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GENERAL ISSUES OF CLIL APPROACH IN TEACHING BA STUDENTS AT HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract. The article is devoted to CLIL (Subject and Language Integrated Learning) describes teaching methods, where subjects are taught in foreign languages. CLIL has two aims: the study of the subject through a foreign language and foreign language through the subject. Most common today is the following definition: didactic methodology, which allows to form students' linguistic and communicative competences in a second language in the same educational context in which there are formation and development of general learning knowledge and skills.

The paper aims to show general issues of content and language integrated learning (CLIL) approach in teaching BA students at higher educational institutions. Some issues of professional communication in the domain of education are considered. The correlation of students' language and vocational skills development is examined. The experience of teaching students at the Philological Faculty is focused on.

Key words: content and language integrated learning (CLIL), vocational training, speaking skills, speaking activity, levels of foreign language acquisition, communicative competence.

Introduction. Content and language integrated learning (CLIL) refers to an educational approach in which a foreign language is used as the medium of instruction to teach content subjects for mainstream students. Over the last two decades, the spread of CLIL has been extensive in Europe, it has been fueled both by top-down and bottom-up processes. The aim of the article is to show general issues of content and language integrated learning (CLIL) approach in teaching BA students at higher educational institutions, introducing the part of the lesson for ecologists in which we can see success in speakers' productivity.

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is a dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language. That is, in the teaching and learning process, there is a focus not only on content, and not only on language. Each is interwoven, even if the emphasis is greater on one or the other at a given time (Coyle, Hood, Marsh, 2010).

CLIL can be described as an “an educational approach where [some] curricular content is [additionally] taught through the medium of a foreign language [which is often also taught as a subject itself], typically to students participating in some form of mainstream education at the primary, secondary, or tertiary level” (Dalton-Puffer, 2011: 182–204).

Content and language integrated learning (CLIL) approach is widely used in teaching practice at higher educational institutions and is much supported by the European Commission. This approach is focused on studying the main subjects in a foreign language learnt by the students. Consequently, learning a foreign language in a nonlinguistic higher educational institution implies a real-life setting which

includes the situations closely connected with the students' professional interests (Commission of The European Communities Promoting Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity, 2004-2006). State educational standards of higher education points out that BA graduates must have a number of generic and professional competences, and as far as a foreign language is concerned, they must have sufficient skills to communicate in a professional domain in a foreign language. This communication can occur both orally and in a written form and naturally all the skills should be developed systematically and regularly.

Professional communication as a process of interpersonal relations is exercised as the following communicative needs of a specialist:

- realization of a collective professional activity;
- exchange of data, information, and research views;
- development of common strategy of interaction in the professional field etc.

All issues mentioned above are essential both for an individual and for a group of specialists united on the basis of their profession. Professional communication is realized in professional setting due to the communicative function of the language.

Developing communicative skills. Educators and researchers emphasize that the goal of a foreign language teaching in linguistic faculties and universities is to develop communicative skills that will assist graduates to realize professional contacts in a foreign language in different situations both in Ukrainian and in English.

Besides learning English in the frames of CLIL this approach helps students to develop the specific way of thinking and to be ready to perform their professional duties and responsibilities.

Professional duties and responsibilities of our students can include examination and public speaking both in Ukrainian and in a foreign language. A teacher deals with different age of children, taking into consideration different forms and approaches. Moreover, graduates of a higher educational institution in the domain of secondary education should always work in accordance with methodology; be aware of teaching methods, lesson design, control and assess his/her professional activity and its outcomes, realize the importance of regular professional self-development; be ready to get new information; respect moral and cultural values as well as opinions of other people; be hardworking and responsible; reserved and decisive (Belenkova, 2012: 42–49).

In the course of professional communication and translation training students try to develop everything mentioned above in course of foreign language sessions and consequently improve not only foreign language skills but special skills as well.

The experience of Foreign Languages Department of V.O Suhomlynsky National University shows that BA students succeed in participating in international conferences and moots, submitting research papers in English, interpreting traineeships etc. To reach the goal of each activity mentioned above students should take into account the adequate vocabulary items and grammar structures. Speaking about special component of the activity the emphasis is made on the transfer of theoretical special knowledge into the area of the practical solution of a task, and afterwards the transfer of the skills developed from one situation into another; and afterward further transfer of data from the particular situation into a general pattern. Here the correlation of the special subject from the core curriculum of the learners and their personal experience occurs.

Analyzing the close connection of language and special vocational training in the frames of CLIL in a non-linguistic higher educational institution we agree with the statement that the quality of language education depends on the quality of vocational education (Druzhinina, 2008: 60–70). The opposite contention can also be considered as valid and essential, inter alia the quality of vocational education depends on the quality of language education. Consequently, to enhance special competences of teachers-to-be language skills and communicative competences of the students should be constantly cultivated. For this purpose, definite tasks and assignments developing both foreign language skills and special vocational skills should be designed and realized in teaching practice.

The integration of CLIL approach into teaching practice. The issue of CLIL and foreign language teaching integration is immense; it can be examined from various points of view in teaching listening, speaking, reading, writing etc. This paper shows some aspects of BA students' teaching speaking skills. Discussing some issues of different teaching methods and approaches in a foreign language teachers-to-be improve their knowledge, skills and know-how of their profession. They also develop their foreign language speaking skills.

CLIL approach can be integrated into teaching practice from the very beginning of vocational training at university. We suppose that this integration can be successful if the students' language acquisition level is B-1 or higher according to the Common European References. At this level learners «can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work... etc..., can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events ... and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans» (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, 2004).

Though, the first-year students do not have sufficient vocational knowledge and skills but we can suppose that their interest in their profession will help to cope with this problem. Communicative and problem of solving tasks, project making activity will enhance learners' foreign language speaking skills and their lawyer-to-be enthusiasm. The theoretical background of the communicative task application into teaching practice and the examples of such assignments are provided by A. Atabekova and N. Belenkova (Atabekova, Belenkova, 2013).

The second and the third-year students have deeper knowledge in the domain of law it gives greater opportunity to realize the CLIL approach into practice and develop the pertinent speaking skills of the students.

Foreign educators and researchers in teaching English as a foreign language pay much attention to the ways of how to improve students' speaking skills. First of all, learners should know an appropriate number of vocabulary items, grammar patterns and some expressive means (e.g. speed of the utterance) to support the debate and participate in a discussion. It is especially crucial for lawyers-to-be to know and to use certain phrases to clarify something, to highlight the key point of their discourse, to show the structure of their thoughts. They should be able to reformulate and to restructure their wording in order to be understood better. For this purpose, such expressions might be used: the important thing to grasp is that...; to begin with/and finally...; what I am trying to say is that...; what I mean is...; the point I am trying to make is that...; to put it another way (Harmer, 2001). Students should know these expressions and must be taught how to use them in professional setting.

Success in speakers' productivity also depends on their foreign language processing skills, i.e. speakers must transform the information in their heads and put it in a comprehensible form from the point of view of the language and the meaning. Language processing involves word and phrase extraction from the speaker's memory and then the word and phrase assembly into the correct sequences. Foreign language processing skills development is a matter of foreign language teaching and the corresponding speaking activities should be included into the practice of foreign language teaching. Rapid language processing also depends on the fact whether the students are aware of the information they are speaking about.

Practical implementation of CLIL in class. We have developed a lesson in the discipline "Practical Course of the English Language" for the bachelor level students who study Ecology, and there is a presentation of the part of this lesson in which we can see success in speakers' productivity.

Discipline: English for ecologists

Theme: Floating islands

Year of study: 3rd year of Bachelor degree

Learning objectives:

Content: Peculiarities of floating islands

Language: Introduce and practice new vocabulary

Communication: Receptive (reading and listening) and productive (speaking and writing)

Culture: Diversity and legends of the floating islands

Spark

Activity 1.1. Look at the picture. What can you see at the picture?



- What is an island? Explain in your own words.
- Have you ever seen anything similar in your life?
- What do you know about floating islands? Do they really drift?
- What are they made of?



These islands are kept **buoyant** by the light **spongy** tissues of certain **aquatic** plants, by gases released into their soil by **decomposing** vegetation, or by both these forces. Floating islands commonly rise in newly-flooded **reservoirs**. This happens if the flooded area has plenty of **peaty soil**.

- | | |
|------------|---|
| Buoyant | 1) land consisting of a low-heating-value fossil fuel derived from wood |
| Spongy | 2) living or growing in water |
| Aquatic | 3) floating |
| Decompose | 4) soft and full of cavities |
| Peaty soil | 5) to break up into constituent parts |
| Reservoir | 6) an artificial lake |

Activity 1.2. Watch the video “The Mysterious Floating Islands of Lake Titicaca in Peru” to get the main idea of the content of the lesson <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9WHMw7NbT1Y>

Activity 1.2.1 Comprehension of the information

Say if the information is true or false. Correct the false sentences.

Activity 1.2.2 Practice

Ask your fellow students about the information that was mentioned in the video (at least five questions)

Activity 2.1. Look at the picture. Can you guess what it is? What kind of floating island is it? What is the main reason of such islands appearance?



Activity 3.1. Give synonyms to the underlined words. Can you guess what the text is about with the help of these words only?

This floating island of trash was found near a dive site that was said to be “unspoiled by humans”. Found in the Caribbean by photographer, Caroline Power. It’s estimated that roughly 8 million tons of plastic are dumped into the ocean every year. This isn’t the only patch of garbage bobbing in the ocean. In the Pacific, there’s an even larger trash vortex along with 4 other trash gyres around the world. The global prevalence of single-use packaging and poor waste management appears to have left places like these contaminated.

Final Activity

1. Floating islands have always been an element of mythology.
2. Do you know any legends or myths connected with floating islands?

Aeaea

In Greek mythology, Aeaea is the floating home of Circe, the goddess of magic. Circe is said to have spent her time on the island, gifted to her by her father, the Sun, waiting for mortal sailors to land so she could seduce them. (Afterwards, the story goes, she would turn them into pigs.) Some classical scholars have identified Aeaea as the Cape Circeium peninsula on the western coast of Italy, which may have been an island in the days of Homer, or may have looked like one because of the marshes surrounding its base.

Tír na nÓg – A Mythical Kingdom of Eternal Goodness

Somewhere between the vast Atlantic and the Gaelic Otherworld is the mythical Irish floating island of Tír na nÓg, a paradisiacal “Land of the Young” where eternal youth, beauty, health, and abundance are a given. Anyone who visits remains eternally young – but if they touch mortal earth again, they will age immediately – and often horribly.

Planctae – Dangerous Waters with Roving, Deadly Rocks

Less of a floating island, Scylla and Charybdis was a treacherous passage with a deadly whirlpool to one side and jagged, wandering rocks to the other. Few sailors were foolhardy enough to attempt this journey. One was Jason and his Argonauts, who sailed between this rock and a hard place (ever wondered where that expression came from?) barely escaping their own watery grave.

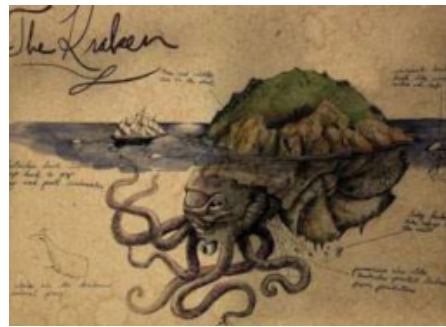
Dancing Islands in Pliny the Elder’s *Natural History*

As one of Rome’s foremost authors, historians, and statesmen, Pliny mentioned several floating islands within present-day Italy. One, he wrote, was “pushed” from place to place to avoid wars. Pliny also wrote about the “dancers,” islands believed to move when a special chorus was sung, along with two more islands, driven around a lake by the wind.

Atlantis – The Great Lost Civilization of Abundance

Atlantis is a mystery that still grips the human imagination today. First mentioned by Plato in 360 BCE, the legend revealed a utopian city situated in the Atlantic, undone by the bad behavior of its inhabitants – a parable relevant to these modern times. One day, Atlantis disappeared without a trace, sinking to the bottom of the ocean... but could it rise again?

Say how each picture relates to the information given above.



Assessment. Divide into 2 groups. Find information about other natural phenomena (Goodwin Sands and Footage of Natural phenomena between two oceans) and make your presentation.

Conclusions. Effective speaking implies effective listening and interacting with other participants. Skillful speakers should be conscious and take into account other opponents’ feelings, their linguistic skills and professional awareness of the subject. They should realize how to take turns, allow others to do so and convey the meaning of the utterance even if some misunderstanding occurs. Communication can be considered as effective if the information sent is processed at the moment of its reception. Information processing depends mostly on the speakers’ special knowledge of the topic discussed. Consequently, language and special content teaching and learning are integrated in practice (Harmer, 2001).

CLIL implementation at V. O. Sukhomlynsky National University (MNU) can be applied in terms of cultural awareness, expanding language competence and increasing students’ motivation. CLIL is

the best methodology for language teaching and learning at BA and MA Schools where English is not a major for learners whose major is not connected with English. For example, for future ecologists while studying the discipline “Practical course of the English language”. It means that the acquisition of the language content is driven by the major subject content and corresponds to the themes of a non-language subject. CLIL methodology is based on the authentic content materials aimed at acquiring basic functional language and is taught by a language teacher.

For language teachers CLIL lessons at BA level at MNU have the following characteristics:

- Integrating language and skills (receptive and productive skills);
- Lessons are often based on studying texts according to students' major;
- Language is approached lexically rather than grammatically;
- Using a wide variety of scaffolding strategies.

Lessons combine digital and non-digital media. We use non-linguistic codes to support students in their minimal output: the mimics, the eye-contact, the body language, paraverbal elements (voice, tone, accent, intonation)

The main conclusion to be drawn is the CLIL approach is very effective in teaching foreign languages and developing professional skills of the students at a nonlinguistic higher educational institutions. This approach diversifies teaching tools and forms of classroom teaching and learning and consequently increases learners' motivation. The integration of foreign language teaching and professional skills development should be further investigated and widely used in teaching practice.

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