ТЕОРЕТИЧЕСКАЯ, ПРИКЛАДНАЯ И СРАВНИТЕЛЬНО-СОПОСТАВИТЕЛЬНАЯ ЛИНГВИСТИКА / THEORETICAL, APPLIED AND COMPARATIVE LINGUISTICS

ENGLISH AS A MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION IN TEACHING PEDAGOGY TO CHINESE STUDENTS: ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Research article

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Abstract

The article addresses educating foreign students in English, which is a significant component of Russia's internationalisation of pedagogical education. For higher education institutions to successfully promote themselves in the market for international educational services, it is crucial that pedagogical standards for professional educational programmes be developed in accordance with the process of teaching in a foreign language. The features of EMI and CLIL technologies in the context of teaching academic disciplines in English are discussed in this paper, along with their benefits and drawbacks in terms of usability and outcomes. The experience of instructing Chinese students in the three-trimester English-language course "Theory of Education" as part of Perm State University's "Educational Management" programme is examined. The author addresses several issues with the way foreign language instruction is organised and offers potential solutions.

Keywords: English, tertiary education, EMI, CLIL, pedagogy, Chinese culture.

АНГЛИЙСКИЙ ЯЗЫК КАК ПОСРЕДНИК В ПРЕПОДАВАНИИ ПЕДАГОГИКИ СТУДЕНТАМ ИЗ КИТАЯ: ПРОБЛЕМЫ И ПЕРСПЕКТИВЫ

Научная статья

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Аннотация

В статье рассматривается важный аспект интернационализации педагогического образования в России, а именно обучение иностранных студентов на иностранном языке (английском). Разработка педагогических стандартов основных профессиональных образовательных программ, соответствующих процессу обучения на иностранном языке, является важным условием успешного продвижения вуза на рынке международных образовательных услуг. Даются характеристики технологий EMI и CLIL в обучении академическому предмету на английском языке в вузе и рассматриваются их преимущества и недостатки с точки зрения эффективности использования и конечных результатов. Анализируется опыт преподавания трехтриместрового курса «Theory of Education» на английском языке студентам из Китая, которые обучаются в ПГНИУ по программе «Educational management». Обсуждается ряд проблем в организации обучения на иностранном языке и предлагаются возможные пути их преодоления.

Ключевые слова: английский язык, высшее образование, EMI, CLIL, педагогика, китайская культура.

Introduction

Professional courses in higher education with English as the primary language of instruction are currently in high demand in many countries, including Russia. For a considerable amount of time, the majority of international students studying in Russia have been from China, Arab nations, and the former CIS. There are numerous English-language educational programmes available at Perm State National Research University, Perm, Russia. In order to prepare middle-level managers for Chinese educational institutions, the Faculty of Philology offers an educational programme called "Pedagogical Education" with a major in "Management in Education" that is only provided in English. Academic disciplines within the programme are separated into three blocks: philology, management, and education and psychology. After four years of full-time study, programme graduates obtain a bachelor's degree.

The experience of instructing Chinese students the English-read three-trimester course "Theory of Education" through lectures and seminars has demonstrated that, even though there are some achievements in learning English, international students have a hard time grasping specialised courses in English. Chinese students may come from quite various linguistic backgrounds, and English is not their first language. To enhance learning effectiveness, it is therefore essential to consider the linguistic traits and cultural values of international learners.

Research methods and principles

Therefore, we think that depending solely on EMI technology – which uses English as the working language for subject knowledge – is not feasible (please see works: [6], [10]). As a result, in our classes we frequently utilise CLIL educational technology, which combines language and academic learning and, in our view, offers a wealth of opportunities for teaching pedagogy and other academic subjects in English to Chinese students. The works of Russian scholars K.S. Grigorieva and L.L. Salehova, among others, offer insight into subject-language integrated learning and confirm its effectiveness in higher education (please see works: [1], [3], [4], [5], [11]).

This study examines how EMI and CLIL instructional technologies are used to teach pedagogy to Chinese students, with English serving as a mediation language.

Along with pedagogical observation and an oral survey of second-year Chinese students enrolled in the "Pedagogical Education" programme, we employed a comprehensive approach that included the review of previous scientific works on the issue of educating Chinese students in Russian institutions. The oral survey asked questions designed to determine the reasons behind the challenges Chinese students face when doing academic courses in English.

Discussion

Note that the four primary components of CLIL – *content, communication, cognition, and culture* – are integrated to form the foundation of the CLIL learning system [9]. Let us look at how each element is applied when reading an academic course in English.

The integration of English language learning with the content of the profile subject "Theory of Education" (also known as "Pedagogy") demonstrates how *the content element* is implemented. This enables students to actively apply language skills and English grammar structures in a particular situation, in this case, a pedagogical context. We firmly believe that in order to accommodate the diverse language competency levels of international students, the curriculum needs to be drastically altered. Consequently, it is necessary to talk a bit more slowly and clearly during lectures and practical classes than in everyday situations, carefully distinguishing one assertion from another and one word from another. Particular attention must be paid to the elements of instructional technique, including appearance, gestures, facial expressions, and speech patterns [2, P. 41–42].

To help Chinese learners become comfortable with the lecture material, we always produce electronic lecture notes in English that include definitions of important terms. These notes are sent to them before class. Additionally, during class, students can access the notes on their tablets or smartphones. We conduct the lecture course using multimedia presentations and a variety of digital visuals (pictures, tables, charts, diagrams, videos, for instance, illustrating the specifics of learning theories or the peculiarities of secondary school education in Russia). This allows us to visualise the material as well as helps international students learn it more effectively. In order to assist students in improving their English reading, writing, and listening skills, we only use real online content that has been modified for instructional purposes in our seminars. Examples of these include English-language scientific journal articles and films about the subject matter. Academic literature and films can be found online using resources like Google Scholar, ResearchGate, Coursera, TED-Ed, YouTube, and others. Academic texts aid in the acquisition of specific grammatical and structural-stylistic constructions, as well as scientific terminology in English. When working with international students, we assign texts that contain challenging material. This makes it possible for students to discuss and share their thoughts about the material they have read, thus helping them strengthen their cognitive abilities. Written assignments involving the read text or viewed video content are provided, and a question-and-answer format with explicit instructions is employed. In order to help students get better at speaking English coherently, we frequently ask them to write brief monologues on educational subjects that relate the subject matter to current events and their own experiences. "Learning content in a foreign language is most effective when the topics are novel and motivate learners to apply their prior knowledge to acquire new information" [3, P. 40]. Students' interest is also piqued by the dynamic intonation of conversational speech, natural emotionality, and pauses that are typical of informal communication in the original listening texts (English-language video resources). However, authentic content may provide some difficulties, such as the complexity of the language.

Given that students must actively speak and express their ideas in English while studying a major subject, the classroom's use of *the communication component* enables the development of communication skills in the language. Although Chinese students typically have a solid vocabulary and a comprehension of foreign grammar principles, speaking in a foreign language presents the most challenge for this group of learners [7]. It should be mentioned that students mostly use dictionaries to translate texts in foreign language studies in Chinese schools [8]. "Foreign Language (English)" and "Foreign Language in Professional Sphere of Activity (English)" are compulsory English language courses offered by Perm State National Research University to Chinese students in order to help them improve their language skills. Nevertheless, the question of how to build up interactive work in pedagogy seminars has repeatedly come up. Without a prepared response to a question, Chinese learners struggle to articulate their ideas orally in English. Since it is assumed that they are a part of a collective and must agree with the majority, Chinese students generally find it difficult to publicly voice their opinions on any topic with thorough justification of their stance [7]. Chinese learners rarely actively engage in discussions on any subject, and rarely attempt to provide a "from the floor" response. Only when the instructor speaks directly to them do they react. Hence, this point places restrictions on how the "communication" component of CLIL technology can be used.

Nonetheless, we believe it is critical to try to establish a communicative environment in the classroom where students can be able to communicate with each other and the instructor in English. Our experience has demonstrated the effectiveness of practical classes that involve pair/group work and project activities for "launching" English speaking and discussing pedagogical issues. These formats assist learners in developing their critical thinking, creativity, and social skills in addition to their communicative abilities. For instance, during a seminar on learning theories, foreign students can be required to discuss in English, using scientific vocabulary, a digital illustration that demonstrates one of the learning theories in pairs or mini-groups.

Building students' critical thinking skills and their capacity to examine instructional issues in several languages is another aspect of CLIL called *Cognition.* Regular quizzes are a useful tool for evaluating students' understanding of the subject matter

and their development as English language learners. These activities also assist the students in improving their English grammar, writing, and reading abilities. In order to have students think more deeply about educational concepts and put them into practice, we frequently give reflection assignments (essays, critical reports, or discussions) for them to do at home. Additionally, we believe that creative assignments are useful and encourage students to use digital tools, such as creating a digital story, infographics, word clouds, and mind maps. As part of the study of the topic "Forms of upbringing", for instance, students were required to write an essay about the customs of Chinese students' collective life, explaining the collective as a form of upbringing and outlining the fundamentals of collective child-rearing. Students had to use their writings to prepare comics, films, and other multimedia products that told a digital story about a Chinese student or students leading a communal life. These assignments stimulate students' own thought processes, enhance their capacity for independent productive activity, and cultivate their cognitive interests based on the innate propensity of today's youth towards computer technologies.

Finally, the application of the *Culture component* of CLIL improves Chinese students' comprehension and perception of the intercultural elements of instructional activities. Students learn new cultural norms and values, become familiar with native speakers of the language they are studying (at least through video materials), and gain new insights into how the educational process is organised in both Russian and foreign educational institutions through the use of authentic materials in classes. This leads to the formation of cultural competence. Additionally, English language instruction also allows students to interact with foreign instructors and other students who speak the language, broadening their horizons and improving their understanding of many cultural facets.

Conclusion

Therefore, employing English as a mediation language when instructing Chinese students in pedagogy has both special potential and challenges. Students can attain noteworthy outcomes in their major disciplines and enhance their language and cultural competency by utilising both CLIL and EMI technologies. As a result, students are more equipped to succeed in an international learning environment and in their future professional goals. By taking into account the cultural characteristics of Chinese learners, creating an engaging learning environment, using a reflective learning technique, and promoting English language competency, instructors can help students thrive academically in English.

Конфликт интересов
Не указан.

Рецензия
Все статьи проходят рецензирование. Но рецензент или автор статьи предпочли не публиковать рецензию к этой статье в открытом доступе. Рецензия может быть предоставлена компетентным органам по запросу.

Conflict of Interest
None declared.

Review
All articles are peer-reviewed. But the reviewer or the author of the article chose not to publish a review of this article in the public domain. The review can be provided to the competent authorities upon request.

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