

REVIEW

By Prof. Irena Vassileva, PhD, NBU, scientific field 2.1. Philology

for the acquirement of the educational and scientific degree "PhD" in: Area of Higher Education: 1. Education Sciences, Professional Field: 1.3. Pedagogy of Education in ... (Subject Area: Methodology of English Language Teaching), candidate **Eda Cauli**.

Topic of the thesis: **„Implementing a CLIL approach to Teaching English for Special Purposes in Academic Contexts“**

1. Scientific and applied significance of the research question.

The researched question is significant in so far as the topic under consideration has not been explored in an Albanian higher education context, in this case in the teaching of English for business purposes. However, the author's statement that: "In the academic context of teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP) at university, the application of CLIL seems to be well suited, although there is very little research into the matter" (p. 1), is hardly supported by evidence – a simple Google Scholar search of CLIL in ESP resulted in over 7 500 hits. Thus, the study contributes to a bulk of similar ones from a local, Albanian perspective, which is also declared by the candidate on p. 6.

2. Accurately formulated aims and objectives of the dissertation.

The objectives and tasks are clearly and precisely formulated both in terms of content and scope of the analysis, its results, and their application.

3. Degree of knowledge of the state of the problem and relevance of the used literature.

The candidate is obviously well acquainted with the academic literature on the problem, since in the process of analysis, as well as in the theoretical overview, she relies on a sufficiently large number of authors. At the same time, although the approach to working with the sources is not always critical, it still demonstrates the author's ability to extract the essentials from the available publications in accordance with the specific needs of the research.

4. Correctness in referring to a representative number of authors.

The in-text citations and references are correct. The number of sources according to the Reference list is large enough and the publications are relevant to the topic, the aim, and objectives of study.

5. Presence of a substantiated and developed theoretical model of the research.

The research is theoretically based on up-to-date principles of teaching ESP in general by employing the CLIL method in particular. The choice of this model is convincingly justified by the lack of publications dealing with this issue in Albanian contexts.

6. Correspondence of the chosen methodology and research methods to the set aims and objectives of the dissertation.

The main aim of the study is to test the applicability and efficiency of the CLIL ESP teaching methodology to the teaching of business English in Albanian higher education contexts. The methods used to achieve this goal include: needs analysis, questionnaires, language placement tests, self-assessment grids, a quasi-experiment with an experimental and a control group, and pre- and post- tests. These are standard methods applied in a number of similar studies and they have thus proven their reliability. Both the chosen methodology and the research methods correspond to the objectives of the study.

7. Presence of author's contribution to the collection and analysis of empirical data.

The collection of empirical data and their analysis, as well as the experiments described in the study, are entirely carried out by the author.

Description of the contributions:

1. Brief description of the nature and assessment of the reliability of the material on which the contributions of the dissertation are based.

The materials which serve as the basis of the analysis in the study consist of the results obtained through the various methods applied (enumerated in 6. Above). Besides, the results are presented in an easily comprehensible manner through a number of clearly structured graphs, which facilitates readers' understanding.

2. Description of the applicant's contributions and their classification.

One of the important contributions of the thesis is the overview of the development and current state of ELT in Albania with a special focus on the teaching of ESP at higher education institutions.

The dissertation also demonstrates that the candidate has in-depth theoretical knowledge about the recent developments in the field of ELT, ESP and the CLIL methodology and its applications.

The main contribution points in the dissertation are the explication of the necessity for the introduction of new approaches to the teaching of ESP in Albania and the experimental introduction of the CLIL methodology in the teaching of business English and its positive results, which come to prove that leaving behind the traditional ELT methodology at this level and the introduction of more up-to-date techniques such as CLIL are necessary steps to be taken by both the decision-makers and the teachers at Albanian universities.

And last but not least, the analysis has been carried out with precision, with attention to detail, and approaches the issue from all possible perspectives.

3. Assessment of the degree of personal participation of the author in the contributions.

Although she relies on previous publications on the problem, the candidate uses them skillfully to support the new analyses and conclusions. Getting into even the smallest details of the data shows that the author has put in a lot of efforts and worked independently.

4. Assessment of the correspondence between the extended abstract and the main points and contributions of the dissertation.

The extended abstract reflects clearly and accurately the content of the dissertation and its contributions.

Impacts of the dissertation on the external environment.

1. Evaluation of the publications on the dissertation: number, nature of the journals in which they are published.

Seven publications, most of which concern individual aspects of the dissertation, are indicated. Two of them are co-authored. All publications are in English and are in international editions. This demonstrates interest in the topic developed by the candidate in the last four years. Besides, the candidate has participated in eleven conferences.

2. Citations by other authors, reviews in the scientific press, etc.

No citations have been reported by the candidate.

Personal qualities of the author (if the reviewer knows them).

I have no personal impressions.

Opinions, recommendations, and notes.

- Firstly, **Part II. Theoretical background** dwells extensively on the development of ELT, English as a *lingua franca* and EGP and contains information that is, in the meantime, common knowledge not only among specialists. In other words, it is unnecessarily detailed and long. The same holds true for **CHAPTER III: ESP theories**. The description of the ELT teaching situation in Albania contains some repetitions, e.g., the last paragraph on p. 18.
- Secondly, it is not clear how the subtopic **1.3.3 The impact of English as a Global Language, in Albanian Language** on p. 20 relates to the main topic of the dissertation.
- Overall, there are too many subheadings (up to four), which has a negative effect on the text flow.

Conclusion with a clearly formulated positive or negative assessment of the dissertation.

My overall assessment of Eda Cauli's dissertation, extended abstract and publications is positive. The candidate is a promising scholar and practitioner in her field. The dissertation contains mainly applied contributions in the practice of ESP teaching by implementing a CLIL approach and, in particular, in designing courses and materials for Business English. The structure and content of the submitted dissertation and abstract fully meet the requirements of the LDASRB and the regulations for its implementation at NBU. This gives me a reason to propose that the educational and scientific degree "PhD" be awarded to Eda Cauli in the Area of Higher Education: 1. Education Sciences, Professional Field: 1.3. Pedagogy of Education in ... (Subject Area: Methodology of English Language Teaching).

Date: 10.02.2023

Signature: Prof. Irena Vassileva, PhD