

## OPINION

By Assoc. Prof. Dr. Boryana Tomova Rogozherova<sup>1</sup>,

Todor Kableshkov University of Transport,

Assoc. Prof. in the professional field of 2.1. Philology, scientific specialty of *Applied linguistics – English*

concerning the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree of *PhD* in the doctoral programme of *Methodology of modern languages teaching*, in the scientific area of 1. Pedagogical sciences, professional field of 1.3. Pedagogy of teaching ..., scientific specialty of *Methodology of modern languages teaching (English language)*, with applicant Eda Cauli

### **1. Significance of researched problem in terms of its scientific and scientific-applied characteristics**

The doctoral thesis submitted by Eda Cauli and entitled *Implementing a CLIL Approach to Teaching English for Special Purposes in Academic Contexts* aims at revealing the effectiveness of CLIL methodology implementation in terms of Business ESP teaching in university context. Researched problem significance derives from the constantly growing necessity of improving university students' ESP communicative competence for the purpose of equipping them with specialized language, linguistic knowledge and skills relevant to a particular sphere of economics and / or science, and thus, contribute to learners' better employability and performance in their future careers. Researched topic importance is characterized with typically scientific as well as with scientific-applied dimensions, namely, theoretical background careful examination, in line with thesis hypotheses formulation and testing, pedagogical experiment concept formation and experiment preparation (scientific relevance) and experiment carrying out and analysis, a developed CLIL approach implementation paradigm in business ESP courses having the potential for improvement and enrichment, in other ESP types likewise, with respect to the teaching circumstances (scientific-applied relevance).

### **2. Justification of thesis objectives and tasks**

The doctoral thesis objectives are twofold, in compliance with its already pointed out scientific and scientific-applied aspects. The study is directed at proving the benefits of introducing

---

<sup>1</sup> Boryana Rogozherova publishes her scientific works under the name Boryana Ruzhekova-Rogozherova.

CLIL methodology in university ESP business teaching in terms of specialized competence (with emphasis on communication skills, performance and terminology acquisition) and at revealing learners' studying attitudes improvement towards CLIL approach implementation in ESP teaching, on the one hand, and, on the other, at introducing examined methodology in Albanian education system. The study tasks are related to organizing and conducting empirical research. Both, objectives achievement and tasks fulfilment, are justified in the perspective of ESP teaching methodology development and perfecting with respect to matching specific learner needs, in general, not only within the framework of business, but also in other types of specialized English language training.

### **3. Congruence between chosen methodology, research methods and the thesis objective and tasks**

Eda Cauli implements the methodology of conducting a case study supported by means of empirical research methods to prove the study hypotheses related to CLIL approach leading to the enhancement of overall university business ESP learners' performance, mainly with respect to subject-specific vocabulary and communicative skills, and also of students' motivation and engagement in study process, compared to non-CLIL teaching. The author possesses extensive theoretical knowledge in ELT accompanied by a significant amount of data testifying to CLIL effectiveness implementation in a number of countries. Thus, this work hypotheses formulation is rather logical and well founded in the light of abundant theoretical sources existence. Consequently, suppositions need to be tested through an appropriately designed and performed experiment. Hence, case study methodology and research methods prove to be adequate to the thesis objectives and tasks.

Case study methodology is implemented by means of accomplished learners' and teachers' needs analysis, students' post-training test and self-assessment questionnaire in the objective of gathering data referring to learning / teaching goals, expectations and preferences in terms of employment ambitions, pedagogical materials and approaches implemented. Experiment findings, validating thesis author's hypotheses, derive from the analysis of two learner groups' performance - an experimental (CLIL- trained) group and a control one (non-CLIL-trained). Post-training test results prove to be higher for the majority of CLIL-taught learners; what is more, CLIL implementation turns out to precondition the enhancement of ESP university learners' motivation

and engagement due to CLIL teaching approach double-objective essence (focusing on subject and foreign language simultaneous teaching) prerequisite to task-oriented and purposeful teaching and learning.

#### **4. Thesis scientific and scientific-applied contributions (description and evaluation)**

Thesis contributions pertain to the sphere of ESP (business and other types) as well as to foreign language for specific purposes (FLSP) in general. The study reveals not only the importance of authentic texts use in educational process, but also the relevance of study materials strictly aimed at learners' specialized communicative competence enhancement through subject specific tasks and terminology teaching, based on the outcomes of ESP learner's needs analysis.

Scientific contributions consist in:

- Hypotheses formulation and validation;
- Theoretical examination of ELT methodology, CLIL, ESP essence in the objective of revealing ESP and CLIL fundamentals compatibility;
- Pedagogical experiment concept development.

Scientific-applied contributions consist in:

- Pedagogical experiment conducting in terms of its components and sub-components, results analysis; resultant educational tradition enrichment;
- CLIL approach implementation in ESP university context in Albania;
- Assisting the development of teaching methodology for ESP and FLSP in other types of specialized foreign language training.

#### **5. Evaluation of publications presented with the thesis: number, type of editions they were published in**

Eda Cauli integrates in her doctoral research four individual papers presented on conferences and published in journals. It needs to be put forward that Cauli's publication (Cauli, 2021) belongs to a journal with IMPACT FACTOR: 5.753 (SJIF). All four materials tightly relate to doctoral thesis considered matters. Cauli published likewise articles and papers, apart from the above referred to in her PhD thesis ones, though belonging to a similar research trend.

**6. References by other authors, scientific press opinions, etc.**

Citations of Eda Cauli's publications or related scientific press opinions have not been encountered so far, based on carried out search. However, this fact is not relevant in terms of her thesis evaluation, other authors' references not being required for the acquisition of a PhD degree.

**7. Opinions, recommendations and notes**

The thesis can generate further research in terms of CLIL approach implementation in various types of ESP and FLSP teaching. The thesis as well as its summary are coherently and logically organized. The work will benefit, in my view, if the author states the differences between *plurilingualism / multilingualism* concepts while discussing CLIL approach advantages. I would also venture to express some lack of agreement with the statement that ESP teaching predominantly lays emphasis on speaking and reading development, other skills importance in ESP having been revealed in literature through needs analysis.

**8. Conclusion containing a clearly defined positive or negative thesis evaluation**

Eda Cauli's thesis entitled *Implementing a CLIL Approach to Teaching English for Special Purposes in Academic Contexts* is written in compliance with the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for its application as well as of the Ordinance on the Development of the Academic Staff of NBU.

I declare with conviction my positive evaluation of the thesis and vote that Eda Cauli is awarded the educational and scientific degree of *PhD* in the professional field of 1.3. Pedagogy of teaching ..., scientific specialty of *Methodology of modern languages teaching (English language)*.

27.02.2023 / Sofia

Signature: .....

/Assoc. Prof. Dr. Boryana Rogozherova /