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Teachers' Experiences of Using CLIL in Kazakh Language Classrooms

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This paper investigates teachers' experiences of teaching the content and language simultaneously by using the Content and Language-Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach when delivering social science subjects, such as Geography, History of Kazakhstan, Kazakhstan in the Modern World and Law Essentials in Kazakh as a second language of instruction. This qualitative study has revealed that challenges teachers face in CLIL classrooms included the language proficiency of students and the lack of teaching materials. Teachers incorporated some strategies according to the CLIL approach, vocabulary teaching, and usage of Russian in order to explain key notions and concepts. Finding and adapting resources for CLIL lessons lay an extra burden on teachers. The development of CLIL teaching materials will likely relieve teachers' workload and enhance the quality and consistency of the materials.

Keywords: CLIL, teachers' experiences, Kazakh, content-based teaching

Language Education Policy in Kazakhstan

For many years, learning the Kazakh language was not a priority in the education agenda of Soviet Kazakhstan due to the prevalence of Russian as the dominant language in education and elsewhere (Fierman, 2006; Kuzhabekova, 2003). Since the country's independence, government bodies began to correspond using Kazakh as one way to popularize the usage of the state language in everyday life communication (Mehisto, Kambatyrova & Nurseitova, 2014). To date, the government of Kazakhstan has developed a trilingual policy to learn three languages: Kazakh, Russian and English (Mehisto et al., 2014), yet it seems that despite the fact that the Kazakh language is the state language of Kazakhstan, there still is not enough motivation among residents of Kazakhstan to learn Kazakh.

Research shows that learning another language is better attained through content; therefore, schools incorporate learning foreign languages through school subjects (Coyle, 2007). One approach commonly practiced in Europe and beyond is Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). Studies indicate that students learn a second and third language more effectively in CLIL classrooms, while content learning is at the same or better level than their non-CLIL fellows (Eurydice, 2006). Thus, administrators, teachers and students should be aware of common CLIL methodology in order to establish a comfortable school environment for acquiring an additional foreign language.

Presently, selected schools, such as Kazakh Turkish Lyceums (KTL), state trilingual schools and Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools (NIS) are trying various methods to teach Kazakh through the content of social science subjects, such as Geography and History (Mehisto et al., 2014). For instance, NIS schools are implementing CLIL subjects that are taught in Kazakh, Russian and English (NIS, 2014). Geography, History of Kazakhstan, Kazakhstan in the Modern World and Law Essentials are among subjects that integrate the content and language in Kazakh using the CLIL approach. However, there are "transition issues" regarding teaching and learning social science subjects in Kazakh as a second language, such as unprepared students, a lack of understanding of CLIL, particularly by new teachers, and a lack of study resources in Kazakh language (NIS, 2014).

The Present Study

This study aims to answer the following questions using qualitative data obtained from semi-structured interviews with school teachers in one NIS school: 1) How do teachers in Kazakhstan experience the implementation of the CLIL approach in teaching Geography, History of Kazakhstan, Kazakhstan in the Modern World and Law Essentials in Kazakh? More specifically, 2) What sort of challenges do teachers face related to the double focus of CLIL lessons? And, 3) How prepared do teachers feel in providing their lessons using the CLIL approach?

The research literature on CLIL in Kazakhstan is very scarce; hence, this study will add to the international context of this issue. In addition, it is worth noting that has some portion of Kazakhstan's population is bilingual in Kazakh and Russian (Mehisto et al., 2014). Therefore, issues that teachers experience in their Kazakh-taught CLIL classrooms might be different from English-taught classrooms, considering that Kazakh is an official language of the country, Russian is a second official language that is widely used in the country and English is a foreign language for most of population. This study is relevant to the current education

agenda on language learning in Kazakhstan and may benefit educators in planning and implementing frameworks for language and content subjects.

The Concept of CLIL

CLIL was developed in Europe in the mid-1990s as a way to facilitate the coming together of a common concept behind a variety of teaching and learning frameworks in European secondary schools aiming to integrate other languages and subject/thematic content (Coyle, 2008; Marsh, 2002). CLIL is still promoted as a distinct pedagogical practice in second language acquisition, distinct from bilingual education, content-based instruction and immersion (Coyle, 2007). Currently, CLIL has evolved into a standard practice in many secondary and primary schools across Europe (Dalton-Puffer & Nikula, 2006), where languages are diverse in its multicultural society (Coyle, 2007). It encompasses various educational contexts to advance second language learning through content (Genesee & Lindholm-Leary, 2013), such as CLIL thematic camps, immersion, projects, family stays, student exchanges, work and study abroad (Mehisto, Marsh & Frigols, 2008). This study focuses on the use of second language as the medium of instruction of a particular school subject.

Some studies have shown that, if implemented properly, the language and the content learning will improve concurrently; however, this does not mean that all programs attain that level (Lyster, 1987; Marsh, Hau & Kong, 2000; Yip, Tsang & Cheung, 2003). Other studies found that CLIL students did better than non-CLIL students in all four language skills in various foreign languages (Lorenzo, Casal, & Moore, 2010). In addition, CLIL students often learn a subject equally, or even better than their non-CLIL fellows (Meyer, 2010). However, Bruton (2011) argues that in these “positive” studies, researchers mainly studied CLIL classrooms where students were purposefully selected and more motivated, whereas the performance of non-selected students from various backgrounds including underprivileged ones might appear to be quite different and not that all positive regarding language gains and acquisition.

Therefore, to be successful in implementing this kind of program, it is crucial for stakeholders to arrange the classroom environment so that both language proficiency and knowledge of the content may develop effectively. It is also important to keep in mind some external constraints that CLIL teachers will face in these programs, such as curriculum constraints not related to language development, economic challenges that may influence student-teacher ratio, and the political context of the role that mother tongue shall constitute in CLIL classrooms (Hoare, Kong & Bell, 2008).

Pedagogical Competence in CLIL

Researchers agree that teachers’ views of the language development of their learners within the content teaching in the CLIL subject is an important factor (Arkoudis, 2003; Morton, 2012), as student achievements in learning languages are influenced greatly by their teachers (Dufva, 2003; Sakui & Gaies, 2003). In CLIL lessons, students may struggle with language proficiency, confidence in the CLIL language, complexity of lesson material, interest or motivation, which will lower their involvement in classroom activities (Ellis, 2003; Robinson, 2001; Skehan, 2001). Examinations and assessments especially need to be considered thoroughly since they are usually based entirely on the content (Banegas, 2014; Serragiotto, 2007).

Teaching Strategies

Coonan (2007) argues that it is fundamental to plan out classroom activities in order to ensure greater involvement by students, and that it is essential for two reasons. The first is linguistic learning. The language proficiency of students may not be enough to actively participate in discussions and conversations. Preparing tasks with the language competence of students in mind may influence their participation by generating different linguistic output. The second is content learning. Content teaching should be planned in such a way that it goes beyond simply understanding definitions and theories and includes tasks of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

In Coonan’s study (2007), teachers explain four teaching strategies they use in CLIL classrooms:

- 1) Teachers use *non-verbal strategies*, such as diagrams, flowcharts, concept maps, and summaries.
- 2) Since teachers are competent in the native language of their students, they *use the students’ L1* when they feel they need to explain important definitions and notions.
- 3) The active participation in the group work, peer discussions and peer learning are practiced by teachers, demonstrating an *interpersonal dimension*.
- 4) Recalling the information, brainstorming, filling out flowcharts, presenting everyday examples, adjusting assignments to student levels, vocabulary teaching and working with texts are among *teaching strategies* that teachers utilize in their CLIL classrooms.

Challenges of CLIL Teachers

It is important to note that subject teachers may focus on the content and not the language, and language teachers may concentrate on the language learning rather than the content (Lorenzo, 2007; Moate, 2011). Hence, teachers may not be aware of what CLIL is, and what expectation they have to fulfill in order to put content and language together. For example, some CLIL subject teachers merely translated the content of lessons as an integration part of the second language (Mehisto et al., 2008). Lasagabaster (2013) advocates for the use of the first language in CLIL classrooms as a way “to scaffold language and content learning” while mainly teaching in the second language of instruction (p. 17). Here, teachers and educators may fail to attain full capacity by integrating content and language unless they adopt the CLIL framework with methodological competences maintained (Meyer, 2010). Also, vocabulary and language forms differ between the sciences and humanities due to subject-specific characteristics (Llinares, Morton & Whittaker, 2012). Therefore, before launching CLIL programs in schools, policy-makers, administrators, researchers, and teachers need to consider these challenges in order to better support student learning and success.

Teacher Training

Many scholars agree that the quality of teaching in CLIL classrooms is largely affected by teacher training (Breibach & Viedbrock, 2012; Morton, 2012; Pistorio, 2009), and that subject teachers should be aware of the language needs of their learners in the second language acquisition (Lorenzo, Casal & Moore, 2010). Yet most teachers in CLIL classrooms worldwide have not been prepared to teach both the content and the language simultaneously (Banegas, 2014). The inadequate training of teachers about the CLIL methodology and language development may lead to the inefficient implementation of CLIL (Morton, 2012), which in turn may result in the lower quality of teaching materials. As a result, the progress in the language development and content learning of students may suffer. Therefore, in order to strengthen methodological and theoretical competences of CLIL teachers, extensive teacher training should be carried out (Pistorio, 2009).

Pihko (as cited in Bovellan, 2014) developed three basic characteristics of competent CLIL teachers, which are cognitive, pedagogical and work community competences. The cognitive competence includes the teacher’s subject knowledge and adequate proficiency in both the native language of students and the language of instruction. Pedagogical competence is about adaptation of lesson materials according to the cognitive and language abilities of students by applying the CLIL approach. Work community competences include dynamic teacher collaboration with colleagues at and outside school.

Most researchers agree that professional development of teachers, such as peer coaching, collegial meetings, professional development communities and networks are all good sources for sharing experience, knowledge, lesson materials and ideas about CLIL (Fernández & Halbach, 2011; Massler, 2012; Pawan & Craig, 2011). In Kazakhstan, there are a few institutions, such as KTLs and NIS that generated adequate practical knowledge on the CLIL approach, and which have been disseminating the CLIL practices through seminars, trainings and conferences.

Teaching Materials

The preparation of high quality lesson materials is of great importance in delivering the CLIL lesson, and therefore can become a great challenge for teachers. For example, the current insufficiency of CLIL resources in several European countries puts an additional burden on teachers to prepare their own teaching materials (Coonan, 2007; Mehisto et al., 2008). Teachers should remember that the lesson materials should cover the content of the subject using the language not only comprehensible to students but also discipline-bound. Researchers seek clearer criteria for good quality teaching materials (Cammarata & Tedick, 2012; Coyle, Hood & Marsh, 2010), since it has a great impact on students’ learning of the language and the content (Bovellan, 2014).

The challenge for the CLIL teacher is to find ways to integrate the content and language of the subject with regards to student cognitive and language abilities. Sharing teaching materials among CLIL teachers may decrease teachers’ workload and may provide a different mindset in lesson planning and preparation (Mehisto et al., 2007). The internet and virtual environments provide great opportunities for networking with CLIL colleagues and sharing ideas and lesson materials (Infante, Benvenuto & Lastrucci, 2009). These various communication means can help teachers cooperate and develop high quality lesson materials for their CLIL subjects (Morton, 2013). KTL and NIS probably have the largest bank of CLIL resources being disseminated among schools of Kazakhstan. This will likely save teachers’ time and greatly help those teachers who do not know how to develop CLIL materials.

Methodology

For this qualitative study, semi-structured, face-to-face interviews were conducted with individuals based on purposeful sampling “to obtain in-depth information about a participant’s thoughts, beliefs, knowledge, reasoning, motivations, and feelings about a topic” (Johnson & Christensen, 2012, p. 202). The sample consisted of teachers who use the CLIL approach in teaching Geography, History of Kazakhstan, Kazakhstan in the modern world and Law Essentials in Kazakh to grades 7-12, and included “people who were available or volunteered or could be easily recruited and were willing to participate in the research study” (Johnson & Christensen, 2012, p. 230).

Five male teachers were recruited from the target school, where this researcher worked as an administrator for language policy. The native language of these teachers is Kazakh and most of them proficiently operate in Russian, whereas the native language of the students in CLIL classrooms is Russian and the proficiency level of Kazakh among the students varies significantly. The research site is one Nazarbayev Intellectual School, where teachers deliver their lessons according to CLIL methodology. The researcher selected the research site with the purpose that the experience of NIS in using CLIL approach will eventually be spread across all secondary schools in Kazakhstan by 2019 (“Minister”, 2016). In this sense, it might be useful for policy analysts and administrators to understand teachers’ experiences in target schools before expanding the practice further.

Interviews lasting for 15-20 minutes were first constructed in English and then translated to Kazakh since Kazakh is the native language of the participants. The participants gave permission to be audiotaped, and the recording was transcribed and translated from Kazakh to English by the researcher. Each transcript was read thoroughly, after which the data were into coded using themes for further interpretation and analysis (Creswell, 2014). These themes are supported by relevant quotes and discussed further below.

Results and Discussion

It should first be noted that the participants who were asked to share their CLIL teaching experience were given pseudonyms to protect their identity. The interviewees were referred to as Teacher of Geography 1 and 2, Teacher of History of Kazakhstan 3, Teacher of History of Kazakhstan and Kazakhstan in the Modern World 4, Teacher of Kazakhstan in the Modern World and Law Essentials 5. The following abbreviations were used to identify them: TG1, TG2, TH3, THK4 and TKL5, respectively.

It is also important to explain that commonly, NIS teachers with a major in Geography teach only Geography as a subject, whereas teachers with a major in History usually teach several subjects, such as History of Kazakhstan, Kazakhstan in the Modern World and Law Essentials. Generally, Kazakh is a first language of teachers who teach subjects in Kazakh as a second language of instruction. Moreover, they usually teach subjects in Kazakh as a first language of instruction. The following six sections highlight the themes that emerged.

Teacher Attitudes Towards CLIL Opportunities

The majority of teachers said that it was a good chance for students to learn Kazakh in addition to Kazakh language subject while studying their subjects.

“The CLIL approach allows students to attain content goals of the subject and simultaneously develop their language skills. Students develop their language skills through listening to each other and participating in discussions. It is possible to use student collaboration by mixing students who know the language well with those who do not know it at all” (TG1).

One teacher related his first experience with the CLIL subject.

“At first, it seemed like a paradox to teach History subject to Russian classes using the CLIL approach. The lesson objectives for Russian and Kazakh classes are the same. The CLIL approach includes the language aim of the lesson” (THK4).

And then this teacher revealed that he could not see the language proficiency of his students.

“To tell the truth, we teach the content and language using the CLIL approach. But I cannot say that knowledge of the national language is attained at a good level yet. I am still studying the reason. I think that we need to learn mechanism of the CLIL approach from international colleagues” (THK4).

These examples show mixed attitudes held by these five teachers. The teachers acknowledged that the purpose of CLIL was to teach the content and language at the same time during their subjects. However, it seems that they face challenges with regards to the language development and content comprehension because

of low proficiency levels of their students. This finding aligns with previous finding of the researchers that low proficiency will lead student to difficulties (Ellis, 2003; Robinson, 2001; Skehan, 2001). In this case, teachers could provide low-proficiency learners with such CLIL assignments, as simple listening tasks with meaning-centred activities by focusing first on developing the proficiency that can be used later in output tasks (Ellis, 2003).

Vocabulary Teaching and Language Proficiency of Students

In CLIL classrooms, teachers generally teach subject-specific vocabulary to students beforehand in order to fulfill the language part of the lesson aim. All of the teachers mentioned that the main challenge for students is studying vocabulary.

“Some students have language barriers and low level of vocabulary. Since a student may not know some words, he will not understand the given assignment. I put students’ vocabulary learning at the first place. Because without the necessary vocabulary, the following skills according to Bloom’s taxonomy will not be developed: know, understand, apply, analyze, summarize, synthesize and communicate” (THK4).

As the teachers explained, vocabulary learning was essential during CLIL lessons. The difference in Kazakh language proficiency levels was stated as another significant issue in teaching a subject lesson in Kazakh using the CLIL approach. Some teachers stated that when students did not comprehend the language at all, they did not understand the lesson materials, and they were not able to contribute to group or class discussions.

“It is very difficult to understand the material for the students who do not know the Kazakh language at all. They are not able to express themselves in group discussions” (TG1).

“When I teach Geography using CLIL approach, some of the students struggle understanding the question or the assignment itself since they hardly comprehend the language” (TG2).

A novice History teacher noted that the students come unprepared for the lesson not having studied the new vocabulary, which may be due to classroom management issues. The teacher said:

“One of the challenges is when students come unprepared for the lesson. Sometimes, they do not study the new words and terms for the lesson. Then, the students forget the words and terms, and this is a challenge” (TH3).

As the teachers’ responses showed, vocabulary teaching was a central part of the lesson goal. The main challenge of teaching the content though was when students did not comprehend the language at all. Even when students with different language proficiency levels sat in the CLIL classroom, teachers had to explain the content in the language of instruction so that every student understood it.

Some teachers stated that since the content learning objectives were the same for the CLIL and non-CLIL students, it was quite difficult to attain language objectives in the given period of time. They explained that one of the challenges for students was not understanding exam questions because of the language. And although students might know the theory and answers to the assignment, they failed to accomplish it well. However, teachers also realized that learning a language would take a lot of time and it was often difficult to measure the input of CLIL subjects into the language proficiency of the students.

Coonan (2007) argues that students may not always understand the content in the second language of instruction, and that CLIL teachers do not devote time to explain the language forms. In this study, the teachers mainly stated that they taught vocabulary and there was no information about the language forms taught. Moreover, the teachers code-switched to Russian, the students’ first language, in order to explain important definitions and concepts. The danger is that some teachers may overuse the first language, and leave less time for the exposure of the second language, which is the main language of instruction (Coonan, 2007).

Teaching Strategies in CLIL Classrooms

The CLIL classroom is different from the regular one, since teachers have to cope with delivering the content aim of the lesson combined with the language aims. As the interviews showed, the CLIL classroom involved not only vocabulary teaching, but also teaching to the students with low language proficiency in Kazakh. This section explores the strategies teachers used in their CLIL classrooms, such as pyramid strategy, picture talk, writing sentences with given words, finding verb endings, dictogloss, SWOT tables, aquarium and matching translation of words in Kazakh and Russian.

Interestingly, the teachers had to work individually with the students who had low language proficiency, requiring them to apply various differentiation strategies. The teachers provided the students assignments according to their language proficiency levels. Some teachers even asked the students with high language proficiency to help their peers.

“I use recommended CLIL methods and strategies. The students with low vocabulary level work with a dictionary a lot. I ask the students who know the language very well to sit and work with the students who know the language poorly. It helps in the group work” (TG2).

The CLIL approach allows teachers to use the native language of students in implementing various teaching strategies. The interviewed teachers often used Russian, which was the native language for most students, to explain some important concepts, theories and definitions since not all the students could comprehend Kazakh. As one teacher reported:

“I use Russian to present definitions and concepts, and to explain if students do not understand something. I would say that Russian is used more in the lower grades and less in the higher grades. Because they have exam, they need to prepare for it” (TG1).

As TG1 mentioned, NIS schools had end-of-school examinations in grade 12 for students who studied Geography and Kazakhstan in the Modern World. In grades 11-12, Geography was an elective subject. Therefore, students who chose Geography were better motivated to study it, since either they spoke Kazakh well enough or they were willing to apply for Economics major at the university for which Geography was a prerequisite subject.

Integrated subject lessons are the common practice of teachers at NIS. Subjects could be integrated by interdisciplinary subjects, such as Biology and Chemistry, or between language subjects and the CLIL subjects, such as Kazakh and Geography. As one of the teachers stated in the interview:

“To teach subject and language, we implement integrated lessons with teachers of Kazakh subject. It would be good if topics taught in Kazakh were adjusted to the schedule of content aims. For instance, the topic about natural resources, particularly about water, is taught in the beginning of the second quarter (term) whereas in Kazakh, the topic about water is taught in the end of the second quarter. In addition to that, topic about food is explained in the end of the third quarter in Geography while in Kazakh it is in the beginning. We could develop integrated subject lessons more often if the similar content topics would be scheduled for the one time period” (TG1).

One of the teachers tried to persuade the students to study at home, even with the help of their parents. “I asked parents for help if they would speak in Kazakh at home, it would be easier. I provide the students with books to read and historical movies in Kazakh to watch at home. The assignments include translating unknown words, making a dictionary and retelling the main idea” (TH3).

Similar to the teachers in other studies (Coonan, 2007), NIS teachers used various strategies in coping with integrating the content and language in their lessons. Cooperation of teachers of language subjects and content subjects seem plausible with regards to prior development of the language necessary to support the content subject. The teachers in this study see this as highly valuable and ask even for more strategies to be used in CLIL lessons.

Methodological Support of CLIL Practices.

CLIL is quite a new pedagogical practice in Kazakhstan, and therefore, teachers might need additional training support for teaching subjects using this approach. NIS schools have a few local teachers who have been through training seminars by international experts. They are assigned by the school administration to conduct seminars and master-classes for other teachers at school. In addition, schools like NIS provide a general CLIL guide for teachers, containing basic information about CLIL and its classroom strategies.

In the interviews, the teachers claimed that they attended seminars and trainings conducted by international and local teacher experts. They also referred to a CLIL coordinator and more experienced teachers at school for advice about CLIL. Some of the teachers said that it might be helpful to have additional trainings on CLIL strategies and to develop a more comprehensive CLIL guidebook with an extended range of teaching strategies. Unfortunately, not all schools have that opportunity, and research shows that professional

development communities are essential in exchanging experience regarding CLIL teaching (Fernández & Halbach, 2011; Massler, 2012; Pawan & Craig, 2011).

Availability of Teaching Materials

The teachers stated that they needed additional time finding and adapting resources to teach courses in Kazakh, as it involved a lot of work in preparing texts and dictionaries, and assignments for group work. The teachers referred to the medium-term lesson plan that contained some of resources and materials necessary for the lesson since there was no assigned textbook that comprised all topics throughout the grade levels. Many of the teachers relied on internet resources for their lessons and only a few of them used parts of textbooks of regular schools.

“I obtain materials that I use in lessons, partly from the medium-term lesson plan that has ready materials provided for some of the lesson aims, partly from internet resources. Moreover, I try to use assignments and strategies of the foreign trainers” (TG2).

“It depends on the lesson structure. For Kazakhstan in the Modern World, I usually get resources on the official websites, such as akorda.kz, the website of the President, an official website of the East Kazakhstan region, Khabar TV channel, and other official government websites. For Law Essentials, I refer to actual laws” (THL5).

History of Kazakhstan has probably the most resources in Kazakh; however, these resources are mainly aimed at native speakers and readers. The main issue for teachers of History of Kazakhstan then was adapting materials according to the level of their CLIL students. Geography teachers noted that there was not enough teaching materials in Kazakh, so Geography teachers relied mainly on Russian, and, sometimes, even on other foreign resources. Kazakhstan in the Modern World is quite a new social subject in the curriculum, and teachers relied on the lesson plan and internet resources to find materials. Law Essentials deals mainly with law interpretation. Generally, the teachers stated that they referred to medium term lesson plans, which provided lesson materials and resources regarding lesson aims and topics.

Teachers often reported needing to find and adapt teaching materials, which raises the issue of not only time spent for preparation of lesson materials (Coonan, 2007; Mehisto et al., 2008), but also the adaptation of resources into high quality lesson materials (Cammarata & Tedick, 2012; Coyle et al., 2010). High quality teaching materials may highly influence students' achievements in the subject (Bovellan, 2014), and the state where teachers with different teaching backgrounds and expertise develop their own lesson materials is not an adequate solution for attaining that high standard. Since there are no textbooks and lesson materials suggested for regular use in CLIL classrooms by teachers, internet and virtual environments may create an efficient networking platform for exchanging teaching experiences and materials.

In mainstream schools, teachers do not usually design their teaching materials; they follow teachers' manuals and textbooks that are recommended by the Ministry of Education and Science of Kazakhstan. At NIS, however, teachers have additional workload preparing and designing lesson materials since as of yet, there are no textbooks developed according to the CLIL approach.

Conclusions and Implications

The move to Kazakh as the main communicative language in Kazakhstan has been on the government's agenda since the independence of the country in 1991 (Mehisto et al., 2014). As the Kazakh subject in schools does not provide enough exposure to the language features in order to attain high proficiency language level, CLIL is seen as an effective approach to support this initiative. This is especially relevant as NIS is working to implement CLIL in all secondary schools across Kazakhstan by 2019 (MES, 2016).

This study has revealed that challenges teachers face in CLIL classrooms included the language proficiency of students, vocabulary, and the lack of teaching materials. These challenges led to the development of teaching strategies according to the CLIL approach, vocabulary teaching, and usage of Russian in order to explain main notions and concepts. Finding the resources necessary for the CLIL lesson and its adaptation to the student level further burdens teachers. The development of CLIL teaching materials in accordance with best practices and expertise will certainly relieve teachers' workload and enhance the quality and consistency of the materials. The organization of professional development communities that discuss CLIL issues is an essential factor in raising teachers' professional competence. The fact that teachers evaluated their knowledge and skills of the language part of CLIL lesson lower than the content part of the lesson means that language issues should get a primary focus from school educators and administrators.

These research findings provide additional insights into challenges teachers face in teaching social sciences subjects in Kazakh using the CLIL approach, challenges which may be addressed in the following ways. First, school educators and administrators need to develop a comprehensive CLIL curriculum, which will consider language differentiation of students, necessary vocabulary, and usage of mother tongue to explain concepts. For that, they might want to consult current CLIL teachers at NIS and KTLs. Moreover, they should get feedback from CLIL teachers in the common schools with non-selected students since they might have different perspectives on the initiative. Otherwise, it will bring additional issues for teachers related to the comprehension of lesson materials, and active participation in peer and group discussions. Second, a variety of CLIL teaching strategies and resources that have already been developed by NIS and KTLs should be provided publicly to teachers through books and teachers' websites. These will provide new teachers with ready lesson materials and insights for their further development. Third, teachers need a strong network of professional communities that provide an exchange of teaching expertise and materials among CLIL teachers. While this paper did not encompass every possible obstacle that may occur in CLIL classrooms, it has examined experiences of CLIL teachers at one NIS school. These findings might be useful for policymakers, administrators and teachers as Kazakhstan is undergoing educational reforms regarding the CLIL approach.

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