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Types of tasks used in the content language integrated learning (according to the results of the survey of subject teachers)

Annotation. *The article considers the types of tasks used in the content language integrated learning (CLIL). The results of a survey of subject teachers about the various types of tasks used in the educational process are presented.*

Key words: *content language integrated learning, tasks, survey, subject teacher, survey method.*

Introduction

In order to develop trilingual education in Kazakhstan, a number of activities are being carried out. The Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan, in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture, was entrusted with the task of developing a «Roadmap for the Development of Trilingual Education». In accordance with the Plan of the Nation «100 Steps», a gradual transition to the English language instruction in high school and universities is provided. There is a need to develop modern effective methods and technologies for teaching high school students.

One of the successful methods of language teaching used is content language integrated learning, a teaching method in which some of the subjects are taught in a foreign language. Thus, the training of students in their native and foreign languages is one whole.

Our article describes one of the important components of the methodology of the content language integrated learning, namely the types of tasks.

The relevance of our research is the need to improve the efficiency of the educational process in high school; the need to develop new theoretical, methodological and organizational foundations for the development of modern education to increase student motivation.

Literature review

Many researchers today make an important distinction between target tasks, which students need to accomplish outside of the classroom, and pedagogical tasks, which are those that occur in the classroom [1]. As far as target tasks are concerned, Long [1] sums up a definition in this way: by task is meant the hundred and one things people do in everyday life, at work, at play, and in between. Thus, these are kinds of things that people typically do outside of the classroom. The ultimate rationale for language instruction is to enable learners to accomplish these activities successfully in the real world using the target language [2].

Richards, Platt and Weber give a definition of a pedagogical task: […] an activity or an action which is carried out as the result of processing or understanding language. For example, drawing a map while listening to a tape, listening to an instruction and performing a command, may be referred to as tasks. Tasks may or may not involve the production of language. A task usually requires the teacher to specify what will be regarded as successful completion of the task. The use of a variety of different kinds of tasks in language teaching is said to make language teaching more communicative […] since it provides a purpose for a classroom activity which goes beyond the practice of language for its own sake [2]. Willis defines a task as an activity where the target language is used by the learner for a communicative purpose (goal) in order to achieve an outcome [3, p. 23].

Although the definitions are divergent, they all share one thing in common - the fact that tasks involve communicative language use in which the students' attention is focused on meaning rather than on linguistic structure. In synthesis, a task is a kind of process of doing or completing something. The learners are active and engaged while trying to complete the task and the communicative process is an interactional one. In order to complete the task the learners have to make as much use of different kinds of linguistic and non-linguistic resources as possible to solve the (communicative) problem successfully. The process of completing a task stimulates learners to use the target language meaningfully and naturally and creates a beneficial environment to promote the learners' acquisition and internalization of the target language [2].

With respect to the principles of CLIL, Willis' definition of task fits the issues of CLIL, in which the goal is to achieve knowledge, skills and understanding in a specific discipline. A crucial aspect to consider is that the understanding and the learning of subject content through the foreign language is primary. Attention is paid to the structural aspects of the language used as the medium of instruction only when necessary, e.g., when difficulties arise. Having said that, language focus (focus on form) is paramount if the foreign language competence of the students is to grow. Thus teachers should give priority to tasks which are both content and language oriented and find the best way to implement tasks in the CLIL contexts. The challenge for foreign language teaching is to find tasks which motivate learners to use the target language but which also give them a fair chance to learn to cognitively cope with the content and the language forms which they find themselves confronted with during the CLIL lessons.

There are many classifications of tasks in English language methodology which can be appropriate for CLIL methodology as well. For example, tasks may vary in terms of design variables:
– focus (unfocussed – focused on a specific feature of language),
– mode (input-providing – output-prompting),
– gap type (information – opinion – reasoning gap),
– openness (closed – open regarding the number of outcomes),
– complexity (language of here-and-now – there-and-then or single – dual activity) and
– familiarity (known – unknown topic) [4, p. 200-202].

In CLIL, there appear to be four basic types of activity that can help students to prosper, despite their relative lack of linguistic resources. These types are applicable to primary, secondary and post-compulsory education.
1. Activities to enhance peer communication
(assimilate conceptual content + communicative competence)
2. Activities to help develop reading strategies
(where texts, often authentic, are conceptually and linguistically dense)
3. Activities to guide student production (oral and written)
(focus on the planning of production - 'minimum guarantees')
4. Activities to engage higher cognitive skills
(make students think - offer more opportunities for employing a range of operations) [5].

Some researches pay special attention to collaborative tasks that involve learners in producing key subject-specific vocabulary and structures in meaningful pair or group work activities. Task may be at word level, e.g. pairs of learners classifying vocabulary into different columns in a table, or at sentence level, e.g. pairs can ask and answer questions on the topic. They can do it either digitally or face-to-face [6].

Teachers need to think about the kind of tasks learners will do during the lesson as a follow-up. It is important to plan a range of tasks which require different challenges, such as less demanding tasks which involve matching sentence halves, marking events on timelines and marking trade routes on old maps. More demanding tasks include explaining causes and effects, providing evidence of change from a text, evaluating evidence and giving reasons why something happen [6].

The research results revealing the similarities and differences between EFL and CLIL textbooks in teaching different skills, the vocabulary and the grammar shows the real picture of using tasks types in EFL and CLIL [7]. Among common aspects one can find the fact that both types of materials include activities devoted to the four skills; in all the materials, there are activities that focus on grammar and vocabulary and on grammar and vocabulary together. As for the presence or absence of the four skills in the EFL and the CLIL materials analyzed, it can be stated that in both approaches activities of listening, speaking, reading and writing were found. According to the results of the research it can be stated that the four skills are not given the same importance in the two approaches. However, in EFL the four skills are given the same importance while in CLIL they are not. The similar amount of activities devoted to each skill in EFL could be explained by the belief that productive skills (writing- speaking) and receptive skills (reading-listening) are two sides of a coin that cannot be separated in language learning because one skill can reinforce another in a number of ways. Thereby, a balanced distribution of the four skills is advisable in the foreign language instruction [7, p. 35].

However, if we pay attention to the results obtained in the CLIL materials' analysis, we can find that there is no balance at all in the amount of activities devoted to each skill. Writing and reading are given an enormous importance in comparison to speaking and listening. This imbalance could be due to the fact that the materials analyzed do not reflect the oral activities that may have been done during the lesson or all the listening input that students get from the teacher's explanations of the content. If that was not the case, the basis of such results could be found in the fact that reading and writing were used as supporting skills in numerous tasks helping to enable students' comprehension, and in so doing increasing the amount of this type of activities in detriment to the listening and speaking tasks. Although the four skills are not given the same importance there is still a balance between input and output (listening and reading: 48 % of activities, speaking and writing: 52 %), however, it cannot be confirmed that input and output are varied enough to guarantee that they can be used in different contexts to accomplish all the functions for which language is required. Nevertheless, despite what has been discussed above, it is necessary to consider that, apart from CLIL, students take 3 EFL classes a week, during which they are exposed to the four skills in a much more balanced way [7, p. 35]

As for the types of activities used in the EFL textbooks and the CLIL materials concerned, the activities have been analyzed according to three criteria. Firstly, the group option (independent, partners, small groups, whole group) in which each activity was presented; secondly, the amount of skills involved in the tasks, one skill or integrated skills; and thirdly, in the written activities, the output required: activities focusing on the production of answers at word level or at sentence level [7, p. 36].

In EFL, the variation of groupings is lower than in CLIL. Independent activities have a great impact on EFL tasks; listening and writing are carried out only with this type of grouping, while in CLIL listening and writing skills also present whole class, partners and small group activities, but most activities are still independent ones.

If speaking and reading are considered, in EFL, speaking is developed with three kinds of group options: independent, partners and small groups, and reading with independent and partner activities. In CLIL, there have only been found whole class speaking tasks, while reading is presented with activities of all group options: independent, partners, small groups and whole class. The great amount of independent activities in both approaches may be explained by the nature of the four skills: all of them present tasks that even if they can be done in groups, they require individual thinking processes to be solved, with no need to interact with others. However, some tasks may be more demanding and be better solved with the help of some pupils [7, p. 36].

In general terms, CLIL presents a wider range of group options than EFL, where the whole class grouping is not considered. When it comes to the amount of integrated skills activities and one-skill activities that are presented in each approach, the results are also different. While in EFL 42 % of tasks involve more than one skill and one-skill activities represent 58 % of the total number of tasks, in 37 CLIL, integrated skills represent only 20 % of the total amount of activities and one-skill tasks 80 %. If the results obtained in EFL are considered, a balanced distribution of these two types of activities can be observed. However, even if the combination of integrated skills is very important, it is also necessary to have some activities focusing on one skill [7, p.37].

In contrast, if we focus our attention on CLIL, the results show a highly more numerous amount of activities focusing on one skill than the number of tasks involving integrated skills. Considering that CLIL is known to be an approach where language is learned in a contextualized manner, it is surprising to obtain such low results on integrated skills tasks. If we take into account the results obtained in the analysis of word level and sentence level tasks in the writing ability, the results obtained are the following: in EFL 54 % of tasks are focus on the production of word level answers and 46 % of tasks require writing at sentence level. In CLIL, 71 % of activities are focus on one-word answers and 29 % of tasks seek for the construction of sentences. Once again, EFL presents a well balanced amount of the two types of activities that are both necessary to allow students the learning of the language and CLIL presents a clear imbalance one more time: the amount of word level tasks is by far bigger than the number of sentence level activities. The results obtained in this analysis may be related to the ones obtained in the amount of vocabulary and grammar activities. If we take into account that vocabulary could be associated to activities that focus on the production of words and grammar corresponds to the tasks that focus on the construction of sentences, the results obtained are not surprising. In CLIL, 71 % of tasks are devoted to vocabulary, exactly the same amount of word level activities, while grammar and vocabulary and grammar tasks represent the remaining 29 %, the same number of sentence-based activities [7, p. 38].

Are there vocabulary and grammar activities both in the EFL materials and the CLIL materials analyzed? Activities focusing on vocabulary have been found in both, the EFL and CLIL materials. In the EFL textbook, 30 % of the total number of activities is devoted to vocabulary, while in CLIL, this type of activities is by far more numerous, and represents 71 % of the total amount of tasks. The similarity between EFL and CLIL materials, according to the grammar question, is that there are grammar activities in both materials. Nevertheless, they differ in the fact that activities focusing on grammar in EFL are more numerous (34 %) than activities devoted to grammar in the CLIL materials (9 %) [7, p. 38].

If we analyze these percentages, a reason why CLIL presents such a low value in grammar activities may be found in the fact that «vocabulary and grammar should be learnt in a holistic way» (Pinter, 2006:86). Because of this, activities focusing exclusively on grammar may have been almost avoided in the CLIL materials allowing a greater number of activities focusing on both aspects of the language. However, when we take a look at the amount of activities that combine vocabulary and grammar objectives, the number of them (20 %) despite being higher than the quantity of grammar tasks is considerably smaller than the amount of activities focusing only on vocabulary (71 %). This result cannot be justified with Pinter's words, but it may have been inspired by the intention of the teachers to provide students with enough content language, in CLIL terminology the language of learning. On the other hand, grammar practice in CLIL materials is very rarely presented in an explicit way. Thus, there is very little language for learning, which is a fundamentals aspect in the 4C's of CLIL. In contrast, the results obtained in EFL seem to be coherent with what according to Pinter (2006) the learning of vocabulary and grammar should be: not only learners need to know a large list of vocabulary and numerous grammatical structures in isolation, but they also have to understand the complex interaction between them. In the EFL graph approximately a third part of the activities is devoted to each type of tasks, vocabulary, grammar or vocabulary and grammar which provides a very well balanced view of the language. In this way, students can learn a large list of vocabulary (vocabulary activities) as well as numerous grammatical structures (grammar activities) and put them into practice understanding their interaction (vocabulary and grammar activities) [7, p. 39].

Research methodology

If the previous research studies the types of activities used in the EFL textbooks and the CLIL materials, our paper presents the results of a research, aimed at learning the degree of awareness of CLIL tasks by school subject teachers for the promotion of learners' skills on language and content. Specifically, the data for this study come from authentic classroom settings recorded during the school year of 2017 and focus on tasks and activities used in the context of CLIL classes of secondary schools of Pavlodar region (Kazakhstan) [8].

A questionnaire survey was provided among subject teachers on the degree of awareness of various types of CLIL assignments used at the lessons. The survey involved 20 subject teachers of secondary schools of

Pavlodar region. Teachers were asked to fill out a questionnaire consisting of 14 questions. We divided questions into 3 blocks relating to the principles of 4C.

Tasks for content development: according to the respondents' answers, it was found that teachers basically (60 %) use the following tasks: «complete sentences», «fill in the blanks», different types of dictations (for the whole class, in groups or pairs), «circle wrong answers», «classification of words, numbers or objects into groups», «multiple choice test», «matching». Less frequently (20 %) are used such tasks as «domino game», «information gap». Thus, the majority of teachers knows and applies content learning tasks.

As for tasks for the cognition development, according to the answers of teachers, they use tasks that teach skills of higher order thinking, that is, HOTs and skills of lower order thinking, LOTs according to Bloom's Taxonomy. More often (70 %) they use such tasks as «listen to the record and fill in the table», «listen to and mark the diagram / picture / map / graph», «listen to and fill in the gaps in the text». Less attention (30 %) is given by teachers to such tasks as «listen and mark the steps of the process / instructions / sequences», «put the words in order». After analyzing this block of questions, it is worth noting that all teachers know and apply tasks according to Bloom's taxonomy in their lessons.

As for the tasks for the development of communication skills, according to the respondents, the following tasks are used to a greater extent (85 %): «Discussion of Questions», «Poster Display», «Class Interviews», «Questioning», «True or False». Less attention (15 %) is given to the tasks, provided in the form of a game like «knockout game», «word guessing game». Hence the conclusion is that teachers are more likely to use tasks that develop speaking skills and use few games at the lessons.

We have also compiled two additional questions. The next question concerned the steps used by the teacher in organizing pair or group assignments in class. Almost all of the subject teachers explain the task; make sure that all students understand the task before giving it; supervise students during the assignment; decide who will work with whom in a pair or group; explain to students how much time will be given to them to complete the task (time limit). An interesting fact: before giving the task to their students, the teachers perform it themselves. Thus, it is worth noting that all teachers with great responsibility approach the choice and preparation of assignments for their lesson.

When asked if teachers encountered difficulties in composing assignments, the majority of subject teachers responded negatively. That is, they do not face serious difficulties. However, two teachers noted difficulties in composing assignments, such as «True or false», the game «Yes or No», «Predicting from pictures», «Show the difference», «Find a mistake», «Discussion of issues».

Results and discussion
As the results of the survey and for improving the methods of teaching subjects in English, we developed the following recommendations for subject teachers using CLIL approach:
– Questions subject teachers should ask about the task they use in the classroom are:
Which tasks motivate students?
Which tasks involve interaction?
Which tasks need language support?
Which tasks develop thinking skills for the subject I teach?
– Teachers need to think about the kind of tasks learners will do during the lesson as a follow-up. It is important to plan a range of tasks which require different challenges, such as less demanding tasks which involve matching sentence halves, marking events on timelines and marking trade routes on old maps (for history lesson). More demanding tasks include explaining causes and effects, providing evidence of change from a text, evaluating evidence and giving reasons why something happen.
– Use a variety of CLIL task types;
– When choosing task types, rely on the purpose of the lesson and the expected outcomes;
– Pay particular attention to the development of students' language skills and use the tasks to develop the skills of listening, reading, writing and speaking;
– Constantly improve your language level through training in language courses, internships, seminars;
– Through the improvement of language skills, increase the level of translation competence.

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РЕЗЮМЕ

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Типы заданий, используемые в предметно-языковом интегрированном обучении
(по итогам анкетирования учителей-предметников)

Статья рассматривает типы заданий, используемых в предметно-языковом интегрированном обучении (ПЯИО). Приводятся результаты опроса учителей-предметников об используемых в учебном процессе различных типов заданий.

Ключевые слова: *предметно-языковое интегрированное обучение, учебные задания, учитель-предметник, метод опроса.*

ТҮЙІН

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Пәндік-тілдік интеграцияланған оқытуда қолданылатын міндеттер түрлері
(пән мұғалімдерінің сауалнамасы бойынша)

Мақалада тақырыптық тілде интеграцияланған оқытуда (CLIL) пайдаланылатын міндеттердің түрлері қарастырылады. Оқу үрдісінде қолданылатын әртүрлі міндеттер туралы пән мұғалімдерінің сауалнамасының нәтижелері келтірілген.

Түйінді сөздер: *пәндік-тілдік интеграцияланған оқыту, оқыту тапсырмалары, пән мұғалімі, зерттеу әдісі.*