

# USING CONTENT AND LANGUAGE INTEGRATED LEARNING (CLIL) FOR CREATING THE EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT CONTRIBUTING TO LANGUAGE LEARNING IN A TECHNICAL HIGHER SCHOOL

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Cultural and linguistic diversity of modern society requires intensification of language learning and creating a language-friendly environment in European higher education institutions. This paper provides a description of CLIL - Content and Language Integrated Learning - in the context of language learning in a higher technical school. CLIL is a special approach to delivering content in education: a non-linguistic subject is not taught in a foreign language, but by means of a foreign language. Through this kind of educational provision, students gain knowledge of some special subjects in the curriculum, at the same time mastering their language skills. In a higher technical school, an appropriate course is included in the professional study program along with traditional courses. We regard CLIL as an efficient instrument of multilingual education as a means of motivating students for further studies.

**Keywords:** educational environment, Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), multilingual education

## 1. Introduction

In the context of the Lisbon strategy of economic, social and environmental renewal initiated in March 2000, it is essential to promote language learning in higher education and to build a language-friendly environment in European higher education institutions establishing an inclusive approach to linguistic diversity and improving supply and take-up of language learning [1].

Being an intellectual community, a higher education institution is also supposed to become a language-friendly environment. Language teaching and learning is only one “building block” of the all-embracing system of knowledge delivery and knowledge acquisition. In the framework of lifelong learning, it contributes much to the full development of the human personality and continuous self-development.

From the educational management perspective, to create an educational environment contributing to language learning has become one of the most significant tasks. For promoting language learning and linguistic diversity European educators use CLIL - Content and Language Integrated Learning – a special approach to foreign languages teaching: a non-linguistic subject is not taught in a foreign language, but by means of a foreign language. CLIL can provide efficient opportunities for learners to use their new language skills now, rather than learn them now for use later; it also allows exposure to the language without requiring extra time in the curriculum [1].

## 2. Using Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) for Creating the Educational Environment Contributing to Language Learning

### 2.1. What is CLIL?

For promoting language learning and linguistic diversity European educators use *CLIL - Content and Language Integrated Learning* - a special approach to foreign languages teaching: a non-linguistic subject is not taught in a foreign language, but by means of a foreign language.

Through this kind of educational provision, students gain knowledge of some special subjects in the curriculum, at the same time mastering their language skills. Subjects and languages are combined to offer our graduates a better preparation for life in Europe, in which mobility is becoming more and more prevalent [2].

Therefore, we assist our students to develop an understanding of diversity not only through the study of a language, but also through a blend of a special subject and a language. In a non-linguistic institute, an appropriate course is incorporated in the study program along with traditional courses: management fundamentals, introduction to computing, macroeconomics and microeconomics, etc. What is also rather important, CLIL allows incorporating a number of languages into the curriculum, this way providing the favourable environment for developing a plurilingual competence with the aim of promoting students' ability to acquire proficiency in several languages and experience of several cultures.

According to D. Marsh, a leading expert in CLIL [3], *Content and Language Integrated Learning refers to is an educational approach where some content learning (like a topic on global climate, or a subject) is taught in an additional language.*

CLIL is an approach to education, in which language teaching and subject learning are combined with the teaching of school subjects in general; it is inspired by a twofold objective: CLIL is meant to ensure first that students get knowledge of curricular subject matter and secondly increase their competence in a language other than the normal language of instruction [3].

In a higher technical school, an appropriate course is included in the study program along with traditional courses: management fundamentals, introduction to computing, macroeconomics and microeconomics, etc. Using CLIL educators may provide the favourable environment for developing a multilingual competence with the aim of promoting students' ability to acquire proficiency in a foreign language and experience of different cultures. As for the balance between content and language development in the design of a CLIL course, content drives CLIL, and this is an important concept, which differentiates CLIL from approaches called content-based language education [3]. In CLIL, teaching is supported by language elements and teaching materials used for delivering a professional subject are authentic. In addition, students learn to deal with more challenging tasks.

## 2.2. The aims of CLIL

The aims of CLIL may be different: they range from helping young people understand the point of learning a language to developing advanced language skills; the aims may include getting teachers to change teaching practice (content and language teachers), or increasing levels of harmony between inter-ethnic groups (socially-oriented) [3].

Except for some general common aims associated with the CLIL concept, official recommendations of various European countries may be different; dependent on the country concerned, importance being attached to [2]:

- *Socio-economic objectives* - preparing students for life in a more internationalised society and offering them better job prospects on the labour market.
- *Socio-cultural objectives* - conveying to students s values of tolerance and respect of other cultures, through use of the CLIL target language.
- *Linguistic objectives* - enabling students to develop language skills which emphasize effective communication, and motivating students to learn languages by using them for real practical purposes.
- *Educational objectives* - enabling students to develop subject-related knowledge and learning ability, stimulating the assimilation of subject matter by means of a different and innovative approach.

## 2.3. Benefits of CLIL

As said by D. Marsh [3], the main advantages of CLIL include “positive attitude changes in learners towards learning a language, and towards themselves as language learners”. Moreover, CLIL provides many benefits to students in the context of language learning intensification:

- Language is taught through diverse perspectives; different subjects are integrated and complement each other.
- CLIL enlarges students' motivation in both the target language and a professional subject.
- CLIL improves language skills and enlarge linguistic competence, since it allows students more contact with the target language.
- CLIL develops a wider range of skills (multidisciplinary skills).
- CLIL helps developing intercultural communication skills and multilingual attitudes, which is vital in the context of the global job market.
- Teachers are encouraged to change teaching practice and employ a variety of advanced instructional tools.
- CLIL can be regarded as *an efficient instrument of multilingual education.*

## 2.4. CLIL principles

According to D. Coyle [4], CLIL is built on the following principles:

- Content matter is not only about obtaining some knowledge and skills; it is about the learners developing their own knowledge (“personalised learning”).

- Content is associated with learning and thinking (“cognition”).
- Thinking processes (cognition) must be “analysed for their linguistic demands”.
- Language has to be related to the learning context, and learning occurs through the language.
- Interaction in the learning context is most important to learning.
- Intercultural awareness is of primary importance to CLIL.

## **2.5. The role of CLIL teacher**

It is obvious that CLIL teachers should have a good command of the target language. CLIL teachers should 1) be native speakers of the target language, 2) have completed a course or studied in the target language, 3) be undergoing in-service training on CLIL type provision, and 4) have taken a language test or examination [2].

CLIL teacher should be creative in their approach to teaching a subject in a foreign language. They ought to use a variety of effective teaching strategies including project-based learning and problem-based learning. CLIL also calls for an interactive teaching style. Verbal input should be accompanied with the use of visual and multimedia aids, the internet-based resources playing an important role in supporting CLIL.

It is vital to provide collaboration between subject teachers and language teachers. Where both learners and subject teachers are adequately fluent in English, it is possible that neither needs help from an English language teacher. However, if the subject teachers are not sufficiently fluent in English they have to work in cooperation with language teachers.

Possible models of teacher cooperation are described below:

- Subject teacher gives materials to language teacher. Language teacher prepares them to be used on his classes.
- Subject teacher gives materials to language teacher. Language teacher prepares language exercises for subject teacher who runs the classes
- Subject and language teacher together prepare classes but the classes are run individually and complement each other.

## **3. Pedagogical Instruments Contributing to the Success of CLIL**

In the environment that encourages language learning and teaching, we may employ a set of pedagogical instruments, which can contribute to the success of CLIL. We regard project-based learning (PLB) and problem-based learning as efficient tools for supporting CLIL. A project-based learning method is defined as a comprehensive approach to instruction; participating in a project students master an interdisciplinary range of skills from maths, languages, fine arts, science, technology, etc. [5].

Project-based learning involves creating a project team working on a common interdisciplinary project. This procedure demands the integration of multidisciplinary skills, as linguistic as non-linguistic. Dasenbrock [6] emphasizing a great role of projects in the learning process states that departments of languages and literatures ought to get involved “with at least one visible interdisciplinary project on their campus”, since strong departments are departments with some knowledge about their external environment, and other units of the university is “a salient piece of that environment”. Close cooperation among students and between various departments of a university helps create a collaborative environment, which may generate students’ motivation for further studies. As a rule, students devotedly take part in interdisciplinary projects; they are eager to integrate new knowledge into the existing knowledge. Subsequently, multidisciplinary skills (both linguistic and non-linguistic) are developed in the course of gaining new learning experience.

Any interdisciplinary project incorporates a problem to be solved. Problem-based accompanies project-based learning, and can be successfully used for supporting CLIL. When students are offered to solve a multidisciplinary problem, the solution of the problem demands interdisciplinary knowledge.

Creating a multilingual project environment can become an efficient means of encouraging young eager learners. Our efforts then are aimed at making students self-motivated; however it requires the appropriate guidance from their teachers.

## **Conclusions**

In a higher technical school, where language teaching is not a priority, language teacher should work in close collaboration with teachers of special subjects in order to provide a language-friendly environment that makes their students want to continue to learn and succeed. In this paper, we have discussed the

importance of incorporating CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) in the curriculum as an efficient instrument of multilingual education.

CLIL would allow students of a non-linguistic institute to obtain knowledge of some special subjects and simultaneously mastering their language skills. The interdisciplinary approach to language learning would enable educators to create the educational environment contributing to studying a variety of subjects, language learning being an essential part of a professional study programme. Using CLIL we expect to inspire students' positive perception of a language or culture and increase their motivation.

CLIL would provide students of a higher technical school with a lot of benefits, the major advantages of CLIL being creating positive attitude towards learning a language and stimulating self-development. We suggest extensively implementing well planned and well-coordinated learning activities beneficial to the success of CLIL such as problem- based and project-based learning.

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## Jūlija Stukalina. SATURA UN VALODAS INTEGRĒTĀ APGUVE (CLIL) – LĪDZEKLIS LABVĒLĪGAI MĀCĪBU VIDES VEIDOŠANAI TEHNISKAJĀ AUGSTSKOLĀ

Mūsdienu sabiedrībā, kam raksturīga kultūras un lingvistiskā daudzveidība, aizvien lielāku nozīmi iegūst svešvalodu mācīšana. Mūsdienās visos izglītības sistēmas līmeņos jāstimulē svešvalodu mācīšanās, tāpat jāpievērš uzmanība īpašas valodu vides veidošanai svešvalodu mācīšanas Eiropas augstākajās izglītības iestādēs. Šajā rakstā aplūkoti jautājumi par integrētās metodes (CLIL) pielietošanu tehniskā augstskolā, izmantojot to kā multilingvālās izglītības instrumentu un studentu motivācijas mācīties līdzekli.

**Atslēgvārdi:** mācību vide, satura un valodas integrēta apguve, multilingvālās mācības.

## Юлия Стукалина. ИСПОЛЬЗОВАНИЕ В ТЕХНИЧЕСКОМ ВУЗЕ ИНТЕГРИРОВАННОГО МЕТОДА ОБУЧЕНИЯ ИНОСТРАННЫМ ЯЗЫКАМ (CLIL)

Всё возрастающую роль в современном обществе, которому присуще культурное и лингвистическое многообразие, играет преподавание иностранных языков. Сегодня изучение иностранных языков необходимо стимулировать на всех уровнях системы образования; необходимо также уделять внимание созданию особой «языковой среды» в европейских высших учебных заведениях. В данной статье рассматриваются вопросы использования в техническом вузе интегрированного метода обучения иностранным языкам (CLIL) как инструмента мультилингвального образования и средства мотивации студентов к учёбе.

**Ключевые слова:** образовательная среда, интегрированный метод обучения иностранным языкам (CLIL), мультилингвальное образование