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## NIHIL NOVI – CONTENT AND LANGUAGE INTEGRATED LEARNING IN *ENGLAND AND THE ENGLISH* BY WŁADYSŁAW KOSPOTH-PAWŁOWSKI

### Abstract

The article presents the language coursebook entitled *England and the English* by Władysław Kospoth-Pawłowski, published in Poland in 1930. Written a long time before the emergence and development of Content and Language Integrated Learning, the book may be perceived as original, innovative and ahead of its times in terms of the methodology applied. Several references to subsequent educational theories are made to emphasize the originality and the unique, modern nature of the book.

Keywords: CLIL, innovation, FLT materials

**Słowa kluczowe:** CLIL, innowacja, materiały do nauczania języka obcego

It was September 1989. A group of 15-year-old people entered their first English class. Before YouTube, Netflix, Facebook or even the Internet itself, English classes were their opportunity to learn the language that could one day help them go abroad and talk to people from other countries. Their student books were like windows allowing them to see tidbits of the Western world. They sat down and opened their windows only to find out homogenous texts about

the Wilsons – an ordinary, humdrum British family. The initial excitement dissipated with every black and white page they turned.

The abovementioned anecdote may seem to be a figment of one's imagination, but in fact it is the shared memory of the authors of this article. When we began our language education in secondary school, there was a rather limited choice of language coursebooks aimed at students of that age. All the grammar and vocabulary practice was impersonal, repetitive and clearly reflected the behavioural views and tendencies prevailing in education at that time. Despite the fact that towards the end of the previous century there appeared a wider selection of language textbooks, a vast majority of those followed the same methodology, providing prompts that were meant to elicit a specific response. Such an approach did not offer much in terms of student interest and involvement, nor did it provide opportunities for personalizing language input, which seems to be the cornerstone of any modern foreign language teaching methodology. Needless to say, any affective factor was missing from those language materials, as students were not meant to interact with the content on an emotional-cognitive basis, but respond to the given stimulus.

### 1. Emergence and development of CLIL – Content and Language Integrated Learning

In this kind of methodological milieu, it seemed far from surprising that change was necessary, and a large number of teachers welcomed the introduction of CLIL, which can be understood as using a foreign language to teach other subjects, such as science, geography or history. It may be postulated that such an approach had existed long before it was formally introduced into mainstream FLT, as humankind had long used language as a means to communicate between cultures. Nevertheless, the person to be credited for defining CLIL is David Marsh of University of Jyväskylä, Finland, who described it in the following manner: "CLIL refers to situations where subjects, or parts of subjects, are taught through a foreign language with dual-focused aims, namely the learning of content and the simultaneous learning of a foreign language (2002: 2)."

It has to be emphasized that CLIL has evolved to be an umbrella term describing situations where the language taught serves as a means of communication and not as an end in itself. From the learner's perspective, what they are studying is therefore a specific blend of culture and language, and the primary aim is to find out about the world using a foreign language. In addition, it has to be remembered that in many modern methodologies the cultural content does not always have to be related to the countries where the learned language is originally used. Therefore, a student learning English may have to deal with texts that do not refer to the Anglo-Saxon world and

may be exposed to texts about life in Latin America, for instance. One of the strongest arguments for incorporating CLIL in the classroom is the feedback effect that it creates with the language taught: by becoming interested in the topic of the lesson, the student realizes that they need appropriate and sufficient linguistic resources to understand and express ideas about it.

Since its emergence in the mid 1990s, CLIL has become part of a number of mainstream FLT curricula, such as:

- Foreign Languages as a Medium of Education
- English Across the Curriculum
- Bilingual Integration of Languages and Disciplines
- Teaching Content Through English
- Teaching English Through Content

In addition, CLIL has found its way into most modern language course-books available, and it might be hypothesized that a large number of teachers employ it in their daily practice even though they may not always be fully aware of the fact. Bearing in mind the tedious and mundane nature of language materials based on behaviourist principles, CLIL appears to have brought a substantial development into methodologies that stress the constructivist beliefs about content relevance, making meaning and constructing one's own world by relating the new material to one's own experience.

## 2. *England and the English* – basic information

Nevertheless, as we have already stated, CLIL has been present in foreign language teaching for years, albeit without being named CLIL. We would like to present the book titled *England and the English*, published in 1930 and written by Władysław Kospoth-Pawłowski, who based his didactic approach on introducing the student to the British culture and literature. Learning the syntax and lexis was an important, yet not the focal, point in the curriculum. It can be clearly observed in the table of contents comprised of 87 reading pieces which serve as the basis for further discussion incorporating comparison of Polish and English culture and literature and language study. To stress the fact that the language book was culture- and literature-oriented, we would like to point out that only 23 of these texts are accompanied by further grammar analysis and explanation. The course book was published with secondary school students in mind, i.e. young people aged between 14–19. Additionally, the students were expected to be at a certain level of English language proficiency rather than novices to language education.

### 3. Władysław Kospoth-Pawłowski – a biographical note

According to Mirosława Podhajecka, Władysław Kospoth-Pawłowski was born in 1894 in Poland to a family of Polish landowners and traders. It is believed that his ancestors can be traced back to nobility of Saxonian origins – the Kospoths, and Władysław was the only member of his family to use this name. He began his academic education at the Faculty of Philology at the University of Berlin but his studies were interrupted by World War I, in which he fought as a Prussian citizen.

After the war his family assumed Polish nationality and Kospoth-Pawłowski continued his career in military partaking in combat against the Red Army in 1920. Although it cannot be supported by conclusive evidence, it is probable that he decided to continue his academic development in Berlin and Poitiers in 1922. In 1926, he commenced working as a teacher of languages in Vilnius and in 1930 he issued *England and the English*. Apart from being a teacher, Kospoth-Pawłowski was also a vehement adherent of Basic<sup>1</sup> English, which resulted in his involvement in the production of the Basic English-Polish Dictionary in 1933.

In 1939 he was arrested by the NKVD and remained imprisoned until 1941 when Germans invaded Russia and managed to take control of Vilnius. Unfortunately, the Red Army regained the power and control over the city in 1944, which led to another apprehension of Kospoth-Pawłowski in 1945. He was charged with espionage and sentenced to 5 years in a labour camp. He did not serve the sentence as he was put on trial again. Tragically, he died in a prison in Moscow on 26 February in 1946 (Podhajecka, 2016: 371-374).

Having provided somewhat scant historical background for Kospoth-Pawłowski's educational endeavours, in the subsequent parts of our article we would like to provide examples of CLIL and reference to the students' world, deep processing of the language to be learnt from the texts included in the book (See: Gallo, Meadow, Johnson, 2008), and elements of inductive or slightly proleptic language instruction.

### 4. Examples of CLIL and reference to the students' world

The following exercise clearly focuses on exploiting the potential provided by a text describing the geographical features of the United Kingdom. Not only are the students taught facts about England, but they are also required to apply and, simultaneously, consolidate their knowledge while comparing England to

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<sup>1</sup> Basic is an acronym for British American Scientific International and Commercial. Basic English was a language created and developed by Charles Kay Ogden in cooperation with Ivon Armstrong Richards (Podhajecka, 2016: 374-376).

Poland (point b). The exercise also supplies the students with an opportunity to revise and remember the newly-acquired structures in their own text about Poland (point a). Additionally, points d-e are exercises in independent critical thinking.

Exercise. a) Give a similar comparative description of Poland's geographical situation, and draw a map to illustrate your answer. Then describe, with the aid of your atlas, the outlines of West – and East-Borderland, Little Poland (so-called Galicia) Upper Silesia, Pomerania and the other parts of Poland. Don't forget Poland's famous 60-mile corridor which leads to the free City of Danzig at the mouth of the Vistula. Point out their peculiar character and mention the neighbouring frontier countries as Germany, Prussia, Lithuania, Latvia, Soviet Russia, Romania, and Bohemia (Tschechoslovakia).

b) In what lies the striking difference between England and Poland? (Island and continent. Hence Poland a continental power whereas England a naval one).

c) What is the chief employment of the Polish people?

d) Is Poland also a sea-faring nation? Where are Poland's seaport towns situated? (Baltic-Sea).

e) Do you know why the names of so many English towns end with "mouth", like Plymouth, Yarmouth, Falmouth etc?

(Kospoth-Pawłowski, 1930: 8)

Another specimen of practice allowing students to incorporate new knowledge into what they already are aware of is the exercise below, in which students are instructed to write a comparative essay and prompted to form a comprehensive assessment of the similarities and divergences between the life of a British student attending a boarding school and one from Poland. Obviously, apart from having an opportunity to employ the lexis and grammar structures from the original text, students need to conduct a cross-cultural analysis of the situation and present the results thereof.

Composition (*for homework*). Compare the life of a public-school boy in England to the life of a Polish boarder. Has a Polish boy a private bed-room? Where does he eat? sleep? work? May he go out alone? What are his working hours? What about his play-time? What are the punishments in Polish schools. What do you think of corporal punishment?

(Kospoth-Pawłowski, 1930: 62)

## 5. Examples of exercises utilising deep processing of the language

In the exercise below, students are expected to work with the target vocabulary in numerous manners which are aimed at anchoring it as a result of involving their brains in deep processing. In parts 1 and 2, the lexis is found in

context and the students' attention is drawn to it. Then, in part 4 lexical items to do with memory are associated with ones to do with purchasing. Finally, the poem is to be re-written as prose and that is supposed to be preceded by translation into students' native language. Both of these activities allow the student to process the target lexis again, each time in a different linguistic setting.

- Exercise. 1. Write out the line which suggests that Adelaide was a forgetful girl.
2. Choose all the words which describe Memory.
3. What words or phrases suggest movement?
4. Write out words which show that Memory cannot be bought.
5. Write out a line which suggests difficulty.
6. Give a prose version of this poem, then translate it into Polish.

(Kospoth-Pawłowski, 1930: 60)

Similarly, in the successive exercises students are instructed to process the information from the reading text and continue with their own language production founded on the linguistic input from the text. Additionally, Kospoth-Pawłowski provides students with yet another opportunity for rooting their knowledge in the world they know and are familiar with.

#### Summary (Revision)

1. From the precedent extracts and poems write your own story of "Country Life".
2. Write a comparison between country life and town life (in summer and in winter). State which you prefer and why.

(Kospoth-Pawłowski, 1930: 98)

Finally, the ensuing series of exercises encourage deep processing of the text at its finest as the author of the book provides students with an extensive variety of divergent approaches to working with one text. First, students are taught understanding the meaning of lexical items from the context. Then, they analyse word formation rules for several rather complex vocabulary items. This, in turn, is followed by practice in punctuation and a discussion of points which students perceive as doubtful. After that, students are required to mediate between first and third person narration, become involved in register transfer, employ reported speech, study the utilisation of conjunctions and desynthesise complex sentences, which is aimed at prompting students' analysis of how to generate the aforementioned.

- Exercise. 1. Read the whole passage silently and study the meanings of the words unknown to you.

2. Analyse the formation of these words: *degenerate, admire, recollect, amicably, judiciously, responsibility, exit, conversation, ennobling, conferred.*

3. Paragraph 1:

a) Write it from dictation (the teacher giving the full-stops only).

b) Punctuate it, and then test the accuracy of your punctuation by reading the passage aloud. Discuss doubtful “stops” with your teacher.

4. Paragraph 2:

a) Write this paragraph in the first person. Observe carefully the proper sequence of tenses.

b) There are four sentences here. Re-write the third in as simple language as you can.

5. Paragraph 3:

a) Write the first sentence in indirect or reported speech, introducing the report with the words “he said that”...

b) Re-write the whole paragraph in “simple” sentences. How many are there?

c) You will observe that the original paragraph consists of four sentences. Study them and note the conjunctions. Now try and arrange your “simple” sentences in (b) so as to form all four sentences. Compare your four with the original four.

(Kospoth-Pawłowski, 1930:106)

## 6. Examples of prolepsis/inductive teaching

Apart from the exercise aimed at an analysis of English word formation that has already been demonstrated in the paragraph above, we would also like to supply one more activity from *England and the English*, which is evidence to the claim of the book’s innovative nature. In the practical exercise below, students are guided with questions in their examination of specimens of the employment of adverbs of manner, possessive pronouns and adjectives, and their utilisation. This approach, regarded as norm in today’s didactics of a foreign language, was rather unorthodox at that time and remained as such for numerous years in which deductive instruction and the grammar translation method prevailed. Notwithstanding the above, we need to stress that prolepsis and inductive teaching did not dominate Kospoth-Pawłowski’s approach to language education and should be perceived as foreshadowing the methodological tendencies of modern times.

Practical exercise. How do you form adverbs of manner? – Give several examples. – What are the possessive pronouns in English? What are the possessive adjectives? How do they agree? In what cases do you use them? Draw your examples from the preceding reading pieces.

(Kospoth-Pawłowski, 1930: 94)

To recapitulate, the above samples are but a few examples of the quite unconventional and undeniably pioneering approach to teaching English. Abundant activities that can be encountered in *England and the English* could be taken from the coursebook and transferred to any modern CLIL-oriented student book.

### 7. *England and the English* within the framework of subsequent educational theories

Largely forgotten for a substantial period of time, Kospoth-Pawłowski's coursebook seems to have shared the fate of a great pedagogical innovator of the time – Lev Vygotski, whose writings were rediscovered in the 1950s and popularized in the 1960s. Interestingly, one can observe certain similarities between the methodology of the book and Vygotski's framework.

With regard to its methodology, Kospoth-Pawłowski's coursebook appears to be in keeping with Vygotski's *mediated activity* framework. As education consists of mediating meaning between the teacher and the student, one has to bear in mind two possible implications: first, one has to understand the social role of learning, which precedes the individual role of the process. As expressed by Vygotski, every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on a social level, and later on the individual level; first, between people (*interpsychological*) and the inside the child (*intrapsychological*) (1978: 57). Second, one has to consider the role of the teacher as the mediator of meaning or content, the purpose of the process being to guide the learner to a new level of understanding or knowledge.

The object of mediation should be placed within an area that Vygotski called the zone of proximal development (ZPD), which he defined in the following way:

[...] the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers (1978: 86).

To put it differently, the ZPD stands for a level which is outside the learner's present level of competence, but may be achieved with appropriate mediation.

Furthermore, it cannot be denied that *England and the English* presents the learner with substantial cognitive challenge, not only in terms of studying a new language, but also acquiring a vast amount of knowledge about culture-related issues. By encouraging the learner to relate the new content to what is already familiar to them, the coursebook seems to be in line with the Piagetian concept of equilibration, that is balancing what is known and what is being experienced and engaging the mind in constant interaction with the environment



(Williams, Burden, 1997). In addition, the teacher does not simply transmit new knowledge to the student, but encourages them to construct their new knowledge in an inductive manner.

The methodology applied in Kospoth-Pawłowski's book appears to have preceded Reuven Feuerstein's idea of Mediated Learning Experience (MLE), by which the person possessing certain knowledge makes it accessible to the learner through comprehensible and meaningful presentation. Feuerstein believed that the concept of the human mediator in education was indispensable as mere exposure to stimulus might be pleasurable, but it would not always guarantee that learning would occur (2010). It has to be admitted that in Feuerstein's view the terms *teacher* and *mediator* were not always interchangeable; however, he stressed the unique potential that teachers had with regard to becoming mediators and creating opportunities for MLE. In addition, it might be postulated that Kospoth-Pawłowski seems to have anticipated the rules for developing intercultural communicative competence, as outlined by Michael Byram (1997).

In outlining teacher roles, Elżbieta Zawadzka (2004) lists the notion of the teacher as the cultural mediator, arguing that each language has its own way of perceiving the world and is a result of the nation's unique history and traditions. She goes on to say that learning a language reaches beyond familiarising oneself with a set of characters and formal structures and has to incorporate the education of values connected with this language.

A major movement towards the inclusion of culture-related topics began in 1980s, together with the socio-political changes happening in Europe, increasing social mobility, international tourism, student exchanges and commercial enterprises. It turned out that intercultural communication has an undisputed influence on one's personality, which is in keeping with the goals of humanistic educational theories. It is generally accepted that:

- intercultural communication is a process benefiting both sides, as they gain new experiences and new values;
- diversity enriches communication, and the greater the distance between the two cultures, the more they have to offer each other;
- there exists a feedback relationship between intercultural communication and the acceptance of one's own culture. Dissimilarity broadens one's horizons and adds to a sense of fascination, which results in exchanges and contacts that enable communication;
- intercultural communication fulfils a number of cognitive and emotional needs and creates opportunities for discovery, risk-taking and creativity. There is a positive correlation between the frequency and intensity of intercultural contacts and the acceptance of one's own culture;

- positive experiences connected with intercultural contacts may weaken or eliminate the influence of those elements of one's native culture that hinder understanding;
- intercultural contacts provide the ground not only for the stimulating function of diversity in terms of intellectual and emotional expression, but also for a dialogue between cultural paradigms, allowing one to search for meaning in life and appropriate models for life.

## 8. Conclusion

CLIL has recently occupied an increasingly prominent position in various teaching curricula in many countries. The very concept of using language not as the final goal, but rather as a means to teach content appears to be a methodologically sound idea. In contrast with the behaviourist-based materials of the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, modern coursebooks containing elements CLIL look both more modern and more engaging. However, as the example of *England and the English* shows, what we tend to call modern and innovative is very often based on already tried and tested solutions which, for various circumstances, did not manage to gain popularity the first time they were introduced. For this reason, it might be a more balanced approach to perceive educational innovation not as concepts or solutions that are always characterised by absolute novelty, but rather as introduction of previously unnamed or undiscovered ideas into mainstream methodology, which is the case with the coursebook in question.

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