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FOREIGN LANGUAGE ACQUISITION:
CONVENTIONAL METHODS vs. CLIL METHODOLOGY

The main focus of this paper is models of teaching foreign languages compatible with CLIL-methodology.

CLIL (content and language integrated learning) implies teaching a non-linguistic discipline through the medium of a foreign language (FL). Nevertheless, CLIL poses a question concerning the models of learning within its framework.

The most ubiquitous model applied in FL Pedagogy is the ***PPP-model***, which stands for Presentation – Practice – Production. It presumes that learners cannot use language features for communicative purposes unless they have drilled them firmly under controlled conditions [3, p. 39]. Teachers successfully apply this model, though it is considered that students do not necessarily succeed in transferring the practised language material into immediate communicative usage outside FL classrooms [1].

Another framework with a subsequent methodological structure is the ***ESA model*** that stands for Engage – Study – Activate. It gives teachers the flexibility to conduct a classroom in an organized and productive way. ESA is believed to be perficient when it comes to teaching a FL, because it keeps students interested, motivated and engaged. Engaging students involve using realia, doing discoveries, acting out, employing challenging and incentive questions to get students thinking and speaking in a FL. The study phase can comprise a number of activities: training speech patterns, drilling, completing gap-filling exercises, doing matching work, and practising conversations. The activate phase may incorporate class discussions, small group or pair debates, role-plays, story building, simulations, etc. The activating phase implies students' putting to work the stuff they have learned in the study phase. By activating the students, the teacher will observe how well they have assimilated the material that has been discussed in the classroom [3, p. 39–40].

There is also another ***model***, which can be successfully employed within CLIL-framework: it implies ***movement from usage of language to its understanding***, that is instead of starting with language, a lesson revolves around students' understanding content or accomplishing a definite communicative task [6, p. 83]. In addition, in case a language issue is encountered in content, the teacher draws the students' attention to it and comments on it. At a later point, the appropriate activities are introduced, which emphasize that issue in the TL [5, p. 162]. This model seems to foster a very close framework of learning as CLIL does.

One more widely-promoted ***model*** presumes ***productive practice*** prior to acquiring the full understanding of language features. Such a framework can conduce to automation of language, which will turn students' attention to communication.

Following the need to focus on language features within communication, such practice is meaningful, not decontextualized or mechanical [3, p. 41].

The idea to start learning language with its production is highly favoured by the active CLIL proponent Ph. Ball, who metaphorically advocates 'throwing students into the deep end of the pool' of communication, insisting that in CLIL production should come first. Moreover, he asserts that in CLIL, the preferable model could be delineated as **Production – Practice – Presentation**, where the language is focused on later but bounden in context [2, p. 61].

In CLIL, there are four major types of activity that can assist students in their communicative and cognitive progression. They are aimed at: enhancing peer communication; developing reading strategies; enhancing oral and written production; engaging higher-order cognitive skills [1; 2, p. 126; 7]. Such activities ensure academic, intellectual, cognitive, and social-emotional engagement of learners [4].

In conclusion, CLIL can be successfully used in the classrooms in combination with other frameworks, which provide diversified learning activities ensuring incremental content and language acquisition. The role of the teacher is instrumental in this process, since he/she not only provides quality instruction, but also facilitates and guides students on their pathway to content and FL mastery.

References

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