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INTEGRATING ELEMENTS OF LSP LANGUAGE TEACHING AND CLIL METHODS IN THE CONTEXT OF TERTIARY EDUCATION

Abstract

LSP and CLIL differ significantly in their perspective, as standard LSP teaching focuses primarily on foreign language competences, while CLIL methodology always implies teaching contents as well as language. Consequently, they nurture different approaches to foreign language teaching, different learning aims and outcomes, as well as different teachers' roles. However, these two linguistic approaches seem also to share some basic features: use of needs analysis, context-based and task-based instruction, subject-specific orientation, fostering of both communicative and academic competence etc. In this paper the integration of LSP and CLIL is examined in the specific settings of tertiary education in Serbia, more precisely, within an LSP course – Italian for students of Social Studies and Humanities. This small-scale research conducted to establish whether it is possible to bridge the gap between the two approaches has shown that integrating elements of LSP and CLIL is not only feasible, but highly desirable.

Keywords: LSP, CLIL, tertiary education, foreign language learning and teaching, subject-specific content

1. Introduction

Despite the coexistence of Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in the European tertiary education settings, in recent years there has been an increasing interest in the implementation of CLIL programs at university level, in preference to LSP courses (Costa & Coleman, 2010; Gonzalez Ardeo, 2013; Räisänen & Fortanet-Gómez, 2008; Vázquez & Gaustad, 2013). This hardly comes as a surprise, as CLIL is undoubtedly an innovative approach with its dual focus that amalgamates language learning and subject learning. Although it has been more widely studied within the primary and secondary education, there are also some studies on CLIL at university level (Fernández, 2009; Gustafsson, 2011; Leonardi, 2015; Smit & Dafouz, 2012; Wilkinson & Zegers, 2007, 2008).

It was not until the early 90's that CLIL began to take shape in Europe. After the *White Paper* entitled *Teaching and Learning: Towards the Learning Society* was issued in 1995 (Commission of the European Communities, 1995) promoting multilingualism has become one of the relevant objectives of the European education system. The concept of multilingualism, expressed by the formula 2+1, implies that all the citizens of Europe should be able to use not only their mother tongue but also two other, foreign, languages. As a result, the implementation of CLIL started spreading rapidly (Pérez-Vidal, 2009), particularly within the primary and the secondary education framework, where bilingual education was usually the term used to refer to teaching content subjects (especially Humanities or Natural sciences) through the medium of foreign and native language.

In 2000, the Serbian Ministry of Education launched several projects supported by a number of international institutions (World Bank, Council of Europe etc.) in order to modernize the education system in the country. Accordingly, a new curriculum framework for foreign languages teaching has been developed. It encompasses the possibility of offering at least two foreign languages throughout the twelve years of elementary and secondary education, as well as three or more languages with the status of optional, non-compulsory subjects. It was within this project that the introduction of bilingual teaching in a foreign language in elementary and secondary schools was enabled (Filipović, Vučo, & Đurić, 2007).

Regarding higher education, CLIL teaching in Serbia is still seldom present, with the exception of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine (Mirić & Đorović, 2015), and the Faculty of Mining and Geology (Beko, 2013). However, the majority of language programs intended for non-philological students remain devised as LSP courses (Mirić & Đorović, 2015). The main issue involving the tertiary level of education and foreign languages teaching is what methodological bases, approaches and strategies, techniques and materials to apply within the broad term of LSP teaching, especially since there is no common or standardized curriculum framework for LSP teaching at Serbian universities. This matter, however, is becoming more and more a pressing issue as the internationalization of university studies and student mobility in Europe has become a reality in Serbia as well. Surprisingly enough, it is still the foreign language teacher who decides whether to implement CLIL or teach a course as LSP in order to meet the needs of standardization and internationalization of university studies in Serbia*.*

When it comes to the choice of language, as expected, English is the most widely implemented target language for CLIL in Europe (Dalton-Puffer, 2011) Generally, any foreign language

could be used as a medium of instruction in CLIL programmes, but English continues to be the most popular vehicular language in all the non-Anglophone areas (Graddol, 2006, as cited in Coyle, Hood, & Marsh, 2010). Although official policies of the European Union promote multilingualism and linguistic diversity, implementing such policies, however, proves more difficult than anticipated, due to "an inexorable increase in the use of English" (Coleman, 2006, p. 1). No other language can challenge its position as international *lingua franca* or as 'killer language', as Coleman (2006) refers to it.

This is also true for high education globally. Even before the Bologna Process, English was irreplaceable as the language of science, technology and academia, so it is no surprise that, at numerous European universities, most courses at tertiary level opt for English as the main instruction language[1] (Gonzalez Ardeo, 2013; Leonardi, 2015). Besides, in accordance with the main principles of the Bologna Declaration, international co-operation among universities implies the mobility of students and teaching staff, which, undoubtedly, reflects on the curricula and the dominant presence of English as the main language of instruction (Leonardi, 2015), or to put it as Philipson (2009, p. 37) does, internationalization of education has come to mean English-medium higher education. Thus, regardless of sporadic incidences of other languages as instruction languages (French, German, Spanish), a number of degree courses in Europe have already introduced English as compulsory in their study programs.

A quick glance at the literature reveals that, when it comes to LSP and CLIL courses, it is often assumed that the language of instruction is, once again, English. Yet, there are some initiatives, both in Europe, United States and Australia, to include Asian, European and heritage languages among CLIL vehicular languages (Coyle et al., 2010) which is in line with the promotion of LOTE (Languages Other than English) programmes (de Riva O'Phelan, 2006; Haataja, Kruszinna, Àrkossy, & Costa Alfonso, 2011). This paper, however, analyses an Italian-for-Specific-Purposes (ISP) course within the tertiary studies at the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Belgrade. In fact, the present study has come to life as two reflective practitioners (one from an LSP, the other from a CLIL setting) started reflecting on their different teaching practices, while simultaneously sharing similar implicit theories of teaching and learning (Richards, 1998).

Starting from the literature review and the analysis of the ISP program and the course documents, combined with the insights gained through long-lasting teaching experiences of the authors (including LSP courses at university level, as well as CLIL teaching at secondary school level), this paper aims at comparing LSP and CLIL and at establishing similarities and differences between these two approaches, with a scope of identifying some of the most relevant features of both that could enrich any tertiary language course. For the sake of precision, it is important to stress that in this paper CLIL methodology will be considered as a fusion of two parallel courses: a language course and a content teaching course with a focus on developing different language skills in order to achieve higher-order thinking. This model is known as *Adjunct CLIL*: "Language teaching is field specific, [...] language courses complement

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1   Most of these courses taught in English fall under the umbrella of English-medium instruction (EMI), which, unlike CLIL, focuses primarily on the content. However, the two terms are often used interchangeably (Smit & Dafouz, 2012).

stage-by-stage higher education programmes, students successfully learn content and gain the ability to use the CLIL language for specific purposes" (Coyle et al., 2010, p. 25).

For the purpose of this study, some CLIL features were 1) selected, defined and explained 2) identified and analyzed in the specific settings of ISP at the Faculty of Philosophy, 3) analyzed through students' answers on the use of the particular feature and 4) discussed in the light of possible future use in the classroom. Students' views on different approaches, strategies and techniques used in university language teaching shed a fresh light on the LSP teaching experience, allowing the authors to examine critically the teaching paradigm in use and hopefully identify certain aspects of teaching that may contribute to a better and more successful acquisition of foreign language in the given situation.

2. LSP & CLIL: differences and similarities

LSP refers to language research and instruction that focuses on the specific communicative needs and practices of particular social groups (Hyland, 2007). It has developed rapidly over the past forty years, drawing its strength from an eclectic theoretical foundation, a distinctive interdisciplinarity and a vivid interest in research-based language education. Dating back to the sixties, LSP has reached its maturity and proved its value when it comes to learning foreign languages for a variety of specific purposes. CLIL, on the other hand, is "a dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language" (Mehisto, Marsh, & Frigols, 2008, p. 9) which implies "using a language that is not students' native language as a medium of instruction" (Mehisto et al., 2008, p. 11). Moreover, CLIL is not considered an absolutely new form of language or subject education, but rather an innovative fusion of both. It is defined as an umbrella term which includes LSP, language and subject education, while sharing some elements of education practices such as Bilingual education and immersion (Coyle et al., 2010), Content-Based Instruction (CBI), Dual Language Programmes, English-Across-the-Curriculum among others (Dalton-Puffer, 2007).

If one is to attempt to explore the relationship between LSP and CLIL in the tertiary education, it is important to stress that these teaching approaches have been at the core of heated controversies as to whether they are different methodologies or two different terms used for the same approach. Apparently, LSP is usually considered as focusing on specific language, whereas CLIL is seen as concentrating on both language and subject-specific content, at the same time (Gonzalez Ardeo, 2013). Nevertheless, both approaches share an interest in subject-specific context. If we look at things from LSP perspective, it is certain that if authentic texts are used by language teachers, the prevalent reason for choosing such materials remains language learning, albeit within a specific, disciplinary area as LSP teachers are language specialists. Diversely, CLIL falls into the category of content-driven approaches in which a foreign language is used for learning and teaching both content and language (Coyle et al., 2010). Furthermore, CLIL normally allows for mother tongue (L1) use and code-switching, while LSP traditionally does not focus on L1.

The main idea of CLIL is to guide students towards a functional integration of language mastery, subject field knowledge and cognitive and metacognitive skills, all of which require

systematic monitoring and planning (Swain, 1988). Consequently, it seems that when embracing the CLIL approach it is not a question of whether to focus on meaning or form but rather that it is crucial to address both, (Coyle et al., 2010). Needless to say, the emphasis on form or meaning is subject to specific learning situations and determined by a wide range of variables in the particular CLIL settings.

Regardless of their differences, the authors of this paper believe that, as stated by Leonardi (2015) as well as by Martín del Pozo (2017)**,** there are more areas of convergence than divergence between these two approaches. The attempt at collaborative work inspired by these approaches would be certainly beneficial for foreign language learning for university students. What is more, both CLIL and LSP should foster intercultural understanding. The review of relevant literature shows that, generally speaking, LSP and CLIL share several key features, the three most frequently mentioned being: 1) the use of context from different non-linguistic subjects, 2) the use of communicative language teaching methodology and 3) the development of academic and communication skills (Dalton-Puffer & Smit, 2007; Greere & Räsänen, 2008).

It is a well-established fact nowadays that learning languages out of context came to be regarded as an outdated methodology. The rationale behind both LSP and CLIL is that the use of language becomes more authentic and more functional if it allows learners to understand and express thoughts in a specific discipline. The subject-specific contents seem to provide learners with a more appropriate and more natural environment for language learning and practice leading to a more successful and meaningful communication in real life situations (Dalton-Puffer, 2007; Dalton-Puffer & Smit, 2007).

As each approach is subject to the specific learning situation and unique educational and teaching settings, the features of Italian for specific purposes taught at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade as a form of LSP indicate that the primary goal refers to developing students' functional language competences regarding specific topics pertaining to specific disciplinary contents. Thus, the LSP course under our scrutiny represents a possible model of teaching Italian for Humanities and Social Sciences students through a gradual and mutual collaboration of CLIL and LSP approaches.

3. The research plan and methodology

The empirical aspect of this small-scale study is based on the questionnaire analysis conducted at the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Belgrade (during the academic year 2016/17). Students majoring in Philosophy, Sociology, History, History of Art, Education, Classics, Anthropology, Psychology or Archaeology can all choose Italian as a compulsory subject during the first two years of their studies. The Italian Language curriculum in question aims at developing all basic language skills (reading, listening, speaking and writing), with a special regard to discipline-oriented language usage. It assumes no previous experience with the Italian language, so it caters for students who did not learn Italian at school and who would like to start Italian at university, as well as those with a very limited experience of the language. Along with the basics of the Italian language system, some of the major lexical, syntactic, pragmatic and stylistic components of LSP are introduced. The course objectives

are defined with special regard to students' needs and interests as university students and future members of disciplinary discourse communities. The primary goal is to enable students to deal with subject-specific texts upon a four-semester instruction and learn how to consult relevant literature written in Italian for their academic and professional needs. As for the learning outcomes, after the biannual Italian course, our students are expected to be able to understand/interpret subject specific texts, recognize discourse patterns pertinent to the subject area and use subject-specific literature in Italian within their own fields of study.

With a view to establishing whether bridging the gap between CLIL and LSP teaching is possible, we identified some of the most representative elements, core features of the CLIL method, as key indicators on which to base our analysis (authenticity, active learning, tasks, focus on meaning, scaffolding, use of L1, co-operative teaching, etc.). Then, the research questions were formulated as follows:

1. Are some of the typical elements of CLIL methodology traceable in LSP practice?

2. Could some of the absent CLIL elements still be implemented into LSP teaching in this particular context?

In the interest of answering the research questions, four features of CLIL methodology (authenticity of materials, contents and context; active learning; tasks and focus on meaning; scaffolding) were identified as crucial and examined within the LSP practice. In order to have a more comprehensive view of the teaching situation in the specific situation of our interest, two different research methods have been employed. First, the above-mentioned CLIL features were searched, identified and analyzed in the official ISP curriculum and syllabus, as well as in the teacher's written preparation, lesson plans and teaching materials used during the winter semester of 2016 and the summer semester of 2017. Secondly, a questionnaire[2] regarding these specific CLIL features and their use during the above mentioned teaching period was administered to 30 second-year students of Humanities and Social Studies whose Italian language level ranges between A2 and B2 level of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). The questionnaire contained 16 questions (13 open-ended and 3 closed-ended questions). The data collected were categorized according to different criteria, with regard to the core features of CLIL selected, their presence/absence in the ISP reality examined and the students' positive, negative or neutral attitude towards their usefulness and usability. The valuable insights gained from both sources of information used in the research helped us come closer to answering the research questions. The main issues dealt with will be described and discussed in the following sections.

4. The results

The Section 4 of this paper is organized as follows. Each of the examined CLIL features (authenticity, active learning, tasks, scaffolding) is first described and explained (Sections 4.1., 4.2., 4.3, 4.4.). Then, some of the CLIL elements already used in the ISP classroom are considered (Sections 4.1.1., 4.2.1., 4.3.1., 4.4.1.). In the Sections 4.1.2., 4.2.2., 4.3.2., 4.4.2.

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2   The questionnaire is available at https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1ZlMapuqD9VbMonHQZpQRxIBdJxb8 29WRTbq3ApPSRTM/edit#responses

students' views on the selected CLIL features are presented and discussed. Finally, some possible pedagogical implications for each of the examined features are proposed (Sections 4.1.3., 4.2.3., 4.3.3., 4.4.3.)

4.1. Authenticity

One of the fundamental traits of the CLIL approach is authenticity which is here understood as in Wolff (1997), as authenticity of learning materials, contents, interactions and context. Authentic materials and contents normally imply adhesion to real-life situations and studying. The language is usually less ambiguous and the content is conveyed by technical terms, as well as specific grammatical and rhetorical structures and patterns.

As for interactions, they seem more authentic in the CLIL settings than within the pseudo-realistic context of foreign language teaching. More specifically, the exploration of real content is conducted through interactive tasks (e.g. discussion about experiment results is more authentic than simulated interactive tasks in traditional foreign language [FL] classrooms). Even reading and writing tasks become more authentic activities when a text is analyzed, read or written, in order to understand and manipulate the content rather than to focus on the language itself. In fact, language analysis within CLIL aims at solving problems connected to managing and learning non-linguistic subjects (Coonan, 2008).

The CLIL approach deals differently with this issue as well, by way of providing the so-called richness of context. Although the subject content addressed in CLIL is necessarily reduced if compared to the discipline in question itself, it is still more complex and rich than the usual learning settings within the FL framework. More specifically, the rich context implies (Coonan, 2009) more complex concepts and underlining language structure, a variety of text typologies, genres and activities to deal with, as well as numerous language and communicative functions practiced with a view to develop cognitive and language functions of higher order (e.g. in Physics: to explain, to define, to verify, to distinguish, to illustrate, to conclude etc.). It also enhances motivation to use FL, both in order to understand the disciplinary concepts and to learn the new content, to reflect, question and discuss. However, the foreign language is not used to demonstrate the language knowledge *per se*, as in FL teaching.

4.1.1. Authenticity in the ISP classroom

Learning materials used in the ISP classroom we examined are usually excerpts from authentic disciplinary texts, primarily aimed at developing subject-specific Italian (so they may be considered pseudo-authentic as their use in the language classroom is mostly non-authentic). However, at certain points during the course, authentic, undidacticized texts are also used by students when they prepare for oral presentations, exams or for writing papers. In these cases, the authenticity is achieved, as the aim transcends the linguistic knowledge and the subject-specific content is addressed with the Italian language as a vehicular language. Thus, both content and materials become authentic.

The same is true for authentic interaction. The pseudo-reality of an ISP lesson is a fact, but if we deal with real-life content (e.g. students are supposed to discuss the results of an

experiment) the interaction becomes authentic. For example, one of the techniques that aids understanding and learning of subject-specific content is the use of non-linear texts (graphs, charts, diagrams etc.) which students perceive as relevant and authentic.

4.1.2. Student views

The use of authentic texts, in the students' opinion, is rather useful in several aspects. The majority of students (90%) stress the importance of using authentic texts for preparing non-philological students to consult subject-specific literature in the future. This didactic activity: (a) helps them practice the use of specific terms within a particular field of study, (b) enables them to use more diverse literature when preparing seminal papers, presentations and exams and (c) increases their motivation for learning both language and content. Interestingly enough, some of the students (10%) characterized authentic materials as a valid source for getting to know the foreign culture and gain a higher level of intercultural competences which may be useful in their future academic and professional careers. Additionally, it is our experience that when introduced to authentic, undidacticized texts, students can easily notice the differences between everyday language used for basic communication skills (in CLIL this would fall into category of BICS[3]) and language for specific purposes which is crucial for achieving higher order skills - defining, inferencing, rephrasing (which CLIL defines as CALP[4] skills).

4.1.3. Pedagogical implications

In the ISP classroom it would be possible to plan activities that could enable students to acquire both language and content knowledge, thus achieving greater authenticity. One of the possible models could be the introduction of non-linear text analysis (e.g. reading and analysis of charts and diagrams used in subject-specific classrooms, even those made by students themselves when studying for exams or doing research) on a regular basis. It would be challenging, however, to implement such an activity with students of disciplines which rarely use such text typologies (e.g. Philosophy students), while it would be most certainly of great use and practice to Sociology and Psychology students. In other words, non-linear text analysis could be implemented, but within carefully chosen differentiated tasks in a heterogeneous classroom.

Authenticity can also be fostered by encouraging the students to ask for the language help they need when dealing with their disciplinary subjects, as well as by maximizing students' participation in the selection of topics, tasks and texts to work on, as well as by personalizing the tasks and fostering autonomous learning.

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3   BICS – Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (Cummins, 1981)

4   CALP – Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (Cummins, 1981)

4.2. Active learning

One of the core features of CLIL we consider of great importance is also active learning (Coyle et al., 2010). The traditional classroom and the roles once played by the participants of the learning process have given way to a different atmosphere and a more active role of learners who become more autonomous and responsible for their learning. Also, for learning to be defined as active, students need not only to do something, but to reflect on that. As a learner-centered concept, active learning involves students "doing things and thinking about what they are doing" (Bonwell & Elison, 1991, p. 2). This is to say that active learning is aimed at shifting the focus from the teacher to the learners, but also at promoting cognitive tasks of higher order through active engagement with the subject-specific content (Prince, 2004).

The concept of active learning implies, for example, that students should be communicating more than the teacher, especially when it comes to verbalizing different procedures connected to the non-linguistic content they are learning. In doing so, students should co-operate with their peers through various social forms such as pair work, group work, debates, plenum etc. while teachers are expected to act more and more as facilitators, ready to negotiate the meaning of language and content with their students when necessary. As active learners, students become involved in tasks that stimulate decision making and critical thinking, such as: setting contents of the course, choosing materials and learning techniques, as well as most useful language and learning competences and most adequate learning outcomes for their particular needs. In addition, active learning means also the maturity and responsibility for self-evaluation practices and self-monitoring in achieving the learning outcomes (Dalton-Puffer, 2007).

4.2.1. Active learning in the ISP classroom

In the ISP of our interest, many aspects of active learning do take place. Although students' proficiency level may hinder their verbalizing of procedures, they take part in setting learning outcomes and skills to be acquired as they formulate their language and communicative needs[5]. Namely, during the first lesson they fill in a short needs-analysis form, and as the course proceeds they communicate their needs and negotiate the content of the course with the teacher. Co-operative learning is also well represented in the ISP classroom. Activities in pairs and groups, as well as peer co-operation in completing different tasks, are frequently used so that students get used to working together to maximize their own and each other's learning and in doing so achieve greater results. Within co-operative learning situations, individuals seek outcomes that are beneficial to themselves and beneficial to all other group members.

As for the selection of topics in the ISP course analyzed, topics to be covered are normally not pre-set. In fact, they are rather roughly outlined before the beginning of the course and set definitively only after all the students have had the opportunity of contributing to the selection. In other words, topics and written materials normally spring from the students' inquiries and interests and are negotiated throughout the learning process. As a matter of

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5   In both approaches needs analysis plays a fundamental role in planning and developing teaching activities tailored to satisfy learners' needs (Đorović, 2015; Basturkmen, 2012)

fact, there is an in-house textbook containing a number of materials for all the disciplines studied at the faculty, so that each year students and their teacher can choose and decide together which texts are to be covered in-depth. Additionally, each student has an opportunity to enrich the selection of texts with the materials of their own choice, which are, of course, reviewed and discussed with the teacher and other peers. As most students are informed well enough on the most appropriate topics and literature concerning their fields of study (which could be also checked with subject matter teachers), they take an active part in the selection of texts, as a form of active learning. They usually opt for literature proposed by their subject teachers, or other texts they consider essential for their studies. Both subject-matter teachers and language teachers are at their disposal for any kind of suggestions or assistance[6]. The role of the language teacher, not as the only source of knowledge, but as a moderator and facilitator who oversees students' choices and understands and takes into account their individual needs, has much evolved from the traditional one.

4.2.2. Student views

Although some of the students would have liked more time spent on communication during the ISP classes, the majority of them (over 80%) seem to be satisfied with the space given to communicative practice on the topics involving the entire class or groups of students of adjacent study fields. Nevertheless, they state that the course is intended primarily to enable them to consult and analyze subject-specific literature, while communication takes only a second place in the list of objectives. Asked to allocate the three most important teaching foci, the largest number of students (90%) name primarily grammar, a somewhat smaller number (76.7%) opt for professional terminology, while approximately the same number of students (73.3%) recognizes communication as one of the primary goals of the ISP course. Concerning the issue of various competences, a large number of students (80%) singled out academic competences as the most relevant, followed by 56.7% of students who opted for exclusively linguistic competences within the profession, while slightly more than half of the respondents (53.3%) stressed the importance of metacognitive competence (allocation of primary information, search for key information, generalization, comparison, etc.).

The results of our study show that according to the ISP students, their teacher does play the role of facilitator by: guiding and assisting them throughout the course, adapting instruction materials to students' language level and encouraging peer co-operation. The ISP teacher is recognized as a capable organizer who succeeds in offering and putting to practice diverse activities and techniques depending on the FL proficiency level of each student. In this respect, students describe their teacher as a language specialist who has the mastery of specific terminology and specific discourse patterns of the disciplines they study. What is more, they are pleased that the language teacher is willing to improve her own level of knowledge of the specific domains of their studies.

Students' answers clearly indicate that they recognize and appreciate the teacher's focus on the texts taken from specific fields of study chosen by them. The majority of students (83%) consider the possibility to participate in tailoring the course by choosing materials

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6   For some examples of good practice regarding co-operation of language teachers and subject teachers in deciding on the topics and materials for the ISP course, see Mirić & Đorović, 2015.

and topics as an excellent experience that fosters their own autonomy in both language and content learning. They find the responsibility involved in this endeavor very rewarding and motivating. One of the students expresses this opportunity of active participation in program decisions as the most unique experience: "It was a great experience; we were given freedom and responsibility, which is always a good thing. Freedom of choice is important"[7] (P11)[8]. Another one states that "by selecting your own text for the exam you were given an opportunity to choose the topic you are really interested in, and consequently you stood a better chance of learning both language and some new information on the content of your choosing" (P23).

4.2.3. Pedagogical implications

Our findings on different aspects of active learning indicate that the most problematic issue in this respect remains the time and space dedicated to practicing communication, oral interaction and verbalizing subject-specific matters in Italian. Certainly, this weakness of the ISP course at the Faculty of Philosophy is undeniably the most serious one, and also the least manageable or resolvable: the level of the students' proficiency in Italian is simply too low for practicing such a complex activity. A two-year long instruction of Italian as a language for specific purposes can hardly allow more time spent on communicative practices when the first and primary goal is to enable students to read and use discipline-specific literature. A possible solution would lie in extending the course's duration to at least one extra semester that could be entirely dedicated to mastering activities and practices regarding functional oral and written communication and interaction related to the subject domains of our students. In all the other aspects of active learning there is always room for improvement but according to the students the present state seems satisfactory enough.

4.3. Tasks and meaning-focused language use

As mentioned, both CLIL and LSP foster the use of authentic materials which means that both approaches tend to provide learners with real-world language. In other words, authentic texts are used to focus on meaning rather than form. Both LSP and CLIL encourage the use of tasks[9] based on authentic linguistic data which provide opportunities for students to practice the language in real-life situations. In CLIL, task-based activities are given priority, as they are believed to increase learners' motivation and learning success. As Ellis (2003) pointed out, they are cognitively involving and motivating as long as they provide a reasonable challenge.

When resolving tasks, students shift the focus of learning from form to meaning. Moreover, tasks should be always chosen with regards to learners' needs. That is the only way to create

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7   The translation of the participants' answers is ours.

8   "P" stands for Participant.

9   The term "task" is used here in the sense of "a piece of classroom work that involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is focused on mobilizing their grammatical knowledge in order to express meaning, and in which the intention is to convey meaning rather than to manipulate form" as stated by Nunan (2004, p. 4)

communicative activities that are both motivating and engaging for students. Tasks can help promote naturalness, collaboration, negotiation. In this way, students' motivation for learning is enhanced as well. Furthermore, tasks are closely related to interactive learning which encourages students to communicate, to use comprehensible input, but also to develop more complex competences, such as using adequate grammar in writing tasks etc. (Cummins, 1999).

The focus on meaning should enhance students' use of foreign language whenever possible, alleviating their fear of making mistakes. As long as communication takes place, be it with some mistakes, the process is usually successful. In our case, students often do ask for language help when completing tasks within their subject-specific domain. Finally, tasks are closely connected to applying different sets of skills acquired in real-life situations, in which authentic language data can be used, student-centered learning developed and both BICS and CALP competences improved (Coonan, 2008).

4.3.1. Tasks in the ISP classroom

As tasks are typically connected to both LSP and CLIL methodology, the ISP course we examined often makes use of this type of activity. The most frequent task includes searching for relevant information and data regarding some of the subject-specific projects of our students (seminal papers, research planning and reporting, literature review etc.). When it comes to tasks more closely related to specific language learning, the ISP syllabus includes a variety of paraphrasing, rewriting, as well as summarizing and translation tasks. One of the significant tasks regularly put into practice is oral presentations on topics related to the students' fields of interest. This activity helps students improve their presentation skills as well as public speaking skills that they will probably need in their future academic and professional careers.

4.3.2. Student views

When asked about the language-related tasks such as paraphrasing, summary writing or certain types of translation, the students attending the ISP course see numerous benefits, which could be categorized as follows:

a) another opportunity for better understanding of specific texts,

b) closer scrutiny and more detailed analysis of such texts,

c) a chance to apply grammatical and lexical knowledge and integrate it with the acquired content knowledge,

d) an improvement of their writing and oral production skills. Some of the students stress the importance of such tasks for "a more in-depth analysis and understanding of texts, necessary to infer, track and use the main ideas" (P4).

The students' answers regarding the use of oral production tasks, such as Power Point presentations, clearly demonstrate their awareness of some advantages the oral production activities bring: detailed preparation of a topic in FL, including text research, selection and

comprehension with the focus on the most relevant information; opportunity to evaluate estimate one's own ability to present ideas publicly in an efficient and relaxed manner in order to be understood by other students in the class. Some of the students state that oral presentations brought them the benefit of developing self-confidence and self-esteem when presenting content in FL to a class, using simultaneously "specific terms, discourse patterns and communicative skills" (P8). Among other positive effects of oral presentations, students cited "becoming more autonomous in specific language learning" (P15), "liberating oneself of the fear of using language, no matter how imperfectly, in real-life academic situations" (P19) and "learning how to extract the gist of a subject-specific text and simplify it enough to make it understandable to all." (P22). Furthermore, in their answers some students expressed their pleasure at listening to and learning about topics not so closely related to their own field of study but interesting and inspiring enough to introduce "a pleasant change and a new perspective at things" (P1).

Two students, however, perceived such tasks as highly stressful, bringing them uneasiness and lack of confidence, seemingly due to their unsatisfactory language level. They consequently avoided such tasks. Moreover, there were some students who found the oral presentations (already compulsory in almost all of their study subjects) tiresome, often too time-consuming and not rewarding enough for such a great effort.

4.3.3. Pedagogical implications

Tasks are undoubtedly an extremely useful way of learning both language and content. However, if the students still have to focus on acquiring some of the basic grammatical and textual competences in FL, task-based instruction cannot be the sole methodology in play: explicit grammar instruction, text-based and lexical approach would have to be incorporated to some extent. Besides, as students in the ISP classroom come from different disciplines, it is of utmost importance to devise tasks that could satisfy the heterogeneous needs of different students.

One of the useful tasks that could be implemented in the ISP classroom is creating a corpus of relevant texts for each of the disciplines our students study, hopefully with the assistance of both their LSP teacher and subject-specific specialists. Another task, closely linked to accomplishing a better understanding of subject-specific knowledge that could be implemented into the ISP classroom is creating glossaries of technical and semi-technical terms pertaining to the students' fields of study. Such attempts have already been made sporadically for some of the disciplines, but not systematically and comprehensively.

4.4. Scaffolding

The concept of scaffolding is best defined by Bruner (1975, p. 2) as "a process in which the teacher supports the learners by breaking down a task or activity into manageable steps and by demonstrating skills and strategies how to complete each step successfully". Actually, educational (or instructional) scaffolding has become a teaching method that enables students to solve different problems and carry out tasks through a gradual shedding of outside assistance (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976). Scaffolding strategies are devised to support

learning when students are first introduced to new concepts. Scaffolding aids students in grasping new and complex information, gives them a solid background but as the learning process unfolds, scaffolds should be removed gradually, if learning is to progress. Eventually, students should acquire sufficient skills to comprehend what is asked of them and do things autonomously.

 In LSP, students' second language is both the content and the means of learning and is usually adapted to the proficiency level(s) of learners, in CLIL, on the other hand, language is considered a means rather than a goal in itself, and content is made easy for students through scaffolding strategies (Coyle et al., 2010). However, there seem to be no obstacles for using scaffolding strategies to teach LSP either.

What scaffolding does for students is give them a context, and consequently enhanced motivation to explore language in the settings they are familiar with. The findings of some previous research reveal that scaffolding activities improved students' motivation for reading (Chotirat & Teosakul, 2017) and that both low-performing and high-achieving students can benefit from this sort of input (Kim, 2013). The forms of introducing such strategies are so diverse that there are always some of them that can be easily fitted in any specific area, no matter how complex. According to Bentley (2010) the most common scaffolding strategies include building on a student's existing knowledge, skills and experience, responding to different learning styles (visual, kinesthetic, verbal etc.), as well as fostering creative and critical thinking (e.g. in problem solving). Helping students to understand the new information that will be introduced and challenging them to think of a different way of solving a problem fall also into the category of scaffolding strategies. The benefits of using scaffolding are multifold and adaptable to various proficiency levels of students. However, in the Serbian settings, these strategies, to our knowledge, seem not to have been yet exploited to their full extent.

4.4.1. Scaffolding strategies in the ISP classroom

Our analysis of the ISP course documentation and the teacher's lessons' plan shows that some forms of scaffolding are regularly used in this particular LSP situation. What must be kept in mind is that the students differ greatly in their academic and linguistic potential. They are equipped unequally with language and non-language competences, their motivation and learning styles are far from similar or uniform. As students in this particular classroom study 10 different disciplines and possess different academic/linguistic skills, different motivation and attitude towards LSP, the teacher's pedagogical reaction to such a situation resulted in fostering individualization and differentiation in teaching, as well as providing personalized scaffolding, so as to help each student progress at his/her own pace. Accordingly, students are not expected to reach the same proficiency level, but each of them will follow his/her path to knowledge and competences, in keeping with his/her abilities, interests and efforts.

The results of our analysis show that ISP students are already familiar with many forms of scaffolding (prior knowledge activation, task demonstration, breaking complex task into easier steps etc.). In the classroom settings that we investigated students are always provided with contextualized information as well as with support before, during and after tasks (key

vocabulary is taught before reading texts, visual organizers are used to brainstorm vocabulary, different cues are given to prompt student answers and foster constructive feedback).

4.4.2. Student views

The students' perspective on the scaffolding strategies was that such help was very welcome and necessary since their level of Italian was low and "they absolutely needed breaking complex tasks down into easier ones, demonstrating what and how they should do it" (P26). Scaffolding helped them reduce stress when encountering complex, authentic texts, indicating that their own abilities and skills needed to improve. The constant support and feedback on the part of the teacher provided them with opportunities to express their doubts or incomprehension, reduce their insecurity and exchange opinions–and experiences, but also resolve some challenges encountered during the learning process.

The results of our study indicate that scaffolding strategies helped increase motivation and self-confidence (79%). Additionally, students found such a way of presenting new materials and texts "more interesting and involving" (P11). Some of the students, however, expressed their reservations as to whether so much time and effort should be "wasted on those that are slow and reluctant to apply themselves more" (P2). Naturally, students with higher levels of language and content knowledge felt sometimes eager to skip some of the steps that seemed too basic or simple to be allotted so much attention. As the most useful scaffolding strategy the majority of students indicated activating positive transfer from other foreign languages they speak, especially English. "The teacher reminded us constantly of how certain structures behave in English, or German, or Spanish, so we could learn things more easily by connecting the new, Italian grammar rules and expressions with our prior knowledge of some other languages" (P1).

4.4.3. Pedagogical implications

At the Faculty of Philosophy a number of scaffolding strategies have already been experimented and implemented in the regular teaching practice. However, the findings suggest that we should concentrate on the problem of individual differences within such a heterogeneous class. While more proficient students would prefer to progress at a more rapid pace, those with limited knowledge of both content and language seem to face substantial difficulties in keeping up with the rest of the class. The possible solution would be splitting the class into two or three groups, according to their level of Italian, their learning potential and their motivation, as well. Such groups would clearly need significantly different amount and type of scaffolding for their learning. However, the question of organization and even more of the criteria to apply to categorize students in different groups are not a small challenge and should be considered at length and with the department and faculty councils involved.

5. Conclusion

Regardless of the advantages stated in the literature in favor of CLIL, the fact remains that in Serbia there is still lack of trained staff or teacher training programs that would prepare both language and subject teachers for this specific approach. Furthermore, such an attempt would probably be hindered by complex organizational issues, the lack of understanding for such an innovation among university administration and staff, the scarcity or total lack of learning materials and textbooks for heterogeneous classes etc. That is why it may still be much easier and less complicated to raise awareness among the LSP teachers of the possibilities of combining CLIL features with LSP methodology.

The aim of this paper is to explore the possibilities of integrating CLIL and LSP in the tertiary level Italian language courses. By analyzing some of the salient features of CLIL methodology within an LSP classroom, we came to understand that differences between these two approaches may be less evident at university level. As the curriculum and syllabus of the Italian for Specific Purposes at the Faculty of Philosophy was examined, numerous convergent points were noticed: learner-centered approaches stemming from learners' needs, the use of authentic materials and language in real-life situations, preference for contextualized and task-based activities, efforts to promote CALP - Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency, prioritizing functional language use in academic and professional communication over strict and formal linguistic competence sensu strictu.

The results obtained from the questionnaire survey, as well as from the analysis of the ISP curriculum and syllabus, the teacher's written preparation, lesson plans and teaching materials show that integrating CLIL methodology elements into an LSP classroom is not difficult, or unnatural. These findings are in accordance with the results of some previous studies (Leonardi, 2015; Fernandez, 2009). It could be done, and it has been done before - even when LSP teachers might not be aware of using some of the CLIL methodologies to enrich their own teaching, they actually do. Since we are dealing with adult language learners, already equipped with a number of useful skills and competences for acquiring and constructing new knowledge, it is in the tertiary foreign language learning that bridging the gap between these two approaches seems most feasible. All things considered, implementing some of the CLIL methods into the already existing LSP programs may be the first logical step towards upgrading and enriching LSP teaching for university students.

Our experience and the results of this small-scale research imply that CLIL and LSP are not irreconcilable or incompatible. As always, it is the teacher of LSP who has to be open to an eclectic approach, which would mean experimenting with some of the CLIL elements, applying them as they are used in CLIL, or adapting them to suit LSP students' purposes. A great challenge for language teachers who decide to follow this path is finding the right way to combine and balance meaning-focused and form-focused learning. If the balance is found, an innovative LSP course enriched by some of the strategies and tools typical of CLIL may promote more active and meaningful language learning at university level. Lastly, it is the authors' belief that another study but in the opposite direction might also yield interesting results: CLIL programs may also benefit from embracing some examples of good practice drawn from LSP teaching. In fact, certain elements of Italian for Specific Purposes at the Belgrade Faculty of Philosophy could serve as a model for creating or revising the FL courses within CLIL programs.

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