

The Possibility of Using the CLIL Technology in Teaching ESP

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Abstract

The article aims to consider the possibility of using the CLIL method in the process of teaching students a foreign language in a higher education institution. Modern requirements for the training of a future specialist in a higher education institution include not only the development of a number of specific competencies, but also the mastering of one or more foreign languages at a high professional level. The article points out that CLIL is a didactic method that allows students to form linguistic and communicative foreign language competences when they acquire general educational knowledge and skills. Today the CLIL method is successfully used in practice in different countries. The authors of the article make an attempt to identify the main aspects of CLIL, each of them being implemented differently depending on the age of students, the social linguistic environment and the level of penetration into CLIL. The article pays special attention to the advantages and disadvantages of the CLIL method. The authors highlight three basic models of the CLIL method: expansion of language education, modular teaching, partial merging with the subject. The article deals with such models of teaching as multilingual learning, additional integrated subject and language teaching, subject courses with language support.

Keywords: CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning), foreign language, educational technology, method, teaching, higher education institution, curriculum, general educational knowledge, skills.

1.0. Introduction

In modern society, the issues of socialization of a progressive person in the interethnic and intercultural space are priorities, while speaking a foreign language is viewed as one of the tools for expanding professional knowledge and possibilities. In this regard, there are new educational technologies for teaching foreign languages, CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) being one of them. The purpose of the article is to show the necessity and effectiveness of using the CLIL method.

2.0. Literature Review

Many foreign specialists [Anderson, Krathwohl, 2001; Bloom, 1956; Byram, 2022, Coyle, 2009] note that the approach to teaching using the CLIL method is quite flexible, taking into account a wide range of contexts studied within it. Individual contents should consider, according to S.A. Gudkova [Gudkova, 2013], integrated selected teaching, as well as clearly identify this integration and determine the specifics and level of the CLIL language (for example, medium complexity) and language content. Conclusions of S.A. Gudkova are supported by D.Yu. Burenkova [Gudkova, Burenkova, 2014], T.A. Laletina [Laletina, 2012], considering that the main responsibility of teachers who participate in the process of teaching a particular context (content of a subject), is how they interpret that context taking into account regional, national, social and all other established requirements, showing that will affect the quality of the content and integration of the teacher in the teaching process. This approach to components' formation of specialists' rapid adaptation in different fields of professional activity to a foreign language completely corresponds to the priorities of the state policy, which, according to L.V. Glukhova [Glukhova, 2010], should be focused on the development of the scientific and intellectual component of the modern economy, characterized by globalization and growth of intercultural relations. In this regard, the research problem can be formulated as follows: how and under which psycho-pedagogical conditions a mechanism for rapid adaptation of professionally-oriented personality to international communication in English can be formed.

Analysis of recent studies and publications showed that, first of all, foreign specialists in teaching are interested in these questions [Grievesson, Superfine, 2012; Kelly]. In our country the publications in this field began to appear only recently [Kochenkova, 2022; Krasheninnikova, 2022; Salekhova, Grigor'eva, 2013].

3.0. The Notion of CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning)

CLIL considers learning a foreign language as a tool for learning other subjects, thus forming students' need for studying, which allows them to develop their abilities in communication, including his native language. This is the most common definition: CLIL is a didactic method that allows students to form linguistic and communicative foreign language competences in the same learning context, when they form and acquire general educational knowledge and skills.

The term CLIL was introduced by David Marsh in 1994 to define educational situations in which disciplines or their individual sections are taught in a foreign language [Coyle, Hood, Marsh, 2010]. Its purpose is the simultaneous study of a subject and a foreign language, i. e. the language is viewed not as the object of study, but as a tool for studying other subjects. Thus, education in native and foreign languages is a whole. The CLIL method has two objectives: to study a subject through a foreign language and a foreign language through a taught subject.

In 1994, the definition of CLIL was formed and approved: "Content and language integrated learning or CLIL is a bi-directional competence approach to learning, in which a foreign language is used to teach both the main subject and the language itself" [Montalto, Walter, Theodorou, 2020]. The relevance of the research is justified by the need to adapt to intercultural communication in its professional field from higher education.

4.0. Using the CLIL Technology in Practice

Today, many countries successfully use the CLIL method in practice. Thus, in Hungary, there are bilingual schools, in which academic disciplines are taught in a foreign language. The use of the CLIL method in Bulgaria has been carried out for about 50 years and is of great interest for specialists working in this field. With its help bilingual schools teach subjects such as history, geography, biology, philosophy; English, German, French, Spanish, and other languages are used to implement the learning process.

This technique is used at universities preparing not only specialists in certain professional areas, but also specialists who speak foreign languages. When planning a course of study based on this method, it is necessary to take into account 4 "C" methods of CLIL: content, communication, cognition, culture.

Defining the basic principles of CLIL, five aspects are distinguished, each of them being implemented differently depending on the age of students, the social linguistic environment and the level of penetration into CLIL:

- 1) the cultural aspect;
- 2) the social aspect;
- 3) the linguistic aspect;
- 4) the subject aspect;
- 5) the learning aspect.

The use of this technique in practice allowed us to identify its advantages, as well as some problems of its implementation in the educational process. One of the main advantages of this technique is to increase the motivation to study a foreign language. Language learning becomes more focused, as it is used to solve specific communication problems. Getting into the situation of communication in a foreign language, students are unable to show their knowledge in specialized areas such as construction, pedagogy, medicine, culture, art, etc. without knowledge of a foreign language. So, they do not have the ability to communicate in a professional context.

Thus, the ability to communicate in a foreign language in a professional context becomes a priority. In addition to this, students have the opportunity to learn and understand the culture of the studied language better, which leads to the development of the socio-cultural competence in students. Student take a large amount of language material, which is a complete immersion in the natural language environment. It should also be noted that the work on various topics allows you to learn specific terms, certain language constructions, which contributes to the replenishment of a learner's vocabulary with subject terminology and prepares him/her for further study and application of the acquired knowledge and skills.

5.0. Challenges in Implementing the CLIL Technology

Despite the large number of advantages of implementing this method into the educational process, there are a number of problems. One of the main problems is the lack of sufficient knowledge of foreign language teachers, and vice versa, the bad knowledge of a foreign language by subject teachers. So, for the implementation of such programs in universities, highly qualified teachers are required who are able to give lectures and conduct practical classes and seminars at least in two languages. One of the solutions that is successfully implemented in many universities in Russia is studying a foreign language with teachers and their consultations in the preparation of lectures and teaching materials. In addition, teachers are sent for internships in the country of the studied language to improve their foreign language skills. Today many universities work closely with large foreign companies.

Another problem is students' poor knowledge of foreign languages, which leads to an increase in students' workload, as well as to a number of psychological problems connected with learning some material in a foreign language. Undoubtedly, it is necessary to mention the problem of the curriculum development and preparation of educational material that would satisfy the needs of students. It is also necessary to understand the fact that learning through a foreign language can aggravate the process of mastering the subject.

In this case, great demands are made on the teachers. In addition to mastering a foreign language, CLIL requires a completely new approach to conducting classes. Teachers need to use different forms of material presentation, organization of work, focus on individual and creative activities of students. It means that studying basic subjects will be much more interesting and effective for students if it occurs within the framework of an active and communicative approach, which is typical for foreign language classes. Thus, we can talk about the specific professional competencies of the teachers of CLIL.

One of the important problems is the problem of students' assessment. Should we assess the linguistic achievements of the students or acquired knowledge of the discipline? And if both, then how to do it?

Despite all the difficulties of implementing the CLIL method, it represents a functional approach to the teaching a foreign language, which allows to solve much more expanded educational tasks.

6.0. Discussion

Modern requirements for the training of a graduate from a higher education institution as a future specialist include not only a number of specific competencies, including self-education, knowledge of innovative technologies, understanding of the prospects and possibilities of their use, the ability to make their own decisions, adaptability to new social and professional conditions, teamwork skills, the ability to overcome stress, but also the mastering of one or more foreign languages at a high professional level.

In most higher education institutions, according to the curriculum, intensive foreign language teaching (most often English) of students of non-linguistic specialties ends in the second year, but it is worth noting that, due to the lack of constant speech practice in the following years of study, there is a gradual loss of communication skills. Therefore, there is a need to integrate a foreign language and professional subjects during the period of study at the university, both for Bachelor's and Master's degree students.

A successful lesson according to the CLIL method is facilitated by carefully selected educational materials both for studying a specific subject and for teaching the language: lexical and grammatical units and structures, all types of speech activity (reading, speaking, writing and listening).

Types of tasks should be developed according to the level of complexity, based on the subject content, its understanding, verification and subsequent discussion. At various stages of work with a text, attention is focused on the vocabulary, the content of a text, and then on the specific grammatical material. The stages of while- and post-reading can include a number of independent and creative tasks (describe, compare, match, ask a question, make a presentation). Thus, there are special requirements for the choice of educational material and the development of tasks:

- tasks on the processing of the text should be built with an emphasis on the subject content, it is necessary to involve students in the process of understanding, checking, discussing the main idea of the text;
- tasks should stimulate independent and creative activity of students; communicative tasks should be used for oral and written communication in a foreign language;
- students should be acquainted with compensatory strategies to solve language, content and communication difficulties.

7.0. Conclusion

In conclusion, we can say that CLIL is a relatively new method of teaching, which can be viewed as a unique way of teaching students the main subjects through a foreign language, as well as teaching a foreign language through the main subjects. This method arouses the interest of foreign language teachers, as well as a number of teachers who speak a foreign language and teach the main subjects at the university. Thus, combining the two directions, the subject teachers are able to teach not only their subject in a foreign language, but also to use important means of language teaching: to teach grammar, vocabulary, etc., including in their lessons the elements of communicative methods of teaching a foreign language. This helps to simplify and modernize the curriculum at the university.

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