Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in Higher Education: Benefits, Challenges and Prospects for Implementation in Ukraine

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The European Union educational policy promotes multilingualism as part of its goal for improving language learning in order to facilitate EU citizens' access to the full range of cultural, social and professional opportunities across Europe. Ukraine which aspires to become a part of the European Union has chosen one of the modern dimensions of higher education reform the transition to teaching subjects in English as the basis of forming a bilingual environment. Using the progressive methods of integrated learning of English and other subjects, researchers identify methods of subject language integrated learning (CLIL) [1, p.48].

Thus, a foreign language is no longer a goal but means of learning another course within the program in the classroom where the CLIL technologies are used. Students observe the teacher's actions, improve listening and speaking skills, perceive certain information respond to what is seen and heard by speech actions without fear of making a mistake or getting a low score because they do not learn just a foreign language but another subject using a foreign language only as an information tool or a source of instructions to perform certain actions [1, p.48].

This method provides opportunities for meaningful interaction and active learning, use of communication skills and literacy forming subject and language competencies. CLIL both allows you to communicate effectively using a foreign language in various spheres of life and improves all language skills. This approach develops critical thinking, creativity, increases students' motivation and self-esteem. CLIL does not require additional hours of study and can go as a part of a general education-al program [1, p.48].

According to CLIL method, students gain knowledge on the subject from the curriculum while learning and using a foreign language. The CLIL methodology has the advantage of addressing the problem of "crowded curriculum" as it allows you to combine one or more aspects of the curriculum [1, p.48].

The specific goals of CLIL were presented by D. Coyle through four components (so-called ‘four Cs’):

communication:

- improving the level of proficiency foreign language being studied;

- communication skills are developed by any discipline studied in the context of subject-language integrated learning, and at the same time separate types of speech develop activities (listening, speaking, reading, writing);

content:

- study of the subject, application of new knowledge and development of skills through practical tasks;

culture:

- expansion of knowledge and understanding of interacting cultures;

cognition:

- development of thinking; subject content, development language skills are consistent with existing knowledge, the experiences and needs of students;

- students analyze their academic activities, synthesize new knowledge based on the knowledge gained from studying various subjects and apply it in practice [2, p.99].

Although CLIL is a versatile approach and objectively speaking, the best method for integrating a non-native language into educational institutions, it nevertheless has its drawbacks and presents certain challenges. This is due to the natural reaction to such adaptation and integration processes around the world. There are a number of challenges for both learners and teachers which we will now examine.

- The first challenge is the psychological strain on students: their fear of both the new material and quite simply of making mistakes whilst answering questions as well as general difficulties in adapting;

- A shortage of qualified specialists: some lecturers do not have a sufficient level of foreign language proficiency to teach at these institutions;

- A low level of foreign language proficiency amongst the students themselves, which leads to a failure to grasp the material and a lack of self-confidence;

- Teaching format: the constant shift to online learning creates a significant gap in understanding the material, communicating in a foreign language and the development of knowledge and personality as a whole;

- Overall, there is as yet no standardised CLIL teaching methodology; consequently, specialists at each institution develop their own unique approaches which consumes a great deal of resources;

- Lack of time: the current education system is unable to allocate the necessary time for studying subjects in a non-native language which combined with the challenges mentioned above, creates major problems in assimilating the curriculum and learning a foreign language in general [3, pp. 275-276; 4, pp. 109-110].

However, despite these problems, we have a number of approaches and methods for overcoming these challenges. These are the most effective ways of teaching a non-native language today as they help learners to understand, analyze and subsequently apply the subject matter:

The ‘storyline method’ is based on combining planned learning content with the students’ interests and ideas. Drawing on ‘prompts’ from the teacher (so-called

key questions), students contribute to the creation of a particular story. This method does not require textbooks as it involves creative planning, the formulation of hypotheses, reflection, systematization and the presentation of work. The constructed story also contains elements of drama and role-play. The teacher merely sets the framework for the action and presents individual episodes whilst students ask their own questions and find the answers themselves. This helps them develop communication and socialization skills within an unconventional group [4, p. 108].

The simulation method is quite rightly popular amongst teachers due to its effectiveness in teaching a foreign language to students of non-language disciplines. During practical sessions, the simulation method takes the form of various simulations (business games) which enable students to practice their skills and apply their knowledge to solve specific tasks within a specific environment that mimics real-life situations. In our view, simulation enables students to try their hand at different roles. Thanks to simulation, students develop strategic planning skills as well as the ability to work in a team, conduct negotiations and persuade others [4, p. 108].

The project-based approach which has long been used in education is now a widely recognized methodology. This approach engages students in organized collaborative work, carried out independently which requires them to apply their knowledge to solve a problem or achieve a goal. Pupils work on a project which is usually a long-term task using the language they are learning. Projects can cover a variety of topics, relating to different fields of knowledge and the results can be presented in a variety of formats [4, p. 109].

Therefore, whilst CLIL is the best method for teaching a foreign language, it remains imperfect for the present day due to the specific challenges each country faces. However, there are many ways to overcome these challenges and the development of this method offers a promising future for our world. This method will enable us not only to learn a foreign language most effectively but also to develop our personalities.

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