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ON THE USE OF CLIL AT LITHUANIAN SCHOOLS

The changing globalized world has brought a new generation of students with a new mindset who are particularly focused on learning by doing. Young people are used to traveling, going to international camps, mixing with foreigners studying at their schools, fighting online computer game battles in teams with their contemporaries abroad. While being involved in any of these activities, they pick up some English. Many English course books that students use in class are also constructed according to the task-based approach to language learning where they use English as a tool to solve problems, design brochures, plan their tourist routes, etc. Consequently, Content Integrated Language Learning (CLIL) with its focus on integration must look very natural and motivating for these students enabling them to achieve both content and language goals.

On the other hand, teachers must also be familiar and ready to use CLIL as they are participating in projects and attending numerous continuous development seminars where CLIL is one of the popular topics. Moreover, during the recent decades quite a few school teachers of other subjects or primary classes have acquired English teacher's qualification as a result of requalification programs making them ideal candidates to combine content and language in their teaching.

The aim of the article is to reveal the current situation regarding the use of CLIL. In order to achieve the aim a survey among Šakiai district teachers was carried out to find out their involvement in CLIL as well as problems they face. The research has shown that the majority of educators in the district are aware of CLIL and more than 30% of them have not only read related literature or discussed the issue with colleagues but have also participated in certain seminars, lectures and courses, some even abroad. Despite that, the educators still feel the lack of training, knowledge and competence to use it in their everyday work. The article presents a detailed discussion of the findings.

KEY WORDS: foreign language teaching, CLIL, teacher training.

Introduction

Though the term CLIL was coined in 1994 in Europe, its practice has a much longer history. The first known CLIL-type programme dates back some 5000 years ago to the terri-

tory of present day Iraq (Mehisto *et al.* 2008, p. 9). Nowadays the acronym CLIL seems to be one of the most widely used buzz terms and one of the most discussed issues in the foreign language teaching field. According

to the European Commission, *Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)* involves teaching a curricular subject through the medium of a language other than that normally used. The subject can be entirely unrelated to language learning, such as history lessons being taught in English in a school in Spain. CLIL is taking place and has been found to be effective in all sectors of education from primary through to adult and higher education. Its success has been growing over the past 10 years and continues to do so. It has been the focus of numerous European and national conferences, projects, websites, special interest groups and teacher training programmes. However, it is not clear how widely CLIL approach has actually been implemented at Lithuanian secondary education level, especially in the province. Whose property is CLIL? Should it be used by foreign language or subject teachers? What are the factors that encourage/discourage teachers of English from using CLIL? *Thus the subject of the research* is the use of CLIL at Lithuanian schools. *The aim of the research* is to analyze Sakiai district EFL teachers' attitudes and experience in using CLIL in their teaching. The district was chosen as it is geographically far from the universities and other educational centers famous for promoting European initiatives and could represent a recent picture of the use of CLIL at ordinary schools in Lithuania. In order to achieve the aim of this paper, the following **objectives** have been set: 1. to overview the main benefits and possible threats of CLIL, 2. to get statistic data defining the situation of using CLIL at Sakiai district schools: a) to prepare a questionnaire for English language

teachers b) to analyze and generalize the results of the questionnaires, which could explain the factors determining the teachers' choice to integrate/not to integrate CLIL approach into their teaching. *The following methods* have been applied to achieve these objectives: 1. theoretical analysis of corresponding literature, 2. survey method, organizing questionnaires, 3. analysis of the data of the survey.

CLIL: Challenges and Threats

No one can argue that integration of language and content in teaching is natural, meaningful and motivating for students. The learner is gaining new knowledge about the 'non-language' subject while encountering, using and learning a foreign language. "CLIL refers to situations where subjects, or parts of subjects, are taught through a foreign language with dual-focused aims, namely the learning of content, and the simultaneous learning of a foreign language" (Marsh 2002). As the number of foreign language lessons is usually considered to be insufficient, introduction of CLIL saves time as it enables the teacher to kill two birds with one stone – develops students' foreign language competence as well as discipline area competence thus providing the learners with more opportunities to be exposed and use the foreign language. Moreover, the mindset of the generation born after 2001 will even more be focused on immediacy as in "learn as you use, use as you learn" – not "learn now, use later". They will be even more influenced by their own early, personal, hands-on experience with integrated technologies, and CLIL is a very relevant methodology for this type of learners that

has emerged to cater to this new age (Mehisto *et al.* 2008, p. 11) Thus CLIL lessons can be characterized as having “value added” benefits (e. g. linguistic, communicative, cognitive, motivational and cultural). Besides, content based activities are cognitively demanding and stimulate creative thinking (Chopey-Paquet 2008, p. 245).

However, some education authorities and the public are often not sure whether introduction of early foreign language teaching or CLIL can become a threat in case the native language is not so strong and eventually can damage or even lead to the loss of those languages. According to K. Kelly, CLIL poses no threat to L1, conversely, bad CLIL practice will drive itself extinct before any minority languages it is seen to threaten (Kelly 2003). Another issue of concern would be the learning content. Lacking the foreign language competence the students may not fully understand or misinterpret the subject information. The parents or the students themselves may not trust the quality of the subject knowledge gained through the medium of a foreign language, as the knowledge acquired may be simplified due to the insufficient command of the target language.

Another question is about the teachers who are going to teach CLIL: should they be subject teachers, language teachers or team teaching could be more appropriate? Some teachers are even said to have a crisis of identity – not knowing what a CLIL teacher really should be like (Kelly 2010). What about the role of language teachers in the future of CLIL? Teachers of English may not feel confident enough to take responsibility for the subject teaching, whereas knowing our situation in Lithuania it would be not

easy to find many subject teachers who would be ready to take up the challenge. However, in some European countries teachers get education and are able to teach more than one subject at school, one of them could be a foreign language. For example, at Charles University in Prague, Faculty of Education, student-teachers involved in five-year pre-service diploma courses combine two majors in their studies. Traditionally, mathematics teaching could be combined with e.g. chemistry, technology, biology, physical education, etc., recently also with foreign language teaching. The graduates obtain dual qualification, e.g. for teaching English as a foreign language and mathematics in Czech. Their qualification applies for secondary schools, i.e. for learners aged 11–19 thus making them ready for CLIL (Novotná, Hofmanová 2005). In Lithuania, teacher training institutions do not have subject+ foreign language programmes, so the only source of subject teachers with a sufficient command of foreign language and its teaching methodology could be institutions requalifying teachers, e.g. Vilnius university Foreign Languages institute, the graduates of which are teachers of other subjects who have also acquired BA degree in the English language and its teaching.

Another problem is CLIL teaching methodology: would it be possible to apply the same methods as in EFL classroom? If not, what methodology would be appropriate for CLIL? What teaching materials should be used in CLIL classes: original subject course books written in a foreign language or special CLIL materials designed by the teachers containing a language focus as well? Assessment also poses certain questions:

Should students be assessed for the subject knowledge only or include the language aspect as well? Having all these questions in mind, the situation of the use of CLIL in English language lessons in Sakiai district schools was analysed.

**CLIL in Lithuania:
Sakiai District Case Study**

In order to find out teachers' of English attitudes toward the use of CLIL in EFL classroom a survey has been carried out in the form of questionnaires. 46 EFL teachers' of the district (out of 52 – 88.4%) have been asked to fill in questionnaires and their answers have been analysed and summed

up. The results of the research are discussed below. At this point the author would like to thank Foreign Language Institute graduate Jurgita Bernotiene for her profound assistance in the empiric research. As the schools in Sakiai district are not very big, the majority of the teachers have been teaching English to students of different levels. Among those interviewed 33 were found to be teaching other subjects beside English, see the subjects below (Table 1).

It was important to find out how many Sakiai district EFL teachers had attended CLIL seminars or courses where they were informed about CLIL and its application. The results showed that the majority (78%)

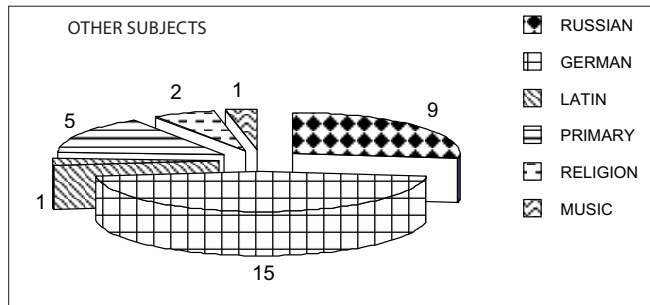


Table 1. Other subjects taught by EFL teachers

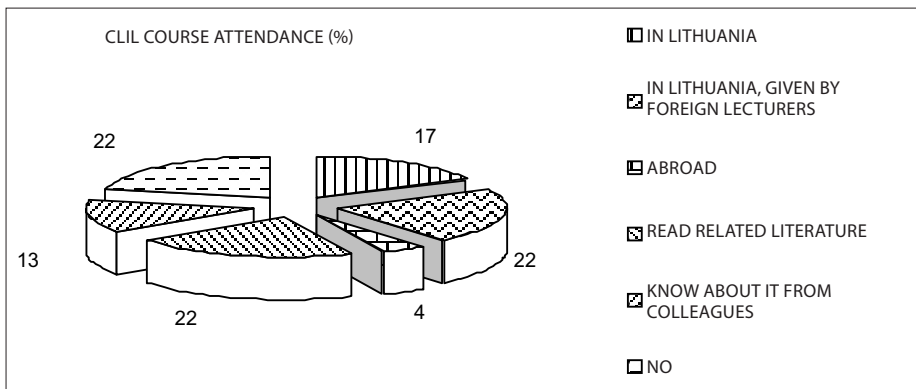


Table 2. CLIL training

have attended seminars, read related literature or heard about it from other sources. However, 22% of the respondents admitted not knowing anything about CLIL at all.

The teachers were also asked whether they used CLIL in their lessons of English or in other lessons in case they taught other subjects as well. At least the primary teachers as well as those teaching music or religion could be expected to be combining the contents of their subject and the language in their teaching. However, the results below demonstrate that only about 7% of the respondents admitted using CLIL, while this time 13% said that they did not know

what it was, despite the frequent use of the term in seminars, books and other sources. All three respondents who gave a positive answer had taught informatics in English in their career.

As the above data clearly shows the reluctance of the teachers to use CLIL approach in their teaching, the answers to another question revealed the reasons why it was considered problematic to be implemented. The majority of the teachers did not feel confident enough with the content and did not know how they could integrate the language and the content, i.e. they indicated the lack of training in using CLIL. Another problem,

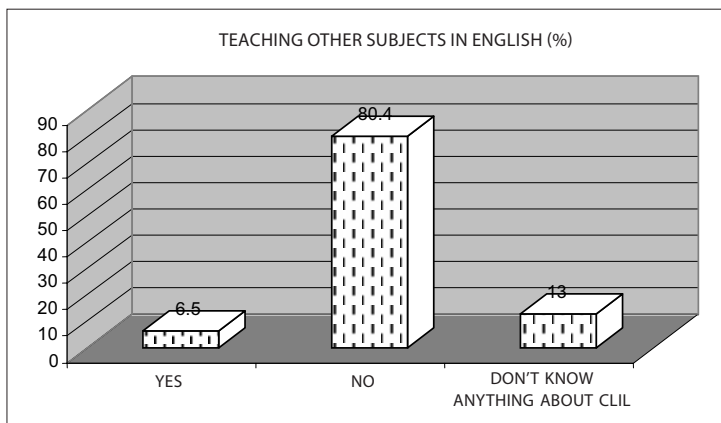


Table 3. EFL teachers' experience in teaching other subjects in English

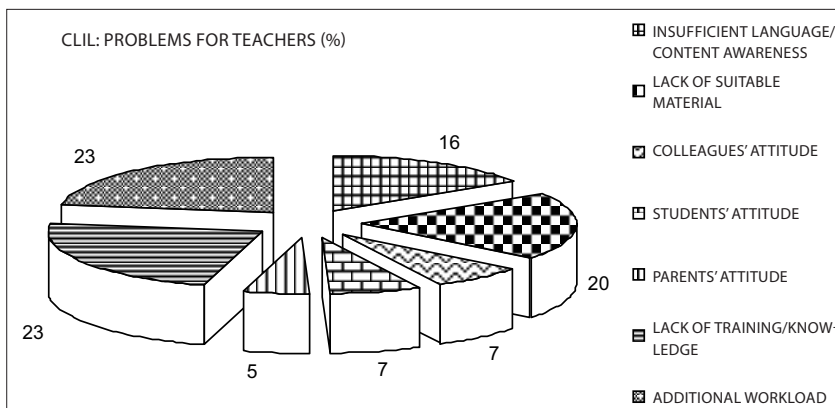


Table 4. Problems faced by teachers in using CLIL

according to the teachers, would be the teaching materials. As there are no special course books intended for those ready to combine language and subject teaching, 23% of the respondents were afraid of the additional workload, as they would have to develop their own teaching materials. Some teachers also mentioned that their ability to effectively teach both content and the language may not be trusted by the students, colleagues or parents, see the percentage above (Table 4).

As the absence/lack of teaching materials was mentioned as one of the most serious problems preventing implementation of CLIL, the teachers were asked their opinion as far as the development of the teaching materials was concerned. 39% of the respondents would be ready to develop the teaching materials in cooperation with their colleagues- subject teachers and discuss how they could be used. 27% were for selecting authentic materials on the subject in the target language, while 11% would try to develop their own materials. Only a few teachers mentioned using a content book in the target language or translating L1 content book into the target language, probably because these would lack language training

aspects. The respondents were also not sure whether L1 should be used in CLIL lessons. More than a half of the teachers thought that the students' mother tongue should be used, while 11% were not sure.

In spite of the problems mentioned and insufficient training, the teachers were found to be aware of the benefits of content integrated language learning for students. 43% of them thought it was useful that CLIL would provide students with an opportunity to study two disciplines at the same time, thus increasing students' exposure to a foreign language while using materials in L2 and having more hours in the syllabus to develop its skills. According to the respondents, the students would have to cooperate and work in a group, which was thought to be important for creating more favourable learning conditions and helped to develop creative thinking, see the percentage below (Table 6).

However, when asked whether they could see any disadvantages for students of implementing CLIL, more than a half of the respondents answered that they could not see any, another 18% either did not answer at all or said that they did not know. 6% of the teachers were afraid that the subject

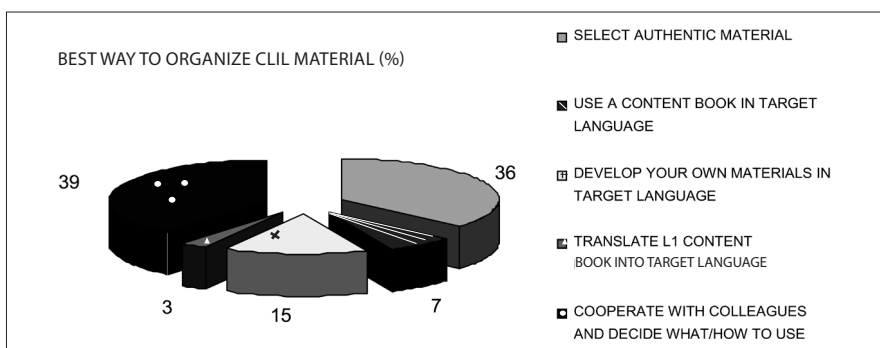


Table 5. Development of CLIL materials

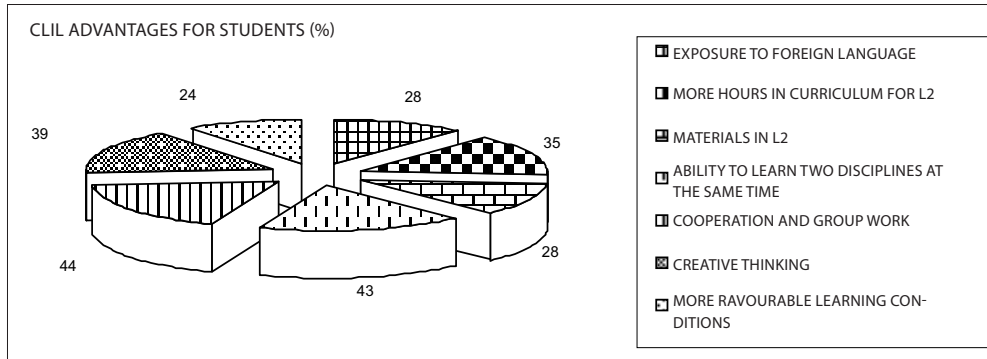


Table 6. Advantages of CLIL for students

content taught in a foreign language might suffer because of insufficient command of L2, lack of materials to study from (5%), inexperienced teachers (7%) and additional workload for students (Table 7).

The teachers were also asked what the opinion of their school administration was regarding implementation of CLIL at their schools. None of the respondents indicated that their school authorities were against CLIL. 61% of those asked felt that those in charge of the educational process would be supportive of the idea to integrate a subject and foreign language teaching. 20% of the

teachers found the administration not interested in any innovations of this kind, the rest either did not answer the question or indicated that they were not sure what their school's attitude was.

Knowing that the school administrations would be mainly in favour of implementing CLIL, the English teachers were asked what help what they would need, once they decided to start integrating the language and subject in their teaching. Their responses showed that they would like to have some training where they could learn more about CLIL methodology as well as about the ap-

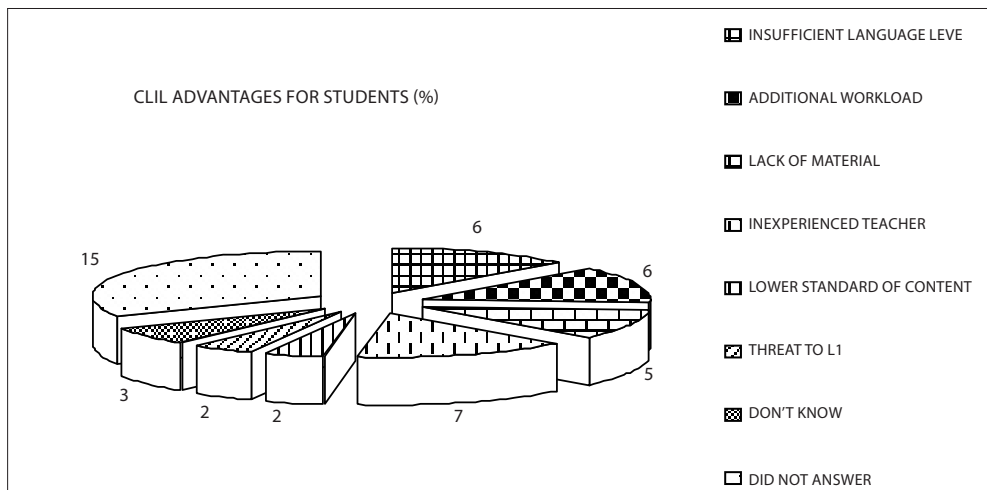


Table 7. Disadvantages of CLIL for students

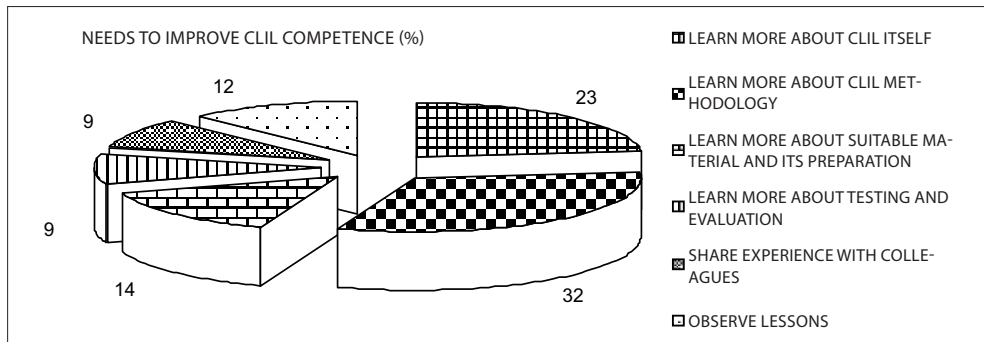


Table 8. Teachers' needs for CLIL training

proach itself in general. Besides, those asked thought they needed help in developing teaching materials. They also expressed their need to find out more about assessment and evaluation in CLIL. About 20% of the teachers felt that observing CLIL lessons taught by experts of the field as well as discussing the experience with colleagues would help them to become more competent and ready to integrate the language and subject teaching (Table 8).

Conclusions

The study was encouraged by the increasing interest towards Content and Language Integrated Learning and aimed at analyzing EFL teachers' attitudes and experience in using CLIL in their teaching. The research showed that the majority of educators in Sakiai district were aware of CLIL and they had read related literature, discussed the issue with their colleagues, participated in certain seminars, lectures and other kinds of training, some even abroad.

As far as students are concerned, the results showed that in the teachers' opinion, CLIL would increase their learning motivation and develop foreign language competence thus helping them to prepare

for the future studies and professional career. Ability to learn a foreign language and content in one lesson, development of creative thinking, cooperation among the students were also mentioned as the benefits of CLIL.

More than 70% of the school authorities were found to support the idea of introducing the innovation at their schools.

Despite all the above, in reality CLIL approach had been hardly ever used in Sakiai district schools. Only 3 teachers admitted having had some experience in this field.

The reluctance was mainly explained by the lack of training and competence, insufficient language or content awareness. Lack of suitable materials was also mentioned among the most discouraging factors preventing the teachers from using it. Besides, some of the teachers considered CLIL as a possible source of such problems as additional workload or tiredness.

All things considered, the results suggest that CLIL could be implemented and all the advantages could be experienced if the teachers had a possibility to learn more about CLIL principles and methodology, development and use of suitable materials. An opportunity to observe and discuss lessons taught by experts or more experienced

colleagues would also be highly appreciated by the respondents. Besides, as the implementation of CLIL depends on the teachers'

motivation, it can be strengthened by relevant educational policy decisions locally or at the national level.

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Moksliniai interesai: anglų kalbos mokytojų rengimas, profesinės anglų kalbos mokymas, mokymas mokyti

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APIE INTEGRUOTO KALBOS IR DALYKO DĖSTYMĄ LIETUVOS MOKYKLOSE

Straipsnyje nagrinėjama integruoto dalyko ir užsienio kalbos mokymo (IDUKM) klausimai Lietuvos mokyklose. Šis mokymo būdas turėtų neginčijamai tikti dabartinei besimokančiųjų kartai, kadangi gyvendami globaliame pasaulyje be sienų, jie kasdien įgyja juos dominančių dalykinių žinių, ieško atsakymų į iškilusius klausimus bei problemų sprendimų pasitelkdami anglų kalbą ir tuo pačiu ją tobulindami. Tačiau IDUKM taikymas taip pat kelia ir nemažai klausimų: ar dalykų dėstymas anglų kalba nepakenks besimokančiųjų gimtosios kalbos vystymuisi, ar nenukentės dalyko mokymo turinys dėl nepakankamo mokytojo-dalykininko, o taip pat ir moksleivių užsienio kalbos lygio, ar užsienio kalbų mokytojai galėtų tinkamai perteikti dalyko žinias, kokia mokymo

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The article deals with the Content Integrated Language Learning (CLIL) issues at Lithuanian schools. This approach to foreign language learning and teaching should definitely be suitable to a new generation of students who are particularly focused on learning by doing. Young people are used to traveling, going to international camps, mixing with foreigners studying at their schools and abroad. While being involved in any of these activities, they develop their English.

However, the use of CLIL causes some important concerns, such as possible threat to the students' mother tongue development, the inadequate level of the subject studies of it is taught by a language teacher and, conversely, about the language level used in CLIL classes if the teachers' and learners' foreign language command is not

medžiaga bei dėstymo metodika turėtų būti naudojama per šias pamokas, vertinimo tvarka ir kt. Kaip rodo tyrimo, atlikto Šakių rajono mokyklose rezultatai, daugumai anglų kalbos mokytojų šis mokymo būdas yra žinomas, nes jie yra turėję galimybę dalyvauti IDUKM prista- tančiuose seminaruose bei mokymuose Lietuvoje bei užsienyje, susipažinti su šio metodo taikymo ypatumais skaitydami specialiąją literatūrą. Deja, nepaisant mokytojų informuotumo apie IDUKM naudą moksleiviams, remiantis tyrimo rezultatais galima teigti, kad jo praktinis taikymas tirtose ra- jono mokyklose dar nėra paplitęs. Tarp priešasčių paminėtini nepakankamas mokytojų dalykinis pasirengimas ar kalbos mokėjimo lygis, specialios mokomosios medžiagos, kurioje būtų integruoti dalykinis bei kalbinis aspektai, trūkumas, o taip pat ir vis dar nepakankamos žinios apie praktinį šio metodo įgyvendinimą. Šakių rajono anglų kalbos mokytojų nuomone, ypač būtų naudinga turėti galimybę stebėti ir aptarinėti IDUKM ekspertų ar šioje srityje labiau patyrusių kolegų vedamas pamokas. Nors mokyklų administracijos neprieštarautų šios naujovės taikymui jų moky- klose, tyrimas atskleidė ir mokytojų motyvacijos taikyti IDUKM stoką, kurią galėtų padidinti atitinkami švietimo politikos sprendimai ir mo- kytojų skatinimas.

REIKŠMINIAI ŽODŽIAI: anglų kalbos di- daktika, integruotas kalbos ir dalyko mokymas, CLIL, mokytojų rengimas.

very good. Quite a few questions about teaching materials, teaching methods to be used in class and assessment in CLIL also arise.

As results of the research carried out at Sakiai district schools indicated, the majority of the English language teachers were familiar with CLIL as they had been attending numerous continuous development seminars where CLIL is one of the popular topics. Moreover, during the recent decades quite a few school teachers of other subjects or primary classes have ac- quired English teacher's qualification as a result of requalification programs making them ideal candidates to combine content and language in their teaching. **However, the analysis of the situ- ation showed the reluctance of the teachers to use CLIL approach in their teaching and revealed the reasons why it was considered problematic.** The results suggest that CLIL could be implemented and all the advantages could be experienced if the teachers had a possibility to learn more about CLIL principles and methodology, development and use of suitable materials. An opportunity to observe and discuss lessons taught by experts or more experienced colleagues would also be highly appreciated. Besides, as the implementation of CLIL depends on the teachers' motivation, it can be strengthened by relevant educational policy decisions locally or at the national level.

KEY WORDS: foreign language teaching, En- glish language didactics, CLIL, teacher training

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