

USE OF METHODOLOGY FOR CONTENT AND LANGUAGE INTEGRATED LEARNING AT PETRAS VILEIŠIS PROGYMNASIUM

Robert LEŠČINSKIJ

Vilnius Gediminas Technical University, Saulėtekio al. 11, LT-10223 Vilnius, Lithuania

E-mail: robert.lescinskij@vgtu.lt

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Globalisation processes worldwide, including Europe, have particularly led to the situation where learning one second language as a foreign language may not be enough to succeed in professional or academic activities in the future. Therefore, the focus of educators has shifted from the traditional model “learn a language now – practice later” to more interactive and engaging ways of teaching. One of “teaching by doing” methods that facilitate teaching of a language and a subject at the same time, is called Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) – an educational approach that puts emphasis on teaching a subject through the medium of a second language thus improving both language and subject learning.

Keywords: CLIL, language learning, language teaching, integrated language learning.

Introduction

Over the course of the last 12 years, Content and Language Integrated Learning has been one of prevailing topics in numerous conferences for educators and policy makers, workshops and other teacher-training events in Lithuania. However, no extensive research has been conducted to reveal its efficiency in Lithuanian schools. Furthermore, it is not entirely clear how broadly it is used at different levels of Lithuanian education system, and what factors discourage teachers from using CLIL methodology. Another relevant problem is encouraging teachers to use the approach in their professional activities. Therefore, the *object*

of the conducted research is to investigate the application of CLIL methodology in Lithuanian schools. Petras Vileišis Progymnasium in Vilnius has been chosen for this purpose due to two reasons: a) well-established traditions of bilingual education (CLIL (English, German) and EMILE approaches facilitated by teachers) and b) successfully implemented CLIL related projects in the past (CLIL project *Development of Content and Language Integrated Learning in the Teaching Process*, 2011–2013). The aim of the *performed research* is to analyse attitudes of teachers working at Petras Vileišis Progymnasium toward the use of CLIL methodology and to

identify problems that limit a broader implementation of the approach. In order to accomplish the aim, the following *objectives* have been set: 1) to overview scientific literature on CLIL; 2) to acquire data on the extent to which CLIL methodology is applied at Petras Vileišis Progymnasium; 3) to analyse and present data on problems that limit the use of CLIL at Petras Vileišis Progymnasium in a quantitative fashion. A number of *methods* have been applied to carry out the research, including a) analysis of scientific literature; b) surveying through questioning and c) quantitative analysis of the obtained data.

Theoretical background

Schools that use a foreign language to teach certain subjects in the curriculum is no longer a novelty in the context of contemporary Europe as this idea has existed for several decades. Some of the earliest uses of this approach have been particularly noticeable in multicultural regions located close to national borders or in areas inhabited by ethnic minorities. Bilingual education has also been long available in some largest cities in Europe. This type of education was aimed at enabling children to acquire proficiency in language comparable to that of native speakers. (Eurydice 2006: 8). Some of the most prestigious schools in Europe, such as in the European School Movement, have long recognized the benefits of bilingual education (Baker 2001: 237). However, the original idea of bilingual education can be traced back to Canada, where this learning model has been implemented since early 1960s (Cummins 2013: 1). According to Jim Cummins, bilingual education in Canada has been widely implemented through so-called immersion programmes that enable the majority of groups of English-L1 speakers to acquire fluency in French (Cummins 2013: 2). However, the Canadian model of bilingual education is different from the European CLIL as much more instructional time is devoted to

teaching subjects through a second language; whereas in the traditional approach to CLIL across Europe, teaching of subjects in a second language amounts to less than 50 per cent of instructional time (Cummins 2013: 1).

Scientists in North America and Europe agree that such a context-based approach to language teaching has a number of benefits for learners, as it enhances learning of a language as well as a subject (Marsh 2012: II.6). It also provides an opportunity for the so much needed authentic communication (Harris, Ó Duibhir 2011: 15). Therefore, scholars also stress the necessity to introduce Content and Language Integrated Learning into the curriculum as early as in primary school (Ó Duibhir, Cummins 2012: 92).

Despite being used throughout schools in Europe and extensively researched by scientists, CLIL reached Lithuanian schools only in 2002, after a project was initiated by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania. In 2004, the British Council joined the project by organising three teacher-training events. Most of participating schools were represented by subject and a foreign language (English, German, French) teachers (Andziulienė *et al.* 2006: 19).

Application of CLIL methodology at Petras Vileišis Progymnasium

Prior to analysing the data obtained by surveying the teaching staff of Petras Vileišis Progymnasium, it is important to mention that the teachers have used two different CLIL models. In some cases, especially relevant to earlier attempts to apply CLIL in a classroom, subject teachers cooperated with foreign language teachers in preparing and teaching lessons. However, in most recent examples of bilingual lessons, subject teachers have stepped up and taught their lessons without the help of foreign language teachers. Some instructions have been given in English during history, ICT, moral education (ethics), home economics, geography

and dance. Some instructions have been given in French during mathematics, ICT and biology. Some instructions have been given in German during arts, ICT, biology, home economics and geography. For students in grades 1 to 4, some art lessons and lessons on introduction to science were partially taught in English or French.

The survey took place at Petras Vileišis Progymnasium during the period of September–October of the academic year 2014/2015. 55 teachers out of 65 (84.6%) completed questionnaires that consisted of 19 questions. In response to the first question on whether or not they knew CLIL as such, 53 respondents (96.3%) answered “Yes”, one respondent chose “No” and one marked “Partially” (1.8%). 35 teachers (63.6%) said they have organised CLIL lessons before and 20 respondents (36.3%) answered negatively. Furthermore, 42 teachers (76.4%) were aware of CLIL lessons organised at Petras Vileišis Progymnasium, 12 respondents (21.8%) did not know about CLIL lessons and 1 respondent (1.8%) was partially aware of CLIL lessons organised at Petras Vileišis Progymnasium (see Fig. 1).

Questions 4–6 aimed at revealing whether the teachers participated in any teacher training events that involved individual studies on CLIL methodology. The analysis of received answers disclosed that the majority of respondents have participated in teacher-training sessions focusing on CLIL (58.1%), have read methodological literature on CLIL (60%) or have observed CLIL lessons (65.4%). 38.1% of respondents have not participated in teacher-training sessions on CLIL, 36.3% have not read any methodological literature on CLIL and 34.5% have never observed CLIL lessons. 3.6% of respondents indicated to have partially participated in teacher-training sessions on CLIL and have read methodological literature partially related to CLIL (Fig. 2).

The following results of the survey refer to answers given by the teachers who delivered CLIL lessons.

The teachers gave different reasons explaining why they decided to implement CLIL methodology in the classroom. 10 teachers (28.6%) indicated they wanted to test the efficiency of the method and find out what effect it would have on student motivation; 8 teachers

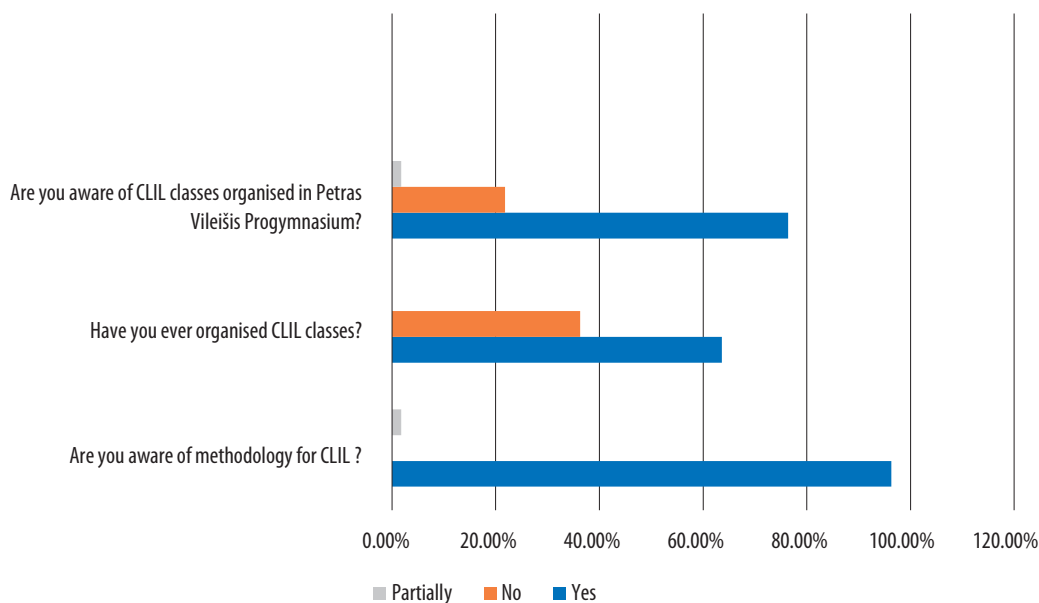


Fig. 1. Use of CLIL methodology at Petras Vileišis Progymnasium

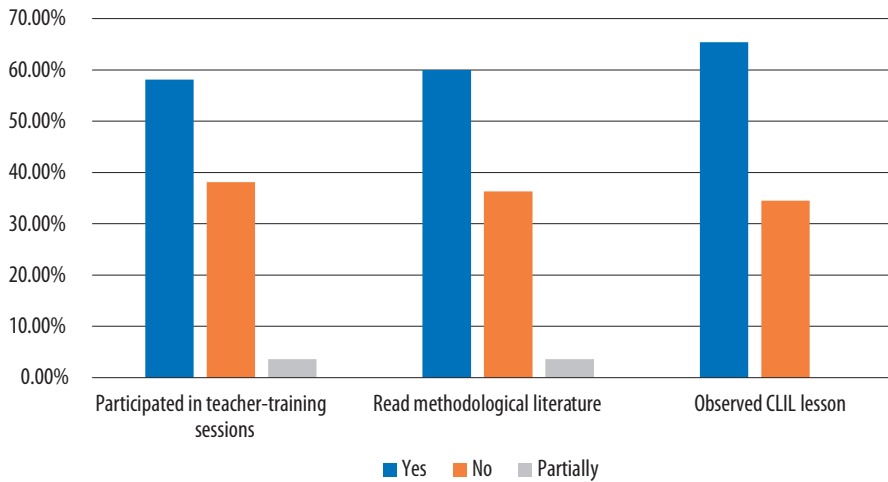


Fig. 2. Percentage of teachers who have participated in CLL training sessions, have read corresponding methodological literature or have observed CLIL lessons

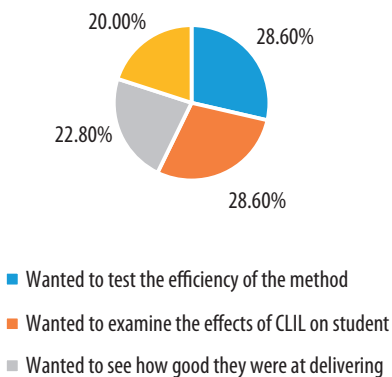


Fig. 3. Reasons for applying the methodology for CLIL in a classroom

(22.8%) wanted to discover how good they were at delivering instructions in a foreign language; 7 respondents (20%) wanted to determine the effect of CLIL on language learning (see Fig. 3).

Respondents were also asked to indicate what part of instructional time was dedicated to teaching of a foreign language. 8 respondents (22.8%) pointed out they spent less than ten minutes of instructional time, 25 teachers (71.5%) spent 10–15 minutes of instructional time and 2 respondents (5.7%) — 20–25 minutes of instructional time for teaching a foreign language (Fig. 4).

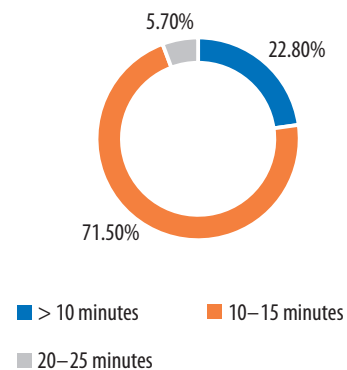


Fig. 4. Instructional time for teaching in a foreign language (in minutes)

Moreover, the teachers were asked if they noticed changes in student motivation for working in a classroom once CLIL methodology was used. 25 respondents (71.4%) believed that student motivation improved, 6 respondents (17.2%) said that student motivation improved only partially, and 4 teachers (11.4%) claimed that motivation remained unchanged (see Fig. 5).

When asked to give feedback on the outcomes of applying CLIL in a classroom, 28 respondents (80%) gave a positive feedback; among them, 7 (20%) chose “Partially positive”. Furthermore, 25 teachers (71.4%) claimed that

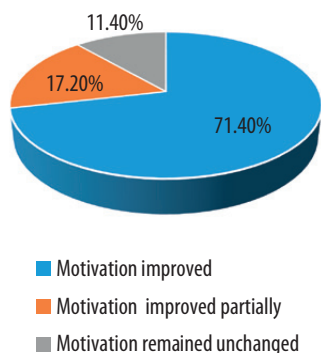


Fig. 5. Impact of CLIL methodology on student motivation

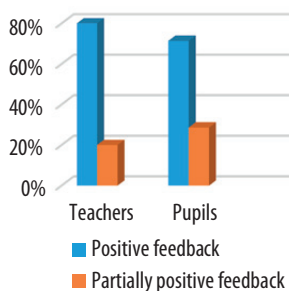


Fig. 6. Opinion of students and teachers on the outcomes of applying CLIL in a classroom

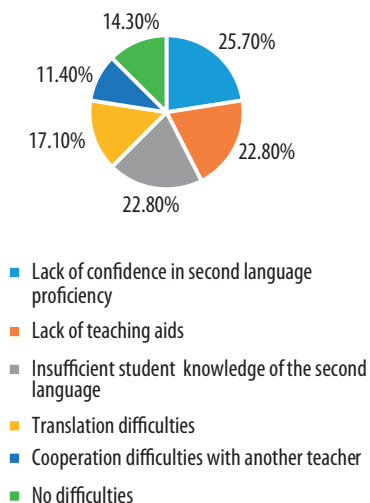


Fig. 7. Difficulties encountered by the teachers in preparing and delivering CLIL lessons

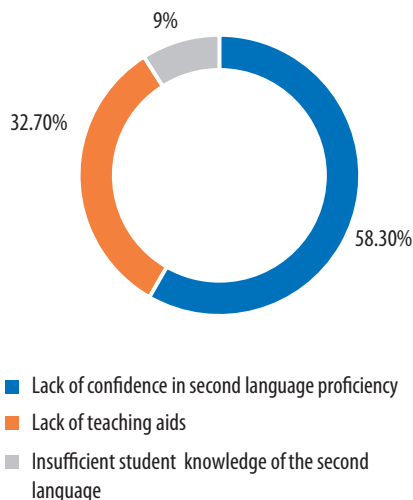


Fig. 8. Reasons for not using the methodology for CLIL

students evaluated such lessons positively; whereas 10 respondents (28.6%) chose the answer “Partially” (see Fig. 6).

The survey also revealed that the majority of CLIL lessons (60%) have been delivered by content teachers alone; whereas 40% of classes have been given by those in cooperation with language teachers. The majority of teachers who prepared CLIL lessons indicated that they faced certain difficulties during preparation and teaching. For instance, 9 respondents (25.7%) said they were not confident about their foreign language proficiency, 8 respondents (22.8%) mentioned they lacked necessary teaching aids and that some students did not have sufficient knowledge of the language, 6 teachers (17.10%) agreed it was difficult to translate some terminology, 4 respondents (11.4%) indicated it was difficult to cooperate with another teacher and 5 teachers (14.3%) did not encounter any difficulties (see Fig. 7).

The survey also revealed that 1 respondent (2.8%) would highly recommend, 29 respondents (82.9%) would recommend and 6 teachers would seldom recommend this methodology to their colleagues.

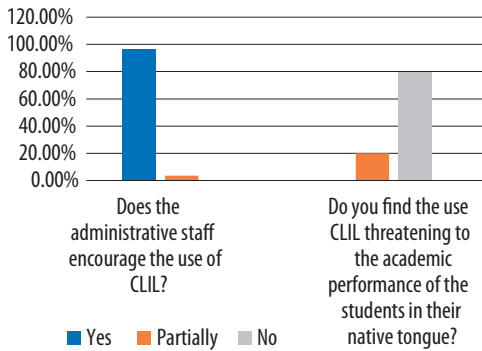


Fig. 9. Impact of CLIL methodology on academic performance in native language and school administration's view on CLIL methodology

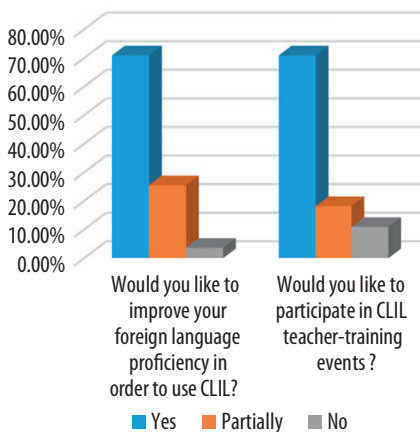


Fig. 10. Teacher willingness to improve their foreign language proficiency and participate in CLIL training

The following data refer to answers given by all teachers, including those who have not taught any CLIL lessons. The survey showed that the majority of respondents (58.3%) have not used CLIL methodology in a classroom (or have not been using it frequently) because they have not been confident about their foreign language proficiency. 18 respondents (32.7%) indicated a lack of teaching aids as an obstacle to giving CLIL lessons (or having them more often). 5 teachers (9%) said that a foreign language proficiency of students was insufficient for such classes (see Fig. 8).

The teaching staff seem to feel the support of school administration when it comes to CLIL, as 53 respondents (96.4%) indicated that the administrative staff of the school has encouraged the use of CLIL methodology and only 2 respondents (3.6%) thought the encouragement has been partial. Also, the majority of respondents (44.80%) stated they did not think that the application of CLIL has had negative effects on the academic performance of students in their native tongue. 11 respondents (20%) opted out for "Partially" (see Fig. 9).

Moreover, the teachers were asked if they would like to increase their foreign language proficiency in order to use CLIL in their classes. The survey revealed that 39 respondents (70.9%) would like to improve their foreign language proficiency in order to use CLIL in a classroom, 14 teachers (25.5%) said they would partially like to improve their language proficiency, and 2 respondents (3.6%) did not want to improve their language proficiency. Finally, 39 (70.9%) teachers would like to participate in teacher-training events on coping with CLIL problems, 10 respondents (18.2%) would partially like to participate in such training, and 6 respondents (10.9%) would not like to participate in such training (see Fig. 10).

Conclusions

The analysis of scientific literature and surveyed results allow drawing the following conclusions:

1. The benefits of bilingual education have been proved by scientists in different countries and cultures.
2. CLIL benefits both language and subject learning without imposing any negative effects on the academic performance of students in their native language.
3. The majority of teachers at Petras Vileišis Progymnasium in Vilnius have successfully applied CLIL methodology in a classroom.
4. Both students and teachers have positively assessed the outcomes of CLIL lessons.

5. The teachers feel they do not have sufficient command of a foreign language, and, therefore, do not apply CLIL or do not use it as frequently as they could. They also believe there is a lack of appropriate teaching aids. Both problems can be solved by teaming-up with foreign language teachers.
6. The teachers are willing to attend methodological and foreign language training to be able to properly manage CLIL.

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INTEGRUOTO DALYKO IR UŽSIENIO KALBOS MOKYMO METODIKOS TAIKYMAS VILNIAUS PETRO VILEIŠIO PROGIMNAZIJOJE

Robert LEŠČINSKIJ

Vilniaus Gedimino technikos universitetas, Saulėtekio al. 11, LT-10223 Vilnius, Lietuva
El. paštas robert.lescinskij@vgtu.lt

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Reikšminiai žodžiai: IDUKM, integruotas dalyko ir užsienio kalbos mokymas, dvikalbis mokymas.