# ТЕОРИЯ И МЕТОДИКА ПРЕПОДАВАНИЯ ФИЛОЛОГИЧЕСКИХ ДИСЦИПЛИН В ШКОЛЕ И ВУЗЕ

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# CONTENT AND LANGUAGE INTEGRATED LEARNING: A VARIANT OF BILINGUAL EDUCATION IN RUSSIAN UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract. A tendency to academic mobility becomes a focus of Russian higher education system which is stimulated by the labor market. Today it is not enough to speak a foreign language to get a job, it is important to have a practical experience of work abroad. Many universities introduce bilingual programs to attract more foreign students and to raise university's prestige among Russian enrollees. At the same time academic mobility requires high level of a foreign language, English in most cases. The goal of this research is to describe one of the variants of bilingual education which may benefit higher education in Russia and help Russian students master a foreign language. Content and language integrated learning (CLIL) is a relatively new methodology for both linguistic and non-linguistic education in Russia and its introduction may cause certain problems. The study analyzes these problems and offers their solution. The experiment held within this research revealed the main obstacles of CLIL implementation from the point of view of students majoring in Pedagogy. Among them are lack of human resources (teachers able to implement CLIL in class); the need for content adaptation (the degree of complexity of a subject must correspond to the level of a foreign language of the group); methodology (teachers must learn to combine subject teaching with language teaching finding the right balance between the methods used) and lack of textbooks (foreign subject textbooks might be too difficult for Russian students). At the same time, future-teachers who took part in the experiment showed readiness for introduction of CLIL pedagogy in their practice. The paper offers an example of a CLIL lesson plan.

*Keywords*: CLIL; methods of teaching; foreign language teaching; content and language integrated learning; bilingual education; English as a foreign language.

## CLIL: ВАРИАНТ БИЛИНГВАЛЬНОГО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ В РОССИЙСКИХ УНИВЕРСИТЕТАХ

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Аннотация. Тенденция распространения академической мобильности и изменение требований рынка труда становятся стимулом для развития системы высшего образования в России. На сегодняшний день важно не только владеть иностранным языком, но и уметь использовать его в профессиональной деятельности. Многие университеты внедряют двуязычные программы обучения, чтобы, во-первых, привлечь иностранных студентов, а во-вторых, повысить престиж учебного заведения среди российских абитуриентов. Академическая и трудовая мобильность требуют высокий уровень иностранного языка, чаще всего английского. Целью настоящего исследования является описание одного из вариантов двуязычного образования, которое используется в российских вузах. CLIL (или интегрированное изучение иностранного языка и другого учебного предмета) – это сравнительно новая технология обучения. Ее внедрение в российскую систему образования может вызвать определенные трудности. В статье анализируются данные проблемы и предлагаются варианты их решения. Статья основана на экспериментальном использовании технологии CLIL на занятиях со студентами, обучающимися по направлению «Педагогика: русский язык как иностранный и английский языки». Среди основных проблем, возникающих при использовании данной технологии, можно выделить следующие: недостаток кадровых ресурсов (преподавателей, знакомых с технологией и готовых внедрять ее); необходимость адаптации учебных материалов (уровень сложности учебных материалов на иностранном языке должен соответствовать уровню владения этим языком обучающимися); методическая грамотность (преподавателю необходимо совмещать методы обучения иностранному языку с методами преподавания специальных дисциплин) и отсутствие учебников (иностранные учебники по изучаемой специальной дисциплине слишком сложны для русскоязычных обучающихся). В то же время, студенты – будущие учителя иностранного и русского языков, принимавшие участие в эксперименте, проявили интерес к CLIL технологии, отметили ее мотивационный потенциал и высказали готовность применять данную технологию в будущем. В статье представлен пример интегрированного занятия с применением CLIL технологии.

Ключевые слова: CLIL; методика обучения иностранным языкам; обучение иностранным языкам; иностранный язык; новые технологии обучения; двуязычное образование; английский язык.

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1. INTRODUCTION. English has become the international language of business, economics, science, art and other spheres; the knowledge of it provides many opportunities for graduates. However, knowledge of English is quite poor in Russia, according to the international proficiency index (EF EPI) in 2019 Russia occupies the 48<sup>th</sup> place among 100 countries, and the level of English is ranked as "low". Strengthening of the role of Russia on the international arena requires development of English skills and promotion of English proficiency. The state realizes the problem and Federal Educational standards are updated to solve it. A competence-based model of contemporary education "emphasizes personal and practical focus, developmental and creative nature of learning, when education quality is a complex indicator combining all stages of per*For citation*: Pirozhkova, I. S. (2020). Content and Language Integrated Learning: a Variant of Bilingual Education in Russian Universities. In *Philological Class*. Vol. 25. No. 4, pp. 181–188. DOI: 10.26170/FK20-04-18.

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sonal development, pedagogical conditions and results of educational process" [Sidakova 2016: 401. Thus, new methods and forms of teaching become not only a subject of theoretical debate and analysis, but also a practical tool helping reach the goals. However, it takes time to create a stable educational system capable of giving good knowledge of a foreign language. Bilingual education as a kind of instruction might be a solution to the problem. It was introduced in the 1970-s in Europe, the USA and Canada due to the big numbers of immigrants who didn't speak English (or the official language of the country). The concept of bilingual education today is given much attention; in teaching it is represented in many ways: English as a medium of instruction; content-based instruction, language across the curriculum, language immersion, English

for specific purposes and content and language integrated learning (CLIL). The article discusses CLIL as one of the promising tools to promote foreign language teaching and learning.

## 2. Materials and methods

**2.1. Research Methods.** This research is based on the use of general scientific methods of analysis, comparison, description and interpretation. These methods are used for theoretical interpretation of articles on foreign language teaching, bilingual education and CLIL methodology. Empirical research methods relevant for the study are pedagogical observation, syllabus planning, linguodidactic experiment and results comparison.

2.2. Materials. CLIL is "dual focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language" [Coyle et. al. 2010: 1]. It is important to mark the difference between CLIL and other similar conceptions of foreign language teaching, including bilingual education, integrated curriculum, language across the curriculum, language-enriched instruction, content-based instruction and others. In this case, D. Graddol's definition gives a clear idea of the peculiarity of CLIL, which is specified as "an approach to bilingual education in which both curriculum content (such as science or geography) and English are taught together. It differs from simple English-medium education in that the learner is not necessarily expected to have the English proficiency required to cope with the subject before beginning study" [Graddol 2006]. Thus, the level of language proficiency in CLIL methodology is not of primary importance, as classes based on this methodology imply teaching both a subject and a language. This statement is proved by the experimental study of 2020, which revealed that "the students' linguistic proficiency, though it may be deficient and cause problems when following class discussions during the first trimester for some first-year students, is sufficient to attend classes with good results, especially if the students are highly motivated from the outset" [Madrid, Julius 2020: 89]. Moreover, it is found that "for 72% of the students, classes given in English were more motivating than those in their native language (Spanish) and the use of a foreign language did not diminish student participation

in class [Dafouz, Smit 2016: 401]. "It can provide effective opportunities for pupils to use their new language skills now, rather than learn them now for use later" [Mehisto et. al. 2008].

Countries with two official languages have been practicing bilingual education for a long time, for instance, in Luxembourg such programs exist since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when pupils learned German in primary school and started learning French in secondary school [Yakaeva 2016]. In non-bilingual countries it was difficult to implement programs of bilingual education in their original structure, as pupils had little practice in the second language, thus CLIL became a simplified model of bilingual education as the number of subjects taught in a foreign language was smaller. The typical model of CLIL belongs to D. Marsh and D. Coyle and includes five elements (Fig. 1). [Coyle et. al. 2010].



Fig. 1. CLIL model by D. Marsh and D. Coyle

At first, CLIL was adopted by European schools, but at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century university programs based on CLIL were introduced in many universities. In Russia, as well as in Anglophone settings "CLIL is often the initiative of foreign language teachers who want to bring more meaningful context to their lessons. In this case, they work together with colleagues from other departments or 'borrow' content from other subjects in order to feed meaningful communication and raise motivation within their own classroom" [Mearns 2020: 2]. Moreover, in the Russian reality, students do not feel the need for foreign language as they are in the Russian-speaking environment all the time and they do not realize the importance of good knowledge of English until they graduate and university administration suffers from lack of resources to initiate bilingual education. This view is supported in many research works: "one of the meaningful contradictions leading to a fundamental flaw in foreign language training is the fact that English language training of students is based mostly either on the principles of General English, thus leaving graduates unprepared for their occupational-specific language needs, or predominantly concentrated on the English for Special Purposes field thus leaving general language competences basically underdeveloped or unattended" [Godzhaeva 2015].

Russian universities today offer bilingual programs in three stages of education - Bachelor, Master's and Postgraduate, among them are National Research Nuclear University, Higher School of Economics, Sechenov University, Ural Federal University and others. Results of program implementation are described in several papers [Alenkina 2020; Sidorenko 2018]. However, the majority of programs belong to Master's and Postgraduate Degrees, which means that Bachelor programs have a lot of potential for bilingual (CLIL-based) programs development.

Advantages of CLIL in Russia for students and teachers may be summed up as following: 1) mobility (participation in exchange programs from foreign universities); 2) career (employment in different countries); 3) research (the use of materials in English which has become the language of science); 4) better knowledge of the subject (the ability to read and compare information in different languages). Advantages for universities include: 1) internalization of programs (increase of the university prestige among Russian and foreign students); 2) student and teacher exchange (students may study in the university without the knowledge of Russian; teachers increase their proficiency to improve education quality); 3) improvement of rating in the global market of educational programs.

In spite of the fact that the use of CLIL methodology in Russian schools and universities is rather occasional today, teachers and administration realize the importance of its development. Several variants of CLIL adaptation to the Russian reality are described by M. V. Shavankova, who singles out four main variants of CLIL suitable for different age and language proficiency: 1) focus on vocabulary – words of a non-linguistic subject are learnt in English learnt, the subject itself is taught in the native language; 2) focus on the text – a non-linguistic subject is taught in the native language, but the answers to the questions are searched for in the text in a foreign language; 3) focus on the content – the subject is taught in a foreign language, but answers to the questions may be given in English or in the native language; 4) focus on both content and structure – the subject is taught in a foreign language, rules of the language are explained, native language is used very rarely (mostly to search for new information) [Savankova 2018].

So, CLIL has a huge potential in both language and subject teaching due to its flexibility and adaptability. It is rather a philosophy than a set of rules, that is why it cannot be neglected.

## 3. Results and discussion

3.1. Results of Experiment. In order to enable students to get the information in English the teacher introduces the content in English gradually, step-by-step beginning with special terminology [Khairullina 2019]. Following this principle, we conducted an experimental implementation of CLIL methodology in teaching Bachelor students majoring in Pedagogy (future teachers of Russian and English languages). The short-term course of Social Psychology was organized in the form of CLIL classes. The experiment involved 40 students and 2 teachers working in class at a time (a Psychology teacher and an English teacher). Before the experiment a survey was made to reveal acquaintance of future language teachers with CLIL methodology (Table 1).

The results are quite striking, no one in the group of third year students majoring in foreign language pedagogy knew about CLIL methodology. Only few students had experience of learning non-linguistic subjects in English, but it should be mentioned that those subjects were not part of the curriculum, but extracurricular activities like theatrical performances in English, foreign literature and foreign culture. In general, Russian students-prospective teachers are ready for introduction of CLIL in their practice, but some of them admit the following obstacles: poor knowledge of English, difficulties that a teacher needs to overcome (time consuming methodology, lack of textbooks, need for retraining, etc.), and little subject knowledge. To acquaint them with the main principles of CLIL methodology we decided to give them a course in Psychology in English.

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This short-term course included five practical classes in Social Psychology. The first class had the following structure, which became a typical structure of lessons in the experiment (Fig. 2).

In this paper the first lesson in the series is described to show the possible interpretation of CLIL in the Russian reality. The aim of it is to present students the concept of Social psychology and make them realize the role of society in their lives. During the first stage we showed a video "Introduction to Social Psychology" by Dr. Brenda Major, Distinguished Professor of Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences, published on YouTube. The work with the video was organized in a typical foreign language methodology including pre-watching, while-watching and post-watching exercises to learn new terminology and practice communication skills. This stage aroused students' interest to the topic and involved them in discussion of the relevant issues. It should be mentioned, that the introductory part should be chosen carefully: on the one hand, it should not be too difficult to give every student an opportunity to dip into it, on the other hand, it cannot be trivial to stimulate cognitive activity.

The second stage was based on a text about one of the distinguished social psychologists V. M. Bekhterev, who introduced the principles of experimental psychology. The text was in Russian

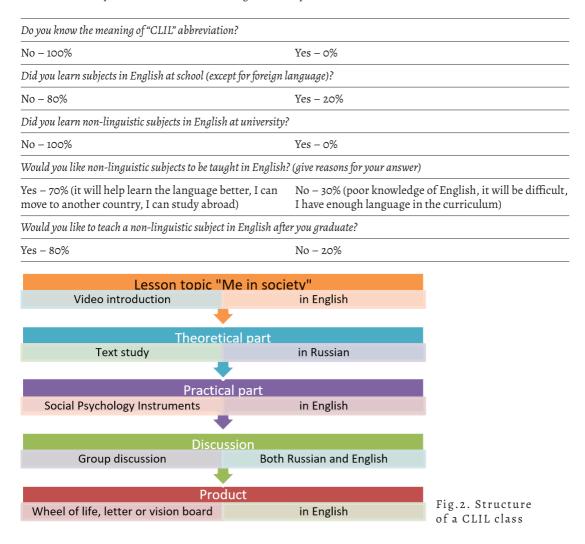


Table 1. Survey to reveal the knowledge and experience of CLIL

accompanied by the English glossary and was presented by psychology teacher. Students read it by themselves and provided an analytical summary of it in English together with questions that caused them certain difficulties.

The third stage presented several instruments of social psychology including wheel of life, vision board and famous experiments in the field. In this case students did not only learn new facts, but also experimented with the instruments and created their own wheels of lives or carried out mini-experiments that attracted their attention. A group discussion of the results was organized and students were free to join Russian-speaking or English-speaking groups headed by Psychology teacher or English teacher respectively. Worthy of note is that the majority of students decided to discuss the topic in English. In the end of discussion students made conclusions which they presented to each other and formulated results of the team work.

The final stage included exchange of students' new knowledge and personal conclusions about the topic. Besides, students were responsible to choose the home-task for the next lesson connected with the topic studied. Such practice is aimed at motivation stimulation and independence development. The following classes in the series had a similar structure.

The series of CLIL classes were concluded by the survey to find out students' attitude to new method of teaching and learning. By and large, the students emphasized improvement of their language skills, underlined that new information is remembered better if presented in a foreign language, CLIL methodology seems very promising to them and the majority would like to learn more about it and practice it. However, they found several disadvantages of CLIL in Russian reality: low language proficiency may cause difficulties in understanding new information, low motivation of Russian students and teachers to develop new skills will make lessons shallow in either content or language and absence of textbooks in professional subjects based on CLIL may prevent students from getting systematized knowledge of the subject.

**3.2. Discussion.** Results of the survey among students-prospective teachers and analysis of scientific works in the field revealed potential

problems of CLIL introduction in Russian universities and their possible solutions:

1. Human resources - the number of subject teachers speaking English (at least B2 level) is dramatically small. The solution to this problem is in additional education either for foreign language teachers (for instance, in such fields as management, economics, marketing) or for subject teachers (in this case it is English courses and exchange programs). An unusual solution to this problem was found in Tomsk Polytechnic University when they involved two teachers to give a lesson at a time the so-called "courses with "double teacher" or, in other words "pedagogical team of two teachers"... A subject teacher was responsible for the content teaching and assessment, while a language teacher addressed language skills and use of language in professional sphere [Sidorenko et. al. 2018].

2. Content adaptation – subject teachers cannot simply teach their subject in English in the same amount and complexity of information due to mixed-abilities groups, i.e. some students may have good language skills (B2 and above), while others may experience certain problems with the foreign language. To avoid this problem it is important that a teacher should introduce new methods of teaching borrowed from foreign language methodology. In this case, additional training to a subject teacher is necessary.

3. Methodology – bilingual courses require special approach, which is still underdeveloped in Russian educational system. Many articles on the problems of bilingual education, CLIL in particular, describe bilingual classes as simply based on reading and discussion of texts [Kezeeva 2019; Yurasova 2015]. However, CLIL should be based on communicative tasks that make students use the new content in different activities (listening, speaking, reading and writing).

4. Lack of textbooks – today in Russia there are only foreign language textbooks, foreign language for specific purposes textbooks or subject textbooks in Russian. One possible solution to this problem is the use of authentic textbooks in the subject (Economics for example) adapted to the Russian reality by the teacher. In this case we again turn to the first problem in this list – the need for additional education in the field of foreign language methodology. Thus, a conclusion can be made that special training and re-training courses should be organized in universities for prospective CLIL teachers. European experience may help Russian education in this area, as CLIL pedagogy is very well developed, both in theory and practice and there is a qualification framework in CLIL teaching. If these problems are solved Russian higher education might move to a new, better stage of its development.

The main requirements to CLIL methodology in Russian universities may be the following:

- learning content should comply with the Federal State Educational Standard of Higher Education;
- student's needs should be the basis for the choice of language content and methods of teaching;
- methodology must be universal to make it suitable for different specialties;

• methods of teaching should combine both traditional and innovative approaches.

4. CONCLUSION. This study revealed several problems in CLIL implementation, but the advantages of this methodology are obvious. First, Russian students will realize the importance of foreign language learning and they will move forward from "learn-for-later" principle to "learn-for-now" concept. Secondly, universities may increase their prestige and attract more enrollees both from Russia and abroad. Then, school and university teachers get a chance to upgrade their professional level and promote education quality in Russia. Finally, CLIL activates teachers' and students' cognitive abilities including critical and operational thinking skills. The prospects of this research include the analysis of learning materials (textbooks and online resources) from the point of view of the CLIL principles implemented in them.

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