



CONTENT AND LANGUAGE INTEGRATED LEARNING (CLIL) METHOD AND HOW IT IS CHANGING THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING LANDSCAPE.

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Abstract: *Global English language education is expanding rapidly. As a result, many approaches and strategies have been developed to improve the way to teach and learn languages. CLIL is a method of teaching a language by integrating non-language contents into the language lessons. The non-language content can be anything ranging from science, social science to literature. Moreover, CLIL can be implemented from elementary school to the university level. CLIL has been proven to be effective for students to learn a new language. At the same time, it helps to develop other skills such as cognitive, cultural awareness, and general academic knowledge. The literature also pointed out several barriers to broadly implementing the CLIL method which are lack of qualified teachers and relevant resources. As a result, it is recommended that school administrators and policymakers should focus on teachers and resources development.*

Key words: *Content and Language Integrated Learning, CLIL, Foreign Language Learning, ESL, EFL, implemented, cognitive, relevant.*

INTRODUCTION

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) plays an increasingly important role in language education, both as a feature of foreign language teaching and learning, and as an element of bilingual and plurilingual education. As learners develop their language competences, they are able to deal with evermore complex topics, so teaching material needs to offer learners interesting and challenging subject matter.

The purpose of this article is to provide a summary of the current literature on the development and application of CLIL. Also, basic guidance for language educator's and policymakers to consider applying this method to enhance the quality of language education.

LITERARY ANALYSIS AND METHODOLOGY

The term 'Content and Language Integrated Learning' (CLIL) was adopted in 1994 (Marsh, 2001) within the European context to describe and further design good practice as achieved in different types of school environment where teaching and learning take place in an additional language. Schools in very different contexts across



the world had been finding their own ways to enrich learning, sometimes for many years. CLIL set out to capture and articulate that not only was there a high degree of similarity in educational methodologies, but also an equally high degree of educational success. Identifying this success was one major driver within the education professions; mainstreaming the experience for a wider general public was the other.

CLIL is an educational approach in which various language-supportive methodologies are used which lead to a dual-focused form of instruction where attention is given both to the language and the content.

The main goal of this research is to observe how CLIL contributes to the development of bilingual language competence of students of a bilingual Slovak-English study program in the secondary vocational school (business academy), in western Slovakia. The aim was to find out the extent, approaches, opinions, documents and materials which are used in the school to develop the foreign language competence of the students through CLIL methodology in particular. The secondary research aims were to describe the available literature on second language acquisition and on CLIL at European level in general and in Slovakia in particular, considering the application of CLIL methodology within secondary level of education, to find out how CLIL methodology is implemented in content subjects within the bilingual Slovak-English study program, to find out how implementation of CLIL methodology affects the students' performance in the bilingual Slovak-English program, and to find out how foreign language competence of students within the bilingual study program is enhanced and fostered in and outside the classroom.

This study uses a naturalistic inquiry. The aim of the naturalistic inquiry is to understand the peculiarities of a phenomenon in its natural setting from the perspectives of the participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this study, a portrayal of the phenomenon being studied was described by the teachers' and students' experiences and perceptions. In this qualitative research, a case study design was used to address the main three research questions guiding this investigation. A qualitative approach for this study was chosen for several compelling reasons. The case study itself was a bilingual Slovak-English study program at a secondary vocational school (business academy) in the town of Slovakia, and the perceptions and opinions of teachers and school managers, as well as students were included. Much can be learned from the descriptions and experiences of secondary-school teachers working in a secondary vocational school offering a bilingual Slovak-English study program, who implement CLIL methodology in their teaching. Using the case study design, it was possible to gather information and learn about each experience and what the experience meant to participants. It also provided an in-depth insight into the selected secondary vocational school and the factors that appear to support bilingualism of its students and sustainability of effective CLIL implementation. As the case was the institution itself, this study could be classed as a single-case study, to use Yin's terminology (2003). Also, it can be identified as a descriptive case study as its purpose



was an in-depth description of the case. Referring to Yin (2003), this type of case study is used to describe an act of intervening or phenomenon as well as the real-life context in which it took place. Study Group and Data Collection The focus of this study was a secondary vocational school, specifically a business academy in western Slovakia. This site was chosen mainly because the school is well-known for being a bilingual school in the region where it is located. Furthermore, it has a good reputation in the town and the region, and is perceived as a prestigious school, and it has also ranked as the best secondary vocational school in Slovakia in the last five consecutive years.

The CLIL approach has gained popularity in language teaching as it offers various benefits to both language learners and educators. Here are some of the key benefits of using the CLIL lessons in language teaching:

1.Improved language proficiency: CLIL allows students to learn a second language in a meaningful context by using it to acquire knowledge in other subject areas. This approach can lead to better language proficiency compared to traditional language instruction methods.

2.Authentic language use: CLIL exposes students to authentic, real-world language usage. They encounter and use language in practical contexts, which can make language learning more engaging and improve their communication skills.

3.Increased student motivation: Learning subjects in a foreign language can be motivating for students as they see a clear purpose for new language acquisition. It can foster a genuine interest in the language and the content being taught.

4.Enhanced cognitive skills: CLIL encourages the development of cognitive skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and analytical reasoning as students engage with complex content in a second language.

5.Cultural awareness: CLIL lessons often include cultural aspects related to the language being taught, helping students gain a broader understanding of the culture, customs, and perspectives of native speakers of the language.

6.Transferable skills: Students acquire skills and knowledge in both the target language and the subject matter, which can be applied in real-life including various academic and professional contexts.

7.Preparation for multilingualism: CLIL can prepare students for a multilingual world by equipping them with the ability to use multiple languages for communication and learning.

8.Improved academic performance: Research suggests that CLIL students often perform well academically in both language and content subjects, demonstrating the effectiveness of this approach.

9.Global competence: CLIL can help students develop a global perspective and become more culturally sensitive and aware, which is increasingly important in our interconnected world.



10. Teacher collaboration: CLIL encourages collaboration between language and subject teachers, fostering a cooperative approach to education and professional development as well.

11. Teacher professional development: Language educators who implement the CLIL approach often need to expand their skills and knowledge, leading to continuous professional development and growth opportunities.

12. Flexible teaching strategy: CLIL can be adapted to various educational levels, from primary schools to universities, and can be used with different languages and content areas.

In summary, the CLIL approach offers a holistic and immersive way for students to learn a second language while acquiring knowledge in other subject areas.

English Language Instruction A language teaching technique is a method of teaching a language that is founded on systematic rules and procedures, it is an application of viewpoints on how a language should be taught and learned in the most effective way. The following are the various methods of language instruction that have evolved considerably in recent years:

- Grammar Translation Method (GTM)
- The Direct Method
- The Audio-Lingual Approach
- Communicative Language Teaching
- TBLT (Task-based learning teaching)

1. Grammar Translation Method.

The grammar-translation method was one of the first methods devised to teach foreign languages. It is a classical approach that was also used in the teaching of Greek and Latin languages. The goal of grammar-translation courses is for students to study grammatical rules and then put those principles into practice by translating phrases between the target language and their native language. Advanced students may be forced to translate entire texts word by word. The aim and purpose of this method is to translate language literally. However, it does not necessarily influence students' intellectual growth positively. Characteristics:

- Classes are conducted entirely in the students' native language.
- The method focuses on the interpretation of singular phrases and words.
- It does not pay much attention to correct pronunciation.
- The reading of challenging literature begins as early as possible. The complexities of grammar are explained with great detail.

2. Direct Method

When the Grammar-Translation technique of teaching failed, the direct way of teaching was devised as a counter-measure. It attempted to immerse the learner in the language using the same method with which the first language was learnt. All instructions are conducted in the target language including the teaching of grammar,



and a strong emphasis is placed on speaking and listening skills. Only practical everyday-language is taught throughout the course. The disadvantage of this method is that it tries to teach a second language as the first language was acquired, little realizing that both of these belong to two different worlds.

3.Audio-Lingual Method According to the Audio-Lingual technique, language was just a type of behavior that could be learned through the development of appropriate speech patterns (Mart, 2013). In other words, the purpose of this method is to instill in trainees the habit of speaking in their original language

Some researchers also emphasize that foreign language learning is primarily a process of mechanical habit building and that excellent habits are created by giving accurate responses rather than making mistakes (Richards & Rodgers, 2014) Habit formation is frequently accomplished through the use of dialogues and pattern drills that students must repeat. Therefore, as points out, repetition of an act makes it a habit; hence, more learning occurs.

4.Communicative Language Teaching Method.

In communicative language teaching (CLT), often known as the communicative approach, interaction is considered the means and end of language learning. Communication-based learning environments allow students to learn and practice the target language through interactions with one another and with their instructors. Other learning strategies include the study of authentic texts (texts written in the target language for purposes other than language learning) and the use of the target language both inside and outside the classroom (Rao, 2019).

5.Task-Based Language Teaching Method.

Task-based language teaching (TBLT), sometimes known as task-based instruction (TBI), is a type of language learning that emphasizes the use of authentic language to perform meaningful activities in the target language. Some examples of such activities are: going to the doctor, completing an interview, or contacting customer service for assistance. It is examined mostly for task outcome (the completion of real-world tasks) rather than the accuracy of specified language forms. As a result, TBLT is particularly well-suited for improving target language fluency and increasing students' confidence. TBLT can be regarded as a subset of communicative language teaching as a result of this.

DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

This result shows that the experience of teachers (number of years teachers have been teaching) does not necessarily mean that they believe it has an impact on the successful teaching of English Language. CLIL is an innovative approach to language teaching. It is hoped that deficiencies in language teaching for content purposes can be overcome using this method. When teachers are rooted in this method, they will be able to respond to ELT issues in new ways. However does not necessarily mean that one of the two (pre- and in-service teachers) will be more successful at teaching through CLIL, as shown by the result of this t-test. Still, this study maintains that CLIL



is an important tool in ELT teaching (Banegas, 2012). Most teachers might have used the CLIL method without being aware of its approach. Contents are used to illustrate lexical or grammatical issues. Using oversimplified English serves as a disadvantage to the CLIL method. According to this methodology the content is there for the sake of the language and vice versa. Language learning is considered at the core of the curriculum. As revealed by the objectives of this study, future teachers need an integrated education to properly function in the language and content teaching profession. It is fruitful to invest in CLIL program for teachers' training. This analysis further revealed that there is a significant and consistent relationship between CLIL and ELT. Also, Awang is (2011) reported a significant correlation between CLIL and academic achievement ELT. Hence, the first step in CLIL is, training the teacher. CLIL is increasingly being taken up by the Ministries of Education around the world. It is an innovative approach in teaching modern languages. It is a motivating method for teaching subject topics. It is a useful contribution to the internationalization of multilingualism. Content teachers are mostly monolingual hence, they may not understand the importance of becoming bilingual. Educational ministries need to put more emphasis on the importance of CLIL. They need to understand its benefits as well as supervise a sufficiently competent workforce. Here, the number of years spent in language teaching is not the most important factor, although teaching experience is important, it is not positively correlated with CLIL benefits according to the findings of this study. However, it has been observed that inservice training for CLIL serves tremendous purposes (Hillyard, 2011). A growing trend in the bilingual education is the CLIL method. CLIL teaching approach belongs to the field of language learning for specific purposes. It is promoted as an educational umbrella word containing several techniques that can be used in multiple curriculum models. The program models employed in CLIL practices might vary significantly depending on the environment. CLIL can be also used to teach all or some of the school topics (for example, bilingual/plurilingual education programs such as full or partial immersion programs). Some lesson sequences in some school courses can be taught using CLIL. The goal of tandem teaching is to achieve a balance between topic and language by working together. Modern educational perspectives, research on second language acquisition, and current approaches to language instruction have all impacted its design. A closer examination of CLIL reveals the influence of the early 1980s post-modernist movement on language education. Language education approaches that were built on prescriptive procedures and unchanging sets of principles and independence of context have been challenged by the 'post-method' mentality. The postmodern (relativist) views emphasize contextual factors and local specificities of knowledge (political, historical, or cultural).

CONCLUSION

The study was carried out to examine the effectiveness and importance of the CLIL approach in ELT. The research investigated the link between language learning



and content development. If academic failure is to be forestalled and standards improved, it is undeniable that institutions, where English Language is taught, would provide relevant content structure that stimulate academic environments. Reliable content and language integrated learning classes not only depend on active learners but also on enthusiastic teachers to facilitate English learning among students. In order to improve the performance of teachers in English Language classroom, there is need to give proper training to teachers to develop themselves in a better way. Implementing CLIL in teaching methods will consequently improve English language teaching. With a deep knowledge of the role of CLIL, along with its implementation, teachers and students alike can be sure that successful learning and education will take place. The main aim of this research was to observe how CLIL contributes to the development of bilingualism and bilingual language competence of students of a bilingual Slovak-English study program in the secondary vocational school (business academy), in western Slovakia. The aim was to find out the extent, approaches, opinions, documents and materials which are used in the school to develop the foreign language competence of the students through CLIL methodology. The secondary research aims were to describe the available literature on second language acquisition and on CLIL ; at European level in general and in Slovakia in particular, considering the application of CLIL methodology within secondary level of education, to find out how CLIL methodology is implemented in content subjects within the bilingual Slovak-English study program, to find out how implementation of CLIL methodology affects the students' performance in the bilingual Slovak-English program, and to find out how foreign language competence of students within the bilingual study program is enhanced and fostered in and outside the classroom.

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