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Applying CLIL Techniques to Teach Analytic Philosophy in English

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I have been lecturing Analytic Philosophy course in English at Oles Honchar Dnipro National University, Ukraine, for three years. Teaching using CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) techniques enables me to do it effectively.

Using English as the medium of instruction for academic subjects is an increasing practice in different countries and universities across the world (Dearden, 2014). Some factors stimulate this trend. Many students prefer to attain knowledge in English because it helps them improve overall and specific language competence, access international certification, and enhance their academic record. Many policy makers and university administrators consider a wide and active usage of English in the learning process at national universities to internationalize their educational offer and stimulate writing high-quality research papers in English by university faculty, which, in turn, helps universities move up in the international rankings.

Besides, there are some types of subjects for which learning in English is preferable because of their peculiarities. Learning analytic philosophy by philosophy students is a good example. One of the requirements for master's-degree students is a profound knowledge of professional subjects. For philosophy students, reading primary sources in the original language for understanding true and deep content of the philosophical thoughts is important. So learning analytic philosophy in English is a good way to achieve deep knowledge in this subject. Because main texts of analytic philosophy were written in English, main terms of this philosophy are English terms.

When you teach a content subject in a language that is not the learners' mother tongue, the issue of teaching strategies is extremely important. There are different forms of education in a second language around the world, such as "content and language integrated learning" (CLIL), "immersion education," "minority education," "bilingual education," "English-medium education in developing countries," and "recent English-medium science and math programs." Many of them demonstrate that it is possible for students to learn subject knowledge in L2 without reducing the cognitive challenge of the subject learning.

After studying the specifics of these learning strategies, I chose CLIL as a methodology framework to design my course. At my university, for which I have created the course "Analytic Philosophy," students are mainly taught in Ukrainian, not English. So CLIL was the best choice because CLIL pedagogy enables to obtain good results even when students have one or a limited number of CLIL

subjects. The other forms of education in L2 involve a large proportion of the curriculum.

“Content and language integrated learning” is a recent set of practices that originated in Europe in the 1990s. CLIL practitioners have good track records. The figures state that “CLIL tends to work – in the sense, for example, that learners can acquire good levels of subject knowledge” (Ball, Kelly, & Clegg, 2016).

The term “CLIL” describes both learning another (content) subject, such as philosophy and history, through a foreign language and learning a foreign language by studying a content-based subject. CLIL lessons are neither language lessons nor subject lessons transmitted in a foreign language. CLIL lessons have their own peculiarities. According to Steve Darn, whose teaching experiences were recommended by the British Council, CLIL can be characterized as follows:

- Knowledge of the language becomes the means of learning content.
- Learning is improved through increased motivation and the study of natural language seen in context.
- CLIL is based on language acquisition rather than enforced learning.
- Language is seen in real-life situations in which students can acquire the language (Darn, 2006).

During CLIL lessons, an instructor not only facilitates students’ knowledge of subject content but also develops their knowledge of content-related lexis and all four language skills—speaking, reading, listening, and writing. The CLIL lessons focus on the subject. There is an idea that a language is learned best when

one uses it to learn something else. In a CLIL course, English is learned mainly through utilization and acquisition. English is used to learn and to communicate.

There are two kinds of using CLIL techniques: one is a language-led approach, the other is content-led. The term “Soft CLIL” is used to describe supporting content learning in language classes; the term “Hard CLIL” is to support language learning in content classes. My course is based on the “Hard CLIL.” According to the authors of *Oxford Handbooks for Language Teachers: Putting CLIL Into Practice*, “‘Hard’ CLIL is a form of subject teaching in L2 which highlights academic achievement within the subject and treats language development as important, but as a bonus” (Ball, Kelly, & Clegg, 2016).

Of course, providing CLIL lessons requires proper language skills of the subject instructor. The Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine demands qualification B2 CEFR for CLIL instructors in universities. The instructor’s subject knowledge and motivation level are important in CLIL teaching. Instructors who sufficiently know a subject and are well motivated can cope with not very high levels of L2 ability. Students also need a proper level of fluency in English. However, “It is possible to run a good CLIL program starting with learners with low or even zero L2 ability” (Ball, Kelly, & Clegg, 2016). In my course, I am oriented to students with level B1+.

All three groups of my master’s-degree students who had learned analytic philosophy by CLIL techniques demonstrated good results of their learning. They not only achieved strong knowledge of analytic philosophy but also sufficiently improved their skills in English writing, speaking, reading, and listening.

References

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