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FROM ESP TO CLIL: INTRODUCING PROJECT-BASED LEARNING IN AN EFL UNIVERSITY-LEVEL COURSE

Abstract

This paper addresses the key dimensions of ESP (English for Specific Purposes) and CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teaching and learning at the university level. Based on the literature analysis, it offers a brief overview of the main similarities and differences of both approaches. University-level EFL courses have relied for many years on the ESP approach, which emphasizes language learning as well as some content knowledge which is taken from the relevant field of study, e. g. business, law, sciences, etc., or is based on developing academic skills. However, it seems that this English language teaching paradigm should be adapted to some innovative ideas and challenges of the 21st century. CLIL integrates language and content learning by offering non-linguistic content as the basis for learning and teaching, and thus promotes the principles of modern education, such as student motivation and active learning, use of authentic tasks and materials, task or project based learning, etc. Project-based learning (PBL) is a learning method which is compatible with the CLIL principles, as it engages students in acquiring knowledge and language skills through an extended inquiry process structured around authentic questions and tasks. This small scale action research explores students' attitudes to using project-based learning activities in their EFL classes to support content and language learning, i.e. introduction of CLIL into their studies. The participants for this study were the third and fourth year students (n= cca.50) of the Faculty of Educational Sciences in Sarajevo attending an EFL elective course. The project lasted for one semester and data were collected from students through a questionnaire at the end of the term. The results of the questionnaire reveal that students had an overall positive attitude towards using PBL and CLIL in their EFL classes.

Key words: English for Specific Purposes (ESP), Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching and learning, Project-based learning (PBL)

Introduction

The age of globalization of the postmodern world has inevitably affected the system of higher education in Europe. Within the framework of setting up a European Higher Education Area (EHEA), more than forty countries have joined the Bologna Process with the common aim to standardize and internationalize higher education in Europe and thus make an open market for European and non-European citizens, where the agenda of the 'joint system reform' includes categories such as 'mobility', 'recognition', 'joint degrees', 'employability', 'global dimension', etc. (Wächter, 2008). The process of internationalization at universities in Europe usually entails the so-called 'Anglicization', which means introducing more and more English-medium programs at the tertiary level or implementing the entire curricula in English, as it has become the international language for the dissemination of knowledge, i.e. a *lingua franca* for the academic world.

Therefore, we assume that integrating English into subject content or subject content into English imposes itself as a necessity for the 'Anglicization' process mentioned above. The curricula for general EFL or ESP courses at the tertiary level in Bosnia and Herzegovina mainly focus on grammar and vocabulary based instruction combined with the ESP (English for Specific Purpose) approach to EFL learning, especially at the faculties where students do not major in English language and literature per se. The ESP approach ensures that the content from the learners' particular field of study (pedagogy, psychology, medicine, economy, law, etc.) is used for developing linguistic competences of the learners. Teaching EFL/ESP courses at the University of Sarajevo poses many challenges, e.g. outnumbered groups of students, EFL/ESP being taught only for 1-2 semesters, insufficient number of lessons, lack of student motivation, students mostly used to traditional methodology of teaching, etc.

Assuming all of the above mentioned, introducing the two contemporary and innovative approaches to learning, namely Project-Based Learning (PBL) and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), in EFL/ESP courses at the university level seems to be an appropriate medium for a more student-centered approach and engaging students in communicative and meaningful tasks while practicing their English language skills at the same time. The present study represents a small-scale action research and focuses on how PBL can effectively be used to support CLIL and foster students' motivation, communication skills and learning in EFL (English as a foreign language) classes at the university level.

2. Theoretical background

2.1. ESP in higher education

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) usually refers to an English course at tertiary level in non-English-speaking countries taught at the faculties where students do not major in English language and literature but in other fields of study. Traditional ESP is a language-focused approach which is designed to meet specified needs of the learner, identified through needs analysis (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998; Hutchinson & Water, 1987).

Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) pointed out the following major characteristics of ESP courses:

- a) they are mainly intended for intermediate to advanced level students, i.e. students who are assumed to have basic knowledge of English;
- b) ESP courses make use of methodologies, activities and techniques pertinent to the discipline they serve;
- c) ESP courses should focus on the language genres (including grammar, lexis, and register) appropriate for the discipline in different contexts;
- d) ESP learning is divided into two main parts, one related to occupational purposes and the other to academic skills and learning to learn (Johns and Price-Machado, 2001), so study skills are part of ESP.

Overall, all LSP (Language for specific purposes) courses represent an approach to L2 learning where the content for language learning is taken from students' particular field of study, e.g. business, law, sciences, etc., and it is usually based on developing academic skills. In the same vein, ESP courses at the tertiary level use functional and thematic syllabus and various interactive and authentic tasks in order to facilitate the acquisition of the English language used by the target professional group. In sum, traditional ESP courses focus on learning the English language for professional communication (Robinson, 1991) and the content is only a source from which language forms for learning are obtained and the background for acquiring these forms (Tarnopolsky, 2013). It is assumed that in traditional ESP courses the professional content matter is used only as a tool or source to acquire a target language, and not as a stimulus for acquiring any professional knowledge.

2.2. CLIL vs. ESP at tertiary level

The concept of ESP emerged in 1960s and it gained merits in the academic language teaching as it relied on the principles of the communicative approach. Parallely, in 1965, Content-Based Teaching (CBT) or Content-Based Instruction (CBI) and the Canadian immersion model provided the basis for

the concept of learning content through an additional or a second language (Coyle, Hood & Marsh, 2010). Thus, ESP and CBI formed a continuum with a language-driven end on one side and a content-driven end on the other. Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) was introduced in the European context in 1994, with the dual focus on content as well as on language. CLIL is in fact an umbrella term which embraces any type of program where a second language is used to teach non-linguistic content-matter (Garcia, 2009; Marsh, 2002). CLIL is an innovative approach which aims to improve language learning opportunities through the use of a target second language (L2) in the teaching of a particular subject matter. CLIL has become increasingly popular in Europe where considerable value has been placed on knowledge of foreign languages and where conventional teaching methods have been assumed as inappropriate for meeting students' future communicative needs in a globalized society in which English has become the lingua franca (Eurydice Report, 2006). Despite the fact that, principally, any foreign language may be used as a medium of instruction in CLIL, English is the most widely used target language for CLIL in Europe (Dalton-Puffer, 2011).

CLIL encompasses most of the features that 'good', contemporary education implies, e.g. active learning and teaching methods, use of authentic tasks and materials, student-centeredness, focus on project work and task-based learning, etc. (Mehisto, March, Frigols, 2008). This approach relies heavily on the constructivist learning philosophy according to which learning is constructed by learners while working cooperatively in groups and, at the same time, CLIL also reflects the holistic education philosophy which advocates for integrating the learning process and not breaking or fragmenting it into different subjects and skills (Miller, 2007). However, one of the main concerns in regard to the implementation of CLIL in higher education is that CLIL teachers should be competent in both content and language knowledge.

Wolff (2002) offers an interesting definition of a CLIL-type learning environment which corresponds much better to modern pedagogical principles than do traditional learning settings: "the classroom is seen as a learning laboratory, a place in which learners and teachers jointly work in projects, a place in which the different subjects are not divided arbitrarily and taught in isolation, but are seen as a complex whole, a place of autonomous learning in which the learners deal independently with the learning content" (Wolff in Marsh 2002: 48). The pedagogical framework of CLIL is based on four key principles, which constitute 'The 4 Cs Framework' (Coyle 1999, 2002b; Coyle et al., 2010): content, cognition, communication, and culture. The 4 Cs Framework is based on integrating learning (content and cognition) and language learning

(communication and cultures) (Coyle, 1999). Coyle (2002a) explains the principles of 'The 4 Cs Framework' in the following way:

The first principle places successful content or subject learning and the acquisition of knowledge, skills and understanding inherent to that discipline at the very heart of the learning process ... The second principle defines language as a conduit for both communication and learning. From this perspective, language is learned through using it in authentic and unrehearsed yet 'scaffolded' situations to complement the more structured approaches common in foreign language lessons ... The third principle is that CLIL should cognitively challenge learners - whatever their ability. It provides a setting rich for developing thinking skills in conjunction with both basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) and cognitive-academic language proficiency (CALP) ... The fourth principle embraces pluriculturalty. Since language, thinking and culture are inextricably linked, then CLIL provides an ideal opportunity for students to operate in alternative cultures through studies in an alternative language (Coyle, 2002a: 27-28).

The basic principles of the CLIL teaching methodology that are quite often cited in the literature are mentioned below (Lesca, 2012: 4):

- (1) multiple focus approach, which entails a high degree of content and language integration within the framework of different subjects;
- (2) safe and enriching learning environment, where the CLIL teachers encourage learners to experiment with contents and language as they facilitate their search for authentic learning materials;
- (3) authenticity, as it is important to provide connections between learning and students' lives as well as connections with other speakers of the CLIL language; authentic materials should be used as often as possible;
- (4) active learning, which means that the learner has a central role in CLIL lessons, whereas the teacher acts more as a facilitator; student activities should focus on peer cooperative learning and the appropriate content, language and learning outcomes should be based on that;
- (5) scaffolding, where the teacher's role is to support and facilitate students' learning by building on their existing knowledge, presenting information in user-friendly way and responding to different learning styles;
- (6) cooperation, which assumes a high level of cooperation among different teachers in different fields of study, especially when it comes to lesson planning, involving parents/ or local community in the process, etc.

Generally, CLIL and ESP share a number of key features, e.g. the use of content from different non-linguistic subjects, development of academic and

communication skills, use of communicative language teaching methodology, etc. On the other hand, they differ to a certain extent, and the key differences between them are in their objectives and learning outcomes: in CLIL, content learning objectives are equally or even more important than language learning objectives; whereas in ESP, language-led and language learning objectives are of primary importance. The key principles of ESP and CLIL are presented in Table 1 below (adapted from Fernandez (2009: 13) and Tzoannopoulou (2015: 150)):

Table 1: Key principles of ESP and CLIL

| Table 1 | |
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| ESP (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998) | CLIL (CLIL Compendium, 2001; Coyle et al., 2010) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Designed to meet specific learner needs – Makes use of the underlying methodology and activities of the disciplines and professions it serves – Related in content (themes and topics) to particular disciplines, occupations and activities – Depends on the language (grammar, lexis, register), skills, discourse and genre relevant to these activities – May use a different methodology than that of general English – No pre-ordained methodology (discipline, strategy or need dependent) – Designed mostly for adult learners either at a higher institution or professional settings – Generally assumes basic knowledge of the target language system | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A dual-focused approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language – Language is a tool for learning and communicating; – Content determines the language to be learnt – Successful content learning through another language entails careful reflection on the use of language and on teaching methodologies which should include output and interaction – Language is used in authentic situations; scaffolding occasionally needed – Lexicon is of paramount importance – Develops thinking skills; challenges learners cognitively – Integration of receptive and productive skills – Discourse rules are brought to the foreground – Fosters intercultural understanding through learning about other cultures in another language – Task-oriented – Methods and forms of classroom practice are diversified |

To sum up, ESP and CLIL do share some features, yet these two approaches are different in many ways. CLIL focuses more on content-learning objectives, whereas ESP is more based on language-learning objectives. In ESP, language is both the content of the course and the means of learning content, but CLIL uses ‘scaffolding’ strategies to make content more manageable without really adapting it (Hammond and Gibbons, 2005), so in CLIL language is considered as a means and not a goal in itself. CLIL uses learning strategies that provide language support for content acquisition and it offers more tolerance to language usage, i.e. it tolerates more use of L1 and code switching strategies. When it comes to the teacher’s role, ESP teachers are primarily language teachers who do not take on the responsibility for teaching subject content as it is beyond their competence, whereas CLIL teachers are mainly subject specialists with an appropriate level of language proficiency. Sometimes CLIL involves tandem teaching by language and subject specialists. It is also noteworthy to mention that some authors distinguish between a strong CLIL approach and a soft one (Ball, 2009; Bentley, 2010). The strong version of CLIL is represented by those CLIL modules in which non-linguistic subjects are taught with the appropriate number of lessons, with the main focus on content, whereas the soft version of CLIL involves teaching certain subjects and contents during language lessons, i.e. in ESP, where focus is more on language. Bearing in mind all of the above mentioned, we propose that traditional ESP programs in higher education should be enriched by different types of content-based activities that focus on both content and language learning and that are in accordance with the majority of CLIL methodology principles, and definitely one of them is project-based learning.

2.3. PBL to support CLIL at tertiary level

Project-Based Learning (PBL) is a teaching and learning model that organizes learning around projects. Projects are envisaged as complex tasks, based on challenging questions or problems, that engage students in design, problem-solving, decision-making, or investigative activities, while providing them the opportunity to work relatively autonomously over extended period of time, and culminating in realistic products or presentations (Jones, Rasmussen and Moffitt, 1997; Thomas, Mergendoller and Michaelson, 1999).

Blumenfeld et al. (1991) define project-based learning as “a comprehensive approach to teaching and learning that is designed to engage students in investigation of authentic problems” (Blumenfeld et al. 1991: 369). Project-based activities engage students in cooperative learning towards an agreed goal and may include planning, the gathering of information through reading, listening, interviewing, etc., discussion and information processing, critical thinking

and problem solving, and oral or written reporting, and display. Within the framework of PBL, students use the target language to negotiate, plan, analyze, and discuss information and ideas with their peers. Therefore, PBL activities are based on genuine communicative needs and they successfully capture the three principal concerns of the communicative approach: motivation (how the learners relate to the task), relevance (how the learners relate to the language), and educational values (how the language curriculum relates to the general educational and professional development of the learner). Furthermore, there are four basic elements which are common to all project-based activities (British Council, 2013: 3): (1) a central topic from which all the activities derive and which drives the project towards a final objective; (2) access to means of investigation (e.g. the Internet) to collect, analyze and use information; (3) plenty of opportunities for sharing ideas, collaborating and communicating with others; (4) a final product in the form of posters, presentations, reports, videos, web-pages, blogs and so on.

PBL creates connections between the foreign language and the learner's own world and it encourages the use of a wide range of communicative skills, enables learners to exploit other fields of knowledge and provides opportunities for them to investigate in-depth the topics that are relevant to their needs and interests. PBL encourages the development of a wide range of skills, e.g. communication skills, imagination and creativity, problem-solving and critical thinking skills, self discipline and responsibility, collaboration, research and study skills, and cross-curricular work through exploitation of knowledge gained in other subjects, and many of these skills are also listed in literature as the key skills for the 21st century (Ravitz et al., 2012). The role of the teacher in PBL differs from his/her traditionally assumed role of 'a presenter of information', as in PBL "the teacher's role is monitor and facilitator, setting up frameworks for communication, providing access to information and helping language where necessary, and giving students opportunities to produce a final product or presentation; as with TBLT, the teacher monitors interaction but does not interrupt, dealing with language problems at another moment" (British Council, 2013: 3).

Overall, PBL is a learner-centered approach that is rooted in constructivism, as it offers an engaging instructional method to make learners become active constructors of their own knowledge. PBL has a lot of advantages both for content and language learning and it is compatible with the basic principles of CLIL methodology. Therefore, PBL can be taken as an efficient tool for supporting CLIL in EFL/ESP classes at the tertiary level. While working on projects, students get the opportunities to practice and learn the English language and at the same time they gain a lot of new information in the field of

their study and develop various important skills. Using the project-based learning approach in EFL/ESP classes can motivate students to learn the English language for a purpose.

3. The Research

3.1. Rationale and goals

This small scale action research explored the benefits of incorporating the project-based learning (PBL) approach into EFL/ESP classes in order to support content-based learning and to enhance EFL teaching and learning. The research mainly focused on the students' attitudes and perceptions of using the PBL approach to support the CLIL-like approach of ESP learning in our EFL context.

Therefore, this study is mainly exploratory in nature with the following research goals:

- 1 to investigate the possibilities and potential benefits of implementing the PBL approach in an EFL/ESP course at the tertiary level with the aim to support the integrated content and language learning;
- 2 to determine the EFL/ESP learners' perceptions of project-based language teaching and learning used to support the integrated content and language learning in higher education;
- 3 to evaluate the level of students' motivation and engagement in connection to the PBL approach;
- 4 to better understand the students attitudes in relation to PBL-based activities and their applicability within the CLIL framework and students' English language knowledge and skills development.

3.2. Participants and setting

The participants were 47 third-year and fourth-year Bachelor level students of the Faculty of Educational Sciences, University of Sarajevo, at the Department of Lower Elementary Education and the Department of Preschool Education. It was a mixed-level group, ranging from intermediate to upper-intermediate level of English language proficiency according to the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference) scale for languages. These students attended an optional EFL course, which is basically envisaged as an ESP course for two semesters with 2 lessons (2 x 45 minutes) per week in each semester.

The project lasted for ten weeks in the winter semester of the 2017/2018 academic year. The research focused on using project-based activities to support

the integrated content and language learning in our specific EFL/ESP context. The aim of the research was to obtain the students' feedback with regard to these two novel approaches, namely PBL and CLIL, used to enhance EFL/ESP teaching and learning.

3.3. Instrument

The instrument used in this small-scale action research was a post-project questionnaire mainly focusing on student perceptions and opinions on the usefulness of project-based activities to support content and language integrated learning and to foster their motivation, creativity and active engagement in EFL/ESP classes and provide opportunities to enhance both their EFL/ESP learning and some of the basic skills for the 21st century. The questionnaire was divided into two parts: (1) questions about the project-based learning approach and its impact on the integrated content and language learning along with its usefulness for EFL/ESP learning and the development of basic 21st century skills (20 items), and (2) personal comments (4 open-ended questions), to elicit the students' personal impressions on what they found as the most useful part of the project-based assignments and activities, to report any possible difficulties they might have experienced while doing the PBL activities, and to compare the two innovative approaches, PBL and CLIL, with a more traditional way of teaching and learning EFL/ESP and to acknowledge if these two approaches helped them improve their English knowledge and skills.

As far as the first part of the questionnaire is concerned, the items were answered according to the five-point Likert-type scales ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). The questionnaire was completed by 47 students involved in the project. Percentages were calculated on the basis of the total number of all responses in each of the categories. On the other hand, the second part of the questionnaire which elicited the students' personal comments demanded a qualitative analysis of the collected data.

3.4. Procedure

As it was mentioned earlier, this small-scale action research was conducted during the winter semester of the academic 2017/2018 year with the students majoring in the field of educational sciences, in particular referring to preschool education and lower elementary school education. The whole project lasted for ten weeks when the target group of students attended their elective EFL course, basically conceptualized as an ESP course aimed at teaching the English language along with the specific content related to their field of study. This project of implementing the PBL approach to support the CLIL-like teaching and learning in our EFL/ESP classes was envisaged as both an

in-class and out-of-class project. The preparation phase began in-class, with English-only lessons and discussions on the specific pedagogical topics, such as 'good teaching strategies', 'active learning', 'classroom management', 'bullying in schools', 'cooperative learning', 'challenging behaviors in the kindergarten', etc. This experience helped the students not only to expose themselves to using English more actively in-class, but also helped them to better prepare for the next stage of the project and to get some in-depth knowledge about the topics we covered in-class.

In the mid-stage of the project, the students were assigned their own mini-projects, to complete individually, in pairs or in groups (4-5 students), according to their own choice. Most of the students opted for the group work and only few of them for the individual or pair work. Their assignment was to investigate in-depth a topic they are professionally interested in and they want to learn more about by using the available resources in English only. The teacher provided a list of possible topics, just in case if some of the students would lack inspiration, but the choice of the research topic for their mini-projects was really up to them.

As a final product of their mini-projects, the students were asked to make their group presentations (Power Point, poster or oral presentation) of the topic they had investigated to their classmates. Each member of the group was supposed to take an active part in the whole project and contribute to its realization, including the final stage, i.e. the presentation itself, where each member of the group had his/her own share in the oral presentation. The students were assessed in terms of the PBL assignments outcomes in this project but they were also given rubrics to evaluate each other's performance while presenting their group work. The categories for evaluation were: 'relevant/ interesting topic', 'useful and relevant information', 'coherence', 'correct grammar', 'adequate vocabulary', and 'collaboration with peers'. Each of these categories was evaluated following the pre-arranged criteria for the assessment of their story presentations, ranging from 1 (negative response) to 4 (positive response). Student empowerment and involvement in the criteria-based assessment of their own work proved to be motivating for their more active participation in classes and it was perceived as fair as the majority of the students were of the opinion that their peers assessed their performance in an appropriate way. We also organized in-class discussions about their projects after each presentation, and the students also reported their perceptions and experiences of learning both the English language and the content relevant to their field of study through the implementation of PBL activities in our EFL/ESP classes at the university level.

At the end of the project, the students were given a questionnaire to provide their feedback on the whole project with the main focus on their perceptions

and opinions on using the PBL approach to support the integrated language and content learning in our EFL/ESP classes.

4. Results and discussion

The overall findings of this pilot research show that the majority of respondents have a considerable level of understanding of the crucial principles of both PBL and CLIL, and they show a positive attitude towards their implementation in our higher-education EFL/ESP context. The data collected via the questionnaire were analyzed using the descriptive statistical methods based on frequencies and percentages of the students' answers in the first part of the questionnaire, combined with the descriptive and qualitative analysis of the students' personal comments in the second part of the questionnaire. Generally, the participants in this project provided a very positive feedback towards using the PBL approach to support and enhance the integrated content and language learning in a higher-education EFL/ESP course.

According to the results of the first part of the questionnaire, the students mostly responded with 'strongly agree' or 'somewhat agree' to all questionnaire items. The highest rated items, in a hierarchical order, were as follows:

- 1 'PBL is an interesting and motivating way of both content and EFL learning.' (Item no. 2 – 97.87%strongly agree)
- 2 'I like the idea of using the PBL approach in our EFL classes.' (Item no. 1 – 93.16%strongly agree)
- 3 'PBL assignments provided a lot of opportunities to learn and practice the English language.' (Item no. 18 – 89.36%strongly agree)
- 4 'Overall, I think that the PBL approach is a very useful method of content-based learning in our EFL classes.' (Item no. 20 – 89.36%strongly agree)
- 5 'PBL activates learners' needs and interests as we learn about the content related to our field of study.' (Item no. 4 – 85.10%strongly agree)
- 6 'PBL assignments provide a lot of opportunities to practice all basic English skills in general.' (Item no. 10 – 85.10%strongly agree)
- 7 'PBL provides a relaxed atmosphere to promote the English language use in our EFL classes.' (Item no. 3 – 80.85%strongly agree)
- 8 'Working with my classmates on our PBL assignments was very helpful and beneficial for my EFL/ESP learning.' (Item no. 19 – 80.85%strongly agree)

The highest rated item in this study was the item no. 2 in the questionnaire (“PBL is an interesting and motivating way of both content and EFL learning”), which clearly shows that the students have recognized the benefits of using the PBL approach for integrated content and EFL learning and that they are more motivated and interested in learning when involved in meaningful tasks relevant to their interests and needs. Furthermore, the second rated item (Item no. 1 – “I like the idea of using the PBL approach in our EFL/ESP classes”) reveals the students’ generally positive attitude towards the implementation of PBL in our EFL/ESP classes. The third rated items (Item no. 18 – “PBL assignments provided a lot of opportunities to learn and practice the English language” and item no. 20 – “Overall, I think that the PBL approach is a very useful method of content-based learning in our EFL classes”) confirm that the students have recognized the potential and benefits of using PBL to foster both the content and the English language learning in our EFL/ESP teaching/learning context. The fourth rated items (Item no. 4 – “PBL activates learners’ needs and interests as we learn about the content related to our field of study” and item no. 10 – “PBL assignments provide a lot of opportunities to practice all basic English skills in general”) clearly show that the students distinguish the critical attributes of the PBL approach such as its focus on learners’ needs and relevance of contents to their field of study and particular interests. The participants have also pointed out that PBL in EFL/ESP classes creates an encouraging learning environment in which students feel more motivated to use the English language and enhance their basic English skills. The fifth rated items (Item no. 3 – “PBL provides a relaxed atmosphere to promote the English language use in our EFL classes” and item no. 11 – “Working with my classmates on our PBL assignments was very helpful and beneficial for my EFL/ESP learning”) also strongly confirm that the students have acknowledged how the PBL activities and assignments are suitable both for cooperative learning in the EFL/ESP context and the use and practice of the English language in a relaxed atmosphere with their classmates. Their answers also reflect their motivation and willingness to work effectively with their classmates in an encouraging learning environment.

Furthermore, the remaining results of this survey indicate that the students show a positive attitude towards the other critical aspects of using PBL to support the integrated content and language learning in EFL/ESP classes, such as the increased student motivation and greater participation and interest from most of the students (72.34%strongly agree), opportunities for practicing reading (68.08%strongly agree) and speaking (68.08%strongly agree) in English, strengthening and building up their vocabulary (74.46%strongly agree) and grammar knowledge in EFL/ESP (59.57%strongly agree), etc. The students’

answers also show that they have recognized how PBL and CLIL are beneficial for the development and improvement of some of the key skills for the 21st century, such as positive interaction and collaboration among students (72.34%strongly agree), communicative skills in general (59.57%strongly agree), interpersonal skills (51.06%strongly agree), problem-solving and critical thinking skills (44.68%strongly agree), etc.

As it was mentioned earlier, the second part of the questionnaire included 4 open-ended questions to elicit the students' comments related to their impressions of using the PBL activities and assignments in our EFL/ESP classes, and the benefits for their learning of EFL/ESP along with the relevant content for their field of study, especially when compared to some more traditional ways of teaching and learning EFL/ESP.

We will quote just a few of the students' comments from this part:

"The most useful part of this project was the opportunity to research topics in our field of study. We had the chance to choose the topic that we wanted to learn more about and, at the same time, we learned English and improve our language skills."

"I had to research about the topic in English, so I improved my reading skills and learned a lot of new words."

"I improved my vocabulary related to the themes relevant for our field of study (e.g. classroom management, school bullying, preschool learning centers, assessment and grading, inclusive teaching, etc.)."

"I find this method much more appropriate for teaching English to university students when compared to traditional methods of teaching. This is due to the fact that learning becomes a very active process, and we learn through more interesting contents and specific projects."

"This specific approach motivated us to be more creative and actively involved in the process of learning the English language."

"I didn't have any difficulties, but instead I had a lot of fun and still got to learn."

"Traditional way of EFL learning is better for grammar, but PBL is better for building up your vocabulary and better communication. With these project-based activities we were doing what we were interested in, we learned a lot of new words and developed our critical thinking skills."

"PBL is much better than traditional teaching and it offers something new. We are all bored of the old methods. PBL is interesting and refreshing, and also a good way of learning English while still remaining in our field of study." Etc.

Generally, these comments were all very positive and they reflect the students' willingness to use the PBL approach to EFL/ESP learning in order to support both their content and English language learning at the tertiary level.

The participants in this study acknowledged that they prefer this innovative way of EFL/ESP learning to some more traditional methods as it provides them more opportunities to actively engage in the learning process and express their creativity and productivity in the group work and cooperative learning with their classmates. Furthermore, the students' answers in the questionnaire revealed the fact that they not only gained knowledge in the specific pedagogical topic(s) while completing their PBL tasks (57.44%strongly agree), but the PBL assignments also motivated them to learn more about the specific pedagogical topic(s) (59.57%strongly agree).

5. Conclusions

Generally, the results of the evaluation questionnaire showed the positive response of all students in the target group towards the implementation of the PBL approach within the CLIL framework of EFL/ESP teaching and learning in higher education. The PBL activities and tasks highly motivated the students not only to become more active and engaged participants in our EFL/ESP classes, but also to do more in-depth research of the relevant topics for their particular field of study. This was a clear confirmation of the fact that students' motivation and interest in learning is increased when they are engaged in meaningful tasks and with the authentic materials which are closely related to their specific needs and interests. In PBL, students are expected to construct their own knowledge and share a common goal with their classmates in the group, they become responsible for their own progress and learning as well as for the progress and success of the whole group, which then results with a greater feeling of belonging to a learning community and the increase in knowledge. This approach also changes the teacher's role, as s/he is no longer a presenter of information but a facilitator to assist and direct her/his students when needed.

Although this was a small-scale study conducted over a short period of time and with a relatively small sample of 47 participants, the obtained results can still confirm the initial assumptions on the usefulness of implementing the PBL approach to support and enhance the integrated content and language learning in EFL/ESP classes at the university level. PBL enhanced students' motivation and participation in EFL/ESP classes, it fostered cooperative learning and social interaction between students, and stimulated both in-class and out-of-class EFL/ESP learning. Encouraged by these positive outcomes, we are going to continue to use PBL in our EFL/ESP teaching context and further exploit its potential to promote and support the integrated content and language learning in ESP at the tertiary level.

Overall, both PBL and CLIL have a lot to offer in EFL/ESP courses at the university level. Although the traditional ESP teaching and CLIL have a number of shared features, ESP can only be classified as CLIL to a certain extent, as it does not pursue content learning objectives in the same way and to the same extent as CLIL does. It seems that the traditional English language teaching paradigms (e.g. ESP) should be replaced with some fresh and new approaches to EFL/ESL teaching and learning, or at least adapted to some innovative ideas and challenges of the 21st century. Therefore, traditional ESP programs at the tertiary level can be enriched by PBL or other content-based activities and assignments that focus on both content and language learning and follow the majority of CLIL principles. This small-scale research has shown that PBL and CLIL-like teaching in higher education can increase student motivation, contribute to both cognitively more demanding content and language learning, and at the same time encourage and enable students to perform to the maximum level of their linguistic and academic competence. Nevertheless, we consider that more research, both quantitative and qualitative, is needed to assess the potential benefits and challenges in using the PBL approach for integrated content and language learning in EFL/ESP courses at the tertiary level.

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OD ESP-A DO CLIL-A: UVOĐENJE PROJEKTNOG UČENJA NA JEDNOM UNIVERZITETSKOM KOLEGIJU EFL-A

Sažetak

Ovaj rad se bavi ključnim dimenzijama ESP-a (engleskog jezika struke) i CLIL-a (integriranog učenja sadržaja i jezika) u podučavanju i učenju EFL-a (engleskog kao stranog jezika) na univerzitetskom nivou. Na osnovu analize literature, rad nudi kratak pregled glavnih sličnosti i razlika za oba pristupa. Univerzitetski kolegiji EFL-a se već mnogo godina oslanjaju na ESP pristup, koji naglašava učenje jezika uz određeno znanje sadržaja koji se uzima iz relevantne oblasti studija, npr. biznisa, prava, nauka, itd., ili se bazira na razvoju akademskih vještina. Međutim, čini se kako se ova paradigma podučavanja engleskog jezika treba prilagođavati nekim inovativnim idejama i izazovima 21. stoljeća. CLIL integrira učenje jezika i sadržaja tako što nudi nelingvistički sadržaj kao osnovu za učenje i podučavanje, te na taj način promovira principe modernog obrazovanja, kao što su motivacija studenata i aktivno učenje, upotreba autentičnih zadataka i materijala, učenje bazirano na zadatku ili projektu, itd. Projektno učenje (engl. PBL) je metod učenja koji je kompatibilan sa principima CLIL-a, jer angažuje studente u sticanju znanja i jezičkih vještina tokom jednog dužeg perioda istraživanja koji je strukturiran oko autentičnih pitanja i zadataka. Ovo akciono istraživanje manjeg obima ispituje stavove studenata prema upotrebi aktivnosti projektnog učenja na njihovim časovima EFL-a kako bi se podržalo integrirano učenje jezika i sadržaja, tj. uvođenje CLIL-a u njihov studij. Učesnici u ovom istraživanju su bili studenti treće i četvrtre godine (cca. 50) na Pedagoškom fakultetu u Sarajevu, koji pohađaju izborni EFL kolegij. Projekat je trajao jedan semestar i podaci su prikupljeni od studenata u formi upitnika na kraju semestra. Rezultati pokazuju da su studenti imali generalno pozitivan stav kad je u pitanju primjena PBL-a i CLIL-a na njihovim časovima EFL-a.

Ključne riječi: engleski jezik struke (ESP), integrirano učenje jezika i sadržaja (CLIL), podučavanje i učenje engleskog kao stranog jezika (EFL), projektno učenje (PBL)