

CLIL AND BOLOGNA PROCESS - THE BOND BETWEEN

CLIL I BOLONJSKI PROCES – MEĐUSOBNA VEZA

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ABSTRACT

The paper deals with the most important facts and goals of Bologna process that cannot be achieved without a proper foreign language proficiency and without efficient language teaching methods. The method that integrates content and language learning (CLIL) has shown a fast growing popularity in Europe over the last few years. In Bosnia and Herzegovina the method was tested at the University of Zenica. Results were outstanding and this paper serves as a recommendation to other universities to introduce such an approach, at least to some courses.

Keywords: Bologna process, CLIL, language policy

REZIME

Rad se bavi najznačajnijim činjenicama i ciljevima bolonjskog procesa koji se ne mogu postići bez određenog znanja stranog jezika, kao i bez efikasnih metoda jezičkog podučavanja. Metod koji integrira rad na sadržaju nastavnog predmeta sa jezičkom podukom (CLIL) pokazao je tokom zadnjih nekoliko godina ubrzanu popularnost. U Bosni i Hercegovini metod je testiran na Univerzitetu u Zenici. Rezultati su bili izuzetno dobri te rad služi i kao preporuka ostalim fakultetima da uvedu jedan takav pristup, barem na nekim predmetima.

Ključne riječi: Bolonjski proces, CLIL, jezička politika

1. INTRODUCTION

It is a well known fact that the Bologna Process is designed to introduce a system of academic degrees that are easily recognisable and comparable; to promote the mobility of students, teachers and researchers; to ensure high quality teaching and incorporate the European dimension into Higher Education. The Process was initiated by Bologna Declaration which was a Joint Declaration of the European Ministers of Education convened in Bologna on 19 June 1999. On that occasion 29 European ministers committed themselves to establishing the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and emphasized the necessity of actions relating to:

- a system based essentially on two cycles (undergraduate/graduate);
- a system of accumulation and transfer of credits
- a system of academic degrees that are easy to be compared and recognised
- mobility of students, teachers and researchers;

- *cooperation with regard to quality assurance*¹
- *the promotion of a European dimension in Higher Education.*

In order to make achievable the mobility and the promotion of European dimension in Higher Education, the European Commission encouraged all citizens to be multilingual, with the long term objective for each citizen to have practical skills in at least two languages, in addition to his or her mother tongue.²

2. EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AND LANGUAGES

In this way, the Bologna Process has significantly changed the role of languages in Higher Education in Europe. Traditionally, languages were studied mainly at the philological/language faculties. The situation has changed and an increasing number of universities extend language learning to students of other, non-linguistic disciplines as well as to other institutional actors such as teaching and administrative staff.

These occurrences are mainly linked to changes in the broader academic and professional environment. Recent decades have seen an enormous increase in international mobility and exchanges. This trend is particularly marked within Europe as an intensely multilingual and multicultural area. In order to prepare their students, graduates and staff to operate within this context, European universities started paying special attention to their linguistic preparedness.

So, in the light of Bologna process, it can be claimed that the European Higher Education Area (*EHEA*) can be effective only if students, professors and other university staff are able to communicate effectively with their counterparts from other countries. Languages thus play a significant role in the promotion of the *EHEA*, of mobility, and also in terms of enhancing graduates' employability.

This new situation incited European universities to find ways to best equip their students with the linguistic and intercultural competences which they need in order to participate in the increasingly integrated academic and professional context created by the European Union and the *EHEA*.

In response to the changes outlined above, an increasing number of universities changed their language policies and extended language learning to most of their institutions.³ Nevertheless, the situation with respect to the introduced changes varies across the Europe. Thus, many institutions, particularly the ones in developed Western European countries, have seen significant advances. On the other hand, many of them have not made much progress, trying to justify their shortcomings with stating the obstacles such as: poor funding, negative attitudes, rivalries, organisational problems etc.

¹Based on the principles of the Bologna Declaration, the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (*EQAR*) has been established aiming at increasing transparency of Quality Assurance, and thus enhancing trust and confidence in European Higher Education. European standards and guidelines (*ESG*) have also been developed for internal and external quality assurance in order to provide universities and Quality Assurance Agencies with common reference points.

² This recommendation often ended up in "Englishization" of some universities because most of the students chose English (the world *lingua franca*) as the language of study.

³ These developments were studied within the framework of the project European Network for the Promotion of Language Learning among all Undergraduates (ENLU, www.fu-berlin.de/enlu), which was managed by the European Language Council (ELC).

The main problem that the majority of Higher Education institutions usually state is the issue of the form that the new language policy should take. In this respect, it should be emphasised that there is no one language policy model that is equally appropriate in all contexts. In fact, there is a plethora of models and strategies ranging from “traditional” to the most contemporary ones including some quite complex methodologies and approaches such as CLIL: the teaching of content courses through a second language (L2). Currently, CLIL seems to be one of the most popular strategies.

3. CLIL

CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) is a very popular approach because of its dual focus (content of the subject matter and the language itself). CLIL is useful in Higher Education environments as it may be applied on a part of a course, or it may be the basis of a whole syllabus with the extreme being full immersion in the second language, that is, the institution using only the second language for all its subjects.

CLIL is a rather new and even favoured approach on behalf of European education authorities. In many European universities it has been implemented for economic, social and political reasons as well. That is to say that CLIL helps attracting international students, prepares local students for international careers and improves the university reputation. However, CLIL is now perceived as an excellent way of improving quality in language teaching. It not only widens the scope of how foreign languages are used for communication purposes but also "fosters the implementation of higher level cognitive skills and cultural knowledge" (Mezzadri, 2009) which is directly in line with already mentioned demands for linguistic and intercultural competences.

4. THE LANGUAGE POLICY AT BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA UNIVERSITIES

When it comes to Bosnia and Herzegovina, the situation with language policy in Higher Education is a direct consequence of the war and post-war circumstances. Bosnia started the Bologna process in September 2003 and made certain progress in that respect. However, necessary reforms are slow and impeded due to deficiencies in the education system.

As to the language policy related to non-linguistic students and staff, it varies from university to university. It is a real challenge to find the most adequate approach that can give best results in BH circumstances.

Some private universities in Sarajevo such as Sarajevo School of Science and Technology, International Burch University and International University of Sarajevo introduced so called Foreign Language Medium Instruction (*FL medium instruction*), i.e. students are taught their subjects in foreign language (exclusively in English) with focus on content of the subject matter, not on language itself. Teachers are either native-speakers or scientists who are proficient in English.

On the other hand, some state universities have adopted traditional approach in language teaching at non-linguistic faculties: they offer their students certain number of classes of general English a week, sometimes even *ex cathedra*, which is completely out of date and results are usually poor.

However, some state universities, such as the University of Zenica, has timely recognized the need for extension of foreign language to non-linguistic faculties and introduced courses in English for Specific Purposes (ESP). According to the reports obtained from our alumni who work in companies with foreign investments in Bosnia and Herzegovina, or abroad, the courses have yielded good results.

Finally, the ESP praxis was of great assistance to introduction of CLIL classes at two technical faculties: Faculty of Mechanical Engineering and Faculty of Metallurgy and Materials during a pilot project two years ago. Results achieved at the end of the project showed that CLIL proved to be a very good tool for language learning at the university level.⁴ The only prerequisite to this European praxis is that students should attend ESP classes before they start with CLIL. Two groups were compared and the students who were not previously trained in ESP showed mean results. The others found CLIL an excellent mode to develop their cognitive and communication skills, in addition to mastering content of the subject as well as some culturally interesting issues. In the questionnaire filled out at the end of the project 100% of students recommended CLIL as a way of language teaching in future.

5. CONCLUSION

The provision of CLIL courses is an advantage which helps universities to deal with demands posed by Bologna process. In many contexts, a more or less substantial amount of formal language teaching is necessary before other strategies, such as CLIL, become feasible. The choices which an institution makes in terms of language teaching strategies depend on a variety of factors. Our recommendation is that these choices should include considerations of a pedagogical nature, strategic choices of the institution as well as a realistic assessment of the educational context.

5. REFERENCES

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⁴ Due to the paper length restrictions, the details on the methodology of CLIL carried out at the University of Zenica were not given in this paper. However, this can be a subject of another paper in the future.