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TEACHING ENGLISH THROUGH CONTEMPORARY BRITISH LITERATURE AND CLIL: AN INTEGRATIVE APPROACH¹

Yulia A. Tikhomirova

National Research Tomsk State University (Tomsk, Russia)

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2426-2254>

Abstract. The study aims to explore the premises, design, and experimental results of implementing a new integrative language teaching pedagogy based on the combination of the content and language integrated learning (CLIL) method and teaching foreign language through literature. It presents a new complex way of teaching English to the Humanities students that can enhance motivation and engagement of students into professional communication in English, and allows integration with other teaching methods, meeting the need to increase the efficiency of FLT in Russian universities. The choice of materials for language courses taught through this method is grounded in the properties of contemporary British literature itself (intertextuality, mixing genres and styles, referring to contemporary historical, political, and social events, high density of factual information, and the reflection of modern processes of thinking and information reception – polycode and fragmentary thinking, etc.), and the abundance of resources (interviews, documentaries, newsfeeds) available due to modern media, which help create an effective learning environment. Increased emotional and personal penetration into the literary text, which possesses cultural and aesthetic significance along with the informational one (surrounding materials being a part of it), inspires student's motivation for learning and communicating ideas, thus evincing high educative value of the new method. The implementation of this method can be a solution to the problem of involving linguistic disciplines into the formation of “universal competences” designated by the Russian Federal Standards for Higher education. Despite several constraints, including the difficulty of integration of teaching language and a professional discipline in the standard model of the curriculum, the implementation of this method may prove extremely effective in Russian universities which aim at developing a skill set for their student's sustainable professional and personal future: critical thinking, emotional intelligence, interpersonal and intercultural communication skills, etc. Language teaching professionals, trained in both a foreign language and other Humanities subjects (Philology, International relations, International Journalism, Global Economy, etc.) may find this method especially appealing.

Keywords: content and language integrated learning (CLIL); foreign language teaching; teaching language through literature; foreign language competence

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ОБУЧЕНИЕ АНГЛИЙСКОМУ ЯЗЫКУ ЧЕРЕЗ СОВРЕМЕННУЮ БРИТАНСКУЮ ЛИТЕРАТУРУ И CLIL: ИНТЕГРАТИВНЫЙ ПОДХОД

Тихомирова Ю. А.

Национальный исследовательский Томский государственный университет (Томск, Россия)

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2426-2254>

SPIN-код: 5508-4821

Аннотация. В статье исследуются предпосылки, принципы и экспериментальные результаты внедрения новой интегративной технологии обучения иностранному языку, основанной на совмещении двух зарекомендовавших себя методов – интегрированного предметно-языкового обучения (CLIL) и обучения языку через чтение художественной литературы. Целью работы является апробирование и представление новой комплексной методики обучения английскому языку студентов гуманитарных направлений российских университетов, которая позволяет повысить мотивацию и вовлеченность обучающихся в англоязычную профессиональную коммуникацию и дает возможность интеграции с другими образовательными технологиями, что отвечает потребности повышения эффективности обучения языку в российских вузах. Обоснованиями выбора материала для обучения выступают как свойства самой современной английской литературы (интертекстуальность, смешение жанров и стилей, обращение к современным историческим и политическим событиям, социальным явлениям, высокая плотность фактической информации, отражение актуальных процессов развития мышления и восприятия информации – поликодовость, клиповое мышление и др.), так и наличие большого количества доступных благодаря современным медиа источников (интервью писателей, документальные и новостные ресурсы), позволяющих организовать эффективное обучающее пространство. Глубокая эмоционально-личностная проработка текста, имеющего не только информационную, но и культурную и эстетическую ценность, и окружающих его материалов также имеет высокий воспитательный потенциал. Внедрение технологии частично решает проблему вовлечения языковых дисциплин в формирование универсальных компетенций, предусмотренных стандартами высшего образования РФ. Несмотря на некоторые ограничения, включая сложность интеграции преподавания языка и профессиональной дисциплины в стандартной модели учебного плана, внедрение технологии может оказаться высокоэффективным в российских университетах, ставящих целью комплексное личностное и профессиональное развитие обучающихся: критическое мышление, эмоциональный интеллект, навыки межличностной и межкультурной коммуникации. Особенно релевантной технология может быть

¹ This article is a thoroughly revised and extended version of a panel paper given at the 4th International Conference “The Magic of Innovation: Integrative Trends in Linguistics and Foreign Language Teaching”, MGIMO University, 2019. The experimental part of the research was carried out as a module of a university course; the results were presented at a workshop within the I Contest “Best educational practices of TSU” in 2018.

для преподавателей, прошедших языковую подготовку как сопутствующее условие дисциплинарной подготовки (филология, международное право, международные отношения, международная журналистика, мировая экономика и т. д.).

Ключевые слова: интегрированное предметно-языковое обучение; CLIL; преподавание иностранного языка; преподавание языка через литературу; иноязычная компетенция

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Introduction

The question of teaching foreign languages, especially English as a global language, in Russia has long been a major concern for educators, scholars, authorities, and students themselves. Apart from those who study English as a main subject (chiefly linguists and translators), the majority of Russian graduates scarcely achieve the level of language competence comparable to the level required for attending a university with English as a medium of instruction, or sufficient for reading and discussing professional and scholarly literature in their field. Most Russian students, being in the Russian-speaking environment all the time, do not see the need for foreign languages. To some extent, this is due to the fact that outbound student mobility is still quite limited in Russian universities, and a vast majority of students, not sensing prospects in this respect, neglect the necessity of foreign language acquisition, although learning opportunities are plentiful, given that internationalization, including internationalization at home, has long become a priority for most Russian higher educational institutions.

Teaching and learning non-linguistic subjects in English as a medium of instruction has scarcely been the strength of Russian universities. Even teaching and reading foreign literature in the original is an increasingly rare case, given that foreign philology in its original university framework, shaped at faculties of Romance and Germanic philology, has gradually given way to a more hands-on, reading-in-translation approach. Language education alone does not bring the desired results; professors, although encouraged to do so, are reluctant to read subjects in other languages due to the complexity of reasons, most possibly, the lack of confidence that they will be understood.

To some extent, their anxiety is well-grounded as, taught to understand words, students often tend to overlook *meanings*. Roughly, meanings in Humanities are rooted not in particular words, but in *contexts*. Comparing “the four skills approach” (listening speaking, reading, and writing) to communicative language teaching with “the five skills approach” (where the fifth skill is the skill of *processing* and *thinking*), John McRae states that “the four skills approach frequently ignores representational language. That is language which is open for interpretation, contains plurality of meaning potential rather than one single denotational meaning, and requires negotiation and judgment by its receiver” [McRae 2017: 101–102]. Thus, it may be suggested that even students in Humanities, whose initial task is to extract meanings, are not taught to do so when it comes to texts in languages other than their native.

There are two marked points of departure for devising the technology presented in this study. The first

rests on the search for ways to bring foreign language not only to classrooms as a mandatory discipline but also to students' minds and hearts, to demonstrate to learners how a language works beyond handbook exercises, which reflect just a minuscule segment of the diverse reality.

Scholars and educators have long been working on elaborating methods of language teaching with both intellectual and thematic appeal, capable of boosting and sustaining students' motivation. One of the most widely recognized ideas is teaching a subject in a foreign language so that there is equal use of both – the subject and the language as a tool of its acquisition. A seminal work by D. Coyle et al. [2010] provides a comprehensive overview of Content and Language Integrated Learning theory and practice, elaborating the basic principles in the so called “four Cs” – Content, Communication, Cognition, and Culture [Coyle 2010: 41]. The generally accepted contemporary CLIL principles include the already mentioned double focus on subject and language learning, alongside with cross-curricular topics and projects, active, cooperative and task-based learning, and scaffolding [Mehisto et al. 2008: 138].

The CLIL technology had long been used in schools, and was originally meant for schools specializing in languages. In the course of its development, it has been extended to university settings, and higher education has gladly embraced the idea of professionalization of language education (Integration of Content and Language in Higher Education, ICLHE) through teaching subjects together with teaching a foreign language to describe it, communicate about it at a professional level, and to equip students with language tools for further work. In Russia, several educational institutions have adopted CLIL and designed their language teaching with regard to its achievements and constraints; for instance, Tomsk Polytechnic University has adopted both the CLIL approach and an invaluable habit of reflecting on their experience in a series of articles, most recently [Sidorenko et al. 2018; Sidorenko 2021]. I. Pirozhkova presents a study of Russian universities' CLIL practices, identifying the four major variants of CLIL use, in her book chapter [Pirozhkova 2021: 197–199].

In general, the approach to teaching a foreign language for professional needs in Russia has been gradually shifting from the focus on reading and translating foreign language professional texts towards the idea of including professionally oriented operations, activities, and skills. A comprehensive comparative analysis of the purposes and results of using the CLIL technology in European education and Russian models of professionally focused foreign language teaching in [Almazova et al. 2017] shows that a

new perspective is emerging on professionally oriented foreign language training in Russia through expanding the notion of itself [Almazova et al. 2017: 120].

Professionally focused language training in Russia used to involve activities for enriching professional vocabulary, learning terminology, and mastering grammar which was believed the most appropriate for this or that field. Thus, exercises were mostly in reading and translating professional texts, which were taken from research journals and textbooks in the particular field. In the contemporary world, with the rapid development of modern technologies, the purpose and skill of merely translating professional texts have shifted to the scope of responsibilities of special software and professional translators, leaving professionals in any field responsible for *producing* professional texts in the required language, and, more generally, communicating ideas, sharing and debating viewpoints. Responding flexibly to the contemporary fluidity of professional knowledge by updating it in an endless process of life-long learning is also a new task for a professional, and the quality of new knowledge has to be universally, or, rather, globally recognized, which again results in the idea of indispensable foreign language competence, and the urge for valid professional *content* which develops it.

The necessity of integrating CLIL into teaching linguistic students is grounded by Tarnaeva and Baeva [2019]. A thorough overview of the contemporary tendencies in professional language education in Russia and Europe allowed the authors to conclude that, although CLIL has found its path into Russian universities, this technology appears to be scarcely introduced into training of linguistic students. Yet, according to the scholars, contemporary graduates have to face professional tasks which increasingly require high level of knowledge, skills, and personal qualities, as the diversity of professional activities is accelerating together with the rapid pace of changes in international social and economic processes. “The use of content and language integrated learning in the system of linguistic education will contribute to training future specialists possessing interdisciplinary cross-cultural competence allowing them to acquire additional qualifications not restricted only to the linguistic sphere” [Tarnaeva 2019: 295].

Another solid point of departure for the design of the technology presented in this study is the idea of teaching language through contemporary literature. While Content and Language Integrated Learning is quite recent as a pedagogical approach, teaching language through literature *per se* is a very long-established one, with many decades of its history. It has been universally accepted that “literature can contribute to linguistic, social, and intercultural competences, as well as to general education in the sense of personal growth, creativity, and expression” [cf. Grimm et al. 2015: 173]. One of popular pedagogies in the Soviet Union after the World War II and throughout its existence, teaching language through literature was inherited by language educators in contemporary Russia. R. Calafato gives a comprehensive analysis of the use of literary texts in Russian school and university

settings, and, after R. Carter [2007: 6], links the increasing popularity of teaching through literature with the adoption of communicative language teaching (CLT) methods [Calafato 2018: 92].

Recent and ongoing scholarship of CLIL articulates a well-grounded basis for employing literature for the purposes of CLIL. Klewitz claims that “A closer look at the two varieties of language instruction (FLT – foreign language teaching, and CLIL. – Y. T.), however, provides a strong argument for including literature as a suitable subject for CLIL, apart from their shared intercultural objectives” [Klewitz 2021: 224]. According to De Florio-Hansen, the critically important difference between CLIL and the traditional FLT is the priority of form and content over each other. FLT advocates choosing linguistic objectives from the foreign language curriculum, and then finding suitable sources of appropriate content, whereas within the CLIL technology content aspects suitable for the curriculum are selected first, and the work with language aspects follows [De Florio-Hansen 2018: 241]. This makes the idea of using literature as a basis for CLIL very appealing in the context of our aim, which is to provide language teaching with cultural, axiological, situational meanings, and interpretative potential.

One major constraint for using literature as the *content* for CLIL is articulated by Klewitz: “Literature as such is not a regular content subject and, by definition in most European curricula, only content subjects can be included in bilingual programs” [2021: 220]. The present study aims to prove that contemporary (British in our case) literature can and should be viewed as a source of valuable content for students in Humanities, whose calling, by the very essence of their disciplines, is to study the humanity as a system in all the possible manifestations of its qualities.

A new perspective emerges out of converging the two established technologies, one providing culture- and value-based content, the other equipping educators with actionable, adaptable, and efficient methodological procedures. The new model of teaching English to Humanities students presented in this article was born in search for a new efficient way of bringing professional studies of a subject in close connection with language learning which is necessary for *natural* existence of a specialist in a field: communicating, expressing views, able to share, discuss and dispute ideas with other professionals, and, moreover, observe professional cases and materials for professional analysis in contexts which bear much resemblance to the life as it is¹.

Materials and Methods.

Research questions and methods. The idea of CLIL, as well as of teaching language through literature have withstood both time and distance, both

¹ As for the practical basis of the proposed model, it cannot but be mentioned that being a regular member (2014–2019) of the annual Seminar “Contemporary British literature in Russian universities” organized for many years by prof. K. Hewitt (Oxford University) and prof. B. M. Proskurnin in Perm (Perm State University), I was greatly inspired to teach English with literature and, consequently, through literature. I am deeply grateful to the organizers and all the participating professors and authors for this invaluable experience.

widespread over the globe and enjoying a wealth of theoretical debate and practical instruction. Can established pedagogies existing for decades allow for innovations? Can the two technologies, CLIL and teaching language through literature, originally intended for different target audiences and scopes of aims, be converged to produce a synergetic effect? How do the principles of text selection in this proposed model differ from those of the established ones? How do the methodological bases for the proposed model differ from the traditional ones? Do the principles of elaborating activities and assessment materials differ in the proposed model and the generally accepted ones? These inquiries, alongside with several less central ones, are research questions put forward in this study.

To solve the abovementioned questions, which result from the main aim of the study, the following methodology was used: the method of critical analysis and interpretation of the existing theoretical debate on teaching language through literature, and contemporary research in the field of CLIL. Also, a heuristic method was used to design the proposed model of language teaching on the basis of integrating the two widely accepted ones. To validate and improve the designed model, practical implementation in the university context, and the empirical research were undertaken, which included observation, linguo-didactic experiment, analysis, description and interpretation of experimental data.

Materials. The materials for the empirical study were collected during teaching a course of History of British literature (in English) to TSU philology students as a component of their curriculum. The students worked over three contemporary British plays within the introductory session to the topic “Contemporary drama.” The preliminary results of this pilot project were first presented at a workshop within the I Contest “Best educational practices of TSU” in 2018.

The three contemporary dramas studied in the class designed as a combination of CLIL and teaching language through literature were *Stuff Happens* by David Hare, *Testing the Echo* by David Edgar, and *King Charles III* by Mike Bartlett. The three plays were presented as a trilogy within “narrating the Past – narrating the Present – narrating the Future” paradigm.

The most striking results were achieved by teaching D. Hare’s *Stuff Happens*, a contemporary drama, which explores quite recent historical and political events starting with the 2000 election of G.W. Bush for the US president, and leading to the 2003 war in Iraq. The *Author’s Note* indicates that “Nothing in the narrative is knowingly untrue. Scenes of direct address quote people’s verbatim” [Hare 2006: vii], but at times he had to use his imagination to build a complete picture of the events with no recorded evidence. Thus, the play is, of course, not documentary; it is a literary experiment, a work of art.

Results and Discussion

Pirozhkova notes that “CLIL has a huge potential in both language and subject teaching due to its flexibility and adaptability. It is rather a philosophy than a

set of rules, that is why it cannot be neglected” [Pirozhkova 2021: 188]. The two essential qualities, flexibility and adaptability, spanning all the 4 Cs in Marsh and Coyle’s CLIL model (Content, Culture, Communication, and Cognition), most notably reflect the ability of CLIL to integrate most diverse *content*, ranging from academic, encyclopedia, and media articles to fiction, music, and poetry [Klewitz 2021: 12], as long as the professional subject allows for such variety.

According to Klewitz, “Literature remains a concern for CLIL, because – taken content subject curricula word-for-word – its implementation is still exceptional. In this context, the primacy of content might shed a new light on the differences between TFL and CLIL indicating a potential fusion of both approaches without replacing one by the other...” [Klewitz 2021: 12].

As it was mentioned in the *Materials* section, the three contemporary dramas participating in the pilot CLIL English literature course were *Stuff Happens* by David Hare, *Testing the Echo* by David Edgar, and *King Charles III* by Mike Bartlett. Although all the three dramas proved to be a splendid choice for literary CLIL, the results of teaching through D. Hare’s *Stuff Happens* seem to be sufficient here to exemplify the considerations on the reasons for successful implementation of the technology described. The main inferences about the reasons of strikingly positive results of teaching through D. Hare’s *Stuff Happens* are: the quality of the drama itself (this relates to the choice of content, in terms of both *topic* and *language*), and the developed step-by-step teaching/learning procedure.

First and foremost, to answer the much debated question regarding the choice of content in the proposed model of teaching, the consideration is as follows. Firstly accepted as a hypothesis that contemporary literature (in this practical case, contemporary *British* literature) could be best to reach the desired efficiency in the CLIL environment, this assumption has later shaped into a rationale which arises out of the quality of the literature itself. The premises are as follows.

Contemporary (British) literature is obviously postmodern. The most important qualities in the context of the proposed model are: intertextuality, a mixture of genres and styles, very high factual density (sometimes up to a documentary level); a vast scope of contemporary themes and aspects of modern knowledge; and drawing upon contemporary social, cultural, public, political, and other practices. The latter, among others, allows for scaffolding in the learning process (building on learners’ existing experience and knowledge, which is an indispensable principle of CLIL [Grimm 2015: 76]). Still another valuable feature of contemporary (British) literature is its utmost proximity to and the reflection of contemporary human cognitive and perception processes: clip thinking, density and integrity of graphic, aural and visual codes, etc.

Scholars are unanimous in the claim that the most treasured quality of teaching language through literature is the language of literature itself – imaginative, metaphorical, metacognitive, but authentic and true-to-life. Simpson, for instance, notes that “There

is no such thing as a 'literary language'. That is to say, there are no items of modern English vocabulary or grammar that are inherently and exclusively literary. It is impossible to identify or isolate any linguistic feature that will automatically confer a 'literary' status on a text. In short, the concept of 'literary language' is a chimera" [Simpson 1997: 7]. Moreover, it is rather evident that contemporary literature speaks the contemporary language submerged into the modern culture; it springs from this culture, and explains how this culture and its values work in the most natural way – through the characters' way of thinking, speaking, reasoning, and behaving.

One more essential attribute of contemporary literature is the fact that, luckily, most of contemporary literature authors are now alive and well, and are enthusiastic and prolific writers, giving interviews and blogging willingly about their writings, their characters and plots, their principles and rationales. Given the contemporary development of technology, all this wealth of materials is within easy and immediate reach for anyone having Internet connection. Moreover, all the abundance of materials concerning the factual basis and context of contemporary writings (news broadcasts, interviews with actual participants of events, etc.) is also available at a click of the mouse, giving enormous opportunities for analysis, comparing, making inferences, judgements, and conclusions, thus, employing all this as an asset for developing value-based and culture-specific professional knowledge.

A unique feature of *Stuff Happens* which has proved especially relevant in terms of CLIL is its extremely high density of references to real contemporary events, actual political leaders and their dialogues, public statements and addresses, which can be easily traced and compared to real documentary evidence (speech transcripts, news releases, briefings, etc.). For instance, the title of the play is a direct quote from Donald Rumsfeld, the US Secretary of Defense from 2001 to 2006 under president G. W. Bush, in response to the news about the atrocious looting in the National Museum of Iraq after Saddam Hussein's fall and the collapse of the Iraqi government: "Stuff happens... and it's untidy, and freedom's untidy, and free people are free to make mistakes and commit crimes and do bad things"¹.

Klewitz [2021: 230] suggests that the basic procedure for literary CLIL is similar to the one described in Victorian Certificate of Education, published by the Victorian Board of Studies, Australia [VCE 2016]². The four stages in literary studies are defined in VCE as follows: approaches to literature, context and connections, form and transformation, and interpreting texts [VCE 2016: 9, as cited in Klewitz 2021: 230]. "Approaches to literature" unit involves "analyzing features and conventions of texts, developing responses to a range of literary forms and gaining insights into

how texts function as representations of human experience" [ibid.: 231]. This stage aims at making students acquainted with key terms, concepts and practices to facilitate their understanding of how text perception is informed by the reader's views and values [ibid.: 231]. "Context and connections" unit allows students to consider the interrelations of texts and contexts, authors and audiences, the present and the past. They realize connections between them, and authenticate their analytical responses through close reading and text analysis [ibid.: 231]. The "form and transformation" unit enables students to investigate how the form of a text influences meaning and how authors design their texts to construe meanings [ibid.: 231]. The last one, "interpreting skills" allows students to critically respond to texts, to interpret ideas imparted through texts, and recognize points of view [ibid.: 232].

The procedure for the experimental part of the study described in this article is elaborated on the very similar principles described in VCE³. Thus, the procedure of working by the plays included the following steps⁴:

(1)

– a lead-in discussion of general questions related to the topics discussed in a play ("If you were a journalist and had an opportunity to take an interview from any contemporary political leader, politician, lawmaker, or office holder, who might that be and why, and what would you ask?"). A question to ask should be relevant to the field in which students major);

– an interactive lecture "Drama as a literary form" in a flipped classroom mode, which included some insights into the history of drama to briefly indicate how drama as a form of art reflects human experiences;

(2)

– a visual presentation of the book (working with the cover and the jacket, the blurbs, etc.). The particular language input was assigned to introduce or revise structures capable of expressing modality ("The book might be about...", "The plot is likely to concern...");

– close reading and analysis of the text; it can be an in-class or out-of-class work, depending on the students' level of language *and* subject competence; even History students may be unaware of the details of recent events, so some introduction into the real history may be necessary;

– introducing documentary sources (reading and listening comprehension: videos, audios, including news broadcasts, interviews, speech transcripts etc.)⁵;

³ although in 2019, when the experiment was launched, it had rather a more abstract theoretical basis.

⁴ The correlation of my procedure with VCE four-unit model is indicated through the numbers.

⁵ This step can be efficiently shifted to students' independent work with them presenting results in class. Pianzina and Shostak describe a similar strategy: to answer the question "How does a [foreign] language, being a semantic and meaning-making component of education, expand possibilities of students in journalism to search for necessary media sources and use them for professional needs?" the authors *include* students into the process of selection of authentic

¹ D. Rumsfeld's speech is available as a video recording on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FgznrYaF3rg&feature=youtu.be>.

² The document is accessible on the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority. URL: <https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Documents/vce/literature/2016LiteratureSD.pdf>.

(3)

- introducing thematic vocabulary (by eliciting, for instance);
- introducing/revising relevant grammar and structures (tools for expressing modality, distancing, and softening claims, etc.);
- theatricalization of an excerpt;
- roleplaying (“an interview/a briefing with Donald Rumsfeld”, where one of students assumes the role of a politician (one of the drama characters), and others are journalists/bloggers/other politicians);

(4)

- a group discussion of the topics raised in the play (vocabulary and grammar revision and activation, with attention to the norms of discussions and debates, etc.);
- a reflexive cooldown (questions can be related to the professional interests of students, or be more general, as “Would you recommend this play to your colleague, and why?”, “What have you learned?”);
- an out-of-class small-group project (3 tracks were proposed by the instructor: a documentary project, an academic essay, a film scenario).

The experiment over, the students were asked to reflect on their achievements and experience of going through this practice. The collected evidence (16 students’ guided interviews) showed that the key results are as follows. All the students mentioned that they became aware of an alternative source for learning a foreign language which they had never considered worth attention because of the reputation of literature as being too imaginative, written in an outdated language, and far from the reality. All the respondents noted the boost of motivation for learning, as they were involved in professional discussions. Moreover, the emotional appeal of literature made learning much more personalized as they were involved in discussing fictional images. Most respondents emphasized that using topic vocabulary and situational grammar, e.g. structures for distancing and expressing modality, was much easier and more natural, as they felt an urge to express themselves. The last but not least, the students noted the improvement in their cultural awareness after discussing the practicalities of situations, and events involved in the plot etc.

The key results of the use of the proposed technology as seen from the point of view of language acquisition pedagogy are achieved through its complexity and the focus on a professional topic. They include:

- the development of analytical skills and critical thinking;
- improvement of speaking abilities, reading and listening comprehension in the professional sphere;
- development of debating skills in English, acquisition of discussion norms;
- development of skills relevant to text analysis, which are essential not only for students in linguistics but also for journalists, lawyers, translators, historians, etc.

media texts, making emphasis on the subject-related sociocultural component of educational process, which enhances intellectual, pragmatic, and interpersonal integration of students into the learning process [Pianzina, Shostak 2020: 231] (*My translation* – Y. T.).

Still another important consequence of the experiment, which is worth a separate mention, is the increase of students’ awareness and proficiency in academic writing in English. Within 5 years (between 2016–2021) of teaching this experimental module on contemporary British literature from 80 to 100% of its participants (from 12 to 15 students out of 15 students in each of the five study groups) voluntarily submitted extracurricular (non-mandatory) academic essays in English: they were invited to participate in the contest which allowed to publish selected essays in the reviewed academic journal *Footpath*¹. Although only one of the submitted essays was selected by the editorial board for publication², the overall boosted motivation, as well as considerable increase in academic writing confidence and skills were noted by all the students who provided essays.

As the study has shown, there is also a range of important advantages of using the proposed model that arise from the synergetic effect of merging the two technologies. They include:

- great interdisciplinary potential;
- highly provoking and debatable potential that provides the ground for developing analytical and critical thinking, that is, metadisciplinary skills;
- returning reading books into the scope of students’ intellectual activities (most importantly, not only of philology students);
- providing high quality out-of-class work, which is increasingly important due to foreign language disciplines being gradually deprived of in-class hours;
- high educative and upbringing potential;
- opportunities for integrating with other educational technologies (PBL, case study, gamification, debating, etc.).

One of the important results of the experiment was the conclusion that this technology, although highly efficient, is rather time- and effort-consuming for a language instructor, especially compared to the existing practices of FLT. A considerable constraint for using this technology as a universal model for subject and language teaching, especially at more advanced levels, is the difficulty of students’ progress assessment; almost all the tasks that are suitable for assessment demand the bulk of teacher’s after-class involvement: analytical, discursive, or interpretive essays, pieces of writing responding to a text, written reviews, a course work, etc. Moreover, assessment itself has to be a part of the regular teaching, and a student who has missed classes even for a grounded reason can hardly be assessed, as regular university exams are not suited for comprehensive evaluation of students’ progress following learning through this technology. Thus, it can be concluded that in Russia, at the present stage of the development of this technology, it cannot be a full alternative but an invaluable supplement to the existing teaching practices.

¹ The journal gave students an opportunity to publish their ideas on literature in the form of an academic essay.

² Makarova A. The Notion of Justice in the Novel *Morality Play* // *Footpath: A Journal of contemporary British literature in Russian universities*. 2019. No. 12. P. 153–155.

Another possible limitation as to the employment of this technology is the inexpediency of its use at early stages of language learning. Although within the traditional language through literature teaching there is a common opinion that after carefully selecting texts language can be taught through literature at any level of students' competence [cf. Di Martino 2014: 19], in the proposed technology based on the convergence of CLIL and language through literature, the interdisciplinary integrability and debating potential seem to be scarcely attainable under the B1 level. As Klewits emphasizes, "Choosing samples, it is important to consider whether literary works are relevant to the students, take into account their interests and *do not overstretch their linguistic possibilities*" [Klewits 2021: 225] (*my emphasis* – Y. T.). Nevertheless, this constraint is not critical, as nowadays the level of English language competence with university students in Russia is rarely lower than the indicated one. To this it must be added that the length and the complexity of a literary piece shall also depend not only on the time available but also on the amount of self-study hours allocated for the course in the curriculum.

Conclusion

Despite the fact that CLIL was originally introduced for teaching natural sciences ("content subjects"), it is rather doubtless that literature and language are the best compliant and most naturally agreeable components for CLIL. This study, while exemplifying the proposed model by the case of philology students, has proved that teaching language through literature to Arts and Humanities students is possible, and may be highly efficient. Seen from the perspective of a scholar in literature and translation (as I am one), the combination of CLIL and language through literature can prove effective in a wide range of Humanities subjects.

A comprehensive overview of various types of CLIL [Kováčiková 2020: 15–17] allowed us to identify the experimental teaching described in this article as the implementation of "immersion of weak CLIL", which is more focused on language rather than content. This is due to the fact that the experiment was held for philology students, whose subject is language and literature. As for other Humanities students, the balance between "hard" (teaching academic subjects through CLIL) and "soft" CLIL will presumably depend on the subject area, as, for instance, students in journalism, or law also have *language* as a focus of their subject area, but their language is a special one, not the language of literature *per se*.

Within the chosen scope of literature – contemporary British literature – there is still the question of selecting a particular piece which can be appealing and relevant to students, both professionally and in terms of their language proficiency. As for philology students, the choice is extremely wide; books to consider for teaching should comply with the only rule: it must be literature of recognized quality (e.g. shortlisted or awarded international literature prizes; yet, not necessarily), as any fictional literature, poetry, or drama constitutes professional material for studies in philology.

The choice of literature for students in subjects other than philology is a more complex matter, but not an unsolvable one. Out of all the diversity of novels and plays, the choice would be in favour of the themes discussed in professional disciplines. A vivid example is the topic of contemporary US policy in *Stuff Happens* by D. Hare, which is highly relevant to students of Journalism (journalistic ethics, fake news etc.), International relations, International Law, Political science (the US political structure and administration, decision making), History (contemporary wars, coloured revolutions), etc.

As for professional terminology, the responsibility for forming this type of vocabulary is shifted naturally to the area of studying additional materials, preparing and taking part in discussions, that is, written and aural texts surrounding the studies of English through literature. As Di Martino and Di Sabato propose, "teachers have to recognize the potentialities of the literary text within a language pedagogy framework, so as to build up their text-based learning programmes by disregarding any dichotomy and by *mixing the literary and the non-literary*. Free from any misgivings and preconceptions, text selection has to be guided exclusively by the learners' preferences and needs, together with the set goals, so as to 'humanize' the presence of literature in the educational context" [Di Martino 2014: 19] (*my italics* – Y. T.).

The proposed technology can be installed into the educational process of Humanities students in Russia in a good variety of administrative forms. Its great flexibility, the possibility of shifting the focus, changing the content, and varying the aims makes it an inexhaustible source for a range of uses.

The possible forms of installing the technology include (but are not limited to) the following.

- It can be a module in the curriculum of linguistic and philological programs.
- As a module in teaching English to non-linguistic faculties, it can serve as a part of language curriculum for students in Journalism, History, Political science, International relations, Law, International law, Philosophy, Economics, and others.
- It may be used in advanced training English courses for university professors and administrative staff.
- It can well serve the basis for campus courses in English, Literature, Modern media, and other subjects.
- Students' and professors' speaking clubs may welcome it as an opportunity for interdisciplinary talks.

The underlying idea of "humanizing" language teaching through employing literature in the curriculum proves to be quite an answer to the question of how learning a foreign language can be installed as an indispensable part of the personal and professional needs.

Only meaningful and challenging studies can lead to successful language acquisition. "Classroom content should be meaningful in a sense that it focuses on global problems facing mankind (Klafki's "epochaltypische Schlüssel-probleme") while connecting with the daily lives of our students and their areas of interest"

[Meyer 2017: 267]. The way students are taught within the technology proposed in this study allows for structuring language learning as a process of gradually becoming more aware of forms of writing that reflect, in a general sense, human and cultural experiences, and, most importantly, getting an answer to the question of how what they are learning is connected with what is happening in the world they live in, thus, with themselves.

The information, including cultural and linguistic contexts, ideas, and values represented in literature first are linked with the idea that conventions are able to influence meanings through the ways a text is constructed. Then the information, ideas, and values are put through the prism of student's personal concep-

tions and assumptions where they meet their own ideas, opinions, and attitudes. Finally, students are brought to the stage of reflecting on personal, social and cultural concerns, drawing connections, making comparative interpretations, integrating them into a consistent perspective, and explicating the point of view in the appropriate language which is a not any more alien. The experience of such intense and deeply personal work with and through a text does not give a chance to indifference and estrangement, bringing professional topics into the scope of personal emotional reality. This, in my view, is the most treasured effect of using this technology, which is well worth an endeavor.

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Данные об авторе

Тихомирова Юлия Александровна – кандидат филологических наук, доцент, доцент кафедры романо-германской и классической филологии филологического факультета, Национальный исследовательский Томский государственный университет (Томск, Россия).
Адрес: 634050, Россия, г. Томск, пр-т Ленина, 34.
E-mail: yat77@mail.ru.

Author's information

Tikhomirova Yulia Alexandrovna – Candidate of Philology, Associate Professor, Associate Professor of Department of Romance, Germanic, and Classical Philology, Faculty of Philology, National Research Tomsk State University (Tomsk, Russia).