

Using the CLIL approach in teaching maths in the fourth grade

Silva Bratož

University of Primorska

silva.bratoz@pef.upr.si

Vid Verdev

Osnovna šola Mihe Pintarja Toleda Velenje

vid.verdev@mpt-velenje.si

Sanela Hudovernik

University of Primorska

sanela.mesinovic@pef.upr.si

The present paper focuses on teaching English and mathematics in primary school using the content and language integrated learning (CLIL) approach. In practice, the CLIL approach implies that learners use a foreign language as a medium to study subjects, such as natural sciences, geography, or mathematics which are usually taught in the first language. There are several benefits of using the CLIL approach in teaching a foreign language in primary school. For the purpose of our research the most important benefits can be seen in the fact that CLIL enables the learner to access subject-specific target terminology, it provides opportunities to study content through different perspectives and at the same time allows learners to gain advanced understandings of subject-specific content (Coyle et al 2010, Klimova 2012). Another important advantage is that it enhances a higher level of cross-curricular integration. In order to explore the efficiency of using the CLIL approach in teaching English and mathematics, we carried out an experiment in which we compared the control group of pupils who had a mathematics lesson in Slovenian with the experimental group in which the same lesson was conducted in the English language. The sample consisted of 133 primary school pupils in the fourth grade (aged 9/10) from three different schools in Slovenia. The results of the post test showed that the classes which were taught in Slovene were generally more successful than the CLIL classes. However, in the majority of the items tested, there were no statistically significant differences and the aims have been achieved by both, the control and experimental groups. This suggests that CLIL can be seen as an efficient approach in teaching selected mathematical content through English.

Coyle, D., Hood, P. in Marsh, D. (2010). CLIL: Content and Language

Integrated Learning. Cambridge: University Press Klimova, B. F. (2012). CLIL and the teaching of foreign languages. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 47, 572-576.

Key words: Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), English as a foreign language, mathematics, cross-curricular integration