



Catering for the Needs of an Ageing Bilingual Post-Soviet Country – CLIL Training for Emergency Dispatchers in Estonia

Jelena Kapura¹, Kerli Linnat²

Estonian Academy of Security Sciences, Estonia^{1,2}

Abstract

The presentation deals with the specific features of teaching professional Russian and English for the public sector in Estonia, particularly the CLIL training provided for emergency dispatchers. Although Estonia has one official language, it is actually a bilingual country with around a third of the entire population using Russian as their first language. There are regional and age-related differences in the Estonian language skills with more monolingual people living in the eastern parts of the country and in the capital, who mostly represent older generations. Younger generations of Russian-speakers know the Estonian language rather well due to changes in educational policy and various integration programmes. On the other hand, younger generations of Estonians no longer speak Russian which used to be the first foreign language taught at school during the Soviet period. This has led to an interesting and paradoxical situation in the labour market (and also university entrance exams) where older people with better Russian language skills but poorer technical (incl. computing) skills have an advantage over younger people with better competence in computing and English but virtually no Russian skills. This, in turn, has become a challenge for trainers catering for the needs of such an aging bilingual country, especially in the field of vital services.

In the presentation, we will discuss the use of CLIL in the training of emergency call dispatchers allowing to teach professional language through immersing in as close to realistic situations as possible, i.e. in collaboration with field experts in a simulation centre identical to their future workplace. Similarly, we will talk about the curriculum development in the past years in cooperation with the employer (i.e. the local Emergency Response Centre) with regard to the proportion of calls in foreign languages, the types of respective emergencies and the caller profiles. We will also highlight the challenges stemming from the rather small number of hours allotted for language instruction and the considerable age differences among students with the respective support system provided by the foreign language instructors.

Keywords: *CLIL, vocational training, LSP, innovation.*

References:

- [1] Coyle, D., Hood, P., Marsh, D. CLIL: content and language integrated learning Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010
- [2] Llinares, A., Morton, T., Whittaker, R. The roles of language in CLIL Cambridge University Press; 2012
- [3] CLIL in higher education: towards a multilingual language policy, Fortanet-Gómez, I. Multilingual Matters: Bristol, 2013