CLIL in Tertiary Education: Does it Have Anything to Offer?

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Abstract. CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) as an innovative educational approach reflects EU policies of promoting multilingualism in Europe. It takes language learning beyond traditional topics and curriculum by offering non-linguistic content as the basis for learning and teaching. CLIL builds on the principles of ‘good’ teaching and learning, namely, active involvement of students, current and authentic materials, active teaching and learning methods, task or project based learning. It views learning as a social process during which knowledge is constructed by being actively involved in ‘meaningful’ communication, group activities and doing cognitively demanding tasks. CLIL is promoted as means of solving problems of traditional language learning, such as sometimes unsatisfactory student achievement levels, lack of student motivation, overcrowded curriculum. Tertiary education has relied for many years on offering LSP (Language for Specific Purposes) courses for students, where the content for language learning is taken from their field of study, i.e. business, law or sciences or is based on developing academic skills. However, it seems that innovative ideas are needed to adapt this kind of teaching to the challenges of the 21st century and apply interdisciplinary curriculum development approaches to designing integrated courses. The article is based on the literature analysis and a survey conducted at ISM (University of Management and Economics) in order to find out students’ attitude to using problem-based tasks in their language classes, i.e. introduction of integrated content and language learning into their studies. The article analyses key dimensions of both LSP and CLIL by looking at main similarities and differences of both approaches and identifies the main aspects that can enrich traditional tertiary level language classes.

Key words: Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), integrated curriculum, Language for Specific Purposes (LSP), tertiary education, problem-based learning.