

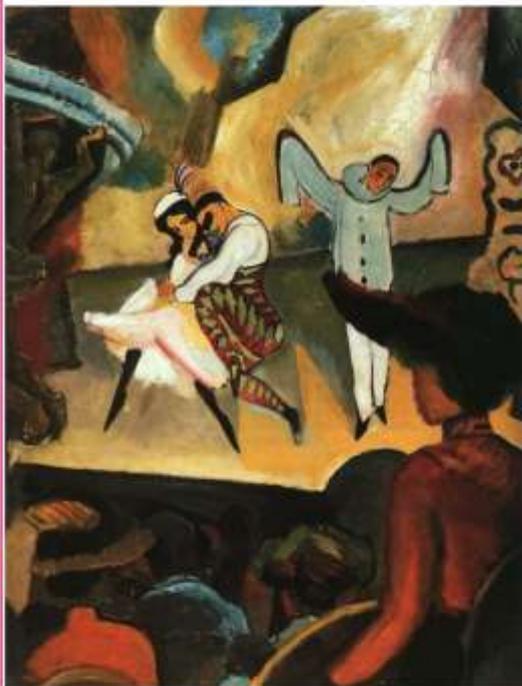
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Formation of the target professional Competences of CLIL Teachers

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Abstract

This article is devoted to CLIL (Subject and Language Integrated Learning) – describes teaching methods, where subjects are taught in foreign languages via comparative qualitative research methods. As a result, assessment in CLIL remains one of the aspects that poses difficulties as it depends on the national or local policy and established practices to a great extent, and causes intense discussions even within the CLIL community itself. In conclusion, teachers still lack competences in preparing/designing teaching materials for the CLIL class, the skills only acquired through long practice.

Keywords: Content, Language, Integrated Learning, Communication.

Formación de las competencias profesionales objetivo de los docentes de CLIL

Resumen

Este artículo está dedicado a CLIL (Aprendizaje integrado de asignaturas e idiomas): describe los métodos de enseñanza, donde las asignaturas se imparten en idiomas extranjeros a través de métodos de investigación cualitativa comparativa. Como resultado, la evaluación en CLIL sigue siendo uno de los aspectos que plantea dificultades, ya que depende en gran medida de la política nacional o local y de las prácticas establecidas, y provoca discusiones intensas incluso dentro de la propia comunidad de CLIL. En conclusión, los maestros aún carecen de competencias en la preparación / diseño de materiales de enseñanza para la clase CLIL, las habilidades solo se adquieren a través de una práctica prolongada.

Palabras clave: Contenido, Lenguaje, Aprendizaje Integrado, Comunicación.

1. INTRODUCTION

The CLIL method was used for the first time at the Jyväskylä Finnish University and also in the Netherlands in the late 90s of the last century. The countries mentioned above emphasize project-based learning when students (from their home countries and from abroad) work in various groups for one semester. As a consequence of the cooperation, they are given the opportunity to work with people of

different backgrounds and with different native languages. This fact enables them to get used to a wide range of accents. The CLIL method is said to correspond with the process of being acquainted with the so-called lingua franca and uses it as a communication tool among nations in order to enable everyone to understand each other without having to learn many languages.

Coyle et al. (2010) give a more precise definition Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is a dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language. 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. So, CLIL or Content and Language Integrated Learning have many definitions. Here are some of them:

2002	An approach ... that may concern languages; intercultural knowledge, understanding and skills; preparation for internationalization and improvement of education itself(Marsh, 2002).
2006	A meaning focused learning method ... The aim is learning subject matter together with learning a language.
2007	An umbrella' term used to talk about bilingual education situations.
2009	An evolving educational approach to teaching and learning where subjects are taught through the medium of a nonnative language (TKT: CLIL Handbook).

The 4[']Cs framework and the language of/for/through learning Coyle et al. (2010) refer to this framework as a basic structure formed by the four main components of CLIL. Content: subject matter; progression in new knowledge, skills and understanding. Cognition: learning and thinking processes; engagement in higher-order thinking and understanding, problem-solving, and accepting challenges and reflecting on them.

Culture: developing intercultural understanding and global citizenship; self and other awareness, identity, citizenship, and progression towards multicultural understanding. Communication: language learning and using; interaction, progression in language using and learning. These four elements occur, as we can see, in a specific context which includes them all and which determines them. Mehisto et al. (2008) also refer to four basic principles which coincide with the 4[']Cs exposed by Coyle et al. (2010) However, instead of the culture they refer to Community. These four elements are tightly intertwined. For instance, learning the content has a positive influence on communication, as it contributes to language development. However, this influence can also be negative if, for example, the content is both difficult and unfamiliar to the learners, as this could hinder the language processing, especially if the instruction is not clear in the FL.

Coyle et al. (2010) present these different types of language in the form of a triptych:



Figure 1: CLIL Linguistic Progression

The language of learning: It is the type of language that learners have to acquire in order to be able to access the new knowledge that is going to be introduced through the specific content of the subject. It is language specific to the subject, so it can be related to the genre. For instance, in a CLIL lesson of History whose genre can be identified as a period study (this language would include terms and vocabulary related to houses, clothes, customs, etc., together with descriptions and generalizations and the use of, for example, the past tense. Language for learning: It is the language that learners will need to use during the lessons, so that they can develop and do the tasks and activities efficiently.

BICS/CALP and the CLIL-Matrix: Regarding the proficiency of the language used, Cummins (1984) makes the distinction between two different kinds:

BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills): It is related to everyday language and is not cognitively demanding.

CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency): It takes place in an academic setting and it refers to the language as a tool for learning.

While traditional language teaching is mainly the domain of BICS, this is different in CLIL, where CALP becomes more relevant. CALP refers to a set of knowledge structures or macro functions that can be subdivided into the three evaluative. These dimensions differ in their cognitive complexity and the level of abstraction involved and can be sequenced from lower to higher order thinking skills: recall, understand, apply, analyze, synthesize and evaluate. In CLIL, it is particularly important for teachers to realize that learners need to acquire foreign or second language not only at the BICS-level, but necessarily also at the CALP-level. Based on the distinction between BICS and CALP, Cummins (1984) created the following matrix and he placed BICS in quadrants I and II and CALP in quadrants III and IV:

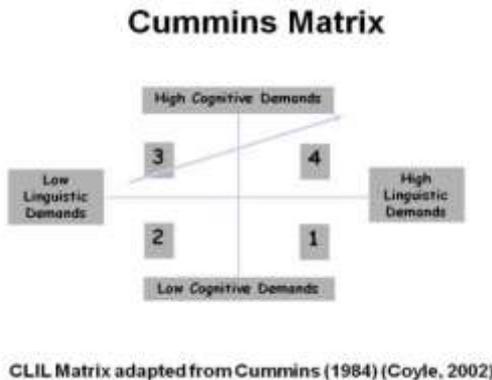


Figure 2

CLIL-teachers, therefore, need to teach for CALP in the same way as they need to teach for competence in the non-language subject. Coyle adapted Cummins' (1984) matrix to CLIL. In this adaptation, Coyle et al. (2010) present the different frames in which both cognition and language coincide, depending on how demanding each of them is. If the cognitive is too low taking into account the language level, then learning is restricted. The following figure also shows how, in the matrix, tasks can be designed to follow a trace from low to high cognitive and linguistic demands. Planning the tasks this way (auditing tasks), a teacher can monitor, sequence and scaffold the learning process: This task of balancing cognitive and linguistic demands is not easy, since the relationship between both cannot be balanced. Coyle et al. (2010) refer to this when they claim that in the CLIL classroom it is unlikely that the language level of the learners will be the same as their cognitive level.

Scaffolds are designed to provide just enough support for learners to succeed in a task in which they would not succeed without a scaffold. Scaffolds can be used when learners are ready for a new challenge but not yet able to master its complexity independently. This is what the psychologist Vygotsky termed the Zone of Proximal Development, ZPD. Bruner (1986) quotes this definition from Vygotsky: the ZPD is the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers. Scaffolds

are what teachers and tutors use to help learners navigate across the ZPD.

Involving learners in CLIL in processes of meaningful interaction requires:

□ Teachers to carefully consider the many dimensions represented in the CLIL principles and

□ Learners to meet various challenges regarding many diverse competences at the levels of content, language and interaction.

2. METHODOLOGY

The idea of CLIL (the approach that integrates content and language learning) contributes to the development of the key competences necessary for the knowledge-based society members; it shapes the participants' attitudes towards innovative and creative subject teaching, encourages them to make the study process active via the application of practical teaching methods. This method inspires teachers to develop their professional and linguistic competences, enhances their teaching experience and advocates unlimited ways for creativity.

The training course included 288 academic hours of classroom work, dedicated to language skills development (216 hours of which were dedicated to subject-specific language learning) and CLIL methodology training (72 hours). CLIL methodology course

incorporated topics related to CLIL definitions, history, key concepts and contexts, key principles of CLIL methodology, integration of language, content and cognition, activity types, as well as practical lesson and module planning, materials design, assessment tools and other issues in CLIL.

On completion of the project, the participants were asked to complete a survey designed to find out the opinions and attitudes of the project participants about the CLIL method. The data obtained was presumed to provide valuable insights from the informed practitioners in the situation of CLIL in Kazakhstan, reveal possible obstacles and weak points that prevent smooth implementation of this innovative approach in Kazakhstan and outline the major directions that might help accelerate the application of this method.

Mellion (2008) researched success factors of CLIL implementation in tertiary education and constructed a conceptual model of 3'C's, in which three factors: the conditions, the commitment, and competencies, accounted for successful CLIL implementation. She stressed that especially commitment and competences (linguistic, didactic and multi-cultural) of the faculty determine the success or failure of the English-based curriculum. By commitment she meant teachers' willingness to make sacrifices, to invest extratime and energy if necessary; it also means effective and psychological attachment to the target of commitment, i.e. teachers' mostly positive attitude to the innovation and belief in what they do.

David Marsh (2002) defines competence as demonstrated ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social, and/or methodological abilities, in work or study situations and in professional and personal development. The CLIL Teacher's Competences Grid Bertaux et al. (2010) and EFFCTE Marsh (2002) are two frameworks that share a number of similar features, however, the principles on which they are based and how they are organized are quite different (Bertaux et al., 2010). They are seen as tools to provide a lever by which to substantially enhance teacher, learner and school performance (Marsh, 2002). They can also be used for identifying professional development needs.

Bertaux et al. (2010) provide a map of key competences to support CLIL development in a variety of contexts, and the framework is divided into two big sections: Underpinning CLIL and Setting CLIL in Motion, one related to laying the foundation for establishing and maintaining a CLIL programme, another to skills needed for implementing CLIL, i.e., the first relates to theoretical, administrative, and policy issues and the second to CLIL practice. Each area of competence is further subdivided into competences that are described in the form of can-do statements, and are named indicators of competence.

3. DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

The research is based on a combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data obtained by means of a questionnaire distributed to the project participants via e-mail after completion of a three-year training programme. The questionnaire was designed on the basis of the European Framework for CLIL Teacher Education, specifically, Target Professional Competences. The Framework was prior used as a tool to develop the course syllabus and as an instrument for personal reflection on the competences developed during the project. The questions were formulated taking into account the objectives of the project, however, focusing heavily on personal experiences and critical self-evaluation of the practical know-how and skills in CLIL practice (Shayakhmetova, 2018).

3.1. Questionnaire

Dear respondents, the Institute of Foreign Languages of Abai Kazakh National Pedagogical University is conducting a research among the teachers participating in the Project Modernization of the process of Content and Language Integrated Learning in the multilingual education of the higher school of the Republic of Kazakhstan by creating an innovative Center for training and retraining of CLIL-teachers regarding their opinions about the professional competences they possess and attitudes towards the CLIL

approach. We kindly request you to complete the following questionnaire (Yang et al., 2019).

3.2. Target professional competences

Choose (highlight or underline) the option that you think is the most appropriate for you (1. I agree; 2. I rather agree; 3. I do not know; 4. I rather disagree; 5. I disagree)

5.

Nº	Option	1	2	3	4	5
1	I am able to identify the appropriate content to be taught in my CLIL lesson.					
2	I am able to deploy strategies to support language learning in my content classes.					
3	I am able to support learners in building their learning capacity.					
4	I am able to nurture cooperation with colleagues and have a repertoire of cooperation strategies and skills.					
5	I am able to work with learners to jointly identify learners' needs in					

	CLIL.					
6	I am able to plan content and language integrated lessons within the context of a general curriculum.					
7	I am able to create authentic and meaningful safe learning environment for my learners (e.g., group work, pair work, etc.).					
8	I am able to articulate CLIL-specific assessment needs and goals and to develop and implement related assessment tools.					
9	I am able to design cognitively and linguistically appropriate learning/teaching materials.					
10	I am able to use the language of appropriate complexity to ensure that my CLIL lesson goes smoothly.					

As you can see above, the questionnaire comprised 10 statements, each representing a Likert-type item to be answered using

a scale of 5. All the 10 questions encouraged the project participant to reflect on the professional competences acquired during the course and assess their own ability to apply the knowledge and skills from a variety of CLIL competence domains (Soo et al., 2019). The first two questions were related to the content and language awareness (Section 3 of the Framework), e.g. I am able to deploy strategies to support language learning in my content classes. Questions 3-8 dealt with the methodology and assessment (Section 4), e.g. I am able to plan content and language integrated lessons within the context of a general curriculum. Question 9 focused on the competences defined in Section 6.

The general overview of the findings with regard to the selfevaluation of the CLIL-related competences is presented in Figure 3 (detailed formulation of questions) (Indriastuti, 2019). Although the questions pertain to rather different aspects of professional skills and abilities, most of the respondents chose the options to agree and rather agree, which may be considered as a positive assessment of the competences gained through the 50 hours of the training course on CLIL methodology. The combined number of those options stands well above 50%, varying between 71% for Question 2 (deployment of strategies to support language learning) and 86.5% for Question 3.

Question 7 received most answers with very strong positive evaluation, followed by Question 1, and Question 4, with 15 or 28.8% each. It should be noted that these questions mostly reflect the general pedagogical competences combined with the subject-specific

competences and the fundamentals of CLIL, and therefore do not require a profound additional training, especially for experienced subject teachers. Question 6 had the largest number of responses I rather agree (35 all in all), followed by Question 3 (31), which correlates well with the findings for Questions 1, 4 and 7, as they also overlap with general pedagogical and subject-specific competences.

However, the number of positive (agree and rather agree) selfevaluation options drops to 65% for Question 9 which deals with ability to prepare/design teaching materials for the CLIL classroom, and even more markedly in Question 8 and Question 10, with 50% (26) and 46 % (24), respectively. What is more, the smallest number of I agree selected in Questions 9 and 10, along with 5 options chosen for Question 6 and 6 answers for Question 8 clearly indicate that the teachers are not confident about their key competences related to the practical implementation of the CLIL approach.

It may also imply that in addition to the individual competences of the teacher, such as the linguistic knowledge, teachers lack the appropriate administrative and regulatory support legalizing and fostering this practice. This is confirmed by the fact that quite a large number of respondents selected the choice I do not know in Questions 8-10 to assess their ability to articulate, develop and implement CLILspecific assessment needs and goals (34.6%), use the language of appropriate complexity to ensure the success of the CLIL classroom activities (28.8%), or design cognitively and linguistically appropriate learning/teaching materials (19%). Very few had a slightly negative

self-evaluation in Question 2 – ability to support language learning in the CLIL lesson, and Question 3 – ability to provide support for learners in building learning capacity, 6 participants confessed they find it difficult to identify the appropriate content to be taught in their CLIL classroom.

A considerable number of teachers (12) tend to express doubts about their competences related to the ability to apply strategies enabling language learning in content-driven classes. Interestingly, Question 7 stands out in this series of questions, as it had the fewest respondents (2) who indicated the option do not know. This demonstrates that the respondents have a more definite judgment about their competences to create an authentic and meaningful learning environment and practice. The number of definitely negative responses (disagree) is minimal, ranging between 1 in Questions 4, 6, 8, 9, 2 in Question 5 and Question 10, and 3 in Question 7.

This distribution of responses could be explained by the diversity of the profiles of teachers participating in the project in terms of the years in teaching practice, CLIL experience and, notably, the level of linguistic proficiency, which plays a crucial role in identifying the linguistic elements that need to be taken into account when planning and delivering a CLIL lesson to students with differing linguistic competence and employing assessment strategies of their progress. It is not surprising that assessment in CLIL remains one of the aspects that poses difficulties as it depends on the national or local policy and established practices to a great extent, and causes intense

discussions even within the CLIL community itself. In addition, one might dispute whether content teachers are used to designing teaching materials, not to speak about adjusting the authentic materials in another language to their pedagogical needs.

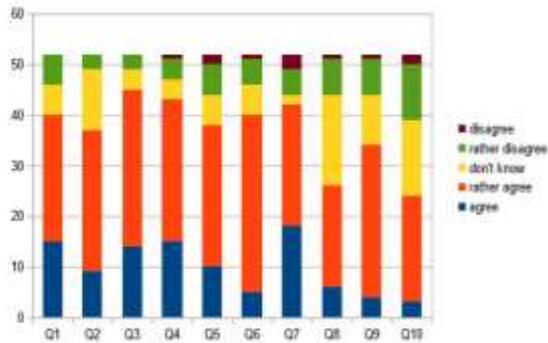


Figure 4: General trends in the teachers' opinions about their professional competences

4. CONCLUSION

The results of the survey clearly indicate that the participants of the project developed a positive attitude towards the CLIL method and positively assess the professional competences acquired during the programme. Since the training programme was based on a combination of selected descriptions from the Professional Development Modules proposed by the European Framework for

CLIL Teacher Education, it proves to be a useful tool when designing training courses for specific target groups of qualified content teachers; moreover, a fifty hours' programme seems to be adequate to get acquainted with the fundamentals of CLIL and acquire the basic professional competences related to practical implementation of CLIL in classroom. It should be mentioned, however, that teachers had only limited exposure to designing CLIL classroom curricula, the principles and objectives of assessment, and the problems arising in this field.

The weakest point identified involves a broad spectrum of language-related issues, such as the ability to support language learning in content, balancing the target language used between the learners' and teacher's linguistic ability, and overall insufficiency of linguistic competences. It should be emphasized, however, that despite the fact that teachers are critical about their linguistic competences, they appreciate CLIL as an opportunity to both develop their linguistic competences and enhance professionalism in the content area.

The study has obvious limitations due to a relatively small number of respondents (only project participants), and the range of competences included. Other instrumentation such as lesson observation and in-depth interviews or focus groups could be employed for further studies. However, it gives evidence that modular CLIL teacher training in Kazakhstan may prove to be highly motivational and lead to successful development of CLIL in schools provided professional competences are enforced and adequate regulatory support is assured.

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