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INTEGRATED CLASSES IN CONTENT SUBJECTS AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES FOR PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

Integration of content and language aspects in one educational process is not an absolutely new idea in classroom instruction. Teaching different subjects to learners in a language other than their mother-tongue started centuries ago (classical gymnasiums) and has received its second breath in the last decades in the form of such dual-focused approaches as content-based language teaching (CBLT) or content-and-language-integrated learning (CLIL).

Traditionally, content subjects and a foreign language, have been taught separately. CLIL tends to join two subjects in one – learning the content of a subject in a foreign/second/third language – with a synergetic effect both for the subject and the language skills. 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” [1 : 1]. The synergetic effect is reached through stimulating cognitive processes in interdisciplinary setting, providing greater exposure to the foreign/second/third language, reinforcing multilingualism, strengthening communication skills, motivating learners through greater authenticity and practical application of their knowledge and skills.

Raised as a research problem in 1990s, CLIL was brought to the attention of European educational policy makers for the first time on a wide scale in 2005, at the European Conference on content and language integrated learning. In 2007 promotion of CLIL has been placed by the European Commission within the priorities of life-long language learning strategic area [2]. Today the possibilities of establishing a common European CLIL curriculum and framework for CLIL

teachers' education are being discussed.

Although CLIL is increasingly being used in European primary and secondary classrooms, its importance in vocational training or professional education at the tertiary level steadily grows together with academic and professional mobility as a pan-European reality.

In Ukraine, as some researches admit, “despite the immense popularity of CLIL in the world, there are still few university programmes, which suggest teaching content subjects through the medium of a foreign language” [3:17]. Because of absence of a unified language-for-specific-purposes policy and diverse language syllabi, tertiary educational institutions develop their own language policy, within which CLIL is only partially and occasionally applied.

Introduction of CLIL on a regular basis is limited by some significant factors, like difficulties of establishing an equal partnership between language and content; strong and consistent cooperation of content subjects teachers and language teachers; students' low language competence level; lack of content subject teachers competent enough in a foreign language; challenges for language teachers undertaking CLIL connected with acquiring high expertise in content subjects; undeveloped system of CLIL-focused teacher education and training in the integration of language and content; great diversity of tertiary curricular needs in CLIL contexts; lack of clear cut framework of the target professional competences that the CLIL teacher is expected to possess; absence of grounded and developed CLIL pedagogy, learning outcomes, methods of instruction, resources database, system of assessment, etc.

In Lviv Institute of Economics and Tourism, integrated content-and-language classes are practiced quite often in training professionals for hospitality industry. This learning strategy has developed in response to a high need for communicative competency in foreign languages as part of professional responsibilities of specialists in hospitality sphere. The strategy is supported by mastering the first foreign language (English or German) during all four years of the Bachelor's programme with final state exam in the language, and introduction

of the second (German or English) and third (Polish) foreign languages since the 3rd year of studying at the institute. There are three main models of CLIL employed at the institute.

1. Inviting foreign teachers to deliver series of lectures and practical classes on content subjects. During such classes complete authentic interaction in foreign languages (English or German) between lectures and listeners is reached. The visiting teachers speak only the foreign language and use different communicative strategies to make listening process meaningful and clear from the content subject perspective (suggest lecture layout structure, handouts, visuals; backup their narration with slide presentations; paraphrase difficult structures; pause, slow down speaking pace, clarify words' meaning and spelling, etc.). The main focus, though, is on content while language acquisition takes subordinate place.

2. Suggesting curriculum content courses in a foreign language. There is a Master's course "Developing intercultural competence of hospitality industry students through English" which is delivered in English with focus both on sociocultural and linguistic peculiarities of intercultural communication. This course coincides with objectives of CLIL, since analysis of social and cultural aspects of communication is integrated with teaching language, developing receptive and productive language skills, practicing listening, reading, speaking and writing in the language. Class instruction is provided exclusively in English.

3. Integrated classes in content subjects and a foreign language with switching two languages – native and foreign. Such classes are focused on a certain problem and directed cooperatively both by content subject teachers and language teachers. Usually, they have the form of a round-table seminar during which students make multimedia presentations on some issues of a common problem, ask each other questions on the presentations, and participate in group discussions. English medium presentations are mingling with Ukrainian medium ones, so students have to code-switch from one language to another. Teachers introduce the issues, comment and summarise students' work keeping meanwhile

to one language – Ukrainian in case of content subject teachers or foreign in case of language teachers.

In whatever form, integrated classes in content subjects and foreign languages prove to be helpful for higher education graduates to get prepared both professionally and linguistically to be efficient at today's internationalised labour market.

Literature

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