Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL); agrarian and technical higher educational institutions; English for Specific Purposes (ESP); motivation, linguistic outcomes; content achievements.

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ПРЕДМЕТНО-МОВНЕ ІНТЕГРОВАНЕ НАВЧАННЯ (CLIL) В АГРАРНИХ І ТЕХНІЧНИХ ВИЩИХ НАВЧАЛЬНИХ ЗАКЛАДАХ ОСВІТИ В УКРАЇНІ

У статті розглянуто ефективність предметно-мовного навчання (CLIL) у вищих аграрних і технічних закладах освіти в Україні. Проведено аналіз понять CLIL (предметно-мовне навчання), ESP (англійська мова за професійним спрямуванням), EMI (англійська мова як мова викладання), визначено переваги та недоліки цих методик на сучасному етапі їх імплементації в українських вищих аграрних і технічних закладах освіти. Проаналізовано вимоги та шляхи реалізації ідей CLIL в сучасній освітній системі, а саме: актуальність методики та компоненти CLIL курсу, підготовка викладачів та методичних матеріалів, мотивація і допомога студентам, труднощі імплементації, очікувані результати в плані мовної підготовки та засвоєння професійно-важливих знань та умінь та інші.

Ключові слова: предметно-мовне навчання (CLIL); аграрні та технічні вищі навчальні заклади освіти; англійська мова за професійним спрямуванням (ESP); мотивація; комунікативна підготовка; професійно-важливі знання та уміння.

Introduction. Ukraine has joined the Bologna Process with the aim of standardizing higher education according to European standards and become competitive at European market. Thus, for many universities in Ukraine it is important to internationalize their curricula, encourage academic cooperation, staff and student mobility. Usually this means implementing higher education in English and using this language as a means of instruction. In addition, universities are required to provide appropriate knowledge of English for their students – B1 or B2 level according to the European Framework of Reference. Thus, the role of foreign languages (in our case, the English language) has never been so important as it is today.

It is high time to reorganize educational process in Ukrainian universities and CLIL is able to meet the above mentioned requirements of the Bologna process and current learners' needs, since it is impossible to be a competent specialist without proper com-

mand of the English language, which is one of the important means of gaining professional knowledge and skills. It is especially important in technical and agrarian higher educational establishments, since students' motivation for learning foreign languages is usually low, their background knowledge and skills are insufficient and groups are usually mixed ability ones. Students lack effective learning environment for mastering a foreign language and lack real profession-oriented content matter when learning English.

Today, teachers and students are not satisfied with the amount of hours needed for learning a foreign language in the existing educational system, taking into account the low level of freshmen's background knowledge and skills of the English language when they enter agrarian and technical universities. Many students and young scientists consider mastering a foreign language very hard and time consuming, thus, they definitely need to become more motivated and to be offered better and more effective methodology.

Currently, in terms of learning a foreign language in Ukrainian agrarian and technical higher educational institutions, there are the following options:

1) ESL, that is to say, usually a short course of general English as an introductory part in the first year of studying in order to elicit and level students' background knowledge and skills;

2) ESP, that is to say, a course of English for Specific Purposes, which is implemented in the form of working with various profession-oriented materials, while mastering a foreign language, but the main focus is on learning a language and enhancing specific professional vocabulary in English, but not on learning a content;

3) EMI courses in a couple of high rank institutes and universities in Ukraine, that is to say, learning subjects where English is a medium of instruction and, here, the focus is on learning a content, but not the language itself.

Every above listed approach has its own disadvantages in the existing educational system. Generally, the content matter offered at ESP classes is believed to have no learning value, it is not often up-to-date, actual and logical, is not profession-oriented enough and often it does not meet specialists' needs, because learners do not acquire any professional knowledge and it is only used as a tool to acquire a foreign language. As for EMI courses, first of all, they require appropriate knowledge and skills of English (B1 or B2 level) of students, which is very rare for today's freshmen in technical and agrarian universities, second of all, they require high level of English for lecturers and their appropriate course materials preparation in terms of material adaptability and scaffolding.

The main task of English language methodologists today is to eliminate the drawbacks of ESP and EMI courses and develop both learning a content and learning a language effectively. Implementing the ideas of content and language integrated learning CLIL can be an effective solution of the above mentioned problem. It is widely used at schools and higher educational establishments abroad, but it is rarely implemented in Ukraine. The reality is, there is a lack of teacher training programmes in order to prepare content and language teachers for CLIL teaching and there is a lack of the developed course materials. These are the problems to be solved.

Methodology of Research. David Marsh was the first one to introduce the term CLIL in educational context and defined this term as an educational situation, where a discipline or a part of a discipline is taught in a foreign language with a dual purpose, namely learning the content of a certain discipline with simultaneous learning of a foreign language [4], that is to say, learning subject-matter content through the

medium of a foreign language, and learning a foreign language by studying subject-matter content [1]. In fact CLIL is an umbrella term used to describe a whole spectrum of approaches and diverse methodologies which lead to dual focussed education where attention is given to both topic and language of instruction [3].

Generally speaking, in the CLIL classroom the language is used both to learn and to communicate and subject matter determines the language needed to learn. CLIL methodology involves students into all four types of communication activity: listening, speaking, reading and writing, while working on acquiring specific profession-oriented knowledge and skills in a certain discipline. Moreover, it is important that students learn a lot of subject-specific vocabulary, which is necessary for their future professional activity. Here, it is worth mentioning that learning specific vocabulary does not decrease the amount of time for practicing reading, writing and speaking. Thus, listening and reading are usually used as input activities presenting meaningful materials and language to be learnt. Speaking and writing focus on fluency, they are the activities through which active vocabulary, grammar and content matter understanding are practiced. What is more, CLIL suggests working with various types of materials, such as texts, video, audio, laboratory work, physical activity etc. in various learning situations. This makes it possible for students to see close integration of communication skills and subject-specific knowledge and skills and understand the ways of their application in their everyday and university lives and in their future professional activity.

When implementing CLIL methodology, it is important to follow certain principles of building course components.

First of all, learning materials must be up-to-date, authentic, correspond to specific specialists' needs and come from various information sources, as it has already been mentioned above. Currently, materials for ESP courses are provided to a certain extent by a number of ESP series by Express Publishing, Oxford University Press and other publishing houses. But these series are very limited and they do not meet the needs of every particular specialty and specialization, work environment and region realities. Moreover, very often these materials require B1 level of English to begin the course. Thus, appropriate learning materials are required in order to develop students' four key language components: reading, listening, speaking and writing, while immersing them in career specific context and vocabulary.

Second of all, proper content matter must be analyzed with respect to the realities and the working environment. Teachers must understand what competences they are to develop and choose adequate

methods and techniques, which involve communication and interaction. It is important to understand that a CLIL lesson is neither a language lesson nor a subject lesson. Content matter should be transmitted in English. Scientists suggest that a successful CLIL lesson should combine the following elements, which are the so-called 4Cs [5]:

1) content, that is to say, skills and knowledge in a certain discipline must be acquired, which is defined and regulated by the curriculum and the study programmes of a certain educational institution;

2) communication, that is to say, a language is used to learn and learning is used to practice communication skills;

3) cognition, that is to say, the learning process should be organized as cooperation, creative project work and interaction in order to develop thinking skills and link concept, its understanding and the language;

4) culture, that is to say, when preparing a CLIL course, teachers should be aware which competences are needed for a certain specialist in current local environment as well as develop intercultural understanding and global citizenship.

Third of all, implementation of CLIL ideas into the educational process of higher agrarian and technical universities today requires scaffolding, that is to say, certain amount of help for students, some supporting activities, which provide better performance and stimulate understanding [2]. This is a temporary measure in today's reality, when the overall level of background language knowledge and skills is low and groups are usually mixed ability ones.

Having worked out the above mentioned principles, it is important to analyze who is qualified to teach CLIL, what is the required level of general English to enter CLIL courses, how to perform needs analysis, define a programme and choose course materials properly, what kind of collaboration is needed between discipline and language teachers and what kind of institution support is required, what are the expected linguistic outcomes and content achievements.

Having analyzed the experience of other countries, where CLIL programmes are successfully implemented (Italy, the Netherlands, Germany, Slovakia and other [4]), it can be concluded that students with insufficient level of English should be offered additional general English courses (EGP) to get the required level. Moreover, they need scaffolding when working on CLIL course components, which means support for the learners in three aspects, language, content and learning skills (e.g. brainstorming related to the topic, description of an unknown word, providing synonyms or antonyms of less common words, content support in the form of animations, charts and tables, sectioning texts into more para-

graphs, subheading, highlighting and underlining) [2]. In addition, students can be offered the course of English for academic purposes (EAP) in order to practice the academic use of English. These courses should be taught by foreign language teachers.

As for teaching CLIL courses, teacher preparation and course materials development is required. First of all, cooperation is needed between discipline teachers and language teachers in order to prepare proper learning content matter. Such cooperation and preparation of CLIL study programmes must be supported pedagogically and administratively having appropriate funding and regulations. CLIL courses can be taught by both language and discipline teachers if they are qualified enough and have got certified language level and approved course materials. According to Marsh [4], the teachers of content should have sufficient linguistic competence to be able to pass on academic content in a target language as well as an in-depth knowledge of their own subject. Unfortunately, there is the lack of sufficient linguistic competence of discipline teachers who want to use a foreign language as a medium of instruction. It is not enough to translate the existing methodological complexes into English. Here, it must be clearly understood that CLIL lessons are aimed at both learning a content and learning a language and this requires high quality course materials, where content meets the requirement of current programmes and the language is learned through this content, prepared scaffolding activities and proper classroom language. The other great difficulty is the methodology that language teachers use in order to provide the linguistic competence of students with a communicative end goal. Taking into account that CLIL teachers deal with a lot of subject specific vocabulary and content, they tend to simplify learning materials and provide linguistic explanations aimed at scaffolding, which is time consuming and may have the negative effect on content learning. Here, it is important to understand that a CLIL teacher should be able to organize communicative and interactive classes rather than instructive teaching, encourage learning and understanding content matter through using it in project work, student-student discussion and collaboration. That is why, it is important to provide teacher preparation in terms of language proficiency and language learning methodology for those discipline teachers, who are interested in implementing CLIL approach in agrarian and technical higher educational institutions in Ukraine. First of all, a free language course should be offered to enroll. Second of all, collaboration between subject teachers and language teachers should be organized. Conferences and workshops on theoretical and practical aspects of the CLIL method proved to be effective environments for getting latest knowledge on the

subject and sharing opinions, experiences and expectations.

CLIL approach in higher educational institutions can be implemented in the form of interdisciplinary pedagogical cooperation, when language teachers and discipline teachers develop CLIL components of their courses or CLIL lessons in collaboration, interdisciplinary themes, projects and lessons, language support for disciplinary teachers and support in preparing content matter for language teachers. Currently, teaching profession-oriented disciplines in a foreign language in Ukrainian higher educational institutions depends on the number of qualified teachers and available developed methodological complexes. The immersion may be of various extend, when certain themes of a discipline are taught in English or when the whole content matter of a particular discipline is learned through a foreign language.

Both content and language are learned in a CLIL lesson [1], that is why, such a lesson may include the following components:

1) input, for example processing a text or listening to audio files or watching a video presentation, supported by illustrations, tables, graphs and other visual aids. Students learn certain content matter by categorizing and analyzing the presented information, learning the required terminology and acquiring core content knowledge;

2) language development is needed, since students are expected to be able to reproduce and use the acquired knowledge. Here, it is useful to highlight subject specific vocabulary, present useful grammar, discourse markers, set phrases and expressions and pay attention to the use of academic vocabulary if needed.

A variety of subject-orientated tasks should applied, so that both content and language are recycled, and which are efficient for practicing receptive skill activities (e.g. read / listen and label a diagram / picture / map / graph / chart, fill in a table, make notes on specific information (dates, figures, times), reorder information, fill in the gaps in a text etc.) and productive skill activities (e.g. question loops, information gap activities, trivia search – “things you know” and “things you want to know”, word guessing games, class surveys using questionnaires, presentations etc.). These activities should be communicative and interactive in order to meet students’ professional needs and interest in communication.

Results and discussions. In general, scientists believe that CLIL has a positive influence on the quality of students’ communication skills in English and acquiring subject-specific content matter, because English is spoken in the immediate environment of the learner and this kind of immersion is a good opportunity to use the language by participating in

natural communication situations. CLIL is a tool for teaching and learning content and language at the same time. Here, the goal is not only in communication skills but also in listening, writing and reading skills.

Obviously, CLIL has its advantages in terms of communication skills development and subject-specific knowledge acquisition. This methodology works with real content and information, which can be applied in real life, thus, it motivates and develops the necessary competences, trains communication skills effectively and increases students’ success on the labour market in future. In addition, CLIL increases teachers’ professional qualification.

However, CLIL methodology has its limits, namely: teachers’ insufficient language competence, insufficient teacher qualification, unwillingness to conduct time-consuming and difficult preparation for CLIL lessons, lack of appropriate learning materials, lack of support from the state and the institution for systematic implementation of CLIL ideas in the educational process.

Conclusions. CLIL is a new interactive approach, which makes it possible to emphasize learners’ needs and interest in communication. It involves new strategies which encourage a more active role of a learner in the educational process with the help of the integration of a foreign language in the subjects, which learners are professionally interested in. Thus, it should be applied in higher educational institutions in Ukraine in the 21st century reality.

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