



STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF CONTENT AND LANGUAGE INTEGRATED LEARNING (CLIL) PRACTICE AT EASS: ADVANTAGES AND DRAWBACKS

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ABSTRACT

The implementation of CLIL (content and language integrated learning) at the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences goes back 10 years and was already accepted then as it is now as an innovative phenomenon and effective way of integrating subject knowledge and foreign language acquisition. CLIL is implemented in order to foster students' language learning effectiveness, whilst also teaching them professional vocabulary. It also helps cut down on learning hours since both a subject and a language are taught simultaneously. Although CLIL was first introduced in educational settings as recently as the 1990s, mostly at primary and secondary school levels, it has in the ensuing years evolved into tertiary education level as well. The teaching staff has a belief in CLIL, but what about students' understanding and beliefs? Thus, this article examines how the content and language integrated learning practices are accepted by the students of the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences. The main findings are made on the basis of a qualitative analysis of the questionnaire survey conducted by the authors in 2018-2020 at EASS. The study reveals essential aspects necessary to improve the quality of content and integrated lessons. The results of the research, relying on the analysis of student feedback, are presumably of interest to Internal Security education and other professional higher educational institutions that practice content and language integrated learning.

INTRODUCTION: IMPLEMENTING CLIL AT EASS

CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning), a 'dual-focused teaching and learning approach' when the first language and additional languages are applied for fostering both content and language acquisition to required levels (Coyle et al, 2010; Mehisto 2012, et al), was first introduced at the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences (EASS) about 10 years ago, i.e. the term CLIL was accepted as a common term, although CLIL type activities had already been applied in the educational process even a few years before that. The necessity for an innovative method for more effective language learning (Mehisto, 2008; Mehisto et al, 2008, Dalton-Puffer et al, 2010) was drawn from the need to meet the requirements of the stakeholders, i.e., the EASS students' future employers, respective state institutions. Their expectations are high, the volume of language classes low and CLIL has appeared to be one possible way to ease the situation and meet the relevant parties' needs – to combine subject and language and achieve a higher overall quality and improved results but do so in an integrated manner without adding any extra classes.

It has to be noted that the EASS has implemented a special foreign language system in which students first receive general English (72 academic hours) and general Russian (144 academic hours) language instruction on levels A1-B1. The next level of learning foreign languages at the academy is language for specific purposes (LSP courses) – English (ESP) of 54 hours and Russian (RSP) of 90 hours. When in the academic year 2012/2013 CLIL was included in 9 speciality courses, in the next academic year there were already 15 speciality courses where a CLIL approach was applied. Since 2017/2018, CLIL has been integrated into all curricula of every speciality of the EASS. The volume of CLIL classes depends on the needs of different spheres of Internal Security, therefore, the number of CLIL classes is regulated by the subject and its learning outcomes, at least 36 language- and subject-integrated classes for each speciality. The aim of implementing CLIL was an attempt to take advantage of the benefits of content-based language activities in increasing students' level of foreign language (both English and Russian) proficiency and competencies in the speciality.

In this paper the authors intend to examine how students perceive and evaluate CLIL practices. The necessity for conducting the research is based on two essential considerations. First, the practical value of the CLIL approach is in accordance with the aim and content of the *professional* higher education in the field of Internal Security. Second, when considering the last decades educational strategy of student-centred learning/instruction (See: Weimer 2002; Chung & Chow, 2004; Brown Wright, 2011; Kaput, 2018), students' feedback has become highly valued. Students' feedback is important in order to analyse the effectiveness of the method and create ways to improve it, making the study process more efficient.

In general, CLIL has become one of the most prevalent trends in the educational landscape at all educational stages. There are several studies on the implementation and impact of CLIL conducted at primary and secondary school levels, but it is not yet studied in depth how it has impacted tertiary education or professional higher education, especially in the field of internal security, and how the teaching staff and students perceive it. The next paragraph provides a selection of studies on students' perception of the approach conducted in other higher educational institutions in the world. Though, it has to be noted that in the studies examined, CLIL is referred to as teaching a subject in a foreign language or an LSP (language for specific purposes class) classroom. As for EASS educational context, CLIL means teaching content and language simultaneously with 2-3 teachers in the same classroom at the same time.

Among the research conducted on students' perception of CLIL there is, for instance, a study undertaken among Spanish and Japanese tertiary students (Tsuchiya, Pérez Murillo, 2015). Around half of respondents in the study indicate a positive view of CLIL at the tertiary level. In this study, the respondents note that it improves their language skills, and one can learn more specialised vocabulary related to what one is studying. Their insufficient English skill to understand subjects and the potential risk to lack subject knowledge in L1 (Spanish and Japanese), as well as the lack of trained teachers are considered drawbacks.

Similar results occurred in the study conducted at the Mexican University BA Program (Asomoza, 2015), where students perceive CLIL very positively, recognising the benefits of taking CLIL classes by being able to use the language in a different context and to improve their academic

skills, however they do hold concerns regarding the lack of terminology in L1 and also indicated a degree of inadequate language skill among the trainers. Furthermore, findings from a study conducted among aviation students add to the positive perception of CLIL, while they note that CLIL classes increase motivation, more intense learning environments, meaningful learning situations and a chance to use a foreign language as it is learned in an authentic setting (Karimi & Lofti 2019).

There is a fair amount of research on the topic, which provide similar outcomes to the present survey. Among them is a study by Hery Yufrizal (2021), who points out the positivity of students' perception towards CLIL. He claims students find it more efficient and easier to learn through CLIL, motivating them to learn, it is more enjoyable, and moreover students are more engaged in the learning process. Rubtcova and Kaisarova (2016) describe, among other findings, how Saint Petersburg University Public Administration students perceive CLIL (i.e., courses in English). The findings are optimistic, as they say, but a remarkably high number of students mention low level language proficiency as a negative factor and therefore do not approve of CLIL courses. On the other hand, a high number of students understand the need for CLIL, because it raises language proficiency, as well as broadening their knowledge on an international level, among other beneficial aspects. Nevertheless, the results also show students' concern that they require more knowledge of the specific terminology in Russian rather than in English because of their future working environment, and ultimately do not find CLIL to be sufficiently motivating.

1. CLIL IN THEORY AND CLIL IN PRACTICE: CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The theoretical basis of the research is defined by the conceptual framework of CLIL, which distinguishes it as a separate approach among other teaching methods in applied linguistics. The aim of content and language integrated learning in theory is to create a beneficial environment for both speciality and language learning and teaching. The approach combines acquisition of subject knowledge with foreign language learning, simultaneously (Tsuchiya, Pérez Murillo, 2015).

On the one hand, the boundaries of the theoretical rationale of CLIL are quite distinct, although there is still a discussion about substantial CLIL theory (Dalton-Puffer et al, 2010; Cenoz et al, 2014, etc.). As the overview of the implementation of the CLIL approach made in the introduction reveals, CLIL is widely applied in many institutions of tertiary education. CLIL is an umbrella term that covers a variety of educational approaches, i.e., immersion, bilingual, and multilingual education (Mehisto et al, 2008, p 12). However, compared to the conducted research, CLIL in the academy carries specific peculiarities – there is synergy and an effective cooperation between at least two lecturers.

In the practice of CLIL in the EASS as an emphatically profession-oriented institution of higher education, CLIL is represented more precisely like a ‘fusion’ of content and language, that is emphasised by the social discursive and contextually situated nature of learning (Coyle et al 2010, pp 41-45). A subject-based curriculum is implemented, where certain specialities to a certain extent are taught in a foreign (English and Russian) language, at the same time it is assumed that the language goals in CLIL are significant but remain nonetheless implicit (Dalton-Puffer et al 2010, p 2). The CLIL strategy involves the use of a language that is not a student’s native language as a medium of instruction and learning for subjects at different levels of education. However, it also requires content teachers to teach some languages, particularly in cases where students need support in the areas of language knowledge they miss in order to master the content. Thus, these are the teachers who should, alongside traditional language teaching, work to support content teachers. (Mehisto et al, 2008, p 11). In CLIL, content goals support language goals (*Ibid*).

Furthermore, Mehisto, Marsh and Frigols (2008) point out that today's integrated world requires integrated learning. They also refer to the realisation that the mindset of new generations is focused on immediacy 'as learn for now' not 'learn to use later'. Thus, CLIL is an innovative approach that has emerged to cater to the needs of those generations. Poor language skills may also diminish students' opportunities in the labour market. Moreover, based on the noted innovativeness of CLIL, it is possible to assume the flexibility of this approach, which can take different adaptive forms in accordance with the goals and objectives of the educational process. CLIL is flexible and can be adapted to different contexts. CLIL binds together the essence of good practice. It involves a variety of models that can be applied differently with diverse types of learners. Effective CLIL is realised through various methods. To be efficient in CLIL classroom students have to be cognitively engaged while developing their linguistic competence. Good CLIL practice involves a level of speech, interaction, dialogic activity, etc., and when learners are encouraged to articulate their understanding, a deeper learning takes place (Coyle et al, 2010, p 37).

Content and language integrated learning at the EASS represents an integration of speciality subjects and language learning (content + L1/L2/LSP) which is closely related to the professional standards of specialities. Therefore, to spare extra academic hours but meet the requirements of cadets' employers as well as professional standards, CLIL in the EASS is more complex and means even trilingual education as content, mother tongue and two foreign languages – English and Russian and Estonian (for those who are Russian native speakers) are involved. Thus, the specifics of CLIL's implementation at the EASS are that CLIL classes are conducted in both bilingual (Estonia/English, Estonian/Russian) and trilingual (Estonian/English/Russian) formats. The research of the trilingual CLIL requires a separate study, and therefore is not applicable to the framework of this study.

Within the last ten years, there have been fluctuations in CLIL activities, though by now it could be admitted that several actions have been performed, including lobbying, explanation and support of content teachers to understand the essence of the method, at the same time proving that CLIL is effective and suitable for the learning environment of professional higher education.

In 2014/2015 an initial CLIL survey at the academy was conducted, where the same questions were posited and received answers from 123 respondents (See: Laanemaa, 2016). The aim in the aforementioned survey was broader, identifying certain aspects of the learning environment with less specificity, such as student involvement and teaching methods, and a focus on studying students' first impressions of CLIL lessons. Therefore, the responses could be described as rather superficial and less detailed. It was a rapid study where students were allotted approximately 20 minutes for formulating their answers to the provided questionnaire. In the current research, the authors' intent was to receive feedback on essential aspects of designing CLIL classes.

Irrespective of the current situation, it has to be brought forth that the most complicated challenge has been delivering the essence of CLIL to content teachers, i.e., changing their thinking (Laanemaa, 2016). Despite the described difficulties, today CLIL is embedded into all curricula, whether at tertiary or vocational level, and most of the teaching staff have accepted the effectiveness of the approach and collaborate with language teachers.

According to the results of a recent study, conducted at EASS at the end of 2020, CLIL teachers tend to rely on specific individual or group needs and level of language skills, rather than on the methodological tools offered by practicing CLIL teachers and researchers (Linnat & Hatšaturjan 2020). As mentioned above, CLIL in the EASS context is seen as CLIL activities incorporated into professional courses (subject courses) giving additional hours to practice foreign languages in professional simulation classes before stepping into real life work situations. It depends on a speciality and subject, in most cases language for specific purposes (LSP) is integrated into the subject course and sometimes vice versa. The purpose of the training is not only to study both the theoretical and methodological tools of the speciality, but also the professional vocabulary associated with it. Thus, it can be asserted that CLIL experience is somewhat different from the more traditional CLIL practices applied in other universities. CLIL in the institution setting means that there are two teachers in the same classroom at the same time, i.e., a subject teacher and a language teacher(s). This structure for a CLIL classroom might be regarded as rather special and unique but also suitable and necessary for us. In CLIL students do not just learn the language for the sake of learning it for future

use, but they apply recently acquired language to immediate use while adapting any related content to suit the content of their daily lives. CLIL requires a hands-on and participatory approach which can be challenging (Mehisto et al, 2008, p 21). At the EASS various CLIL methods are employed to activate cadets in CLIL classrooms. Interactive methods, e.g., roleplays, simulations, debates, seminars, dialogues, – perceived as active CLIL and student conferences, lectures – ‘passive CLIL’. The division of CLIL methods into ‘active’ and ‘passive’ CLIL are considered newly created terms for EASS.

Therefore in the EASS, CLIL experience embraces bilingual and trilingual lectures, and the focus of the study is the feedback from cadets to such a specific CLIL approach, which is different from the traditional CLIL lecture with only one foreign language and subject. Thus, the kind of peculiar and sufficiently complex CLIL method is used, where one or two foreign languages, language for specific purposes (LSP) and subjects are taught simultaneously.

2. RESEARCH INSTRUMENT AND PROCEDURE

A total of 122 questionnaires were collected within the current small-scale qualitative study during the 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 academic years. Respondents were given the choice to answer the questionnaire in both electronic and paper versions. There were 87 questionnaires filled out by respondents in the paper form and 35 in the electronic form.

The respondents are of the following specialities – Police Service, Border Guard, Tax and Customs, Rescue Service and Emergency Dispatchers, both at vocational and professional higher education level. The study provides possibilities for students, both at vocational and tertiary level to specify, express their perception and understanding of the implementation of CLIL as one innovative and effective way of learning languages in the field of Internal Security. The questionnaire comprises all aspects that are applied within CLIL at the academy, and they also outline the objectives of the study, which are:

- What is the students' attitude towards CLIL as a language and subject teaching and learning approach? How do the students evaluate the learning environment created by CLIL?
- Which learning methods do they prefer in CLIL classes?
- Do students acknowledge the benefit of having the subject and language studied simultaneously? How do they evaluate the benefits of CLIL for more effective language acquisition?

The anonymous questionnaire included seven open-ended questions and one question with suggested sample answers (See: Appendix 1). A qualitative method is appropriate and used for collecting data through questionnaires with open-ended questions, where respondents are expected to provide informative and descriptive answers. Considering the limit of free time in the schedule of cadets of the EASS, they were offered a maximum and optimal number of questions (at least 5, but no more than 10) that could provide an opportunity for a qualitative analysis of the statements about the CLIL experience. When formulating the questions, the authors

assumed that the questions implied a tremendously rich, informative and detailed response from the respondent. Thus, there were seven main open-ended questions and one question with a multiple choice, designed to give a more or less objective picture of how CLIL classes are perceived by the students. Questions on CLIL cover both Russian and English language acquisition and mastering of academic (subject) disciplines. Some of the questions in the questionnaire are imperceptibly duplicated in order to receive further information about the required topics. Planning CLIL classes requires a number of obligatory aspects to be considered (learning environment, language instruction, used teaching methods, student involvement, etc.), therefore, students' comments were expected in particular for the aforementioned.

Based on the data obtained, it is assumed to make recommendations and improvements to the implementation of CLIL at the tertiary and vocational level at the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences.

3. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS OBTAINED

When analysing the data, elements of content analysis were applied, followed by the identification of the system of semantic units (categories), finding their indicators - words, phrases, judgements (units of analysis) and statistical data processing (calculating the percentage). A qualitative analysis of the respondents' statements revealed the following general characteristics, which can be presented through the following categories which will be discussed further.

(I) Estimation of **CLIL as an approach** in general through comparison with regular language and subject classes (Question 1¹).

First, it should be pointed out that 13.9% of respondents did not answer the question, phrasing it differently, 'do not know', 'can't say' or 'do not understand the difference'. Though, informative and lengthy responses were received from 86.1% of the respondents, the content of which generally can be divided into the three following groups of **features** noted by students:

1. *Acquisition of both the foreign language (English, Russian, English and Russian) and language for specific purposes through a subject (78.7%).*

Students perceive CLIL as a combined language learning and professional lesson, where they can practice both English and Russian work-related situations. At the same time, it is noted that CLIL class is more real than an ordinary language lesson and integrated lesson covers more different areas.

2. *Practicing the use of language, communication (69.7%).*

In students' opinion, the knowledge of languages is introduced better than in a regular language class, even LSP class.

3. *More dynamic, intensive pace of the lesson (35.2%):*

¹ Hereafter, the abbreviation Q 1, Q 2, etc. is used.

CLIL provides students with brainstorming-style language and subject learning, which seems to them to be more intensive and more informative.

(II) Estimation of the **positive and negative aspects of CLIL** (Q 2, Q 4, Q 5)

15.6% of respondents did not directly answer the question, phrasing it differently, 'do not know', 'can't say' or 'do not understand the difference'. Accordingly, 84.4% note the **positive** options, among which the following options are highlighted:

- involvement of all students in the process of solving cases (74.6%);
- broad vocabulary (69.7%);
- opportunity for communication (59%);
- feedback (a lot of feedback, immediate feedback, motivating feedback) (52.5%);
- interactive, ideal, different learning environment (discussions, group work, etc.) (48.4%);
- applied teaching methods (23.8%);
- various cases to solve (18%);
- lots of freedom to solve tasks (10.7%);
- multi-sided comments on the solution of situations/cases by several teachers from different points of view and teachers' effective language assistance (9%).

Regarding the **negative** trends noted by the respondents, it is necessary to analyse the Q 4, Q 5, where the two following dimensions are discussed – the factors of acceptance of the CLIL as an approach by students (Q 4) and the factors which inhibit student active participation in CLIL classes (Q 5).

According to the first dimension, only 19.7% of the respondents found there was nothing at CLIL that they didn't like (i.e., accept). The remaining 80.3% of the respondents noted the **ineligible** aspects such as:

- differences in foreign language proficiency among students in the group (26.2%);
- too high professional language (i.e., LSP) level and the lack of initial knowledge to immediately learn professional words and formal speech (17.2%);
- limited time for cases to be resolved, lack of CLIL hours (15.6%);
- too large groups of students in the classroom so not all cadets were able to participate actively in classes (10.7%);
- tense atmosphere, too intense pace of the lessons and other external or psychological factors (4%);
- teaching methods (2.5%);
- inappropriate subjects for teaching it in a foreign language because it won't be useful in the future (2.5%);
- too passive CLIL i.e., regular lecture without any communication activities in the foreign language (1.6%).

In regards to the second dimension (Q 5), there are 73.8% of the respondents highlighted factors which **inhibit** student active participation in CLIL classes and only 26.2% of the respondents state that there are no barriers that inhibit active participation, phrasing it differently (*'there are no inhibiting factors'*, *'everything has been smooth'*, *'it all depends on student himself'*, *'everybody was actively involved'*, etc.). Returning to the negative aspects, the following interfering factors are mentioned by the respondents. However, most of the answers are characterised by generalisations about what generally prevents a student from actively participating in the CLIL. Moreover, some of the following options indicated by students resonate with the previous (Q 4) ones:

- language barrier or fear of speaking a foreign language (noted by 73.8% of the respondents);
- different levels of Russian and English proficiency among students in the partial group (68.9%);
- weak or deficient language skills or vocabulary deficiency (62.3%)
- lack of interest and motivation (16.4%);
- laziness, fatigue, fear of others' opinions and other problems related to the student's own attitudes (8.2%);
- uncomfortable classrooms, adverse weather conditions and other external problems (4.9%).

(III) The **benefits of CLIL for subject and language acquisition** (Q 3, Q 7, Q 8)

It is noteworthy that 9.8% of the respondents could not answer the question ('*don't know*', '*can't say*' was answered). These answers can be interpreted as a manifestation of the respondents' uncertainty about this question rather than a negative aspect. However, it is possible that respondents have difficulties assessing their linguistic and professional progress forthwith. These results are also to some extent correlated with the percentage of negative responses in the case of the Q 2, i.e., '*estimation of the positive aspects of CLIL*', where 15.6% of respondents found it difficult to answer the question. However, current results are also consistent with the abovementioned negative factors according to the analysis of the Q 5.

Despite the negative factors, a prominent percentage (90.2%) of the students considered CLIL classes beneficial. Students have noted the following positive aspects:

- the opportunity to test one's skills in Russian and English, as well as knowledge of the speciality (86%);

- expanding the scope of knowledge, i.e., clarification of the complex terminology, more professional and language knowledge, improving professional and language knowledge (77.9%);
- various types of educational activities to develop one's language skills and professional knowledge synchronously (71.3%);
- extremely practical/hands-on training, using foreign languages in a work-related situation and completing tasks in both languages English and Russian (59.8%);
- gaining confidence in using English and Russian, including overcoming the language barrier (57.4%).

Furthermore, students were asked to answer more specific questions about professional and language skills, what useful factors they learned from CLIL lessons and to what extent did their participation in the CLIL classes affect their professional and language skills (Q 7, Q 8). It seems noteworthy for the present study that the patterns of the answers became more apparent. Only 2.5% of the respondents claimed that CLIL did not improve their **speciality** knowledge at all, 8.2% of the respondents did not know what to answer, stating 'don't know/can't say' and 9.8% of the respondents pointed out the negative features, clarifying why CLIL classes do not improve **language** skills. Amongst the noted negative aspects, poor Russian and English language skills were mentioned as an obstacle to improvement. That refers to the lack of the required language level for learning of LSP.

On the other hand, there is a high number of respondents (82%) who have pointed out positive features of CLIL classes for fostering language skills. The positive aspects identified by the respondents can be grouped according to the following features:

- (1) *the learning environment helps to overcome the language barrier (75.4%)*

Students find that the learning environment enhances the opportunity to use the language, as well as raises self-confidence. Furthermore, communication in CLIL classes requires the use of a foreign language without the help of the mother tongue. There are real-life situations, one has to

interact somehow, which in students' opinion definitely improves foreign language skills.

(2) *more new (professional) words, expanding vocabulary is achievable (73%)*

Stressful situations encourage the student to memorise a relatively large amount of the required vocabulary during CLIL classes. Respondents have pointed out that in CLIL classes, it is possible to improve even linguistic competences such as sentence structure, word combinations and collocations and phrases, formation of questions, etc.

(3) *there are more ways to communicate (students rate this aspect of CLIL lessons highly) (71.3%)*:

Respondents stress the ability to practice and improve self-expression skills which promotes language acquisition in general.

(4) *balance of theory and practice (39%)*

Students value integrated lessons where language and theory are embedded, one can use theory in practice, simultaneously increasing one's own professional vocabulary.

(5) *pronunciation improved (28%)*

Respondents have pointed out that pronunciation has become more accurate when learning languages in CLIL classes and real language practice supports to clarify the pronunciation of the initial phrases required to solve professional cases.

Regarding the method preferences, applied in CLIL context (Q 6) students were asked to choose and rank at least three of the methods in order of importance. Respondents placed the options offered to them in the questionnaire in the first three places as follows:

1st place: *pair work (58.2%), roleplays (14.7%), group work (8.2%), simulation (7.4%), dialogue (7.4%), debate (2.4%), seminar (0.8%), independent work (0.8%)*

2nd place: *roleplays (35.2%), group work (27%), dialogue (9.8%), simulation (8.2%), debate (8.2%), independent work (4%), seminar (3.3%), pair work (2.4%), presentation (1.6%)*

3rd place: *dialogue (27%), debate (24.6%), independent work (19.7%), roleplays (9.8%), presentation (7.4%), seminar (5.7%), simulation (2.4%), group work (1.6%), pair work (1.6%)*

The study showed that students have different preferences, but the vast majority prefer a tandem format (i.e., pair work, dialogue), roleplays, debate, so-called simulation classes (when a work-related situation is simulated, involving procedural acts, performance of ordinary duties as a police officer and a border guard, a tax officer or a customs officer), and both group and independent work.

CONCLUSIONS

This qualitative study allowed the authors to analyse EASS students' feedback on CLIL in three main categories, such as (I) estimation of CLIL as an approach through comparison with regular language and subject classes; (II) estimation of positive and negative aspects of CLIL and (III) the benefits of CLIL for the subject and language acquisition, and to draw a particular set of conclusions about the results of implementing CLIL at the EASS. Most of the students (86.1%) find the difference between regular classes and CLIL, emphasising such important features of the latter as the acquisition of both the foreign language and language for specific purposes (LSP) through a subject, practicing the use of language, communication, more dynamic and intensive pace of the CLIL lesson. Thus, students' understanding of CLIL as a language and subject teaching as a learning approach meets the goals and aims of CLIL approach.

Along with highlighting CLIL as a unique teaching method among other approaches, students sufficiently critically assess CLIL practices, pointing out approximately the same ratio of positive and negative trends. Thus, they noted the ineligible aspects of CLIL practice, which interfere with the effective learning process, such as differences in foreign language proficiency among students in the group and too high an expectation of LSP level, limited time for cases to be resolved, the lack of CLIL hours and the lack of opportunity for equal participation for all cadets due to the size of the groups. It should be noted here that since the period of conducting this study (2018/2019 and 2019/2020 academic year) the development and systematic implementation of CLIL in the EASS curriculum as well as increasing the amount of CLIL classes were just beginning to take shape, therefore, the respondents noted the relatively small number (even a lack) of hours allocated for CLIL lessons based on the system that was applied in the period of the survey. Compared to the survey carried out in 2014/2015 (Laanemaa, 2016), similar areas of improvement were mentioned. As a drawback, the biggest weakness of the effectiveness of CLIL indicated in both studies is the differences in foreign language proficiency among students in the group.

As a positive sign, the following features were highlighted as specifically useful: for instance, the involvement of all students in the process of solving cases, an opportunity for communication, immediate and motivating teachers' feedback, an interactive and different learning environment, applied teaching methods, and teachers' effective language assistance. Compared with the results of the previous study of 2014/2015, it should be noted that the students' feedback on CLIL in Laanemaa 2016 showed some similar outcomes concerning advantages conducted in EASS. The supportive role of CLIL application at both tertiary and vocational level was mentioned, 'due to its practicality, true to life simulations and possibility to apply several competences simultaneously including instant feedback' (*Ibid*, pp 311).

According to the abovementioned results of the present survey essential changes have been initiated, for instance, as previously mentioned, the increase of the number of CLIL classes, subjects with CLIL activities have been reviewed and the list of subjects where CLIL is included has been widened. Moreover, the application of CLIL is becoming more in balance with LSP courses and CLIL classes are more relevantly distributed throughout the academic study period and in accordance with LSP training stages (general language courses, introduction to LSP and LSP courses). Therefore, more focus is on student's language acquisition progress and is carried out progressively, due to the expanded variety of content subjects with integrated CLIL.

It is noteworthy that the overwhelming majority (90.2%) of the students consider CLIL classes beneficial for themselves. Thus, they see a CLIL lesson as an opportunity to test one's skills in Russian and English, as well as knowledge of the speciality, to expand the scope of knowledge, i.e., to clarify the complexity of professional terminology and to improve the pronunciation, to gain confidence in using English and Russian, including overcoming the language barrier, as well as an opportunity to develop one's own language skills and professional knowledge synchronously.

The order of students' methodical preferences in CLIL classes meets the CLIL concept of activities being engaging, activating and involving students. Undoubtedly, one of the criteria for choosing any method or technique is its relevance to the goals and topic of the CLIL lesson, but it is also necessary to consider the factors that contribute to the cognitive

involvement of students into the educational process. The CLIL teaching techniques, favoured by the students, provide us with an opportunity to develop and to harmonise and systematise the methodology of CLIL classes at the academy and to create a general methodological platform. As one of the aims of the research was to figure out students' perception (both advantages and drawbacks) of the obligatory aspects when designing CLIL (i.e., learning environment, language instruction, used teaching methods, student involvement, etc.), their feedback will be analysed and taken into account when planning CLIL in cooperation with language and subject teachers.

APPENDIX 1. QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTIONNAIRE

The Language Centre of the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences is conducting a survey. The survey is anonymous. Your opinion provides us with an opportunity to improve the quality of the content and language integrated learning, used methods and structure.

A little information about your background:

a) Level of education

Vocational education _____

Tertiary education _____

b) What year did you start your studies at the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences?

Question 1. What do you think is the difference between a CLIL lesson and a traditional language and/or content lesson?

Question 2. What did you like the most about integrated (CLIL) lessons (learning environment, phrases, used teaching methods, student involvement, etc.)?

Question 3. How did you benefit from integrated classes (the acquired language, speciality knowledge, etc.)?

Question 4. Was there anything you did not like about integrated (CLIL) classes (learning environment, phases, teaching methods, little involvement in classes, etc.)?

Question 5. Which factors inhibit student active participation in integrated (CLIL) classes?

Question 6. Which methods are the most effective in integrated (CLIL) classes? (Please rank at least 3 of the following methods in order of importance)

Pair work _____

Group work _____

Roleplays _____

Simulation _____

Dialogue _____

Seminar _____

Discussion _____

Presentation _____

Independent work _____

Question 7. Does an integrated (CLIL) class improve your professional/speciality knowledge and how?

Question 8. Does an integrated (CLIL) class improve your language skills and how?

Thank you for taking the time to fill in the questionnaire!

Your opinion is highly important

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