

ESP COURSE “ENGLISH FOR INTERPERSONAL PROFESSIONS”: CLIL APPROACH APPLICATION

The object of the research is to study the peculiarities of the English language curriculum for students of interpersonal professions, such as social work specialists, psychologists, educators, managers, journalists, and others. Due to the fact that future professional activity of such students will involve face-to-face interpersonal communication on daily basis, their English class curriculum should include not only language material aimed at developing four communicative skills, but also focus on building students' interpersonal and intercultural competence.

Developing any type of competence requires acquiring relevant theoretical knowledge and practical skills [1]. In our case it is intercultural communication, interpersonal communication, conflict resolution, persuasion and public speaking. Many of these subjects are studied by students as a part of their curriculum, however the research shows that students are not always able to apply theory into practice [3], so the foreign language classroom can and should be an extra opportunity for them to learn or review the theoretical principles and then use them immediately in real life while learning and practicing foreign language.

This task can be achieved with the help of CLIL approach (Content and Language Integrated Learning). According to this approach the foreign language is learnt while being a medium of instructing [2]. Thus, a CLIL course has at least two goals: to teach a subject and to develop language skills, which means there should be two sets of objectives, two sets of criteria to evaluate the course effectiveness, plus materials and activities that would address both goals at the same time.

Our course “English for Interpersonal Professions” covers such topics as “Basics of Interpersonal Communication”, “Being Good Listener”, “Verbal Communication”, “Nonverbal Communication”, “Conflict Management”, “Communication on the Phone”, “Communication on the Web”, “Intercultural Communication”, “Team Dynamics”, “Personal Relations”, “Negotiating”, “Public Speaking”. Besides theoretical principles of the above-mentioned aspects of interpersonal communication, close attention is also paid to the language material which is not usually studied explicitly by students who are not specialized in linguistics. Camerer and Mader, for example, define three language areas. The first is meta-language, i.e. language to describe language. Being able to use meta-language effectively helps students to explain themselves in the situations when the speaker's or listener's level of English is not sufficient for mutual understanding. The second area is means of politeness, as this is the key to effective intercultural communication. One more important language skill that the course addresses is paraphrasing which is essential because good communicator should be able to adjust their message to the listener [1].

The work in class was organized mainly with the help activities typical for communicative English language classroom. For instance, the theoretical material was presented in the form of listening or reading comprehension tasks, jigsaw reading, group and individual presentations prepared by students. We also included activities that are

widely used in social skills trainings: role plays and simulation, case studies, and self-reflection [4]. The mid-term and final tests included reading, listening, writing and speaking tasks that covered the content of the topics of the course.

The evaluation of the course effectiveness demonstrated improvements in students' interpersonal and intercultural competence, as well as their language knowledge.

References

1. Camerer, Rudi, and Judith Mader. Intercultural competence in business english / Rudi Camerer & Judith Mader. - Cornelsen, 2012. - 204 p.
2. Dalton-Puffer, Christiane. Discourse in Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) Classrooms / Christiane Dalton-Puffer. - John Benjamins Publishing Company. - Amsterdam : John Benjamins Publishing Co., 2007. - 331 p.
3. Ellis, Roger. An action-focus curriculum for the interpersonal professions / Learning to effect // R.Barnett (Ed.). – Buckingham : SRHE and Open University Press, 1992.
4. Koprowska, Juliet. Communication and interpersonal skills in social work / Juliet Koprowska. - London : Learning Matters, 2014. - 256 p.