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PHILOLOGY

Dovhan L., Osaulchyk O.

INTEGRATION OF CLIL PRACTICES IN THE TRAINING
OF FUTURE PHILOLOGISTS 73

PHILOSOPHY

Bondar S.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND HUMAN: RULES OF
INTERACTION 76

PHYSICS

Antonov A.

TIME TRAVEL IS FEASIBLE ON EARTH AS WELL? 79

PHYSIOLOGY OF ANIMALS

Ismatullayeva D., Mirzakhodjayev B.,

Radjabov I., Tajanova A.

APPLICATION OF UV IRRADIATION FOR AIR
DISINFECTION IN INCUBATORS AND REARING ROOMS
OF THE MULBERRY SILKWORM
(*BOMBYX MORI* L.) 94

POLITICAL SCIENCES

Alma Beatriz Navarro Cerda,

Martin Cutberto Vera Martinez

ANALYSIS OF DATA ON GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE
AND WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN ELECTED OFFICE IN
TIJUANA AND MEXICALI 102

PHILOLOGY

INTEGRATION OF CLIL PRACTICES IN THE TRAINING OF FUTURE PHILOLOGISTS

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Abstract

The article explores the benefits and challenges of implementing CLIL in philology curricula, emphasizing its potential to enhance communicative competence, academic literacy, and motivation. The literature review highlights that CLIL bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world application, fostering both cognitive and linguistic development. Practical strategies for integrating CLIL with digital tools that support collaboration, language acquisition, and subject learning are discussed. It is concluded that thoughtful CLIL integration in philological curricula, supported by technology and teacher training, can significantly improve students' academic language proficiency and prepare them for global professional engagement.

Keywords: Content and Language Integrated Learning, digital tools, philology education, foreign language, language competence, professional communication.

Introduction

Nowadays, many educational institutions promote the goal of mastering foreign languages by the students and becoming multilingual in order to be competitive in the labour market. Traditional methods have often proven to be insufficient to meet these ambitious targets.

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is considered an efficient and effective pedagogical approach aimed at achieving these multilingualism goals across different educational levels, providing the necessary depth and breadth of language exposure.

The urgency of adopting CLIL is driven by major shifts in the global economy, education policy, and the skills required for modern professionals. It addresses critical deficiencies in traditional education systems that no longer meet global demand.

Integration of CLIL in higher education institutions is caused by the need to train graduates who are globally competitive and multilingual. Traditional foreign language (FL) teaching often results in students with strong grammatical knowledge but low communicative competence and fluency, especially in professional or academic contexts. This creates a gap between classroom learning and real-world application. CLIL shifts the focus from learning about a language to using the language to learn the content. This helps students acquire the specific, high-level vocabulary, i.e. cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) needed for the profession.

Literature overview

CLIL has become a widely researched approach in higher education given its dual focus, i.e. combining content instruction with foreign language development. For philology students, particularly future teachers,

translators, researchers and applied linguists, CLIL offers an opportunity to develop both discipline-specific knowledge and target-language competence.

The literature on CLIL in higher education highlights its potential to foster academic language, subject literacy, and transferable skills, but also signals significant implementation challenges pertinent to philology curricula.

In a globalized economy, businesses and institutions require personnel who can work in different cultural environments. Countries and universities that fail to produce these multilingual specialists risk falling behind. According to research, CLIL improves international labour-market opportunities and thus contributes to a country's economic resilience (Makukhina, 2023).

Research indicates that CLIL can significantly enhance students' motivation to learn a foreign language when the language becomes a tool for mastering academic or subject content rather than an isolated subject (Somers & Llinares, 2021). While students often feel unmotivated in traditional FL classes since they do not see the immediate, practical relevance of the isolated language structures they are learning.

Lyu (2023) analysed CLIL implementation across tertiary settings, focusing on English-language competence, differentiated effects on receptive vs. productive skills, and learner motivation. It includes recommendations relevant to higher education contexts where philology students engage in English-medium instruction.

Akhobadze (2021) conducted a case study of higher-education institutions in order to examine CLIL in economics/business courses and offered empirical data on language competence gains, and discusses institutional and teacher-training issues.

Numerous studies generally support great prospects of implementing CLIL in higher education (Andriichuk, Lazorenko & Doronina, 2024; Hao & Yamada, 2021; Hallasi-Ancori, 2025; Yevtushenko, 2021). At the same time, Vega and Moscoso (2019) report that shifting from an ESP to a CLIL programme at the university level did not yield significant gains in language proficiency, pointing to students' initial language competence as a key moderating factor. They further emphasise that successful CLIL implementation depends on favourable contextual conditions such as adequate language levels, instructor training, and institutional support rather than on the CLIL model alone.

However, contextualized research into philology faculty settings, target languages other than English and local institutional constraints is still underdeveloped and require to be investigated.

The aim of the article is to explore the integration of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) practices into the training of philology students at higher education institutions, focusing on how this approach enhances linguistic competence, academic literacy, and professional readiness through the use of digital tools and innovative teaching strategies.

Discussion

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is an educational approach that combines subject matter instruction with foreign language learning. For philology students, CLIL can become an effective means for enhancing linguistic competence while simultaneously developing subject-specific knowledge.

CLIL can be effectively integrated in the curriculum when training future philologists. Linguistic courses are content-intensive and CLIL develops the skills and abilities necessary to discuss complex theoretical and historical content (linguistics, literary theory, cultural studies). Besides, future philologists are, in many cases, future teachers and communicators themselves. Experiencing CLIL as learners prepares them to implement similar integrated methods in their own professional practice.

CLIL is moving education from a theoretical, isolated model to a purposeful, integrated, and professional model that actively prepares students to use language as a functional instrument in the complexity of the 21st-century world.

The successful implementation of CLIL in philological education largely depends on the thoughtful integration of digital tools and interactive resources that promote communication, creativity, and critical thinking.

Modern CLIL classrooms benefit greatly from digital learning platforms such as Moodle, Google Classroom, and Microsoft Teams, which allow teachers to organize subject and language content effectively. These platforms support the integration of multimedia materials, e.g. videos, podcasts, quizzes, and forums, that make linguistic and cultural content more engaging. For philology students, online discussion forums and collaborative tasks stimulate academic communication in the target language while deepening their understanding of linguistics, literature, or translation studies.

Language support is a crucial element of CLIL. Tools such as Quizlet, Wordwall, or LearningApps help students internalize academic vocabulary and complex grammatical structures used in philological discourse. By creating interactive flashcards, matching exercises, and word games, teachers can scaffold learners' linguistic development and support them in mastering the terminology of literary analysis, translation theory, or linguistics.

Philology students work extensively with texts, so digital libraries, corpus tools (like Sketch Engine), and reference management software (such as Zotero or Mendeley) are essential. These tools not only foster reading comprehension and research skills but also help learners practice academic writing in a foreign language. Through guided tasks, including analyzing linguistic data or comparing translations, students can be engaged in authentic academic communication and acquire discipline-specific competencies.

CLIL encourages the development of productive skills of students, e.g. speaking and writing skills, through meaningful tasks. Tools like Canva, Genially, and Padlet allow students to present literary analysis, create digital posters on linguistic phenomena, or share translation projects. By designing visually appealing presentations or multimedia reports, students practice language in context and demonstrate their subject knowledge in innovative ways.

For effective feedback and learner autonomy, teachers can employ tools such as Mentimeter, Kahoot!, or Edpuzzle. These platforms make formative assessment interactive and motivating. Additionally, reflective tools like Google Forms enable students to evaluate their progress, express difficulties, and set personal learning goals.

Conclusions

Thus, CLIL is a profound approach to combining language learning with disciplinary training in philology. It offers philology students an authentic and dynamic environment for mastering both language and disciplinary knowledge. The integration of digital tools not only enhances the learning experience but also prepares students for the demands of the modern academic and professional world. By combining linguistic practice, critical analysis, and creative production, CLIL tools empower philology students to become competent, autonomous, and globally minded scholars. Under thorough implementation, teachers' training, task design, assessment and digital mediation, CLIL can equip graduates with strong academic language competence and subject-matter expertise.

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