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CLIL IN UKRAINE: PATHWAYS TO BILINGUAL EDUCATION AND ACADEMIC INNOVATION

CLIL В УКРАЇНІ: ТРАЄКТОРІЇ РОЗВИТКУ БІЛІНГВАЛЬНОЇ ОСВІТИ ТА АКАДЕМІЧНИХ ІННОВАЦІЙ

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This article presents a comprehensive analysis of the implementation of the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) methodology within the educational framework of Ukraine. The primary objective of this exploration is to assess the effectiveness of CLIL in enhancing student learning outcomes, identify the challenges faced in its application, and examine the potential advantages it presents to schools throughout the country.

The study delves into current pedagogical practices observed in Ukrainian classrooms that employ the CLIL approach, studying cases of some Ukrainian schools. It evaluates how these practices influence students' engagement and proficiency, particularly in both language acquisition and the comprehension of subject-specific content. By systematically analyzing various case studies and classroom experiences, the article seeks to paint a clearer picture of the overall effectiveness of CLIL in fostering a more integrated learning experience.

The research explores the integration of the CLIL methodology into the national education system, highlighting successful implementations and areas needing improvement. It collects insights from educators and policymakers to adapt CLIL effectively across different academic settings. The article emphasizes CLIL's positive impact on students' language skills and content mastery, which is crucial for preparing them for a globalized world.

The discussion culminates in a set of key recommendations for future research to enhance CLIL practices in Ukraine's education system. These include promoting collaboration among educators, developing teacher training programs, and creating supportive resources. By focusing on these areas, the article aims to strengthen CLIL implementation and enrich students' educational experiences nationwide.

Key words: Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), foreign language teaching, integrated learning, educational methodology.

У статті представлено комплексний аналіз впровадження методології предметно-мовного інтегрованого навчання (Content and Language Integrated Learning, CLIL) в освітній системі України. Основною метою дослідження є оцінка ефективності CLIL у підвищенні результативності навчання здобувачів освіти, визначення викликів, що виникають у процесі його застосування, а також виявлення потенційних переваг для закладів освіти по всій країні.

Дослідження зосереджується на сучасних педагогічних практиках, що застосовуються, впроваджуючи методику CLIL на прикладі окремих українських шкіл. Проаналізовано вплив даного підходу на зацікавленість здобувачів освіти у навчальному процесі і рівень їхньої успішності, зокрема у сфері володіння іноземною мовою, а також кращого засвоєння предмету. Завдяки систематичному вивченню кейсів та навчального досвіду практичного застосування CLIL окреслено більш чітке уявлення про ефективність даного підходу у формуванні інтегрованого освітнього середовища.

У роботі досліджено інтеграцію методології CLIL у національну систему освіти, окреслено приклади успішного впровадження та напрями, які потребують подальшого вдосконалення. Проаналізовано напрацювання педагогів та представників освітньої політики щодо ефективної адаптації CLIL у різних академічних контекстах. Підкреслено позитивний вплив методології на розвиток іншомовної компетентності здобувачів освіти та засвоєння предметних знань, що є надзвичайно важливим чинником для підготовки до життя у глобалізованому суспільстві.

Наведено основні рекомендації для подальших наукових досліджень з метою вдосконалення практик CLIL в освітній системі України, активізуючи співпрацю між педагогами, розробляючи програми підвищення кваліфікації. Зосередивши увагу на цих напрямках, покращується ефективність упровадження CLIL та збагачується академічний досвід здобувачів освіти у масштабах усієї країни.

Ключові слова: предметно-мовне інтегроване навчання (CLIL), викладання іноземної мови, інтегроване навчання, методика навчання.

Problem statement. Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is a highly effective educational approach that focuses on teaching subjects through a foreign language, integrating content knowledge with language skills [1; 3]. Initially developed in Europe, CLIL has gained widespread popularity around the world. Notably, countries such as Ukraine have begun to integrate CLIL into their educational systems [4; 5], reflecting its growing significance in contemporary education. The CLIL methodology offers a unique opportunity to meet this demand while enriching students' knowledge across various subjects [10; 11], aligning well with the country's educational reforms aimed at promoting multilingualism and modernizing teaching practices [11].

However, the implementation of CLIL in Ukraine faces challenges, such as the readiness of teachers, the availability of appropriate materials, cultural attitudes toward language learning, and the adaptation of the methodology to local contexts [8]. Additionally, concerns arise about effectively integrating CLIL into the existing curriculum while balancing subject mastery with language acquisition [11].

Analysis of existing research on CLIL. Content and language integrated learning is a new and innovative approach to language learning that is gaining popularity in Ukraine and around the world. Numerous research studies have demonstrated that CLIL stands as a highly effective method for equipping graduates with the necessary skills and readiness for their future practical life and the job market. Ukrainian scholars (O. Bielska, O. Kordyu, Y. Roudnik, I. Shevchenko, N. Yevtushenko) underline its role in preparing graduates for professional life, enhancing language proficiency, and fostering intercultural competence. International authors (P. Ball, J. Brewster, D. Coyle, T. Gerdes, D. Marsh) emphasize CLIL's potential to improve fluency and accuracy through meaningful content engagement. Coyle, Hood, and Marsh show that CLIL supports both language development and cognitive growth, while also strengthening critical thinking and academic performance.

Overall, existing studies confirm CLIL as a promising methodology for equipping learners with linguistic and academic skills for a globalized world, provided that institutional and methodological barriers are addressed.

Objective setting. This article aims to explore the potential of integrating CLIL into the Ukrainian edu-

cational system, assessing both its benefits and challenges [1; 6]. Key objectives include evaluating the potential benefits of CLIL for language proficiency and content knowledge; analyzing challenges faced by educators during implementation [8; 11]; examining how CLIL can be incorporated into the national curriculum and teacher training [8; 11]; offering recommendations for adapting CLIL to local contexts to enhance educational reforms in Ukraine.

Main material. The theoretical Framework of CLIL is grounded in several theories:

- Immersion theory, suggesting that immersion in a foreign language promotes natural acquisition, integrating linguistic and academic content [1;3].
- Constructivist learning, emphasizing active engagement with content and facilitating deeper learning through exploration and problem-solving [6].
- Cognitive load theory, aiming to balance cognitive demands of processing content while learning a language, ensuring effective learning without overwhelming students [7].

All the mentioned theories prove benefits of CLIL, namely:

- enhanced language proficiency, as CLIL improves foreign language skills within contextual frameworks, leading to higher fluency and accuracy compared to traditional language courses [1; 9];
- cognitive benefits, promoting critical thinking and problem-solving, vital for intellectual growth, which are often underemphasized in traditional instruction;
- cultural awareness, as CLIL exposes students to diverse cultures, enhancing intercultural understanding crucial in a multicultural world [9; 10];
- motivation and engagement, because students are more motivated to learn languages when they see practical applications in subjects like science and history.

While CLIL offers clear advantages, challenges in its implementation remain. A primary issue is the need for thorough teacher training; many educators, especially in Ukraine [8; 11], lack adequate preparation in both subject matter and foreign languages. Adapting the curriculum is also challenging, as it requires new materials and bilingual resources that are often limited [11]. Additionally, students may struggle with complex subjects in a second language, particularly if their proficiency is low. Finally, the availability of educational resources is crucial for successful CLIL

implementation, and these resources are often lacking in rural or underfunded areas.

CLIL Implementation in Ukrainian schools: case studies. CLIL merges foreign language instruction with academic subjects, offering an immersive learning experience that is increasingly vital in today's globalized educational landscape. In the Ukrainian context, CLIL presents significant potential for enhancing students' language skills and academic understanding through the introduction of bilingual courses beginning in middle school. This approach not only promotes the acquisition of foreign languages but also fosters interdisciplinary collaboration, preparing students for participation in international academic and professional environments. The authors of the study analyze several cases of CLIL implementing in Ukrainian schools.

Case study 1: Kyiv International School (KIS) has been implementing CLIL since 2015, using English as the primary language of instruction for its diverse international student body. CLIL was particularly applied to subjects such as science and history, creating opportunities for students to simultaneously develop subject knowledge and linguistic competence.

The outcomes of the initiative were significant. Students demonstrated measurable progress in English language proficiency, particularly in their ability to articulate subject-specific knowledge within academic contexts. Moreover, CLIL increased student motivation by linking language learning to real-world applications, thereby strengthening engagement with both linguistic and disciplinary content. Enhanced academic performance was also observed in CLIL-supported subjects, confirming the value of the dual focus.

Lessons learned at KIS underline the necessity of systematic teacher training, which included professional development workshops dedicated to CLIL methodology and cross-disciplinary collaboration. Furthermore, the development of tailored teaching materials played a crucial role in aligning language and content objectives, ensuring the bilingual nature of instruction was adequately supported.

Case study 2: In 2018, Lviv Secondary School No. 25 adopted CLIL as part of a pilot program aimed at strengthening foreign language instruction and enhancing students' international competitiveness. The initiative focused on integrating English into STEM subjects at grades 9 and 10. Implementation relied on extensive teacher training, emphasizing the creation of context-rich, interactive tasks to support comprehension.

The outcomes confirmed the effectiveness of the approach. Students exhibited improved performance

in STEM disciplines and demonstrated growing bilingual competence, particularly in academic English. Additionally, parents and the local community expressed strong support for the bilingual initiative, highlighting its perceived benefits for global education.

Nonetheless, certain challenges emerged. Traditional assessment practices were often inadequate for measuring both content mastery and language proficiency, requiring innovative evaluative approaches. Teachers also had to address language barriers among students, using visual aids and peer collaboration to bridge differences in English proficiency. Crucially, the school's supportive environment, grounded in collegial cooperation, facilitated the effective planning and execution of CLIL lessons.

Case study 3: In 2019, Vinnytsia School of Foreign Languages integrated CLIL into subjects including geography, history, and literature. Implementation was marked by flexible approaches and strong collaboration between language teachers and subject specialists, ensuring that English-medium instruction was both linguistically accessible and content-rich.

The outcomes extended beyond language acquisition. Students developed cross-disciplinary knowledge and demonstrated the ability to apply English to real-world situations, particularly in the humanities. Increased learner autonomy, deeper engagement with subject matter, and enhanced critical thinking were notable results. Furthermore, students reported a heightened interest in pursuing studies abroad, reflecting greater confidence in their preparedness for international academic contexts.

Key lessons from this case emphasize the importance of gradual implementation. A phased approach allowed teachers and students to adapt to the demands of CLIL, reducing resistance and anxiety associated with abrupt pedagogical change. Equally significant was the collaboration between subject and language instructors, which provided students with cohesive and integrated learning experiences. Continuous assessment and feedback also emerged as essential for refining both pedagogical strategies and evaluative methods.

These case studies collectively demonstrate the potential of CLIL to simultaneously advance language proficiency and subject-specific knowledge among Ukrainian students. The positive outcomes, including improved academic results, heightened motivation, increased autonomy, and strengthened bilingual competence, underline the transformative potential of CLIL in the national educational context. At the same time, the challenges related to teacher training, material development, and assessment highlight areas requiring sustained attention.

The experiences collectively provide valuable insights into effective CLIL practices. These lessons establish a foundation for expanding bilingual education in Ukraine, offering strategies for future implementation and adaptation to various institutional contexts.

Policy considerations for integrating CLIL into the Ukrainian education system. The successful implementation of CLIL in Ukraine depends not only on pedagogical practices and classroom-level outcomes but also on broader policy decisions. One of the most critical questions concerns the status of CLIL within the national education system: whether it should be introduced as an elective or a mandatory component of the curriculum. This issue directly affects accessibility, teacher training, educational outcomes, and the overall pace of integration.

Elective status of CLIL. Introducing CLIL as an elective offers schools the flexibility to adapt the methodology to their local contexts and allows for experimentation with various subjects and instructional strategies. This approach fosters student agency, as motivated learners often show greater engagement and ownership of their education. Additionally, focusing teacher training on smaller cohorts can ease initial systemic strain. However, the elective model has limitations. It may limit access for motivated yet disadvantaged students, especially in rural areas with fewer resources [11]. Moreover, fragmented implementation could hinder the establishment of a coherent national CLIL framework, preventing all students from benefiting equally from the advantages of integrated learning.

Mandatory status of CLIL. A mandatory approach would ensure that all students, regardless of socioeconomic background, gain access to CLIL instruction [11]. By embedding CLIL systematically into the curriculum, Ukraine could guarantee comprehensive language development, strengthen interdisciplinary thinking, and enhance the global competitiveness of its graduates. Such an approach aligns with broader European educational trends, where bilingual and multilingual education is increasingly viewed as a necessity in preparing students for international academic and professional environments. At the same time, making CLIL compulsory presents considerable challenges. Large-scale implementation requires extensive teacher training, the development of bilingual teaching materials, and structural adjustments to curricula. Without adequate preparation, mandatory CLIL could increase educator workload, create resistance among students and parents, and exacerbate disparities between urban and rural institutions.

Making CLIL compulsory poses significant challenges, including the need for extensive teacher training, bilingual materials, and curriculum adjust-

ments. Without proper preparation, it could increase teacher workload, lead to resistance from students and parents, and widen gaps between urban and rural schools.

Extending CLIL to higher education and professional pathways. While much of the discussion surrounding CLIL in Ukraine has focused on primary and secondary schools, its implementation at the university level presents equally significant opportunities. Universities, as institutions that prepare students for professional life and global citizenship, are uniquely positioned to leverage CLIL for developing advanced linguistic competence alongside disciplinary expertise [8].

Introducing CLIL in secondary education creates a continuum that eases students' transition to higher education. School graduates who have participated in bilingual programs enter universities with greater confidence in engaging with academic content in English or other foreign languages. This preparedness reduces the cognitive and affective barriers often associated with English-medium instruction at the tertiary level.

Moreover, early exposure to CLIL allows students to explore academic disciplines through a foreign language lens, potentially influencing their career choices. In this sense, CLIL not only fosters bilingual competence but also supports informed decision-making regarding future academic and career paths.

The integration of CLIL into higher education enhances the internationalization of Ukrainian universities by aligning them with European Higher Education Area (EHEA) practices and promoting English-medium instruction. It also supports academic mobility, preparing students for international exchanges and graduate studies abroad, while improving employability through the development of professional knowledge and advanced language skills.

Successful CLIL implementation requires linguistic preparation and curricular adjustments, often involving collaborative teaching models that integrate subject and language instruction. This approach fosters critical thinking, problem-solving, and intercultural communication.

Beyond undergraduate studies, CLIL supports lifelong learning and professional development, especially in fields like business and technology where English proficiency is crucial. Graduates gain the adaptability and resilience needed to thrive in diverse work environments.

Ultimately, CLIL serves as a bridge between education and professional development, helping students acquire disciplinary knowledge and language competence, and supporting Ukraine's educational modernization and global competitiveness goals.

Pros and cons of CLIL in the Ukrainian educational context. CLIL has emerged as a significant pedagogical innovation in contemporary education, particularly for countries striving to enhance foreign language proficiency while maintaining subject knowledge acquisition [10; 12]. In the Ukrainian educational context, CLIL holds particular relevance as the system seeks to align more closely with European educational standards and to strengthen students' competitiveness in a globalized world. However, despite its potential advantages, CLIL implementation is also accompanied by a range of challenges that must be critically examined.

CLIL offers several advantages, notably enhancing language proficiency by integrating foreign languages, particularly English, into subject instruction. This approach fosters authentic language use and helps students develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and metacognitive skills. Additionally, CLIL boosts motivation and engagement by linking language with meaningful content, promoting interdisciplinary learning, and preparing students for global communication. Its focus on collaborative tasks also nurtures teamwork and interpersonal skills, important in today's educational and professional environments [6; 10].

Challenges of CLIL. Despite these advantages, the implementation of CLIL poses notable difficulties. Foremost among them is the issue of teacher preparedness: effective CLIL requires educators who are proficient in both foreign language and subject content, yet in Ukraine such professionals remain in short supply. Curriculum design also presents challenges, as instructional materials must integrate content and language in balanced and context-appropriate ways. From the student perspective, CLIL can increase cognitive load, particularly for those with limited foreign language proficiency. This often results in stress, reduced motivation, or incomplete mastery of subject knowledge when language barriers hinder comprehension. In terms of equity, CLIL tends to be more accessible in urban, well-funded institutions, which risks widening educational disparities between urban and rural contexts. Finally, cultural and parental resistance may emerge, particularly in communities concerned about the preservation of native language competence or wary of educational innovations that may be perceived as undermining national identity [8; 6].

Overall, CLIL represents a promising tool for strengthening language education in Ukraine, offering a pathway toward bilingual competence, interdisciplinary understanding, and greater international competitiveness. Nevertheless, without substantial

investment in teacher training, curriculum adaptation, and equitable resource allocation, the risks of cognitive overload, content gaps, and unequal access may undermine its effectiveness. To maximize the benefits of CLIL, Ukraine must adopt context-sensitive strategies that balance innovation with inclusivity, ensuring that the approach supports both linguistic and academic development for all learners [11, 12].

Recommendations for the introduction of CLIL in the Ukrainian education system. The integration of CLIL into the Ukrainian educational context requires a carefully structured approach that balances pedagogical innovation with systemic feasibility. While the benefits of CLIL in terms of language acquisition, subject knowledge development, and internationalization of education are well-documented in global scholarship, its large-scale adoption in Ukraine necessitates targeted recommendations.

CLIL should be framed as part of broader educational reforms designed to improve the quality of foreign language teaching and to strengthen Ukraine's alignment with European educational standards. A national framework is essential to define the objectives, stages, and mechanisms for monitoring CLIL implementation across primary, secondary, and tertiary levels. Such policy guidance would provide a unified direction, preventing fragmentation in practice and ensuring equitable access to CLIL instruction.

The shortage of qualified educators skilled in both foreign languages and subject content is a major barrier to CLIL implementation. To address this, teacher education must invest in specialized CLIL modules to enhance subject teachers' language skills and equip language teachers with subject knowledge. Collaborative teaching models, where subject and language teachers work together, can be effective. Continuous professional development, such as workshops and online training, is essential for teachers to stay updated on CLIL methodologies.

Additionally, appropriate learning materials are crucial. The Ukrainian curriculum should be revised to integrate language instruction with subject content. Developing bilingual resources like textbooks and digital platforms is necessary. A phased introduction of CLIL, starting with simplified topics in early grades and advancing to complex subjects, is advisable.

CLIL should be introduced in Ukraine through pilot projects in select schools and universities to evaluate teaching models, teacher collaboration, and student support. Findings from these pilots will inform large-scale policies, ensuring strategies are based on empirical evidence and tailored to the Ukrainian educational context.

Implementing CLIL offers linguistic and cognitive benefits and can help students explore academic and career paths, encouraging informed decisions about their future. At the tertiary level, CLIL prepares students for academic mobility and global competitiveness, utilizing scaffolding techniques like glossaries and visual aids to support comprehension.

Ongoing research, including longitudinal studies, is vital for the sustainable development of CLIL. Attention must be given to regional differences in resources and teacher availability. Collaboration among researchers, educators, and policymakers will ensure evidence-based decisions that meet evolving needs.

Conclusions. Integrating CLIL into Ukraine's educational framework offers significant opportunities for enhancing language proficiency and subject knowledge. By focusing on content-based learning,

CLIL fosters cognitive processing, critical thinking, and intercultural competence essential for today's global environment [1].

In universities, CLIL can boost internationalization and academic competitiveness by offering specialized courses in English, equipping students with professional vocabulary and preparing them for global research collaborations and job markets. This integration also aligns Ukraine's education with European standards, producing graduates capable of thriving in multilingual contexts.

In conclusion, despite the challenges of implementing CLIL, its potential to enhance language education and professional training makes it a promising direction for national educational policy, bridging school and university practices for lifelong learning and successful global integration.

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