FOREIGN LANGUAGE TRAINING OF EASTERN EUROPEAN HUMANITARIAN COLLEGES STUDENTS USING CONTENT AND LANGUAGE INTEGRATED LEARNING (CLIL) METHOD

Abstract. The article is devoted to the study of the peculiarities of using the method of content and language integrated learning (CLIL) in the process of foreign language training of humanitarian colleges students in several Eastern European countries (Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia). Based on the analysis of scientific and methodological literature, the authors found out that during the last decade the CLIL method has been rapidly spreading in the European educational space in three main forms: so called «hard», «soft» and «partial immersion». In Eastern Europe, the «hard» form of CLIL is the most widespread, because, according to educators, it is better able to implement the idea of integrating learning in a certain discipline and a foreign language. At the same time, practical teachers are aware that only a balanced combination of foreign language and non-philological content can give the best educational effect. In pedagogical practice, the CLIL method is often used by teachers of special (non-philological) disciplines who possess high level of foreign language training. However, the latter often subconsciously pursue only one goal of learning - language, evaluating the overall success of students mostly from the perspective of success in a foreign language. Therefore, it is more logical to train a subject teacher who will have a high level of competence in the foreign language field than a foreign language philologist who has additional subject specializations. The authors found out that as of today, in contrast to most EU countries, there are not many accredited programs in humanitarian colleges in Eastern Europe that are fully focused on the training of CLIL teachers. Humanitarian colleges offer only select courses, which are
often elective ones. Although practicing and prospective teachers (who are interested in developing their professional competences in CLIL) have access to courses offered by national and international post-graduate teacher education institutions, but this is clearly not enough. Thus, the authors come to the conclusion that the strategy of adequate systematic training of CLIL teachers does not yet have a clear definition in humanitarian colleges of the studied countries (Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia). Under such conditions, the authors recommend starting with an assessment of existing competencies and clarifying the needs of a teacher interested in systematic work using CLIL method. This assessment can be based on the requirements described in the Recommendations of the European Commission on the training of such specialists, the Table of Competencies of the CLIL teachers, reflections of the teachers themselves, feedback from students, educational institutions administrations, other interested parties.

**Key-words:** humanitarian college, foreign language training of students, content and language integrated learning, Eastern Europe, CLIL teacher.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The educational standards adopted in the European Union interpret and specify the description of learning outcomes. According to them, every humanitarian college graduate should have not only professional, but also psychological, pedagogical, methodical knowledge, flexible skills necessary for the comprehensive performance of professional tasks, in particular, a high level of foreign language training. The Council of Europe has defined a list of key competencies that are required for self-realization, personal development, employment, social integration, sustainable living, successful coexistence in peaceful societies, healthy lifestyle, and active citizenship.

**Problem setting.** All key competencies are equally important, and it is possible to develop them, including in the process of foreign language training. The value of flexible skills is also increasing, because in the future two-thirds of professions will require a high level of their development. The value of a specialist on the labour market is significantly increased by knowledge of foreign languages, and from the point of view of the mobility opportunities provided by European Union membership, competences in the field of foreign language communication become invaluable in general. There are various foreign language training technologies used productively in colleges of Eastern Europe («flipped classroom» technology, project-based learning technology, task-based learning and teaching), but in this article we will focus on the use of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) technology.

**The aim of the study.** The goal of the article is to determine and analyze main directions of using Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) technology for foreign language training of the humanitarian college students in three Eastern European countries (Poland, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia).

### 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The didactic method of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in the most general sense refers to the teaching of a non-language subject using a foreign language as a means of communication and exchange of educational content. The CLIL method allows you to form the linguistic and communicative competence of future specialists in a foreign language in the same educational context in which their general knowledge and skills are formed. The content of a non-language subject is developed with the help of a foreign language, which simultaneously serves to mediate this educational content. This type of integrated education has two main goals - the acquisition of knowledge and skills in the subject and a foreign language areas, and is often complemented by a third objective that defines how these skills will be developed.

The problem of effective teaching of foreign languages to humanitarian students using innovative methods of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) technology has always been of interest to practical teachers in the European Union (Almenta E. [1], Bertaux P., Coonan C., [2], Coyle D., Hood P., Marsh D. [3], Frigols M. [4], Graddol O. [5], Mehisto P. [6]) and in Eastern Europe in particular (Czura A.[7], Multańska M. [8], Novotná J., Hofmannová M. [9], Olpińska M. [10], Pawlak M. [11], Romanowski P. [12], Šmidová T., Sladkovská K., Cvejnová J. [13], Štefflová J. [14]). Having analyzed their works on the issue it is not difficult to notice that great interest in this method is primarily related to the fact that this hybrid immersion approach not only produces more immediate results but also appeals to self-motivated audiences who possess a basic knowledge and understanding of the target language [3].

The term CLIL was introduced into pedagogical science in the mid-1990s, but over the years its definition has changed several times. Today, CLIL is a specific type of teaching that combines the procedures of foreign language didactics and non-language subject didactics. Its characteristic feature is the
appeal to many organizational forms and methods of work, in which various learning strategies are used, and the main goal is to stimulate students' critical thinking, develop creativity and increase motivation. CLIL is based on the well-known assumption that foreign languages are best learned on the basis of real concrete content mediated by the foreign language, and not simply by focusing on the language itself, its structures and forms, as is often the case in the process of «pure» foreign language teaching. CLIL is sometimes called one of the approaches to bilingual education, which involves intensive contact with the target language and is aimed at acquiring foreign language competence at the level of a native speaker, at least at the level of receptive skills. On the other hand, CLIL focuses on both receptive and productive skills, simultaneously taking into account their possible limitations on the part of all participants in the educational process - both students and teachers, and therefore is often implemented partly in a foreign, partly in the native language, however, emphasizing the special role of foreign [5, p. 32].

The CLIL methodology reflects the modern globalized outlook, in which separate fields of knowledge and disciplines are intertwined, complementing and enriching each other. In this context, the classical type of education, which involves teaching individual subjects separately, no longer meets the requirements of the time. CLIL not only allows for the integration of subjects and disciplines, but also introduces new procedures that contribute to the significant activation of the student's role in the educational process, thereby developing the skills of educational autonomy.

The CLIL methodology is rapidly spreading in the European educational space in three main forms. The so-called «hard» CLIL assumes that at least half of the subjects of the curriculum in the specialty are taught in a foreign language. This form is subject to special content (subject goal) and is most often implemented by teachers of non-philological specialties. Instead, in «soft» CLIL, professional foreign language teachers include the thematic content of a certain non-linguistic subject in their curriculum, and the choice of content is subordinated to the foreign language (linguistic goal). The third form of «partial immersion» occupies an intermediate position and is used when some modules of the major programme are studied in a foreign language [6, p. 29].

Eastern Europe (Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia) has the most widespread «hard» form of CLIL, because, according to teachers, it is better able to implement the idea of integrating learning in a certain discipline and a foreign language. At the same time, they are aware that only a balanced combination of foreign language and non-philological content can give the greatest educational effect. If a teacher wants to use a foreign language as a means of communication in a class on a certain subject, he should be aware that the language cannot «dictate» the content of such classes. True integration is one in which it is possible to determine which language elements will make information most accessible to students, which will help them better analyze ideas, work with them, adapt for themselves, and produce new ones based on them.

Teachers of special (non-philological) disciplines who have a high level of foreign language training often use the CLIL method in pedagogical practice. CLIL is much less often implemented by teachers of foreign languages who teach their discipline on the special content of another (non-linguistic) discipline. However, the latter often subconsciously pursue only one goal of learning - language, evaluating the overall success of students mostly from the perspective of success in a foreign language. Therefore, it is more logical to train a subject teacher who will have a high level of competence in the field of a foreign language than a foreign language philologist who has additional subject specializations.

The advantages of the CLIL methodology traditionally include: high demands on students' cognitive processes, which are usually not included in foreign language textbooks; learning compensatory strategies and developing communication skills in an effective way: working with real content (information) that can be used in further practical activities; increasing employment opportunities on the labour market (including abroad) and preparation for further education; expansion of the student's intercultural competence; improvement of the teacher's professional qualifications. Speaking about the shortcomings of CLIL, the following are most often noted: insufficient preparation of students for the use of a foreign language in the process of studying professional subjects; the lack or even absence of appropriate teaching materials and assessment tools for CLIL; unconscious or unsystematic implementation of the technique; reluctance of teachers to work according to the CLIL methodology due to the time-consuming and difficult preparation for teaching; insufficient language and/or professional competence of the teacher himself.

The use of CLIL potentially improves the climate not only within the student group, but also the entire institution, whose management can save time in the curriculum by allowing students to communicate in foreign languages in non-language classes, while using the interdisciplinary concept of the curriculum to increase the competitiveness of the institution. How can the advantages of the method be strengthened and its disadvantages reduced in a specific institution? This issue is determined by the capabilities of the teaching
3. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The popularity of CLIL teaching in recent years is associated with the general development of foreign language teaching in Eastern European educational institutions. At the same time, political and social changes also led to a significant increase in interest in foreign languages at all levels of the educational process - among teachers, students, parents, because foreign language competence is required by most spheres of social life, from professional and educational activities to foreign trips and tourism, access to foreign sources of information (films, literature, etc.). One of the answers to the need to expand the active knowledge of foreign languages, among other things, was the development of bilingual education in primary, secondary and higher education institutions of both countries, and, as a result, teachers are increasingly turning to CLIL. Today, in parallel with regular classes in a foreign language, training takes place according to this method, which aims not to replace traditional classes, but rather to enrich them [11, p. 8].

During the last decade in the EU, the implementation of CLIL methodology has been supported in both public and private colleges. The intensity and effectiveness of its implementation directly or indirectly depend on many factors listed above, but the cornerstone still remains the question of the qualifications of the teaching staff. Researchers J. Novotná and M. Hofmannová, thinking about what CLIL teachers should know and be able to do, mention the main models that have been implemented over the years in different countries and with different results [9, p. 60]:

1) CLIL training is carried out by native speakers who have a pedagogical education in a certain non-linguistic field of knowledge;
2) training according to the CLIL method is carried out by domestic teachers of non-philological specialties who are able to actively use a foreign language in their professional activities, but do not have a special foreign language education;
3) training according to the CLIL method is carried out by domestic teachers - professional foreign language specialists, but who do not have the appropriate education in a certain non-philological subject;
4) CLIL teaching is carried out by two teachers - a foreign language specialist and a non-philology specialist, who are simultaneously present in the classroom and help (complement) each other.

The experience of implementing these models in the EU countries confirms the assumption that a qualified specialist in a foreign language who does not have an appropriate education in a non-philological specialty faces many problems in CLIL due to his insufficient awareness of the issues of subject didactics, and therefore does not achieve the necessary results in the non-philological discipline he is trying to teach. The model in which there are two teachers in the class at the same time and the model involving the subject teacher, a foreign language speaker, usually give better results, but both models are financially much more expensive, and therefore their large-scale implementation in Eastern European schools is considered unlikely in the near future [9, p. 63].

Therefore, the most realistic option remains the training of domestic teachers of non-philological specialties who are able to actively use a foreign language in the process of teaching their disciplines. In the teacher education systems of Eastern Europe, future teachers of non-philological specialties are offered training in special courses for teachers using the CLIL method at the pedagogical faculties of universities.

In particular, at the Pedagogical College of the West Czech College in Pilsen (Fakulta pedagogická Západočeské univerzity v Plzni (ZČU)) during the semester, students are taught the discipline «Integration of general education subjects into the teaching of English», within the framework of which they get acquainted with the principles of effective integrated learning and study the procedures for creating content-language integrated educational unit [15].

During one semester, students of the Pedagogical College in Český Budějovice (Pedagogická fakulta Jihočeské univerzity v Českých Budějovicích) are offered to familiarize themselves with the peculiarities of teaching their subject in a foreign language, learn the methodology of using CLIL in primary and secondary schools, study special terminology, the possibilities of using modern ICT in CLIL education, determine the advantages and disadvantages of using authentic materials [16].
At the Pedagogical College of the Masaryk University in Brno (Pedagogická fakulta Masarykovy univerzity) the Master's program offers an additional compulsory semester course «Content and Language Integrated Learning», which aims to present information and raise students' awareness of the CLIL philosophy so that future professionals are able to use this methodology in the process of teaching non-philological subjects [17].

At the Pedagogical College of Charles University in Prague (Pedagogická fakulta Univerzity Karlovy v Praze) CLIL teaching takes place at several levels. CLIL didactics is taught in the departments of subject teaching methods, at the same time, in the departments of foreign languages, professional subjects are taught in a foreign language with the aim of developing both students’ theoretical knowledge and their practical skills in this field. Foreign language propaedeutics and professional vocabulary are important topics. Students visit institutions where non-philological subjects are taught using the CLIL method, and also conduct their own lessons there. Students often cooperate by practicing group learning when planning and implementing integrated learning [18].

Students of the Pedagogical College of the College in Olomouc (Pedagogická fakulta Univerzity Palackého v Olomouci) are offered a two-semester course «Integrated teaching of mathematics and English», which, in addition to future teachers of mathematics, can be attended by students of other pedagogical specializations. Language skills of students are purposefully developed at the level of professional mathematical terminology, as well as at the level of general knowledge of a foreign language for professional communication [19].

With the development of the implementation of CLIL in schools, the circle of those who want to train teachers to work according to this method has expanded significantly. Relevant courses are offered by pedagogical faculties of universities, educational centers, institutions of postgraduate pedagogical education, and even by private individuals. Humanitarian colleges are also actively involved in national, regional and international (mainly European) projects, the purpose of which is to study issues, develop methodology and implement systematic and effective training of CLIL teachers.

Effective students’ preparation for work according to the method of Content and Language Integrated Learning involves the development of professionalism, at least in three main areas: in the field of non-language subject; in the field of foreign language; in the field of didactics of integrated education. The first position is obvious, because the teacher must be an expert in the subject he teaches to the students. Next is the level of mastery of the foreign language, with which the teacher teaches his non-language subject. European countries do not have the same legally established norms and standards regarding the minimum level of foreign language competence of CLIL teachers, however, the Recommendations of the European Commission on the training of such professionals state that the level of foreign language competence should vary from B2 to C2 according to the CEFR system [4, p. 401]. It is obvious that the CLIL teacher needs linguistic fluency, because teaching in a foreign language requires the teacher to be able to communicate freely in it in basic professional and everyday situations, understand terminology and use the lexicon specific to the non-linguistic subject being taught (chemistry, geography, physics), organize training and presenting the programme (at least partially). The lower the level of foreign language competence, the stronger the teacher is forced to adapt (simplify) the course of integrated education due to language limitations.

An important characteristic of an effective CLIL teacher is a high level of didactic skills, which contributes to the creation of a productive learning environment. These are the basic competencies of quality pedagogical training, such as the ability to apply activating learning methods, the ability to create a variety of interesting learning situations, adapt the educational process to different learning styles and needs, know, respect and take into account the level of foreign language preparation of students, actively involve students in cooperation, choosing appropriate organizational forms, etc. At the same time, as M. Multańska points out, in addition to the factors mentioned above, the personal motivation of a teacher who wants to teach his subject in a foreign language is a guarantee of the success of such training, because preparing for lessons takes a lot of time and requires dedication from the teacher (even self-sacrifice), especially in the initial stages of training [8, p. 78].

In the long term, the systematicity, success and sustainability of CLIL teaching is ensured by the teacher having the professional qualities listed above, however, they are not limited to them. Descriptions of the main competencies of the CLIL teacher are presented in the pedagogical literature in different numbers and from different points of view, in particular in the works of such Eastern European scientists as Cvejnová J., Czura A., Pawlak M., Romanowski P., Sladkovská K., Šmídová T. and many others. According to the scientists, in addition to the fact that a teacher knows his subject perfectly, has a good command of a foreign language and basic didactic techniques, he should familiarize himself with the cognitive, sociocultural and
psychological aspects of studying a non-philological subject through the means of a foreign language. A CLIL teacher must be aware of the diversity of students’ needs in terms of knowledge, skills, abilities, experiences, etc., and be able to identify and take these needs into account when planning lessons. The CLIL teacher must take into account the role and function of the foreign language in the cognitive process, constantly seeking the optimal balance in planning between subject-oriented activities and the foreign language, finding such methods of work that will effectively develop both of these areas [12, p. 8]. A. Chura (A. Czura) notes that the CLIL teacher uses interactive and activating methods of work taking into account the age, foreign language training, abilities of students, as well as various verbal and non-verbal forms of presentation and practice of educational content, based on learning styles and needs of students. In addition, it conducts training through various organizational forms and uses a wide range of resources and teaching aids, including information technologies, which help students not only to acquire knowledge of the subject being studied, but also to develop foreign language skills through the simulation of various communicative situations of the "subject" direction [7, p. 110].

The developers of the <<Table of CLIL Teacher Competencies>> Bertaux P., Coonan C., Frigols-Martin M., Mehisto P. supplement the above list arguing that an effective CLIL teacher in the process of integrated learning [2]:
- at the same time, has a good understanding of the main linguistic aspects of a foreign language and the peculiarities of his subject area of knowledge;
- acquaints students not only with the content of the subject being studied, but also with linguistic means, methods and styles of communication related to the target subject;
- chooses assessment forms and methods that create a favourable learning environment and provide feedback both from the point of view of the educational content of the target subject and the development of foreign language skills;
- since the introduction of CLIL into school practice requires changes in the management of the institution and cooperation between teachers, he is ready to cooperate with colleagues, share knowledge and skills, exchange experience, receive and provide feedback as necessary;
- is aware of the need for contact between all stakeholders involved in the CLIL process (students, parents, administration, etc.) and recognizes their important role in the development of integrated learning;
- constantly self-improves through reflection and self-assessment.

Researchers D. Coyle, P. Hood, D. Marsh claim that traditional university programmes are unable to provide training for a competent CLIL teacher, so it is necessary to create and implement specialized training programmes based on specific integrated learning methods [3, p. 59].

4. CONCLUSIONS AND PROSPECTS OF FURTHER RESEARCH

Unfortunately, today, in contrast to most European Union countries, the majority of Eastern European humanitarian colleges do not have accredited programmes that are fully focused on the training of CLIL teachers. Humanitarian colleges’ curricular offer only certain courses (described above), which are often elective or optional at all. In addition, practicing and future teachers who are interested in developing their professional competences in the field of CLIL have access to numerous courses (both face-to-face and online) offered by national postgraduate institutes, national agencies of the European Education Programmes, national offices of the British Council (Great Britain), the Goethe Institute (Germany), the French Alliance (Alliance Française, France) and other international organizations. If a teacher is interested in the official certification of his competence in the field of CLIL teaching, he has the opportunity to take the international exam Cambridge ESOL Teaching Knowledge Test - CLIL module, which tests knowledge of the principles of CLIL teaching, planning, strategy and evaluation. Thus, the strategy of adequate systematic training of CLIL teachers is not yet clearly defined in Eastern European humanitarian colleges. Under such conditions, the first step should be an assessment of existing competencies and clarification of the needs of a teacher interested in systematic work using subject-language integrated teaching methods. This assessment can be based on the requirements presented above, described in the Recommendations of the European Commission on the training of such specialists, the Table of Competencies of the CLIL teacher, reflections of the teachers themselves, feedback from students, parents, administrations of educational institutions, and other interested parties.

As the perspectives of further research in this direction one can mention investigation the issues of possibility and effectiveness of implementation of the best European practices of using Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) method for foreign language training of students into the educational process of humanitarian colleges in Ukraine.
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