



CLIL Approach in Foreign Language Speaking Skills Development

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Abstract

Developing specialized foreign language communicative competencies is one of the main goals of higher education. The level of competencies development depends on the learners' skills in the foreign language reading, writing, listening and speaking. Interpersonal and professional cooperation enhances the importance of speaking skills.

However, communication practice of our students as well as the practical experience show that some speaking skills have not reached the sufficient level, learners face some problems to express their ideas and thoughts in the professional setting. Specialized foreign language speaking skills development is closely connected with the professional skills development. All these skills are interrelated and affect the efficiency of professional education in higher educational institution. The discrepancy between the goals of the Educational Standards in foreign language competencies development and their practical realization, as well as between the students' intention to implement the professional communication in a foreign language and not sufficient level of their speaking skills determines the topicality of the problem.

1. Introduction

The contemporary strategy of Russian education promotes higher education institutions to enhance the university graduates' self-realization and learning mobility, their participation in joint educational projects and research, their ability to be integrated into economic, social and specialized fields of life.

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2. Specialized Component and Language Correlation

National state educational standards of higher education emphasizes that BA graduates must have some generic and professional competences, and as far as a foreign language is concerned they must have sufficient skills to communicate in a professional domain in a foreign language [3]. This communication can be realized both orally and in a written form and consequently these skills should be developed systematically and regularly.

Professional communication as a process of interpersonal relations is exercised as the following communicative needs of a specialist:

- realization of a collective professional activity;
- exchange of data, information, and research views;
- developing of common strategy of interaction in the professional field etc.

All issues mentioned above are essential both for an individual and for a group of specialists united on the basis of their profession.

Educators and researchers emphasize that developing foreign language communicative skills at non-linguistic higher educational institutions will assist graduates to realize professional contacts in a foreign language in different situations both in Russian and in English. On the other hand a foreign language helps students to improve their professional skills and competencies, to get specialized information. Foreign language abilities, skills and competence acquisition can be considered as an indicator of the bachelors' professional competence.

Foreign language is one of the directions of professional training of specialists-to-be, so learning a foreign language the students can succeed in language acquisition and get specialized knowledge of the professional setting. The potential of a foreign language can be realized under the following conditions:

- foreign-language speech activity is widely used in learning;
- this activity has specialized and social orientation;

- students' professional and interpersonal goals and tasks are realized in practice;
- these tasks are solved taking into consideration the students language abilities, interests, creativity;
- learning is exercised in favorable psychological and friendly atmosphere [2].

Success in speakers' productivity also depends on their foreign language processing skills i.e. speakers must transform the information in their heads and put it in a comprehensible form from the point of view of the language and the meaning. Language processing involves word and phrase extraction from the speaker's memory and then the word and phrase assembly into the correct sequences. Foreign language processing skills training is a matter of foreign language teaching and the corresponding speaking activities should be included into the practice of foreign language teaching. Fluent language processing also depends on the fact whether the students are aware of the information they are speaking about.

Speaking is correlated with listening. Skillful speakers should be conscious and take into consideration other opponents' feelings, their linguistic skills and professional awareness of the subject. Communication can be considered as effective if the information sent is processed at the moment of its reception. Information processing depends mostly on the speakers' special knowledge of the topic discussed. Consequently language and special content learning are integrated in practice [4 – 386 pp].

Practical experience shows that university students prefer reading, discussing, and writing about the familiar topics, the awareness of the topic helps the learners to understand the message of the utterance correctly and apply the language properly. In this way the existing specialized knowledge increases the language proficiency. Moreover the integration of the language and the specialized content can enhance the students' motivation.

3. CLIL in Lawyers-to-be training

The correlation of language and specialized vocational training in the frames of CLIL in a non-linguistic higher educational institution proves that the quality of language education depends on the quality of vocational education [5]. We consider that the opposite standpoint is also valid and essential; inter alia the quality of vocational education depends on the quality of language education. Consequently to enhance specialized competences of lawyers-to-be the language skills and communicative competences of the students should be constantly cultivated. For this purpose definite tasks and assignments developing both foreign language skills and specialized vocational skills should be designed and realized in teaching practice.

Discussing some issues of different laws and legislations in a foreign language lawyers-to-be improve their knowledge, skills and know-how of their profession. They also develop their foreign language speaking skills that are realized in dialogue, polylogue, monologue formats and hence imply message conveying, purposeful communication of the interpersonal and professional character on a definite specialized topic, as well as reporting information of the professional character, presenting a report or research data, expanding statements during discussion and debates, make presentations in a monologue mode.

To succeed in specialized speaking activity students must be aware of phonetic phenomena, grammar forms (including those typical of the domain students study), word formation rules, special terminology, speech registers according to communicative situations; build the coherent utterance to express the thoughts in the course of communication; have sociocultural awareness that make the learners familiar with appropriate ways of communication and with the communicative culture of another country, its communicative traditions and customs [2]. Moreover students should know how to structure an utterance, comment, analyze, generalize, argue and debate in a foreign language. All these issues are trained and developed in a number of tasks and assignments both as separate units and in a context.

Considering the integration of the specialized content into language learning we imply that all components of the content should be connected with the students' profession and all speech activities including speaking should touch upon professional matters.

The practical experience shows that CLIL approach can be applied into teaching practice from the starting level of vocational training at University. We suppose that this integration can be successful if the students' language acquisition level is B-1 or higher according to the Common European References.

Though the first year students' specialized awareness is not sufficient enough we can suppose that their interest in their profession will help them to solve communicative problems and tasks, to participate in project making activity and consequently to enhance the learners' foreign language speaking skills and their lawyer-to-be proficiency. The theoretical background of the communicative



task application into teaching practice and the examples of such assignments are provided by A. Atabekova and N. Belenkova [1].

The second and third year students have deeper knowledge in the domain of law so it gives greater opportunity to realize the CLIL approach into practice and develop the appropriate speaking skills of the students. Moreover the second and third year students of Peoples Friendship University of Russia studying at the model "Translator for Specific Purposes (Law)" participate in different kinds of moots, translation internship etc. and thus constantly develop their specialized speaking skills as well as speaking skills in General English.

Different projects aimed at foreign language speaking skills training can also be used as tasks for professional problem solving. As examples of such projects the following kinds of work can be used: making presentations on some professional topic in a foreign language, participation in conferences. Foreign Languages Department of Law Faculty in Peoples' Friendship University of Russia holds two annual students' conferences "We Speak Legal English, German, French, Spanish, Chinese" and "Language, Culture, Translation, Tolerance".

The speaking skills training in the frames of CLIL approach includes such forms of activities and technologies: classroom activities (debates; discussions; case analysis), self-guided activities of students (creative works, projects investigations), self-guided work of students under the instructor's supervision (lexical and grammar abilities exercising formation of grammar skills).

The most popular activities developing students' speaking skills are role plays, brain storming, information gaps activity, storytelling, debates, interviews, story completion etc.

The students' speaking skills in the frames of CLIL approach are improved on the following principles: general: the principle of humanization, the principle of systemic training, the principle of accessibility; specific: the principle focused on the objectives and the output of the activity, the principle of competence training unity, the principle of functional application, the principle of active speech practice relationship in all language aspects training.

The speaking skills training in the frames of CLIL approach is effective if:

- the learners are aware of the goal and tasks of the activity; they know the general and specific areas of the work;
- exercising the communicative speaking assignment the learners can choose such level of linguistic means complexity that correlates with their language abilities;
- an instructor does not supervise the speaking activity but participates in it on equal terms;
- all assignments developing speaking skills are of great professional significance to the learners.

4. Conclusion

The issues of foreign language speaking skills training in non-linguistic higher educational institutions are very topical under the circumstances of the international cooperation in education, culture and science, in technology and economy.

Foreign language speaking skills training in a non-linguistic higher education institution is closely connected with a specialized component, i.e. with the professional career of the students. The efficient speaking activity is affected by graduate competences in a particular setting, by the professional environment of specialists-to-be.

A foreign language in a specialized setting is an essential source of specialized information, a tool of professional competencies improvement. So foreign language skills training and professional training are interrelated and interdependent.

The correlation of a foreign language and professional study is the subject matter of the content and language integrated learning (CLIL) approach which is very effective in teaching foreign languages and developing professional skills of the students at non-linguistic higher educational institutions. This approach diversifies teaching tools and forms of classroom activities, increases learners' motivation and consequently enhances the level of foreign language and professional skills.

Learning a foreign language in the frames of CLIL approach promotes conditions for the training of the students' awareness of the significance of their professional activity, as well as the ability to make independent decisions in complex professional situations that ultimately determines their competitiveness in the modern labour market.

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