Language as a Tool Empowering Students to be Independent in Sociocultural Environment

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Abstract

Thesis. The aim of the research is to confirm the role of language as a tool empowering school students to act independently in educational activities and sociocultural environment. This can be achieved by encouraging students to actively participate in educational activities, to learn a language and other academic subjects without any direct input.

Methods. The article is based on a scientific literature analysis and monitoring at one of the language integrated learning centres. It studies discussed hereof showcase the importance of language integration and a broader understanding of teaching students the basics of language skills.

Results. The analysis shows language skills are a result (synthesis) of abilities and competencies combined by different disciplines and programmes. It is directly related to the methods, measures, situations and environments employed in educational activities. The studies discussed hereof showcase the importance of language integration and a broader understanding of teaching students the basics of language skills.

Conclusion. Based on the research results it is possible to distinguish language as an independent learning tool. This is proven by such student skills as high motivation and inclusion; courage and self-confidence; ability to analyse, reason and summarise information; openness to learning; independence; curiosity; focus and concentration. The comparison of the data and the literature analysis allow concluding that this is one of the most resultative methods to develop the language skills of students in an integrated way.

Key words: sociocultural environment, language learning, language integrated learning, primary school students

Introduction

Language (communication) skills are very important to every individual as they are the cornerstone of further successful learning. Language learning should be perceived in a broader sense, encompassing both native language skills and the key learning strategy (Jakavonytė-Staškuvienė, 2011). *According to the phenomenologist Algis Mickūnas*, "the way we speak reflects our world" (2014, p. 16) This researcher has confirmed that philosophically the Lithuanian language is different and does not speak of something; instead, it is focused on a specific object. Isabelle Vinatier (2020) claims that it is the verbal interplay that is the key factor of our communication, environment cognition and inclusion. Language skills are assessed as competencies rather than knowledge of the subject, and these competencies empower the individual to be self-sufficient irrespective of the surrounding environment (van den Akker, 2006). Even though education programmes are constantly updated, academic achievements should be integrated with social competencies. Integrated curriculum and language learning have the most important goal of instilling general and key academic competencies. The learning of the curriculum subject is the main focus while language learning and teaching serve as a way to deepen the respective competencies (Reys et al., 2003). The present-day tempo of life and the rapidly advancing technologies (computers, mobile phones and the Internet) obligate one to reconsider the key reading competencies which are vital to every learner (Fayol, 2005).

The language learning and teaching system documents (Council of Europe, 2001, 2018) of the European Commission reflect a strong change in the concept of curriculum, which may be defined differently; however, with respect to the education theories analysing the respective object, the concept of curriculum in the education process is usually perceived as the entirety of all the experiences gained during the learning (education) process (Kelly, 2009). When the concept of curriculum is used, the logical sequence of planned educational activities and the deep comprehension of a subject are outlined. The curriculum may encompass the planned interaction of students with the learning content, materials, resources and processes, related to the implementation of the education goals. The development of a child's personality in this contemporary and complex world of constant change and movement is quite controversial and demanding in terms of more and more integration and inclusion of several educational aspects.

The object of the research is language as a tool of independent learning.

The goal of the study is to analyse the integrated language learning methods empowering students to be proactive in a sociocultural environment.

Research objectives constitute:
- to reveal the concept of language integrated learning;
- to discuss the aspects of a curriculum in which language integrated learning is perceived as a tool to be proactive;

- to highlight and summarise the harmony of the sociocultural environment and learning motivation.

The methods used in the study are content analysis of the scientific literature and case study.

Concept of Language Integrated Learning

The main ideas of holistic education approach, teaching and learning are related to constructivism and especially to social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1997). This theory assigns the active role to the education process and human activities. Lew Vygotsky (1933, 1997) claims that language transforms into speaking to oneself and highlights that language influences cognitive development and metacognition. In other words, the holistic worldview of the 21st century and the holistic approach impact the school community in the way that the constructivist approach to cognition generates added value. Both the personal holistic concept and the idea of sociocultural and interdisciplinary integration are equally important. This deep approach influences the education forms and methods employed in the curriculum and the teaching and learning process. The recommendations of Peter Senge (2012) should be taken note of when analysing the paradigmatic differences of didactics with respect to teaching and learning (in schools). The said researcher suggests how to negate the shortcomings of mechanical and industrial schools, where education is set in stone, only the procedural and action-related achievements are taken into account and the personality of a learner is entirely forgotten. These ideas undoubtedly belong to the concept of holistic reality. Comprehensive integration of the curriculum results in cognition of sociocultural context, wholesome or holistic worldview and meaningful learning. An environment that is suitable for learning and a system for aiding the student are created. The strategy of learning through cooperation, the collaboration of teachers and their cooperation with students and their parents in discussing the education objectives, activities and evaluation system become prominent.

Language integrated learning also serves to implement the curriculum plan. The school is the one to make the decision on how many hours per week or trimester (term) will be dedicated to language integrated learning activities or lessons. Such factors as classroom preparation, complexity of the subject and variety of methods and measures should be taken into account. The duration of content and language integrated learning may vary from a single lesson to a lesson cycle consisting of a single or several course units. The teachers employing this method plan various activities related to the chosen subject. The figure below is an illustration of the relation between different skills and competencies that are related to the main topic in one way or the other. An integrated curriculum may be developed in many different ways but all of them differ in terms of synthesis of the integration

of two precisely planned subjects. This is more related to interdisciplinary learning in terms of philosophical concept of the curriculum.
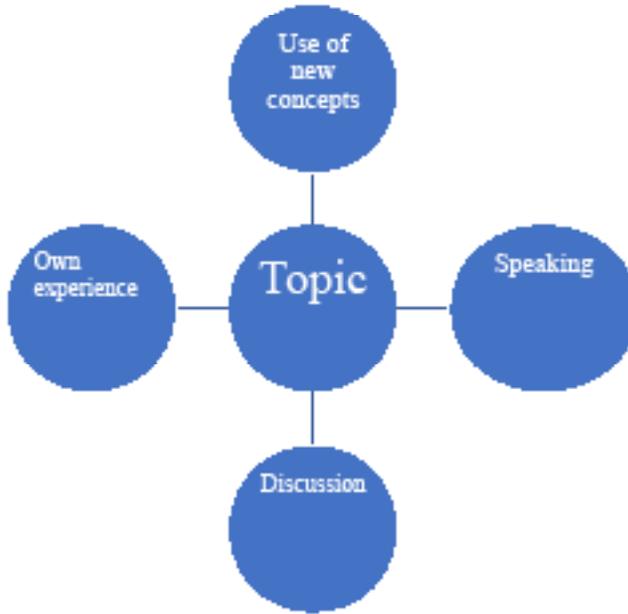

Fig. 1. Curriculum Integration for Language Learning in Educational Activities

Source: own research.

Reading, writing and verbal communication skills are equally important and must be developed alongside language skills. All educational subjects have the same uniting aspect. This method is used to understand the connection between different skills and their relation to the real world as in how much those skills are truly used. The synthesis between the subject and the skills is considered the key principle (Thomas-Lester, 2001). It should also be noted that the following tools must be employed in the educational activities of language integrated learning:
- verbal communication;
- discussion;
- linking information to own experiences.

One of the more popular ways of combining curriculums is the development of the same integral skills during activities of different subjects. Several different methods must be employed in this case. In primary school, students most often perceive an entire process and remember the topic rather than the separate subjects. For example, the analysis of the topic of the Solar System enables the students to learn new words, understand concepts,

discuss the topic and gain experiences. The content of this topic encompasses three separate subjects: language learning, natural science and mathematics. By participating in the lesson, the students analyse the content of natural sciences and mathematics while at the same time developing and improving their language skills.

The studies revealed that the planning of topic-based education activities is more inherent in those teachers who know the curriculum well and apply it in practice. Some teachers take care to select the topic that might be suitable for content and language integrated learning. Teachers define this task as a "reflectively analysed topic." Three or more subjects, with language learning being the main one, are usually combined. The following are the aspects of applying the curriculum:

- proactive, motivated and independent work by students;
- cooperation;
- teamwork planning;
- work presentation methods and discussion;
- students present their works or projects using various communication methods and tools;
- students show deep comprehension of the topic (they can relate the topic to their own experiences, analyse what they have learned and see that they have learned it, give reasons for the achieved result).

Such a concept of the curriculum required the planning of educational activities encompassing several subjects and/or methodical areas of the general education programme. One or several topics of each subject is used to highlight the interdisciplinary skills and to enable the memorisation and use of concepts. The subject itself is recognised but is not the focus of the matter. Figure 2 presents the interdisciplinary language learning method during lessons of other subjects.
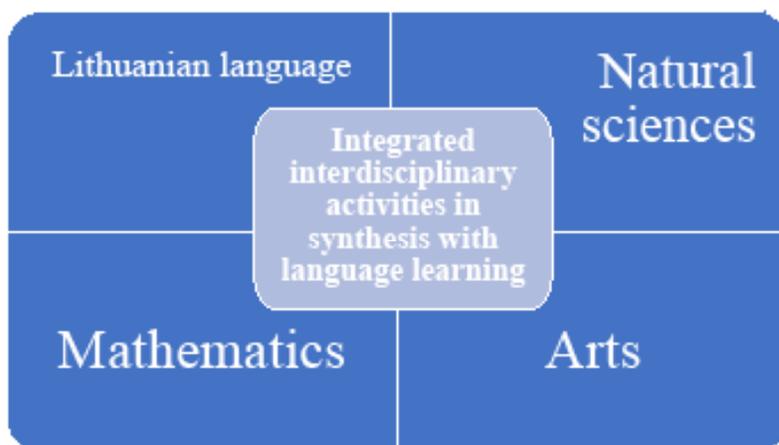

Fig. 2. Synthesis of Curriculum-integrated Subjects
Source: adapted from The Good School Concept (2015).

The integrated curriculum makes use of methods for topic analysis, insight into various subjects, understanding of their content and integration of these ideas into a more detailed and consecutive analysis system (Woods, 2007). The completed researches revealed that integrated curriculum is the same, i.e., it encompasses a broad spectrum of academic and practical matters that are necessary to develop the understanding of learning and society. Structural knowledge, including both the actual knowledge (facts) and the procedural knowledge (processing information) is important. Each form of knowledge is needed to solve complex problems. This type of learning allows the student to learn how to combine ideas and concepts in different subjects. As a result, the students can apply the knowledge gained in one subject in an entirely different discipline as a method of deepening the learning experience (Jones, 2010). The most effective interdisciplinary research method allows the students to develop their own interdisciplinary path by choosing meaningful activities (Jones, 2010). For example, it is not that difficult to find a topic which would traverse the subjects of literature, art and history or natural sciences and mathematics. Analysing the topic is one of the methods to unite ideas, making language learning more meaningful in this case.

Assumptions Helping to Use the Curriculum in Planning Language Integrated Learning Activities

The modern society believes childhood to be heavily affected by technologies, in other words, technologised. The daily activities of children are all based on technological devices that empower them to be self-sufficient. Children see the world of technologies a bit differently than adults. They see it fragmented and divided into separate parts that are assessed as either challenging or pleasant (Tapscott, 1998). The children of this generation are also called digital natives (Prensky, 2001). They have different and ever-changing experiences and give many challenges to their parents, teachers and childhood specialists. The generation of digital natives often has poor vocabulary and pronunciation problems but they make up for it with their high cognitive skills. Even though language learning phenomenon in children is still taking root in Lithuania, foreign researchers present their works on how to help children to start learning how to read and write. Inspired by certain factors, children can concentrate and demonstrate language skills (Berson & Berson, 2010), especially showcasing cooperation, communication, independence and self-confidence skills.

Based on the studies carried out in France and the decision passed by the Government to modernise the services rendered by educational institutions and to help teachers to gain modern method application skills, the key goal was to improve education results and the emotional wellbeing

of children by encouraging and instilling self-confidence. The second challenge the reform had to tackle was the improvement of reading skills. The school strategic plans describe special methods that develop personal learning strategies, including speed reading. However, learning is impossible without the proactive approach of the learner. The definition of "proactive approach" in this statement firstly means intense thinking endeavours as the connections between neurons are mostly activated when thinking (Matthews et al., 2014). Successful learning is conditioned by the applied methods.

Educational environment is becoming the primary source of formal or non-formal socialisation. Not every child can take in new information if it is boring or unsuitably presented. Thus, high motivation is an incitement helping to start liking reading, writing, counting or improving language skills. These main skills are developed as early as possible in France as it has been proven that good motivation empowers children to learn and use the available information. According to Petter Matthews, Simon Rea, Robert Hill, and Qing Gu (2014), the teachers have to first renounce any preconceptions that the ongoing process is not productive. The research carried out to find out the effectiveness of the education systems aims to show the peculiar perception of the quality of the activities held by classes and schools. This phenomenon is based on evidence that students are directly affected by economic and social processes going on inside the schools and classrooms. According to the researchers, teachers and educational institutions should not focus only on increasing efficiency or improving certain results. The final research result is dependent on student motivation and intake of the content. Such researchers have their own statistical model to assess school effectiveness and to make assumptions on how to improve the entire process. Student motivation and language skills are among the main self-assessment aspects in an educational institution.

Table 1
Presumptions Encouraging Active Learning Motivation in Children

Presumptions encouraging active learning motivation in children	1) All students can succeed. 2) Primary school serves to introduce to one's possibilities in life. 3) Innovative and consecutive learning. 4) Education content is child-oriented.
	5) Effective learning methods accessible to all children. 6) Student training and activities that help to improve leadership skills.
	7) United school community seeking improvement. 8) Innovative teachers with leadership traits. 9) Quality-oriented education system.

Source: adapted from Matthews et al. (2014).

Significant language learning (Zhou & Fink, 2003) occurs when the child gains meaningful and long-term experience. The education process is perceived as meaningful and significant when teachers provide the conditions for the children to develop various skills (Zhou & Fink, 2003). The following are the education process elements that affect the significance of learning, provided that each of them is an aspect of integrated learning in sociocultural environment:

- basic knowledge: acquiring information and understanding ideas;
- application: understanding when and how to use the respective skills;
- integration: ability to combine ideas;
- human dimension: acknowledgement of the consequences of social and personal questions;
- compassion: acknowledgement of the role of feelings, interests and values;
- reflection and learning from the environment: gaining insights into the education process.

Language integrated curriculum encourages the acquisition of fundamental knowledge, integration of ideas from various disciplines and the gaining of knowledge of how to apply what the students have learned, which leads to understanding of how to learn. Thus, for the major part, the integrated curriculum structure complies with the key learning aspects. The student activities should be of sociocultural nature as it is the most effective method to understand the analysed topics.

Integrated curriculum also promotes the understanding that students can learn in a variety of ways. Famous psychologist Robert Gardner (1983) determines that students use at least several different learning and information memorisation types during the education process. In consideration of the differences in people, their own learning styles and different education, interests, experience, talents and values, Gardner (1983) believes that broad use of systems and methods could increase the participation of students and their proactive language learning.

The Need for Language Skills in Sociocultural Environment

Scientific research has proven language to be an empowering phenomenon that encourages people to look for additional media combining economic, humanistic and sociocultural aspects of language learning and teaching and education programmes. All of this can be implemented on local, national and international levels (Phillipson, 2006). Language integrated learning and teaching go well with the approach stating that being fluent in one's native language or a foreign language is the key factor in work/studies and creative industries. This language planning initiative is determined by social, economic and logical explanation, also known as

the linguistic marketplace requirements (Bourdieu, 1991) and the needs of international nature. Language quality and clear use is the goal of this approach and is treated as a verbal interaction (Vinatier, 2020). Verbal interaction is a binary phenomenon as it is based on didactic language elements and personal traits. Verbal interaction in the education process has the following advantages: maintaining holistic education ideas, improving cognitive perception, promoting linguistic variety, and empowering to act independently (Byram & Beacco, 2007). These factors are the most important to intercultural development and learning society (Cavalli et al., 2009). The European Commission (2018) defines that the ability to show empathy (be tolerant) when perceiving and assessing the sociocultural environment improves communication and interpersonal competencies along with the didactic skills and develops an authentic personality with leadership traits, which is the basis of a sociocultural environment (Doye & Hurrell, 1997). The studies of the intercultural and multilinguistic sociocultural environment revealed five key language use levels that are modelled based on the respective curriculum level (Thijs & van den Akker, 2009):

- SUPRA. International context aimed at looking for and developing an instrument or an international agreement that reflects the current data and international studies.
- MACRO. National or regional context focused on adapting the curriculum to resolve the state o region-specific problems, with respect to general recommendations. Education standards and specific strategic goals are scheduled.
- MESO. Institutional or school level, where the curriculum is implemented with respect to the national or regional agreement/plan.
- MICRO. Classroom, education group and education process level, where synthesis between the applied methods and measures and the implementation of the set goals is the most important.
- NANO. Personal level, where the personal experience (context), individual progress and autonomy are observed.

To attain a consecutive curriculum, the focus is given to MESO and MICRO levels as they are the ones responsible for implementing the linguistic policy. However, all of these levels must be united by the educational philosophy paradigm and sociocultural aspects.

The table above is an illustration of the curriculum level elements. A total of ten elements are distinguished consisting of the following: goals, methods, implementation, planning, measures, activity planning and assessment areas. The elements are distributed to their typical levels. The elements of goals, specific targets and content are categorised as MACRO (international level). Most of the elements (methods and activities, activity location, time, education sources, teacher's role, cooperation), however, are grouped as MICRO (classroom level) and MESO (school level). Assessment is distinguished from others and assigned to NANO (personal) level. The

main goal of the curriculum is the synthesis of these elements and levels from SUPRA (international) to NANO (personal) level.

Table 2
Consecutive Curriculum Planning Elements

Elements		Typical level
1) Main goals	What are the learning goals of the learners?	MACRO (national, regional)
2) Specific targets/ competencies	What goals are set?	
3) Content	What needs to be learned?	
4) Methods and activities	How will the students learn?	MICRO (classroom, education group) and MESO (school)
5) Activity location and grouping	Where and with whom will the students learn?	
6) Time	When will the students learn? For how long?	
7) Sources and measures	What measures will be used for learning?	
8) Teacher's role	How will the teachers plan, promote and adapt the education process?	
9) Cooperation (interaction)	What type of cooperation between teachers is needed to make learning easier?	
10) Assessment	How are progress and gained competencies assessed?	From NANO (personal) to SUPRA (international)

Source: adapted from van den Akker (2006).

The key linguistic skill development aspects applied in the curriculum of the Francophone Studies Center are based on the following:
- visual tools (thinking maps, diagrams, thinking caps);
- personality and trait development (traits, attitudes, preconceptions, thinking habits);
- thinking skills (open and target use of cognitive skills);
- learning via cooperation (cooperation between student pairs, groups, schools or international networks);
- reflective questioning (higher-level questions and listening skills);
- education environment adaptation (adaptation of physical spaces and resource use).

The need for skills in the labour market is constantly changing. Life demands that specialists renew their competencies or gain new ones as the ones they had before might no longer be compliant with the new living and working standards. According to the studies carried out by the World Economic Forum and the forecasts of 2016 regarding on-demand

working skills, the need for cognitive skills will grow the most (by as many as 52%). Cognitive skills encompass cognitive flexibility, creativity, logical reasoning, problem identification, mathematical reasoning and visualisation. According to the research on the most wanted future employee skills carried out by World Economic Forum (2016), critical thinking is one of the three most important skills to have in the future labour market.

The goal of the teachers is to prepare students for the future ahead and to grant them the basic skills that they will need to succeed. The presented future on-demand skill data can help to estimate how the students should be educated starting with primary school. The traditional education model is used too frequently by the teachers. The students try to memorise the given information and to adapt their knowledge during examinations. According to Eric Jensen (2001), our brains are not wired to such traditional textbook memorisation. Instead, the education process should involve all the senses of sight, hearing and kinesthetics. The traditional education methods rarely stimulate the brain enough (Jensen, 2001). The best educational progress is made when various "channels" are used.

To summarise the analysed educational and psychological material and international documents, it could be said that a significant change in the curriculum development and application on international level is seen. The key ideas behind these changes are to direct knowledge and skills towards the development of competencies and to include different sociocultural environments. These principles will help to attain didactic and social goals of competency development. The most advanced language integrated learning models and education systems were reviewed. The theoretic analysis revealed that the concept of language is based on verbal interaction which empowers students to be independent in different sociocultural environments.

Research Methods

Qualitative research was carried out. Interpretive paradigm is typical to such studies. According to Kęstutis Kardelis, "interpretive paradigm analyses the individual, the subjective world of human experience, and attempts to understand the man from inside" (Kardelis, 2007, p. 32). A case study, which is a method of qualitative research, was employed to find out the possibilities of language integrated learning in different sociocultural environments.

The data collection tools for the qualitative research were observation and semi-structured interviews. The reference book provides the following definition:

Observation is a method of data collection which helps the researcher to gather the primary data. By observing, the researcher perceives the variety of interaction that the respondents do not mention (either in avoidance or failure to comprehend it) and receives a comprehensive view of the analyzed problem. (Bitinas et al., 2008, p. 181)

As a research method, observation has certain benefits and is convenient. One can observe the respondents directly one by one or in a group. The observation is also not dependent on the preconceptions of the respondents. The educational activity observation protocol developed at Warwick University was used during the observation. This type of observation was chosen due to the goal to observe a specific phenomenon, i.e. verbal interaction. The observation was carried out both under natural and preplanned conditions. Observation is defined as a purposefully planned process with the goal to substantiate the hypothesis of verbal interaction and reply to the research questions.

The observation was carried out in 2019 during the Linguistics Week held by the Francophone Studies Center. The key goal of the Linguistics Week was the active use of language with the help of sociocultural environment. Thus, certain objects were visited and work assignments were given. The observation reports to be later analysed using qualitative methods were completed based on this data. The observation object was chosen consciously with respect to the fact that the French education system has one of the most advanced language integrated learning systems that uses sociocultural environment.

Semi-structured interview is another research data collection method focused on finding out the opinion and experience of teachers in integrated activity planning and language teaching via sociocultural environment. A total of four interviews with teachers who prepared educational activities were held. The interview included questions as the main tool. The questions were formulated based on the references analysed in the theoretical part. The questions were related to the research objectives and were construed based on the definitions, concepts and studies by Dan Jacob Long and David Carlson (2011) and other researchers.

Table 3

Summarised Plan of Language Integrated Learning Week and Educational Activities

Plan of language integrated learning week and educational activities				
Activi-ties	Topics	Didactic elements	Competencies	Methods
4 activities (2 days)	A trip from Lithuania to Southern France.	Vocabulary expansion. Detailed explanation of concepts	Cognitive, communication.	Conversation. Discussion. Custom assignments, reflection.
6 activities (3 days)	What new reflections has the current environment given me?	Creation of cohesive text, reasoned / empathetic structuring of thoughts.	Cognitive, communication, social, creativity.	Project activities. A tour, investigation of natural and social environment, reflection.
4 activities (2 days)	How is this environment special? Famous creators in the region.	Text and content analysis, understanding, analysis of figurative meaning. Formulation of own insights	Social, creativity, personal.	Analysis of poetry, poetry reading, deep reflection. Relating information to modern society problems.
4 activities (2 days)	Personal creative powers: what are my special traits?	Self-observation of linguistic skills, verbal interaction, information acceptance, communication and cooperation.	Creativity, learning how to learn.	Visiting of places of interest. Creative writing assignment.
2 activities (1 day)	What am I bringing back to Lithuania?	Summation, analysis of personal experience. Giving meaning to experiences and relating them to daily life.	Personal.	Diary. Reflection in a small group. Discussion in a large group.

Source: own research.

The table presents the plan of educational activities of language integrated learning week. The number and duration of activities are indicated in the plan. The integrated activity topics are presented. Their duration was different with respect to the depth of the topic which required more time. Didactic elements are also included, i.e., the didactic goal which is related to the instilled competencies. The methods applied in the activities are indicated. These methods also show activity integration and language skill improvement.

Table 4

Opinion of Teachers on Linguistic Manifestation During Proactive Student Activities

Category	Subcategory	Statement
Language integrated learning	Manifestation of language skills of students	"(…) independent thinking, based on broad understanding of the subjects and creative approach instead of simple repeating of facts. Such students boldly say what they think, ask questions and wish to find out the meaning" (respondent no. 1); "(…) such students usually look pensive and are able to process replies; they are interested in and gather information from various sources. When answering, these students often substantiate their responses. They can listen to another and are empathetic" (respondent no. 2); "(…) critical thinking manifests when children can evaluate the opinion of others and different opinions and can summarise information. One of the most important things is that they are creators and are capable of creating" (respondent no. 3); "(…) proactiveness, curiosity, ability to analyse, assess and make a choice" (respondent no. 4).
	Measures promoting the development of language skills	"(…) following the viewing of videos or other visual material, the students have many questions and wish to express their opinion, compared to verbal explanation" (respondent no. 1); "(…) the use of thinking maps in lessons strongly activates critical thinking. Also, it is helpful when activities are planned in a way that allows the students to choose the location, measures and time of activity themselves. Various projects are also a great help" (respondent no. 2); "(…) when they are allowed to choose the assignments or the way to complete them. Context lessons and trips. Various visual measures" (respondent no. 3); "(…) active methods, various visual materials, creative and project assignments" (respondent no. 4).
	Skills of proactive students	"(…) constantly questioning, have the ability to discuss, think over and assess the lesson activity, can present own thinking map" (respondent no. 1); "(…) empathetic, not afraid, able to help others, curious" (respondent no. 2); "(…) self-confident, creative, problem-solving, open to constant learning" (respondent no. 3); "(…) students who have critical thinking are skilled in various subjects and more self-independent, compared to their peers" (respondent no. 4); "(…) not afraid and curious" (respondent no. 2); "(…) students who can focus and concentrate. Also students who are responsible and do not overstep the line" (respondent no. 4).

Source: own research.

The data collected during the interview with teachers were analysed in Table 4, with respect to the succession of the questions. The first part of the interview was focused on finding out the opinion of the respondents about language integrated learning. The following questions were given: "How do language skills of students manifest?"; "What measures mostly reveal language as a tool encouraging proactiveness?"; "What skills do proactive students have?". A single category of "Language integrated learning" with three interrelated subcategories was formed based on these questions. The first subcategory involved the manifestation of language skills in students. The majority of teachers agreed that such students had creative skills, analytical thinking, the ability to reason and summarise information and to be bold. The second subcategory questioned which measures promoted the development of language skills. All teachers mentioned visual measures (videos, thinking maps, etc.). Other measures included project activities, contextual lessons and development of self-sufficiency, non-traditional spaces and different sociocultural environments. The third subcategory was related to the skills held by proactive students. The teachers accentuated curiosity, courage, independence, creativity, self-confidence and openness to learning.

To summarise the signs of language education noticed by teachers in student behaviour, the following groups can be differentiated: high motivation, inclusion; courage and self-confidence; ability to analyse, reason and summarise information; openness to learning; self-independence; curiosity; focus and concentration of attention.

Observation of Educational Activities

The table below presents the summarised data proving the active use of language, based on the observed activity reports. The table has been prepared on the basis of qualitative research data analysis. The following three sections are used: object (skills of students; measures and methods increasing student motivation); traits and factors (detailing the skills, environments and experiences); and illustrating statements. Active language use is observed in synthesis ranging from student skills, employed measures and environments to active language use and proactiveness in educational activities.

Table 5

Traits and Factors Signifying Active Language Use

Object	Traits and factors	Illustrations and observed activity illustrations
Skills of students	Proactiveness Creativity Independence Curiosity Analytical thinking Resilience Focus Motivation Logical thinking Ability to make connections Ability to memorise information Ability to process information Ability to study, analyse and make primary conclusions	"(…) when they do not know what to do next, they ask nearby children for help" (respondent no. 2); "(…) boldly say that they do not understand even after the teacher explains it for the second time" (respondent no. 8); "(…) I think of a poster topic: the child is happy, stands up and claps, encouraging others to 'think simple' because he had an idea when he saw the flask note" (respondent no. 1); "(…) when they cannot recall a word, they go back to the material or the thinking map and check it…" (respondent no. 8); "(...) when asked a question, the student cannot answer" "(...) the teacher says that everything is ok and that sometimes more time is needed to think," "(...) the student calms down and answers the questions after several seconds of reasoning" (respondent no. 2); "(...) asks one another how they did it" (respondent no. 6); "(...) investigates the map curiously and upon seeing a larger map nearby (on the information board, author's note) chooses to work with the latter" (respondent no. 5).
Measures and methods increasing student motivation	Environment Experiential learning Learning through the senses Visualisation and association Systemisation of information Cooperation and teamwork	"(…) visit famous locations in Southern France" (respondent no. 2); "(…) take photos and enjoy nature, use social media and share photos" (respondent no. 1, respondent no. 2, respondent no. 4, respondent no. 5, respondent no. 6, respondent no. 8); "(...) when telling how they feel, mention that they want to go back here with their families" (respondent no. 1, respondent no. 3, respondent no. 4).

Source: adapted from observation activity reports.

Based on the concept of active language use, such student skills as proactiveness, independence, creativity, curiosity, resilience, analytical thinking, logical thinking, focus and motivation manifest. Other student skills include the ability to make connections between different traits (based on thinking processes), the ability to memorise and process information, and the ability to study, analyse and make conclusions. With respect to the

described language integrated learning measures and methods, several key aspects with the largest impact may be distinguished. One of these aspects is the environment promoting active language use. It is reducing and based on visual information. Critical thinking is encouraged by experiential learning when students experience everything for themselves while working together in a team. Visualisation, association and information systemisation are also among the factors inducing critical thinking.

Conclusion

The analysis of scientific literature, research data and documents reveal that curriculum integration is defined in various ways; however, the synthesis of interdisciplinary skills that helps to perceive deeper learning meaning and significance is the key factor in all analysed sources. Based on the observed activity analysis and interview data, project activities, where children cooperate and plan their activities on their own, are the most popular ones. Various tools targeted at presenting the achieved results are also employed. The presentations of such activities are based on reflection. Deep reflection is necessary to summarise such activities. Based on the carried-out research, it is possible to distinguish language as an independent learning tool that empowers students to be proactive in sociocultural environment. This is proven by such student skills as high motivation and inclusion; courage and self-confidence; ability to analyse, reason and summarise information; openness to learning; independence; curiosity; focus and concentration. The comparison of this data and literature analysis allows making the conclusion that this is one of the most resultative methods to develop language skills of students in an integrated way.

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