

CONTENT AND LANGUAGE INTEGRATED LEARNING (CLIL) METHOD IN UZBEKISTAN: CURRENT STATUS, CHALLENGES, AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

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Annotation. This article explores the integration of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in Uzbekistan's educational system. CLIL, a method that combines subject content learning with foreign language acquisition, offers a promising approach to improving both language proficiency and subject knowledge. In many countries, this method has already been successfully implemented to enhance bilingual education. However, Uzbekistan is still in the early stages of its adoption, with several challenges hindering its widespread implementation. This article identifies the obstacles preventing the integration of CLIL into Uzbek schools and discusses potential strategies to overcome them. It also highlights the importance of such integration for Uzbekistan's educational reforms, aiming to foster a generation of students who are proficient in both their native and foreign languages, thus preparing them for global citizenship.

Keywords: CLIL, Uzbekistan, bilingual education, language learning, educational reform, teaching methodology

In today's globalized world, the need for multilingual education is becoming increasingly urgent. With an ever-growing emphasis on communication across cultures, foreign language proficiency is no longer an optional skill but a necessity. This is especially true in countries like Uzbekistan, where the government is prioritizing the learning of foreign languages, particularly English, as part of its educational reforms. However, the traditional methods of language teaching in Uzbekistan often fail to provide a

comprehensive, practical, and context-based learning experience. This is where Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) can play a significant role.

CLIL is an approach that combines the teaching of academic content with the learning of a foreign language, thus addressing both subject mastery and language acquisition simultaneously. As the British Council (2020) explains, CLIL is not merely about teaching subjects in a foreign language. It is an innovative pedagogical approach that fosters cognitive development, cultural awareness, and deeper learning, as students engage with content through a second language. CLIL allows students to acquire a language while also deepening their understanding of subjects like science, history, or mathematics, thus creating a more integrated learning experience (British Council, 2020).

Although CLIL has been widely adopted in several European and Asian countries, its implementation in Uzbekistan remains in its infancy. The country is undergoing significant educational reforms to improve language education, but there are still many obstacles preventing the full integration of CLIL into its schools. This article aims to examine the current state of CLIL in Uzbekistan, highlight the challenges that exist, and explore potential solutions to ensure that CLIL can be effectively implemented to meet the needs of the 21st-century Uzbek education system.

Current State of Education in Uzbekistan

Uzbekistan's education system has undergone considerable reform in recent years, particularly in the area of foreign language instruction. The government has introduced policies aimed at increasing proficiency in English, such as incorporating English into the curriculum from the early stages of schooling and providing specialized training for English teachers. Additionally, English has become a compulsory subject in schools, and there are efforts to introduce it at higher levels of education as well (Marsh, 2008).

Despite these positive changes, there are several issues that continue to impede the effectiveness of language education in Uzbekistan. One major challenge is the traditional, teacher-centered methods of instruction that are still prevalent in many schools.

These methods focus heavily on rote memorization and grammar drills, which often fail to provide students with practical language skills or the ability to apply the language in real-world contexts (British Council, 2020). Furthermore, while the government has made strides in teacher training, there is still a lack of teachers who are adequately trained in bilingual or CLIL-based methods.

Another issue is the insufficient integration of foreign languages into other subject areas. While some schools have begun offering courses in English, this is not yet widespread. Most academic subjects are still taught in Uzbek, which limits students' exposure to the foreign language. This creates a gap in the educational experience, as students are not given enough opportunities to apply their language skills in a content-based context. The absence of such integration leaves foreign language learning isolated from other areas of knowledge, preventing students from fully benefiting from a more immersive, bilingual educational experience (Coyle et al., 2010).

Challenges in Implementing CLIL in Uzbekistan

The integration of CLIL into Uzbekistan's educational system presents several challenges. These challenges can be categorized into several areas, including teacher training, curriculum development, and institutional resistance.

Teacher Training

One of the most significant barriers to the implementation of CLIL in Uzbekistan is the lack of teachers who are qualified to teach both academic subjects and foreign languages. CLIL requires teachers to have proficiency in both the subject matter and the foreign language, as well as specialized training in CLIL methodology. However, in Uzbekistan, many teachers still rely on traditional teaching methods that do not emphasize bilingual education (Coyle et al., 2010). Additionally, many teachers may not have the necessary language proficiency to teach subjects like mathematics or history in English, for example.

To overcome this challenge, it is crucial for Uzbekistan to invest in teacher training programs that equip educators with the necessary skills to teach using the CLIL method. This could involve specialized courses or workshops on CLIL pedagogy, as well as language immersion programs to enhance teachers' foreign language skills. Only by providing teachers with the right tools and resources can Uzbekistan hope to successfully implement CLIL and improve the quality of education in both languages (British Council, 2020).

Curriculum Development

Another major obstacle is the lack of a curriculum that supports CLIL. In many schools, the curriculum is designed primarily for instruction in the native language, with little consideration for how subjects can be taught in a foreign language. As the British Council (2020) suggests, CLIL requires a well-designed curriculum that integrates language learning with subject content, making it essential to revise existing curricula to include foreign language instruction in a meaningful and contextual way.

In order to create a more CLIL-friendly curriculum, schools will need to ensure that content is taught in a way that is accessible to students learning in a second language. This could involve adapting teaching materials, modifying assessments, and offering support to students who may struggle with the dual challenge of learning both content and language simultaneously. Furthermore, collaboration between subject teachers and language instructors will be essential in developing teaching materials that are suitable for CLIL-based instruction (Marsh, 2008).

Institutional Resistance

Institutional resistance is another challenge that may hinder the adoption of CLIL in Uzbekistan. Schools and universities may be reluctant to embrace CLIL because it requires significant changes to teaching practices, assessments, and resource allocation. In many cases, administrators and teachers may feel that CLIL is too complicated or time-

consuming to implement effectively, especially in an educational system that is already undergoing other reforms (Coyle et al.

Overcoming institutional resistance will require strong leadership and a clear understanding of the benefits of CLIL. By demonstrating how CLIL can enhance both language and subject learning, educators can build support for this approach among school administrators and policymakers. Additionally, pilot programs or gradual implementation can allow schools to experiment with CLIL on a small scale before fully integrating it into the curriculum.

Strategies for Integrating CLIL in Uzbekistan

Given the challenges outlined above, it is essential to develop a clear strategy for integrating CLIL into Uzbekistan's education system. Several steps can be taken to ensure the successful implementation of this approach.

1. Teacher Training and Professional Development

As mentioned earlier, teacher training is critical to the success of CLIL. Professional development programs that focus on CLIL pedagogy and language skills will be essential in preparing teachers to teach academic subjects in foreign languages. These programs could include workshops, online courses, and international exchange opportunities where teachers can learn from countries that have successfully implemented CLIL (British Council, 2020).

Additionally, universities and teacher training institutes in Uzbekistan could offer specialized degrees or certifications in CLIL teaching, ensuring that future generations of educators are equipped with the skills they need to teach using this approach.

2. Curriculum Reform

In order to fully integrate CLIL into the education system, the curriculum will need to be reformed to include more bilingual content. This could involve introducing English-language versions of existing textbooks, adapting teaching materials to include more

bilingual exercises, and developing new content that is designed specifically for CLIL instruction. Schools could also introduce bilingual classrooms where subjects are taught in both Uzbek and English, providing students with more opportunities to practice their language skills in an academic context (Marsh, 2008).

3. Collaboration and Support

Collaboration between language teachers and subject teachers will be essential for the successful implementation of CLIL. By working together, teachers can develop integrated lesson plans and teaching materials that meet the needs of students learning both content and language. Furthermore, providing students with additional language support, such as language tutors or after-school classes, can help them manage the dual challenge of learning in a foreign language (Coyle et al., 2010).

The integration of CLIL into Uzbekistan's educational system represents a valuable opportunity to enhance both language learning and subject knowledge. While there are significant challenges to its adoption, such as the need for teacher training, curriculum reform, and overcoming institutional resistance, the benefits of CLIL are clear. By adopting CLIL, Uzbekistan can provide students with a more immersive, practical, and engaging educational experience, preparing them for a globalized world where bilingualism is a key asset.

The successful implementation of CLIL will require a multi-faceted approach, involving teacher training, curriculum reform, and institutional support. However, with the right investments and strategies, Uzbekistan can create an education system that prepares its students for the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century.

References

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