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### A TRILINGUAL REALITY: AN OVERVIEW

**Abstract.** The President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev in his message mentioned the necessity of application of the foreign experience in the local education. Thus, issue of trilingualism gains importance in the light of the newly introduced government policy. The present article is dedicated to the literature review on the issue of trilingualism and presents the thoughts on the works of foreign scholars concerning the CLIL model in the context of trilingualism. The article also presents the difference between the traditional education system and the trilingual with the application of CLIL model.

**Key words:** literature review, CLIL, trilingualism, traditional education system, difference.

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**Аңдатпа.** ҚР президентінің Қазақстан халқына жолдауында Отандық білім беру жүйесіне шетелдік тәжірибені кәсіби қолдану қажеттілігі туралы айтылды. Осылайша, жақында енгізілген үш тұғырлы тіл туралы сұрақ біздің республикамыздағы мемлекеттік саясатта маңызды орын алады. Берілген модельдің практикадағы қолданысында теоретикалық негіз үлкен рөл ойнайды. Осы мақалалада үш тұғырлы тіл контекстінде шетелдік ғалымдардың үштілділік сұрақтарға арналған жұмыстарында пәндік-тілдік кіріктірілген білім моделін енгізу сатылары қарастырылды.

**Түйін сөздер:** әдеби шолу, пән мен тілді кіріктіріп оқыту, үш тұғырлы тіл, дәстүрлі білім беру жүйесі, айырмашылық.

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**Абстракт.** Президент Республики Казахстан Нурсултан Назарбаев в Послании народу Казахстана говорил о необходимости применения зарубежного опыта в отечественной системе образования. Таким образом,

вопрос о трехязычии приобретает важное значение в свете недавно внедренной государственной политики в нашей республике. Теоретическая основа играет основную роль в применении данной модели на практике. Таким образом, в настоящей статье автор рассматривает разницу между особенностями традиционной системой образования и трехязычной системой с применением модели ПЯИО с целью выявления плюсов и минусов каждой из упомянутых систем.

**Ключевые слова:** обзор литературы, ПЯИО, трехязычие, традиционная система образования, разница.

Indeed, that was only «the tip of a large linguistic iceberg» because, in fact, the process of «englishification» in Kazakhstan had already started long before the trilingualism company was officially declared. The declaration itself was actually a logical response to the natural event taking place in the society since the first foreign investors. We must admit that foreign language learning is not something that happens overnight; it requires commitment of time and money. However, the results of these investments can be noticed today. For example, the British Council in Kazakhstan supports the policy of multilingualism – from training courses to a mobile service «Phrase of the day». «By 2020, 20 per cent of the population should speak English freely» – states the president of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev in his 2011 state of the nation Address. «The country aims at becoming one of the world’s fifty most competitive countries and has all the qualities necessary to achieve that and more. Kazakhstan’s natural resources are an enormous asset, as is its diverse population. There are about 130 ethnic groups, each with its own languages, living in Kazakhstan» he adds [1].

According to Ardak Bekturova, «a unique trilingual policy declared by President Nazarbayev sets out the objective – everyone should speak fluent Kazakh (the national language of state), Russian (for everyday transactions) and English (for international communication). The medium-term aim is for 15 per cent of the population of nearly 17 million to achieve this by 2020. As a multilingual country, the government is keen on giving young people the opportunity to study in all three languages, from primary school to university. Aside from traditional foreign language instruction, children in 33 trilingual schools across the country are being taught core subjects in all three languages, and special departments at 20 Kazakhstani universities have been opened to teach students in the same way».

Then she continues saying «as global specialists in English language teaching, we at the British Council are working actively to support the trilingual policy – offering a wide range of training courses for English teachers to upgrade their professional skills and seeking opportunities to transfer this experience to make the teaching of Kazakh and Russian more effective. A basic methodology course leading to the Cambridge

Teaching Knowledge Test is used as an elective course in some universities, while Classroom Language and English for Teaching are embedded in the programme of national in-service institutes. To provide more access to opportunities for low-cost language development across Kazakhstan, our innovative trilingual mobile service offering learners of English a «phrase of the day» was launched in cooperation with Kcell, the largest mobile operator in Kazakhstan. This simple SMS tool reaches 14,000 new subscribers monthly. New content is constantly being developed and introduced to meet wide-ranging needs, such as business English, English for IELTS, English for teachers, English for sports, English Today and so on».

According to Do Coyle, Philip Hood and David Marsh «CLIL is a dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language» [2]. They point to the importance of cognitive engagement in order to learn effectively. Group work, problem solving and questioning are important vehicles the pupils need to master for the process of «constructing knowledge which is built on their interaction with the world». In CLIL, the cultural context is, together with cognition, content and communication, the cornerstones that create the settings for an engaging learning environment with clear linguistic and subject area goals.

#### *CLIL in theory*

From a theoretical viewpoint, the aspects of learning through cognitive thinking and cooperation are in line with the sociocultural perspective as outlined by Lev Vygotsky. In the research area of language development, Patsy Lightbown and Nina Spada point to research by Jim Lantolf, concluding that the cognitive language development does not only necessarily involve frequent interaction between a learner and a teacher, but also takes place in learner to learner interactions [3]. In her research Merrill Swain concluded that discussions between students regarding how to correctly formulate a language output trigger thinking processes that develop understanding of the language [4]. Although CLIL as the full concept described by Coyle at all can bring many advantages, Lightbown and Spada identify two potential drawbacks with the CLIL approach as the sole teaching method. Firstly they point out that meaning often becomes more important than form, i.e. that there is a risk that students produce language output, which is understandable, and makes sense from a content perspective, but contains many flaws from a language perspective. Secondly they point out that oral interactions between students lead to confidence in language use, but with the important negative effect that the majority of the language produced remains without error correction. In many cases the teacher is not presented to make any corrections, and the students might not correct each other even if they could. As with all methods there are both advantages and challenges and the same can be said when it comes to teaching through CLIL. Sheelagh Deller and Christine Price [5]

explain that an advantage for the language teacher is that since there is a lot of material within CLIL some content is readymade and this avoids reinventing the wheel. Deller and Price refer to the work of Howard Gardner [6]. His theory on multiple intelligences suits the way CLIL approaches pupils' learning and progress. Since CLIL teaching is highly interactive, with various tasks, group formations and a communicative focus, these different intelligences can be supported and the pupils will be able to access learning more easily: «When we are teaching another subject through a foreign language it is likely that we will draw on more of the intelligences and this is likely to be helpful for our learners». Lightbown and Spada mention that among the intelligence the verbal one is the intelligence that is mostly associated with success in school.

#### *CLIL method and its tools*

The current curriculum requires the integration of subjects and educational fields. Thus, it is necessary to blend and mutually enrich individual fields and disciplines. The classic type of education, which prefers school subjects taught separately, no longer corresponds with today's needs. One of the approaches which stresses the above mentioned integration is an implementation of a foreign language into teaching; the related method is called Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). In its broadest sense, CLIL refers to teaching a non-language subject using a foreign language, which then serves as a means of communication and content sharing. Non-language content is mediated and developed using a foreign language while the foreign language is developed by mediating the content. As a result, both the content and language are developed through a mutual relation.

This type of integrated teaching sets two basic objectives – the content and the language. The term CLIL was coined in 1994 and first used in 1996 in UNICOM, University of Jyväskylä, in Finland, and by the European Platform for Dutch Education. CLIL was supposed to define the educational methods through which special subjects are taught in a foreign language and through which content teaching takes place simultaneously with teaching a foreign language. Later, CLIL expanded to teaching via any language that was not the first or native language. Many authors refer to CLIL as an «umbrella term», which includes a number of different approaches in different educational contexts. The authors of the CLIL concept believed that this was an innovative approach to education and it would have a long term impact on the quality of education. In 1995, the European Commission adopted the White Paper on education, which emphasized plurilingual education in Europe.

In this document, experts agreed that CLIL can play an important role in this effort. At that time they highlighted the fact that CLIL helped to develop foreign language skills. Today we know that it also brings substantial benefits and innovation in teaching non-language subjects, especially in the context of

the traditional, sometimes rather old-fashioned, educational system. Integrated teaching entails certain risks, but it also offers benefits. The benefits include greater demands on the cognitive processes that are not commonly contained in language textbooks, training compensation strategies and an effective development of communication skills, working with real content that is usable in real life, better chances to find a job, expanding intercultural competence, and increasing teachers' professional qualification. The risks associated with CLIL include students' inability to use a foreign language in special subjects, a lack of relevant learning materials (printed and digital) and a lack of evaluation tools for the CLIL, uninformed school management and unsystematic introduction of the CLIL in schools, teachers' unwillingness to cooperate in CLIL teams, time-consuming and difficult preparation for CLIL teaching, and insufficient language or subject skills of the teachers. Nevertheless, CLIL is a method that assumes changes in teaching methods and in using other didactic means.

When planning content objectives, teachers must also take into account the cognitive development of the students so that the mental operations at a lower level (remembering, understanding, application) could be followed by higher-level mental operations (evaluation, creation, analysis).

There are six basic principles of teaching: 1) use of new organizational and methodological approaches in teaching, 2) creative atmosphere, 3) authenticity of teaching, 4) active learning (students' participation in content creation), 5) support in teaching (scaffolding) and 6) cooperation. The CLIL educational method is based on the didactics of teaching foreign languages and the didactics of special subjects, and it is implemented through pedagogical constructivism, project based learning, critical thinking, etc. In integrated teaching, a constructive approach is important because students do not possess sufficient language skills to be able to understand the complete contents of education. New terms must coincide with previously acquired and adopted content, and it is equally important that such content is based on the already acquired language structures and skills.

#### *Differences between CLIL and traditional language education*

First of all, CLIL is dual-focused and has both content and language goals, which creates a continuum of both goals at one end, without any specification of importance of one over the other. The target language is used as a vehicle for communication and is therefore not the ultimate goal. In other words, CLIL is a task-based language learning approach by which language is learned through usage of the language while discussing content matter. This creates a meaningful learning environment in which pupils have an immediate need to use the target language. Feedback is given through scaffolding, ensuring the pupils are constantly in what Vygotsky called «the zone of proximal development» [7].

This means that the pupil is able to fulfill tasks because the teacher is helping, whereas alone the pupil would not be able to do so. A second difference from traditional language learning approaches is the way CLIL is pupil-centered rather than teacher-centered. In many Western societies, the dominant teaching model is based on what Freire calls the «banking model» [8]. This means that the teacher has the role of the expert and deposits information and skills into the memory bank of the pupil. This banking model creates a teacher-controlled and teacher-led learning process. CLIL, on the other hand, has a more social-constructivist approach, meaning that the emphasis is on the student experience and on the encouragement of active student learning [9]. The focus of CLIL is therefore on interactive, mediated, and student-led learning, which requires social interaction between teachers and students.

The third difference focuses on the resemblance of the language learning process in CLIL to the natural cognitive skill acquisition. There are two types of processes that interact during a learning process, namely implicit learning and explicit learning [10]. Surmont, Van de Craen, Struys, and Somers [11] compared this interaction with the way a child learns how to tie his/her laces: He/she needs to practice on his/her own, but when a parent or sibling provides explicit information on what to do with the laces, the child will figure out much faster how it is done. Research by Bialystok and Barac [12] showed that when second languages are learned implicitly, the brain responds the same way as it does when using the mother tongue. This does not imply that it is better, but it proves that the learning context has a major influence on how something is processed. This can, for instance, explain previous neurolinguistics results in which bilingual brains were found to be more efficient than monolingual brains [13].

In traditional education, there are various reasons why implicit (language) learning is not used often enough. Sun, Mathews, and Lane described it as follows: «Most educational settings focus on teaching conceptual (explicit) knowledge rather than setting up an opportunity for gaining substantial experiential (mostly implicit) knowledge». In traditional language education, the emphasis is all too often on grammatical correctness and often teachers are unable to give their students sufficient time to use and to practice using the target language due to time constraints. In CLIL education, on the other hand, students learn the language in a much more implicit way, as they have to use it to understand and communicate about the content of the course.

They basically learn the language «along the way». Due to a much higher implicit learning aspect in CLIL classes, children benefit more from the interaction between implicit and explicit education. It is of course impossible to solely off implicit or explicit learning. Rather, learning should be seen as a continuum in which both sides can never be fully tuned out, thus implying that

traditional language courses are not obsolete in CLIL programs, because they provide the necessary, more explicit focus on language. Francis [14] even suggests that it is not bilingualism per se that creates increased metalinguistic awareness but that the learning context in which the pupils are situated has the largest influence. The combination of a CLIL class and a traditional language class creates a learning environment in which the brain thrives, an environment where explicit and implicit learning can take place [15].

A final difference between CLIL and traditional foreign language classes is the possible increased development of metalinguistic awareness. Metalinguistic awareness can be described as the ability to «reflect on and manipulate the structural features of languages» [16]. It permits reasoning and application of logic with language. Usage of metalinguistic awareness usually requires a momentary shift of attention from content to form [17].

In normal language use, metalinguistic awareness is hardly relevant as conveying the message is normally considered as more important than the linguistic structures used to convey it [18]. Speakers do rely on it when they have to access deeper linguistic knowledge when, for example, correcting certain slips of the tongue [19] or deciphering an atypical form of speech or dialect [20], when making puns or word jokes, when linguistic ambiguities have to be resolved, when grammaticality or appropriateness has to be judged, or when decisions have to be made on deeper meanings or intentions based on word choices or paralinguistic cues. Thus, the current review of the literature proves the effectiveness of CLIL method in the context of the newly introduced policy.

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