

'CONTENT AND LANGUAGE INTEGRATED LEARNING' OR 'ENGLISH FOR SPECIAL PURPOSES'

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Abstract: *Taking into consideration the definitions and implications of the 'content and language integrated learning' and 'English for specific purposes' we will try to identify the affiliation of the Foreign language classes, especially English, taught in Academies, to these methodologies. The characteristics of the methodology that fit better to the type of classes we teach will be of the greatest importance.*

Keywords: CLIL, ESP, methodology.

Introduction

Teaching has changed as content, means and methodology and the change began with the foreign languages. From teacher centered teaching we shifted to student centered teaching. The content itself of different subjects changed with the development of new concepts and scientific discoveries. The means of teaching also evolved from the blackboard and chalk (still in use) to overhead projector, computer, laptop, intelligent board etc. All these changes should have modified the learners' perception and process of learning. Teachers try to make learning easier by using modern methodologies and strive to motivate the students to learn a certain subject, in our case English. For vocational studies and higher education, which does not involve philology, the teacher should give the students, at least, elements of specialty or terminology which means that they should teach either 'English for special purposes' or 'content and language'. We will analyze the characteristics of these two modern trends of teaching and learning and try to decide for the one that suits best the English classes of the military academies.

What is CLIL?

'Content language integrated learning' or abbreviated **CLIL** is a relatively new approach to learning that implies an "umbrella term" created almost 20 years ago by David Marsh and Anne Maljers from University of Jyväskylä, Finland, who defined the term and the methodology as double aimed: "CLIL refers to situations where subjects, or parts of subjects, are taught through a foreign language with dual-focused aims, namely the learning of content and the simultaneous learning of a foreign language." (Marsh, D. 2002)

Searching for further information about CLIL, we have found out a quotation from the European Commission that tends to make CLIL very important for the future Europe. "Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), in which pupils learn a subject through the medium of a foreign language, has a major contribution to make to the Union's language learning goals. It can provide effective opportunities for pupils to use their new language skills now, rather than learn them now for use later. It opens doors on languages for a broader range of learners, nurturing self-confidence in young learners and those who have not responded well to formal language instruction in general education. It provides exposure to the language without requiring extra time in the curriculum, which can be of particular interest in vocational settings." (CEE 2003)

'Content language integrated learning' is a method of learning a subject of the curricula using another language as a means of learning. The foreign language becomes a vehicle for learning new things within a studied subject or even new subjects. In order to suit the needs of this paper we consider the foreign language as being English.

What is ESP?

'English for specific purposes' or abbreviated **ESP** is an approach to teaching vocational students, developed in the 1960s. It is a method of teaching foreign languages, mainly English, for a certain purpose, usually for the present or future job that can be business, technical, medicine, tourism etc. According to Dudley-Evans (1997) the characteristics of ESP are: ".....needs analysis, the analysis of genres and language

related to these needs, and the use of the methodology of the disciplines or professions it is serving for at least some of the

time in materials in the classroom, as the absolute characteristics of ESP that distinguish it from other branches of English Language Teaching." The definitions of ESP were given in order to identify the new approach in comparison to ESL, emphasizing the characteristics and dividing them into absolute and variable ones.

1. Strevens (1988) has found out four absolute characteristics of ESP in comparison to ELT:

- "designed to meet specified needs of the learner";
- "related in content to particular disciplines, occupations and activities";
- "centred on the language appropriate to those activities in syntax, lexis, discourse, semantics, etc., and analysis of this discourse";
- "in contrast with General English."

The variable characteristics of ESP are those that may exist but not necessarily:

- "restricted as to the language skills to be learned (e.g. reading only)";
- "taught according to any pre-ordained methodology." (Gatehouse, 2001 cf. Strevens, 1998, p. 1-2).

2. Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998, p. 4-5) have presented a modified definition of ESP which also comprises absolute and variable characteristics of ESP that are as follows:

"Absolute Characteristics

- ESP is defined to meet specific needs of the learner;
- ESP makes use of the underlying methodology and activities of the discipline it serves;
- ESP is centered on the language (grammar, lexis, register), skills, discourse and genres appropriate to these activities.

Variable Characteristics

- ESP may be related to or designed for specific disciplines;
- ESP may use, in specific teaching situations, a different methodology from that of general English;
- ESP is likely to be designed for adult learners, either at a tertiary level institution or in a professional work situation. It could, however, be for learners at secondary school level;
- ESP is generally designed for intermediate or advanced students;
- Most ESP courses assume some basic knowledge of the language system, but it can be used with beginners".

According to these characteristics ESP might be the first step in differentiating between teaching English grammar and literature and teaching content and language.

Comparison between CLIL and ESP

In order to make a comparison between 'content and language integrated learning' and 'English for specific purposes', we should depict some characteristics of the first approach. If possible, the characteristics will be divided into absolute and variable in the same way those for ESP were divided, and at the same time we will try to restrict the two sets of characteristics to only one set.

The absolute characteristics of **CLIL** can be:

- simultaneous learning of a foreign language and a subject;
- the foreign language is a vehicle of learning;

- pupils or students can use their foreign language skills;
- repeated exposure to a certain language saves time;
- tasks are designed to allow students to focus on and learn to use the new language as they learn the new subject content.

The variable characteristics of CLIL may be:

- visual support materials for meaning;
- materials permit focusing on the language the students need to learn for a certain subject;
- “the learner is not necessarily expected to have the English proficiency required to cope with the subject before beginning study” (Graddol, 2006).

The absolute characteristics of **ESP** according to Stevens are:

- designed to meet specific needs of the learner;
- related in content to particular disciplines, occupations and activities;
- centred on the language appropriate to those activities in syntax, lexis, discourse, semantics, etc., and analysis of this discourse.

As for the variable characteristics, Dudley-Evens (1997) has depicted more:

- related to or designed for specific disciplines;
- likely to be designed for adult learners, either at a tertiary level institution or in a professional work situation. It could, however, be for learners at secondary school level;
- generally designed for intermediate or advanced students;
- assume some basic knowledge of the language system, but it can be used with beginners.

The main difference, in our opinion, between CLIL and ESP is the multitude of subjects that can be taught and learned in the ‘content and language integrated learning’ in comparison to particular subjects, usually the specialty of a domain, taught in ESP.

The common points between the CLIL and ESP are: the level of learners who should have certain knowledge of the language, although beginners may be used, the language that is a vehicle of learning and the visual materials that are very important especially in the situation of the beginners or lower-intermediate students.

Conclusion

Teaching and learning in military Academies have certain characteristics that make the process closer to the CLIL or ESP.

- The military students usually have pre-intermediate knowledge of English, level that suits more **CLIL** than **ESP**.
- We teach English language by teaching the history of military, the military organization, the differences between branches of the military, the weapons generally and the specific weapons for each branch etc. From this point of view we might say that students are learning a multitude of subjects using English as vehicle, but if we look more closely we can understand that everything is based on the same military vocabulary, which is **ESP**.

- Both methods use as variable characteristics visual materials for better learning and understanding.

Even if the two methods have many common points, we believe that the language taught in the military system at this level is mainly connected to ESP and less to CLIL, although in the future things can change in favor of CLIL in order to meet the language policy objectives of the European Union.

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