

ISSUES OF TEACHING INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION AS AN ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE IN ECONOMICS UNIVERSITY

Olga Bratanych

Associate Professor PhD, Kryvyi Rih Economic Institute
SHEE “Kyiv National Economic University named after Vadym Hetman”,
e-mail: bratanicholga333@yandex.ru, Ukraine

Abstract. The article highlights the issues of Intercultural Communication as an academic discipline in the Economics University. The methodology of teaching Intercultural Communication depends on the language of teaching. Employing a foreign language as a tool for learning the subject area makes this academic discipline integrated that requires applying specific methodology. The author has identified the challenges and advantages of teaching this discipline to students with high level of foreign language proficiency, justified the application of Content and Language Integrated Learning methodology to teaching Intercultural Communication as an integrated discipline and contributed to the teaching methodology by outlining a teaching and learning framework, proposing the structure of the integrated class tailored to the development of effective intercultural communication and mediation skills and ways of achieving the dual goal of the discipline.

Keywords: discipline, Intercultural Communication, CLIL – Content and Language Integrated Learning, foreign language, student, class, methodology.

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.23856/2203>

Introduction

Ukraine like other countries reluctantly or willingly participates in globalization process while striving to join the EU. Ukrainian Higher School is very responsive to these processes. To meet the need of the Ukrainian society for specialists who are proficient in a foreign language and have a high level of cross-cultural communication skills in the professional field, some Ukrainian Economics Universities have extended the period of learning a foreign language up to 5 years. While learning a foreign language students, to some extent, acquire skills of intercultural communication. But, as practice shows, this is not enough. The process of forming intercultural communication competence should be more focused, especially for specialists in international economic relations. Given this, Kyiv National Economics University has introduced a new discipline “Intercultural Communication” into its curricular.

Intercultural Communication as an academic discipline

Currently, Intercultural Communication is only starting to establish itself in the Ukrainian Universities as an academic discipline. The experience of teaching Intercultural Communication in the native language in Ukrainian Universities shows that the most effective organizational form of classroom activities is a combination of lectures and practical classes.

According to E. Hall (1990), the teaching of Intercultural Communication involves intercultural training based on the practical use of the facts of intercultural communication between people, arising in direct contact with other cultures. He regarded the training process as a process of analysis of specific examples of intercultural dialogue, which resulted in expanding intercultural competence of students and overcoming difficulties in everyday communication with people from other cultures. A number of Western scholars (Collier, G., Gudykunst, W. B. & Hammer, M. R., Paige, M. R. & Martin, J., Hoops, M., Bennett, M. J., et al.) described their own experience of teaching Intercultural Communication and the models of acquiring a foreign culture.

Intercultural Communication is a very specific discipline. However, Ukrainian scholars have not provided any studies on methodology, technology, approaches, organizational forms of teaching Intercultural Communication in a foreign language. In this regard, *the aim of this article* is to provide answers to the following questions: What is intercultural competence? Who should teach this discipline in Economics Universities? What language to employ for teaching? Whom to teach? How to set a goal? How to teach? How long? How to prepare a teacher for teaching? What will the student gain? What will the teacher gain? What will the University gain?

Challenges of Intercultural Communication teaching and learning

The European Commission has been looking into the state of bilingualism and language education since the 1990s, and has a clear vision of a multilingual Europe in which people can function in two or three languages. Languages will play a key role in curricula across Europe. Attention needs to be given to the training of teachers and the development of frameworks and methods which will improve the quality of language education.

The discipline "Intercultural Communication" is based on the theoretical positions of classical philosophy, sociology, psychology and linguistics. Who should teach this discipline? There are no experts in this subject area so far. Examining available on the Internet working programs of the discipline compiled by Russian and Ukrainian Universities, we saw that it was taught by professors from different Humanities departments (philosophers, culture experts, teachers of native and foreign languages) to students of various specialties at both bachelor and master level. It is taught primarily in native languages. The organizational forms are lectures and seminars/ practical classes. Duration of the course is 1-2 semesters.

Kyryvi Rih Economic Institute SHEE, "Kyiv National Economics University named after Vadym Hetman" is committed to the implementation of a multilingual environment in the University classrooms according to the guidelines of the European Commission, that is why this discipline is taught to Master's level students of International Economic Relations in English and aims to increase the level of English proficiency and purposeful formation of intercultural competence in students of international economic relations.

By intercultural competence we understand awareness of cultural diversity, skills of showing respect to other cultures and preventing cultural conflicts and ability to establish sustainable intercultural verbal contact.

Given this, in the context of Ukraine's Higher School and other non- English speaking countries, Intercultural Communication can and should be *taught in the language of global communication –English* on condition that:

– there is an enthusiastic teacher proficient in the subject area of Intercultural Communication and in English;

- there are students with high enough level of English proficiency and what is most important-willing to do this course in English;
- there is University management willing to support the project in terms of providing relevant facilities and financial reward to teachers for the effort they put into the project.

As there are no specially trained teachers to deliver this discipline in English in Ukraine, who is better option for teaching Intercultural Communication in English: a teacher with Intercultural Communication proficiency but without English proficiency or a teacher with English proficiency but without Intercultural Communication proficiency? In our opinion, it is more reasonable to speak in favor of teacher of English because it is easier, quicker, and less costly to self-study the subject area of Intercultural Communication for the teacher of English than for a teacher with Intercultural Communication proficiency to master English. For this reason, in KryvyiRih Economic Institute this discipline is taught by a teacher of English and it proved to be right.

It is most appropriate to teach Intercultural Communication to students majoring in International Economic Relations (and other majors: International Economics, International Business etc.) in English as, on the one hand, they have appropriate English proficiency after taking an advanced course of practical English (560 academic hours) and Business English (280 academic hours) and, on the other hand, it provides an opportunity (90 academic hours) to raise their English proficiency to a still higher level. No doubt, one discipline should not be taught at the expense of the other discipline, there must be a balance.

As a result of the study, we found out that in Russian and Ukrainian Universities the emphasis in the subject area of the discipline “Intercultural Communication” varies depending on who teaches the discipline and to who, that is, the content of the discipline is adapted to the capabilities of the teacher and the needs of students of a certain profession.

Judith N. Martin and Thomas K. Nakayama (2010) distinguish the following main aspects of intercultural communication as an academic discipline: Foundations of Intercultural Communication, Intercultural Communication Processes, and Intercultural Communication Applications. Since we believe that the content of the discipline Intercultural Communication must meet the needs of students majoring in international economic relations, who study the discipline in English, we consider it necessary:

- to expand the subject area of the discipline, adding such aspect of studying Intercultural Communication as “Foundations and Scope of Intercultural Business Communication”;
- to emphasize the linguistic component of the process of intercultural communication.

How to teach Intercultural Communication? It depends on the language employed for teaching. If it is taught in a native language, lectures and seminars are appropriate. But, if it is taught in English and pursues a dual goal lectures and seminars are inappropriate. In fact, teaching Intercultural Communication in English makes this discipline integrated and requires specific approaches to learning process organization.

In our opinion, the most suitable methodology for teaching Intercultural Communication as an integrated discipline is CLIL Content and Language Integrated Learning.

The theory behind Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)

The term Content and Language Integrated Learning was coined by David Marsh in 1994. This type of training was characteristic of training situations where subjects or separate

chapters of subjects were taught in a foreign language, thus pursuing a twofold objective: the study of the subject and the simultaneous mastering of a foreign language.

David Marsh (2002) gives the following definition of CLIL, - "Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) refers to any dual-focused educational context in which an additional language, thus not usually the first language of the learners involved, is used as a medium in the teaching and learning of non-language content. It is dual-focused because whereas attention may be predominantly on either subject-specific content or language, both are always accommodated."

In one of his interviews David Marsh (*November 11, 2010*) gave a great insight into CLIL answering relevant questions: the future of CLIL, advice on how to start up a CLIL program and much more. In particular, he said that CLIL is meant, - "to enhance and accelerate content learning, language learning and basically having fun".

A number of foreign scientists (Cummins, J., Coyle, D., Hood, P. and Marsh, D.) distinguish a four-component system (CLIL 4C's): content, communication, cognition, culture. CLIL Methodology provides for the mandatory use of various charts, graphs, tables, contributing to developing the ability to structure, analyze and classify information. This methodology is best suited to the study of "Language for Specific Purposes." Applying this methodology to the study of Intercultural Communication in English helps solve the following tasks:

- to form intercultural competence;
- to improve communicative and linguistic competence of students;
- to increase the motivation for learning a foreign language;
- to train students to freely use a foreign language as a solution tool for casual and purely professional problems of communication;
- to develop practical skills of oral and written communication, making reports, giving cutting-edge presentations etc.

Most current CLIL programs are experimental. There are few sound research-based empirical studies, while CLIL-type bilingual programs are mainly seen to be marketable products in the private sector. Despite the self-explanatory nature of the phrase 'Content and Language Integrated Learning', the true nature of CLIL still remains elusive.

As for the development of CLIL in non-language Higher School in Ukraine, it should be noted that its implementation is currently sporadic and is carried out partly, in the framework of individual schools. Dr. Marsh believes that to achieve the maximum result, you need to apply CLIL methodology to Teens of 14-19 years old (he considers this methodology only at the level of secondary education) for 5-10 hours a week.

A number of Ukrainian scholars and researchers of neighboring countries studied the problem of the use of CLIL in higher education. So, Kozhevnikova O. V. (2011) studied the integrated learning of specialized subjects in a foreign language as a factor of the inclusion of students in international academic mobility. Kochenkova O. M. (2012) described the possibility of profilization of foreign language teaching through the use of the elements of CLIL methodology. Krupchenko, A. K. (2012) considered the integrated teaching of a foreign language and specialty.

Defining the purpose of integrated education, Krupchenko A. K. (2005) rightly noted that, - "the educational process in the context of the professional linguistic didactics is the integration of learning objectives of the professional subjects and objectives of learning a foreign language. It represents the integration of knowledge in the content of vocational

education, where a foreign language as a means of education and communication is the integrant."

Economics University teachers have had some successful experience in teaching integrated disciplines, namely: "Professionally oriented foreign language" (POFL), "Business foreign language" (BFL), "Professional foreign language" (PFL). As for teaching Intercultural Communication, there is great difference because:

– while teaching POFL, BFL, PFL:

- the level of integration is much lower (Fig. 1);
- a foreign language teacher is not supposed to be an expert in students' professional subject area;
- the main goal is to master a foreign language and the inferior goal is to learn some "facts" from the subject area and to form a specific purposes vocabulary;
- knowledge of subject area is rather background than foreground knowledge, the teacher is not qualified to asses it;
- low integration levels allow applying solely methods of teaching foreign languages, though somewhat different.

– while teaching IC:

- the level of integration is very high (Fig. 1);
- a foreign language teacher is supposed to be an expert in the other subject area;
- there is a dual goal- to master a foreign language and to learn the subject;
- the foreign language is a tool for learning the subject;
- the teacher is qualified to asses both knowledge of the subject area and language proficiency;
- high integration level does not allow applying solely methods of teaching foreign languages to teaching a highly integrated discipline.

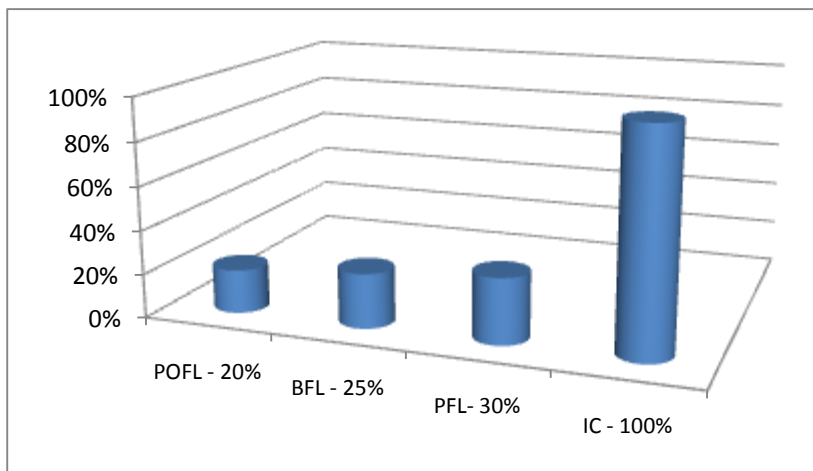


Fig. 1. Approximate integration levels of the disciplines POFL, BFL, PFL and IC

While the first three stages reflect the challenge of professionally-oriented foreign language teaching, the third stage (integrated teaching), can be called the *foreign language*

professional education due to a very high level of integration. Variations in methodologies of teaching these disciplines depend on the level of their integration with other disciplines.

Framework for CLIL-type classes

The teaching of integrated subjects is based on the methodology of teaching these subjects. What should the structure of English taught class in Intercultural Communication look like? In our opinion, it should be a "merger" of a lecture, a seminar and a practical class. We propose the following integrated structure of the class:

1. Procedure/instruction.
2. Conversation, students' reports and presentations on the topic of the previous class.
3. The message of the theme, the objectives of the class.
4. Motivation of classroom activities.
5. Updating the knowledge of reference.
6. Semantization of the vocabulary
7. Interactive mini-lecture on a new topic.
8. Identifying keywords of the topic.
9. A brief conversation on the contents of the lecture.
10. Using the text material on the topic, doing pre-reading, while-reading and post-reading exercises.
11. Viewing short authentic instructional video on the topic of the class, doing pre-listening while-listening, and post-listening exercises.
12. The conversation in context of the video.
13. Cross-cultural training: the practical (oral or written) assignments, case studies, tests, role-playing games and the like.
14. Current performance control.
15. Summing up the class activities.
16. The tasks for independent work.

The structure of the class in the discipline "Intercultural Communication," which we believe is optimal, allows taking into account the 4 "C-s" of CLIL methodology by D. Marshall. The main objective of such a class is to communicate the content of the subject in English, so the students can learn the contents of the course in the same way they could have done it in their mother tongue. It also allows involving students in developing the awareness, knowledge, skills and strategies for effective intercultural communication. Practical classes in Intercultural Communication should be based on guided reading, case studies, simulations, personal diaries or journals, critical dialogue, peer tutoring, practical research assignments, language study and student-led presentations

The process of learning a foreign language involves the following types of speech activity: reading, speaking, listening and writing. While teaching Intercultural communication we can implement all these types of speech activities almost in full, namely:

– *Reading* authentic scientific texts up to 20 pages per week (mostly independent, understanding without translation). CLIL draws on the lexical approach, encouraging learners to notice language while reading;

– *Speaking* - reproductive (memorization and reproduction of the definitions of categorical apparatus of the discipline); prepared monologue speech (oral report, presentation); unprepared monologue speech (extensive response to the problem question,

statement of opinion etc.); unprepared dialogical speech (dialog with the teacher, another student); polylog (debate).

– *Listening* in each class (mini-lectures by the teacher, presentations and reports by other students, educational videos from You Tube or other sources). Since the educational videos are recorded by speakers of different origins and they speak with different accents, the students practice in perception and decoding of the broadcast spoken at a natural pace and style.

– *Writing* - motivated application of studied in previous years grammar rules and vocabulary, as well as of new words for note-taking mini-lectures, the fulfillment of a written case assignments, writing essays, reports and the like.

There is no doubt that learning a language and learning through a language are concurrent processes, but implementing CLIL requires rethinking traditional concepts of the language classroom and the language teacher. CLIL adopts a more hands-on approach to education, because the linguistic challenge of studying complex content in a foreign language requires greater cognitive and interactive effort from the learner. Learning a foreign language through the content of the discipline "Intercultural communication", makes this process more natural (the students rather pick up the language than learn it) and motivated and hence more productive.

While the idea of CLIL-based learning has been proven to be effective there are also many problems with bringing this methodology into mainstream education in Ukraine. One of the most pressing issues is the lack of specialist subject teachers with both the language skills and methodology necessary to enable them to successfully teach their subject in this way. Anyone who has tried to either give or understand any kind of explanation in a language not completely familiar to them will be aware of the kind of problems that both teachers and students are facing.

However, in case of teaching Intercultural Communication as an integrated discipline, there are fewer problems. Speaking in terms of Economics, we can say that the implementation of CLIL methodology in Intercultural Communication teaching creates some added value (Fig. 2).

There are economic reasons for implementing CLIL in Intercultural Communication teaching as, - successful employability of today's higher education (HE) graduates in Europe is more and more dependent on how well they are prepared linguistically and intercultural to enter the internationalized labor market. Greere / Räsänen (2008).

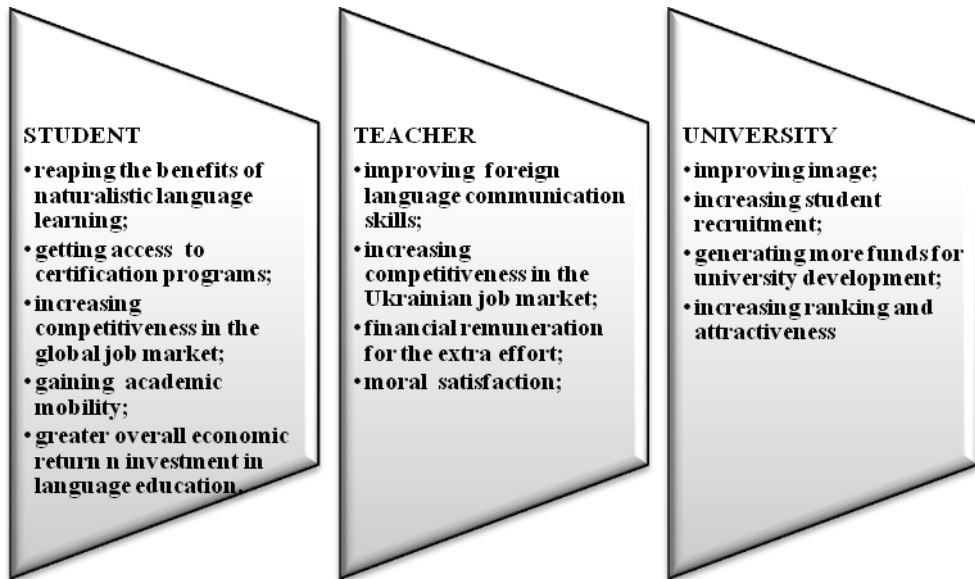


Fig. 2. Added value of the implementation of CLIL methodology in Intercultural Communication teaching

Mastering a foreign language along with acquiring intercultural competence can lead to the personal, social and professional fulfillment and sustainable economic prosperity and employability.

Conclusions and Suggestions

Taking into consideration the European Commission requirements regarding the improvement of foreign language competences and taking English as the language used internationally in the academic and professional world among the EU member states we aimed at showing how English can be introduced progressively as a vehicular language in the university classroom from a CLIL perspective in the field of Intercultural Communication. The need for language teaching reform in the face of Europeanization may make CLIL a common feature of many European education systems in the future.

As a result of the study we can make the following conclusions and suggestions:

- Intercultural competence is awareness of cultural diversity, skills of showing respect to other cultures and preventing cultural conflicts and ability to establish sustainable intercultural verbal contact.

- In Economics Universities Intercultural Communication as an academic discipline should be taught in English to students with high level of the English language proficiency;

- The best option for the teacher of Intercultural Communication as an integrated discipline is a foreign language teacher.

- The best option for methodology of teaching Intercultural Communication as an integrated discipline is Content and language Integrated Learning.

- As CLIL – based teaching of Intercultural Communication involves the use of specific methods, techniques and materials, there are considerable implications for training (or retraining) for all teachers involved in CLIL. Training can be offered as on the job training or off the job training.

- The implementation of CLIL methodology in Intercultural Communication teaching creates considerable added value for the student, the teacher and the University: results in economic prosperity and employability.

As for the further study of the problem, it would be revealing to find out how CLIL affects learners' motivation towards learning a FL in comparison with non-CLIL instruction.

References

- Hall, E. T. (1990). *Understanding Cultural Differences: Germans, French and Americans*. Yarmouth: Intercultural Press.
- Kochenkova, O.M. (2012). *The possibility of profile teaching of foreign languages through the use of the elements of the CLIL methodology*. [Electronic resource]. Retrieved from http://kochenkova.ru/publ/vozmozhnosti_profilizacii_prepodavaniya_inostrannykh_jazykov_s_pomoshhju_primeneniya_elementov_metodiki_clil_integrirovanie_prepodavaniya_inostran/1-1-01.
- Kozhevnikova, O. V. (2011). *Integrated learning of specialized subjects in a foreign language as a factor in the inclusion of students in international academic mobility*. Series: Pedagogy and psychology, Issue 4, TV S U: Tver.
- Krupchenko, A. K. (2005). *Introduction to professional lingvodidactic*. MFTI: Moscow.
- Krupchenko, A. K. (2012). *Profession and language integrated learning*. [Electronic resource]. Retrieved from http://www.nbu.gov.ua/old_jrn/Soc_Gum/Vchdpu/ped/2012_101/Krupch.pdf
- Marsh, D. (2001). *Using Languages to Learn and Learning to Use Languages: An introduction for parents and young people*. TIE-CLIL: Milan.
- Marsh, D. (2002). *Content and Language Integrated Learning: The European Dimensions - Actions, Trends and Foresight Potential*. [Electronic resource]. Retrieved from <http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/languages/index.html>.
- Marsh, D. (2002). *The relevance and potential of content and language integrated learning (CLIL) for achieving MT+2 in Europe submitted to European Commission DG EAC in September 2002*. Retrieved from <http://userpage.fu-berlin.de/elc/bulletin/9/en/marsh.html>.
- Marsh, D. on CLIL (November 11, 2010). [Electronic resource]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Czdg8-6mJA>
- Martin, Judith N., Nakayama, Thomas K. (2010). *Intercultural communication in Context*. Published by McGraw-Hill, a business unit of The McGraw-Hill Companies: New York, NY.