Revolutionizing English Language Instruction for Special Education Students through Engaging and Meaningful Experiences

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Abstract

Inclusive education is crucial for modern development, emphasizing the need for educators and policymakers to support equitable access for all students, including those with special needs and English language learners. One notable approach is Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), which merges language instruction with subject content. This study reviews the application of CLIL for students with intellectual disabilities, focusing on its effectiveness in improving language skills, content comprehension, and engagement. The findings reveal that CLIL enhances linguistic abilities while also fostering cognitive, social, and emotional development through collaborative teaching, visual media, and hands-on activities. Furthermore, CLIL is seen as a means to create a more adaptive and inclusive learning environment. To optimize CLIL's implementation in special education contexts, the study recommends enhancing teacher training, ensuring adequate learning resources, and encouraging further research in this area.

Keywords: children with special needs; contextual learning; English language skills; inclusive education; social-emotional development

1. Introduction

Education is a right for every individual, including students with special needs such as the Mentally Disabled. Learning Special Material for Self-Development is a very important part in meeting their learning needs. One aspect that is inseparable from education is learning English. English is not just an ordinary subject, but also an important communication skill in everyday life. Therefore, integrating English language learning for students with special needs and intellectual disabilities is an urgent need. Students with special needs are often faced with various challenges in learning English. These challenges can include difficulties in understanding the material, limitations in communicating, as well as obstacles in expressing oneself verbally. In this context, conventional approaches to English language learning may not be effective enough to meet their learning needs. Therefore, a revolution is needed in English learning methods for students with special needs, which allows them to be more actively involved and gain meaningful learning experiences (DeMatthews et al., 2014).

Through an innovative and experience-oriented approach, English learning for students with special needs can be revolutionized into something more interesting and meaningful. By paying attention to the uniqueness and individual needs of each student, we can create learning experiences that motivate, enrich, and empower them in developing their English language

skills. In a broader context, the revolution in English language learning for students with special needs is not just about improving the teaching and learning process, but also about providing equal opportunities for them to develop and succeed in the field of English. Thus, concrete steps need to be taken to provide inspiring, supportive and enriching learning experiences for students with special needs and intellectual disabilities (Klingner et al., 2014).

Revolutionizing English Language Instruction for special education students through engaging and meaningful experiences is a progressive step in supporting the vision of educational inclusion for all individuals, including students with special needs. With the right and comprehensive approach, we can create a supportive, inclusive and empowering learning environment for them. Therefore, it is important for us to continue to develop innovative learning strategies and methods, so that every student with special needs can reach their full potential in learning English (Batchelder et al., 2023).

Introducing CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) as an innovative approach to learning Special Material for Self Development in English (getting to know everyday life). CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) is a learning approach that integrates language learning with content or other subject matter, such as science, art, or history. This approach not only allows students to acquire strong English language skills, but also to understand the lesson content in greater depth. CLIL provides opportunities for students with special needs and intellectual disabilities to learn English while understanding daily life and the context around them.

In the context of learning Special Material for Self Development, CLIL is a very relevant and effective method. By integrating English with content relevant to everyday life, students with special needs can develop their language skills in a natural and enjoyable way. For example, through learning about everyday activities such as shopping, cooking, or communicating with other people, students can learn English while understanding important concepts in everyday life. In addition, CLIL also provides opportunities for students with special needs to engage in experience-based learning. By presenting content that is relevant and interesting to them, English learning becomes more meaningful and motivating (O'Connor, 2019). Students can experience success in understanding and using English in the context of everyday life, which in turn increases their self-confidence and motivation to learn. Through the application of CLIL in learning Special Material for Self-Development in English, we can create a holistic, inclusive and meaningful learning experience for students with special needs. By combining English language learning with relevant and engaging content, CLIL opens the door to deeper and more sustainable learning possibilities for students. Therefore, it is important for educators and policy makers to consider the use of CLIL as an innovative approach in supporting English language learning for students with intellectual disabilities.

In the context of the English language learning revolution for students with special needs through the CLIL approach, this research aims to achieve several important goals. First, this research will examine the effectiveness of CLIL in improving the English language skills of students with special needs, especially the Mentally Impaired. By observing and analyzing learning outcomes from implementing CLIL, we can evaluate the extent to which this approach can have a positive impact on the English language skills of students with special needs (Korucu-Kış, 2021).

Additionally, the second aim of this study was to identify the interesting and meaningful experiences that CLIL offers to students with special needs. By collecting data about student responses, learning experiences, and their perceptions of learning with the CLIL approach, we can understand more deeply how students with special needs respond to this learning method. This will help us to identify the elements that are most effective and interesting for students in the context of learning English with CLIL.

Lastly, the purpose of this study is to provide recommendations for practice, policy, and future research directions for the effective implementation of CLIL for students with special needs. By analyzing research findings and collected data, we can develop concrete and sustainable recommendations to improve the quality of English language learning for students with special needs through CLIL (Al Khasawneh et al., 2021). These recommendations may include practical guidelines for educators, policy recommendations for educational institutions, as well as research directions that can be carried out to continue to develop and improve the implementation of CLIL in the context of inclusive education for students with special needs and intellectual disabilities. Thus, it is hoped that this research can provide a valuable contribution in advancing inclusive education and meaningful English language learning for all individuals.

LITERATURE REVIEW
A. CLIL Concept
a) Definition of CLIL and its main principles

A learning strategy called Integrated Learning of Content and Language (CLIL) places equal emphasis on the instructional language and the information being studied. Marsh et al. (2010) wrote that: "CLIL is a dual-focused method of education in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of content and language with the aim of promoting both content and language mastery to predefined levels". According to the statement, CLIL is a teaching methodology that emphasizes two areas of language learning: language that is utilized to teach and acquire new information, as well as language that is used to support material and language mastery at specific levels.

CLIL-Compedium aspects, which address concerns with language, learning, culture, and content, define CLIL goals. It is clear from this statement that the objectives of CLIL have to do with language, learning, culture, and the environment. Marsh (2010) identifies the four C components of CLIL as follows: (1) content (subject matter); (2) communication (language learning and utilizing); (3) cognition (learning and thinking processes); and (4) culture (building intercultural awareness and global citizenship). Learning is defined by the 4C components of CLIL, which hold that learning encompasses not just how pupils absorb the ideas or content being taught but also how they learn and think while creating knowledge. Additionally, in CLIL instruction, pupils are.

Marusic (2012) asserts that the integration of the 4C components content, communication, knowledge, and culture is the key to successful CLIL learning. (1) content, namely through improving comprehension, abilities, and knowledge of the subject. (2) Communication, that is, learning to use language and utilizing language to learn. (3) Cognition, specifically through the development of reasoning abilities that link language, comprehension, and abstract and concrete notions. (4) culture, specifically by providing fresh perspectives and exchanging knowledge to increase awareness of oneself and others (Levchyk, 2022).

b) Benefits of CLIL for students with special needs

Content Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is a learning approach that integrates language learning with other content or subject matter, such as science, art, or history. There are a number of significant benefits from implementing CLIL in education, especially for students with special needs such as the Mentally Impaired. First, CLIL helps improve students' English language skills effectively. By studying English in the context of different subjects, students have the opportunity to develop their language skills in a natural and integrated way. This not only strengthens their English language skills, but also allows them to understand the lesson content better. Second, CLIL provides an interesting and meaningful learning experience for students. By integrating English with content that is relevant to everyday life or

other interesting subject matter, students with special needs can engage in fun and meaningful learning. This helps increase their learning motivation and enriches their learning experience (Artiles & Ortiz, 2002).

Apart from that, CLIL also stimulates students' cognitive development. By studying English through diverse subject matter, students are faced with higher thinking demands, such as analysis, synthesis and problem solving. This helps improve their critical and creative thinking skills, as well as develop the cognitive abilities needed to learn more effectively. Lastly, CLIL helps improve students' cross-cultural understanding and global thinking abilities. By learning English in the context of diverse course content, students with special needs can develop a deeper understanding of different cultures and perspectives. This helps them become more open, tolerant individuals and ready to face challenges in an increasingly globally connected society.

c) Challenges and obstacles in implementing CLIL

Challenges and obstacles in implementing Content Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) may include several aspects that need to be considered carefully. One of the main challenges is the availability of adequate resources. Implementing CLIL requires the development of learning materials that integrate English and other learning content, as well as special training for educators to implement this approach effectively. Limited resources such as appropriate textbooks, relevant learning materials, and adequate training can be obstacles to implementing CLIL comprehensively.

Apart from that, another challenge in implementing CLIL is the readiness of educators to adapt new learning methods. The CLIL approach requires an integrated approach between English and course content, which may require changes in the way educators plan and deliver course material. Educators need to have a strong understanding of how to effectively integrate English with course content, as well as the skills to create meaningful learning experiences for students (Koraishi, 2023).

Apart from that, another obstacle that may be faced in implementing CLIL is the evaluation and assessment of learning outcomes. Measuring the effectiveness of CLIL in improving the English language skills of students with special needs can be a challenge, especially in determining appropriate and relevant evaluation methods. Educators need to ensure that the assessments used reflect student progress in both aspects of the English language and lesson content taught through the CLIL approach.

By being aware of the challenges and obstacles that may arise in the implementation of CLIL, educators and policy makers can prepare themselves well to overcome these obstacles. Intensive training, development of adequate resources, and ongoing support for educators can help overcome challenges in CLIL implementation and ensure success in providing meaningful learning experiences for students with special needs (Martha Betaubun et al., 2023).

2. Method

As Kitchenham (2004) notes, systematic literature reviews provide a robust framework for ensuring our research is grounded in solid evidence. Various previous studies have shown that implementing CLIL can be an effective approach in improving English language skills, understanding of lesson content, and the involvement of students with special needs in the learning process. The results of research by (Seymour, 2023) show that students have a better ability to understand lesson material and use English more fluently when learning is carried out through the CLIL approach. This shows that CLIL can provide significant benefits for the academic and language development of students with special needs

The identification of interesting and meaningful experiences reported in CLIL research highlights the positive aspects of implementing this approach. Apart from that, other research conducted by (Tuzlukova et al., 2023) stated that students with special needs reported having a more interesting, interactive and meaningful learning experience when learning was carried out using a CLIL approach. They engage in learning activities that are relevant to everyday life, interesting learning content, and deep learning experiences. These positive experiences help increase learning motivation, student engagement, and strengthen the connection between English and other course content.

Further research by (Adams & Hord, 2023) focused on developing appropriate evaluation methods to measure the effectiveness of CLIL in improving the English language skills and content understanding of students with special needs. In addition, in-depth studies of effective teaching strategies, the use of technology in CLIL implementation, and the influence of the learning environment on the learning outcomes of students with special needs in the CLIL context can be the focus of future research. Thus, further research on CLIL and students with special needs could provide valuable insights for improving the quality of inclusive education for all.

3. Findings and Discussion

A. CLIL Case

One example of the application of CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) to children with special needs can be found in a study conducted in Barcelona, Spain. This study looked at the application of CLIL to science learning in a class consisting of students with a variety of special educational needs, including autism spectrum disorders and learning difficulties. In this case, the teacher uses a collaborative approach in which two teachers, one specialist in science subjects and one in language teaching, work together to design and implement the curriculum. This approach ensures that science material is delivered in a way that is easy for all students to understand, while also promoting mastery of the English language (Sukyadi et al., 2023).

One of the strategies used is visual aids and hands-on activities, which help students understand complex science concepts. For example, when studying ecosystem topics, students are invited to leave the classroom to observe and interact directly with the surrounding environment, such as the school garden. This not only helps students understand the material better but also provides an opportunity for them to practice language skills in a real context. The research results show that this CLIL approach not only improves students' understanding of science material but also improves their language skills. Students with special needs show significant increases in their learning engagement and motivation.

The collaborative approach in CLIL, with an emphasis on the use of visual aids and hands-on activities, has proven effective in supporting the learning of students with special needs, enabling them to access a more inclusive and equitable curriculum.

B. The Role of CLIL can Revolutionize English Language Learning for Students with Special Needs

The application of CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) can revolutionize English language learning for students with special needs by providing a more integrative and contextual approach, which simultaneously improves language skills and understanding of academic content. This approach emphasizes language learning through subject content such as science, mathematics, or history, which makes students more engaged and motivated because they learn the language in a relevant and meaningful context (Nugraha et al., 2022).

One way CLIL is revolutionizing learning is through the use of a variety of adaptive teaching methods. Teachers can use visual aids, hands-on activities, and technology that supports visual and kinesthetics learning, which is especially beneficial for students with special needs such as autism or dyslexia. Studies in Barcelona show that students with autism spectrum disorders and learning difficulties show significant increases in engagement and motivation when they learn English in the context of science lessons delivered through the CLIL method (Khan, 2018).

In addition, collaboration between subject teachers and language teachers in the CLIL approach ensures that students receive maximum support in both aspects of learning: content and language. This collaborative approach allows for precise adaptation of teaching methods to individual student needs. Language teachers can focus on linguistic aspects, while subject teachers can ensure that academic content is delivered in a way that is easy to understand. This ensures that students not only learn English as a separate subject, but as a communication tool used in a variety of academic and real-life contexts.

The CLIL approach also improves the cognitive abilities of students with special needs. By learning a language in the context of complex academic content, students are invited to think critically, analyze, and solve problems. These skills are critical in their cognitive and academic development. For example, when students learn about ecosystems through CLIL, they not only learn new vocabulary in English, but also understand ecological concepts, interact with the environment, and develop their analytical thinking (Miller et al., 2023).

In addition to academic benefits, CLIL also provides social and emotional benefits. Learning in a collaborative and supportive environment helps students build self-confidence and social skills. They learn to work in teams, communicate with peers, and appreciate differences, all of which are important for their social and emotional development. The application of CLIL in English language learning for students with special needs offers a comprehensive and inclusive approach (G. Yaseen & S. Alnakeeb, 2023). By providing an adaptive, supportive, and meaningful learning environment, CLIL not only improves students' English language skills but also promotes their academic, cognitive, social, and emotional development, revolutionizing the way we approach inclusive education in the 21st century.

C. The Interesting and Meaningful Experiences that CLIL Offers for Students with Special Needs

The interesting and meaningful experiences that CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) offers for students with special needs are very varied and have the potential to improve their academic abilities and social-emotional development. One of the most significant experiences is more contextual and relevant learning. In CLIL, students learn a language through the content of another subject, such as science, mathematics, or history. This method makes language learning more interesting and relevant for students, because they can see firsthand how language is used in real life and academic contexts (Alenezi et al., 2023).

Additionally, CLIL offers a more inclusive and adaptive learning experience. By using various teaching methods that are responsive to student needs, such as visual aids, hands-on activities, and technology, teachers can adapt lesson material according to the abilities and learning styles of each student. For example, students with autism spectrum disorders or dyslexia may feel more comfortable and better able to understand material when it is presented through pictures, videos, or physical activities that involve movement and direct interaction.

The collaborative approach in CLIL also provides a rich learning experience. Through collaboration between subject teachers and language teachers, students receive more comprehensive support. Language teachers can help with linguistic aspects, while subject teachers focus on academic content. This ensures that students not only learn English but also understand and master other subject matter in depth. These experiences are especially

important for students with special needs because they require a more structured and integrated approach.

In addition, CLIL can improve students' social and emotional skills. In a collaborative learning environment, students learn to work together with peers, communicate effectively, and appreciate differences. For example, in group projects, students can practice social skills such as sharing ideas, listening to others' opinions, and resolving conflicts in a constructive way. These experiences help them build self-confidence and social skills that are important for their success outside of the academic environment (Lubicz-Nawrocka & Bovill, 2023).

Learning experiences through CLIL also help students develop critical thinking and problem solving skills. By learning a language in the context of complex academic content, students are invited to analyze information, make connections between concepts, and solve challenging problems. For example, in a science lesson, students may be asked to investigate a local ecosystem, collect data, and prepare a report in English. This experience not only improves their language skills but also their cognitive abilities (Jiménez, 2009). Overall, CLIL offers a rich, engaging, and meaningful learning experience for students with special needs. With an inclusive, adaptive, and collaborative approach, CLIL not only helps them master English but also promotes their academic, social, and emotional development, preparing them for future success.

4. Conclusion and suggestion

a) Conclusions

The application of the CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) method in the education of children with special needs has shown various significant benefits. Through a collaborative approach involving subject teachers and language teachers, as well as the use of visual aids and hands-on activities, students can understand academic content better while improving their language skills. Studies in Barcelona show that CLIL not only improves students' understanding of science material but also increases their learning engagement and motivation. Contextual and relevant learning experiences, adaptive support, and development of social and emotional skills, make CLIL a comprehensive and inclusive method for the education of children with special needs.

b) Suggestion

Suggestions that can be given are to expand the application of the CLIL method to various other subjects and improve teacher training to be able to implement this approach effectively. Apart from that, it is important to continue to carry out research and evaluation of learning outcomes using the CLIL method in order to identify challenges and opportunities for improvement. The government and educational institutions are also expected to provide adequate resources to support CLIL implementation, including visual aids, supporting technology, and training programs for teachers. Thus, the CLIL method can be optimized to provide more inclusive and quality education for all students, including those with special needs.

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