

INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO ENHANCING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CLIL METHOD IN TEACHING ECONOMICS IN ENGLISH

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Abstract: This article explores innovative approaches to enhancing the effectiveness of the CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) method in teaching economics subjects in English. It analyzes the key principles of CLIL, the advantages of integrating content and language learning, and the innovative strategies applied by educators. The study highlights the role of interactive technologies, multimedia resources, project-based learning, and methods aimed at developing students' communicative competence. The findings demonstrate that effective implementation of the CLIL approach significantly improves students' mastery of professional English in economics-related fields.

Keywords: CLIL, economics education, integrated learning, innovative approaches, communicative competence, English language, interactive methods.

The increasing interconnectedness of global economies and the expansion of English as an international business language have created a need for innovative pedagogical models capable of simultaneously developing both professional and linguistic competences. In this regard, the CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) approach has become one of the most dynamic methodologies in higher education, especially in teaching economics through English. However, despite its widespread use, many teachers and researchers emphasize the need for more advanced, context-sensitive and cognitively optimized strategies to increase its effectiveness and learning outcomes. This article presents a comprehensive analysis of innovative approaches designed to improve the effectiveness of the CLIL method in teaching economics in English, drawing on modern educational research, cognitive linguistics and digital pedagogy. The main basis of CLIL is its dual focus: the simultaneous acquisition of subject knowledge and linguistic competence. When applied to economics, this model allows students to engage in authentic academic and professional discussions, developing their ability to understand, interpret, and create complex economic texts in English¹. However, the multidimensional nature of economics as a subject – with its abstract terminology, mathematical models and contextual interdependencies – requires a much more complex didactic framework than traditional CLIL practice. Effective implementation requires the integration of linguistic, cognitive and methodological innovations, creating a flexible learning ecosystem that reflects real-world economic communication and decision-making. The first innovative dimension is the cognitive scaffolding within CLIL. Traditional CLIL education often focuses on delivering content in English, without sufficiently considering the cognitive load placed on learners who are forced to process complex content in a foreign language.

¹ Kuzminska N. Application of CLIL methodology in teaching economics. – Kyiv: National Technical University "Kyiv Polytechnic Institute", 2019. – P. 113–120.

Cognitive scaffolding involves structuring the learning process in such a way that linguistic and conceptual challenges are introduced gradually, supported by multimodal input, visualization and metacognitive strategies. In economics education, this can be achieved through conceptual mapping of economic processes, interactive simulations, and discussions based on scenarios that reflect real economic reasoning. Such methods reduce cognitive overload, encourage deep learning, and promote the internalization of both linguistic structures and economic concepts.

A second innovative approach involves disciplinary discourse modeling. Economics, like all academic disciplines, has its own specialized discourse characterized by its own system of thinking, terminology, and rhetorical patterns. In CLIL education, students need to learn not only “about economics,” but also “how economists talk and think.” Therefore, it is crucial to develop discipline-specific linguistic models. This may include corpus-based study of real economic texts, the extraction of frequent adverbs and phraseological patterns, and the design of lexical competence frameworks that reflect real professional usage². Integrating these models into CLIL materials ensures that language acquisition is functional, context-dependent and consistent with the epistemic culture of economics. The novelty of this approach lies in the convergence of applied linguistics and disciplinary pedagogy, where linguistic competence is developed not as an end in itself, but as an operational tool of disciplinary thinking.

The third area of innovation is related to the integration of digital and AI-enabled learning environments. The digitalization of education has opened up new opportunities to improve the effectiveness of CLIL through flexible learning systems, interactive platforms and data-driven assessment tools. In economics education, digital CLIL environments can use simulations of financial markets, economic games and intelligent tutoring systems that adapt to the performance of students in real time. For example, AI-powered learning analytics can identify linguistic and conceptual weaknesses, offer personalized feedback, and micro-learning tasks focused on specific economic areas (e.g., macroeconomic indicators, financial instruments, or international trade). The combination of AI-powered analytics and content-integrated learning represents an unprecedented level of individualization³. This ensures that each learner develops according to his or her linguistic and disciplinary profile. Such a model exemplifies the transition from standardized education to flexible education, where technological innovations become a factor in ensuring pedagogical precision.

Another aspect of innovation emerges from the task-based and problem-oriented CLIL design. Traditional CLIL practice often emphasizes understanding and reproducing content, while modern approaches focus on the active use of language as a tool for solving disciplinary problems. In economic terms, this might include case studies of monetary policy, fiscal strategy simulations, or discussions of ethical issues in global finance. By developing CLIL tasks that require decision-making, argumentation, and data interpretation, teachers can transform the classroom into a cognitive laboratory that reflects professional economic reasoning. The innovative value of this method lies in the synergy between content-based problems and communicative performance: language becomes not just a means of instruction, but a functional

² Andryukhina T. V. Conceptual metaphor in CLIL-Economics. – In: Linguistics and Polyglot Studies, Vol. 9, No. 2. – 2023. – P. 103–115

³ Shraiber E. G. CLIL technology as an innovative method to learn foreign languages at university. – In: Scientific Electronic Library “CyberLeninka”, 2017. – P. 45–51.

means of cognition. This model is consistent with constructivist principles and emphasizes that knowledge is co-constructed through communication, reflection, and problem-solving in real contexts. One of the most promising innovations is the introduction of translanguaging and interlingual mediation strategies into CLIL economics courses. While CLIL has traditionally promoted the exclusive use of the target language, research increasingly shows that the strategic use of students' native language can improve comprehension and facilitate cognitive transfer. In economics, where abstract concepts are often subject to subtle linguistic differences, translanguaging allows students to access prior knowledge, compare terminological systems, and develop metalinguistic awareness⁴. This hybrid model develops deeper conceptual understanding and linguistic flexibility, allowing students to move freely between languages and ways of thinking. The novelty of this approach is its recognition of bilingualism as a pedagogical asset rather than a barrier – a fundamental shift in the philosophy of CLIL education.

An additional methodological innovation involves the integration of data literacy and economic visualization into CLIL materials. Economics relies heavily on quantitative data, graphs and models; therefore, visual and statistical literacy become integral components of disciplinary competence. Incorporating data interpretation tasks into CLIL lessons will help students to understand trends in English⁵, allows for the acquisition of specialized language to describe correlations and cause-and-effect relationships, while also developing analytical thinking. This interdisciplinary synthesis creates a multimodal learning environment that combines verbal, numerical, and visual semiotics. For example, students can analyze linguistic patterns used in economic forecasting reports while interpreting basic data sets, thereby developing their linguistic and analytical skills. This form of multimodal CLIL exemplifies the shift from language learning to the development of disciplinary literacy. Another innovative principle focuses on reflexive pedagogy and metacognitive regulation. Effective CLIL teaching requires students to be aware of their own learning processes - how they acquire vocabulary, how they interpret complex texts, and how they construct arguments. The use of self-assessment tools, learning journals and linguistic reflection exercises encourages students to monitor their progress and identify specific areas for improvement. Reflective activities in economics education can focus on linguistic expressions of cause and effect, argumentation structures or evaluative stance in economic writing. Through such reflection, students develop a meta-awareness that enhances the transferability of skills across contexts and supports lifelong learning. The innovative feature of this approach is the integration of cognitive self-regulation with linguistic awareness, creating a holistic model of autonomous learning. Equally important is the reconceptualization of teacher roles in CLIL economics courses. Traditionally, teachers have functioned as language teachers or subject specialists, often lacking the integrated competencies required for dual-track teaching. The innovative approach requires a new professional profile - the "CLIL economics teacher" - equipped with advanced scientific

⁴ Villabona N. The integration of content and language in CLIL: a holistic approach. – In: Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching, Taylor & Francis, 2022. – P. 87–96.

⁵ Luprichová J. Teaching foreign languages by means of CLIL in selected subjects. – In: ERL Journal, Vol. 2, No. 1. – Warsaw, 2019. – P. 56–64.

knowledge, linguistic expertise and methodological flexibility⁶. Professional development programmes should therefore include interdisciplinary training, co-teaching models and collaborative curriculum design between economists and linguists. This systemic innovation ensures coherence between linguistic objectives and content outcomes, prevents fragmentation and ensures authenticity. The transformation of the teacher persona within CLIL represents both a pedagogical and institutional innovation that is redefining the experience in higher education. From an institutional perspective, the effectiveness of CLIL in teaching economics depends on curriculum coordination and policy-level innovation. Universities should move beyond separate CLIL modules to an integrated curriculum in which the principles of English Medium Instruction (EMI) and CLIL complement each other within a coherent pedagogical strategy. This includes designing development pathways that support language development in economics, establishing assessment criteria that measure content mastery and linguistic competence, and creating resource banks of authentic materials – policy documents, market analyses, and academic journals – to ensure access to real professional debates⁷ Such systematic integration transforms CLIL from a pedagogical practice into a structural feature of contemporary economics education.

Empirical research further supports the potential of innovative CLIL approaches to achieve measurable outcomes. Studies using mixed-method designs have shown that students in CLIL economics programs achieve higher levels of content knowledge and English language proficiency than those who receive traditional instruction. Furthermore, neurocognitive research suggests that learning through a second language activates deeper processing networks, promoting cognitive flexibility and long-term retention. However, the level of effectiveness depends on the quality of instructional design, teacher training, and the balance between linguistic and conceptual challenges. Therefore, the pursuit of innovation should be based on continuous evidence-based evaluation, including quantitative assessment, classroom observation, and student feedback. Only through systematic reflection and empirical validation can innovation become a sustainable educational improvement.

The fundamental principle underlying these innovations is interdisciplinary collaboration. Economics as a field is closely related to sociology, mathematics, political science and psychology; CLIL education, which reflects this interdisciplinary collaboration, reflects the real cognitive structure of economic thinking. By using texts and case studies from relevant disciplines, students learn to interpret economic phenomena from multiple perspectives, developing both critical thinking in English and interdisciplinary literacy. This multidimensional impact prepares them for professional contexts where economic analysis requires interaction with different stakeholders. Thus, CLIL becomes not only a language learning method, but also a platform for developing the complex cognitive and communicative competences required by the global knowledge economy.

⁶ Villabona N. The integration of content and language in CLIL: a holistic approach. – In: Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching, Taylor & Francis, 2022. – P. 87–96.

⁷ Cruz M. CLIL approach and the fostering of “creactical” skills: Combining creativity and critical thinking in EFL classrooms. – In: MEXTESOL Journal, Vol. 45, No. 2. – 2021. – P. 15–24.

Another aspect of innovation is the ethical and cultural dimension of CLIL economics teaching. Economic concepts are embedded in cultural contexts and value systems that influence interpretation and application. Integrating intercultural dialogue into CLIL economics courses allows students to understand the cultural relativity of economic practices and discourse. For example, the language of negotiation, decision-making, or economic reporting reflects cultural norms of politeness, authority, and risk perception⁸. Through comparative analysis of economic texts from different linguistic backgrounds, students gain an understanding of the sociocultural underpinnings of the global economy. Integrating intercultural competence into CLIL economics not only enhances linguistic and conceptual understanding, but also fosters globally responsible citizens who are able to think ethically in international economic contexts.

An innovative synthesis of all these dimensions – cognitive scaffolding, discourse modeling, digital adaptation, problem-based design, translanguaging, data literacy, reflective learning, teacher re-professionalization, and institutional adaptation – forms a holistic model for next-generation CLIL economics education⁹. The basis of this model lies in the dynamic interaction between language, cognition and context, where innovation is not limited to technological or methodological changes, but represents a paradigm shift towards flexible, evidence-based and learner-centred learning. In this model, students are no longer passive recipients of knowledge, but active co-creators of meaning, negotiating both economic and linguistic realities in real time. In conclusion, improving the effectiveness of CLIL in teaching economics in English requires a multidimensional and innovative strategy that redefines the nature of integrated learning. The combination of cognitive scaffolding, disciplinary discourse analysis, digital tools, problem-based learning, translanguaging and reflexive pedagogy ensures that CLIL becomes a truly transformative learning paradigm. The novelty of this approach lies in its systemic vision: CLIL is not a method to be added to existing curricula, but an epistemological framework that reshapes how knowledge and language are formed.

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