



The Challenges Faced by the Teacher in Clil Classroom: Case Study at Tumbuh Senior High School Yogyakarta

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.18415/ijmmu.v11i6.5742>

Abstract

Mastering English has been an essential competency for embracing the demands of the contemporary era characterized by the Industrial Revolution 4.0. English emerged as the predominant medium for cross-cultural communication. Despite the implementation of various strategies to improve English proficiency among students in Indonesia, the attained level still fell short of anticipated standards. This gap underscored underlying issues within the teaching methodology, indicating the presence of factors, whether direct or indirect, that influenced the effectiveness of instruction. This study aimed to focus on the challenges teachers face in CLIL classrooms and to overcome the difficulties in language learning in CLIL classrooms at Tumbuh Senior High School. This study was a case study method with a descriptive qualitative inquiry approach, which employed several data-collecting techniques, including semi-structured interviews, observation checklists, and document checklists. The results obtained in the study reveal that teachers face many challenges when using the CLIL method in the learning process. These challenges include teaching preparation stages such as preparing lesson plans, adjusting learning levels to student abilities, organizing learning materials, introducing scientific language, mapping material across levels, and adapting terminology into two languages. The solutions teachers offer in facing these challenges include adapting lesson plans to meet student needs, integrating diverse media, and combining materials to implement teaching strategies effectively. Apart from that, they employ creative methods, adapting materials for student comprehension and avoiding overly academic language, which is crucial, explaining in both English and Indonesian, and using gestures to aid understanding. These strategies demonstrate a commitment to ensuring all students can understand and engage with the material despite language differences.

Keywords: *CLIL; Case Study; Challenge Teacher; Language Learning*

Introduction

Language plays a vital role in everyday life as a communication tool across diverse contexts. Proficiency in English is especially critical in adapting to the demands of the current era, characterized by the Industrial Revolution 4.0. As highlighted by McKay (2018). Moreover, acquiring a foreign language is increasingly imperative for effective global communication, emphasizing the need to understand and excel in an international linguistic context. This process seamlessly integrates language and content

within the educational system, enhancing foreign language learning. As students progress through different courses and academic levels, they cultivate a more analytical language, consolidating linguistic and cognitive abilities (Díaz, 2021).

Numerous efforts have been made to enhance students' English proficiency in Indonesia, yet their achievements in English continue to fall below expectations. Deficiencies in English teaching suggest the presence of factors directly or indirectly impacting the teaching process. As Bravo & Alves (2021) noted, activities aimed at reinforcing discipline and other overlooked elements in English teachers' curriculum planning can hinder the success of English teaching.

Learning English has proven challenging for many students, with some finding it considerably more complex than learning Indonesian. This complexity presents a significant hurdle for students. As noted by Maili (2016), one of the challenges stems from the unappealing approaches used in English teaching. Numerous studies have sought to develop more straightforward and more engaging techniques for teaching and learning English to address this.

From this perspective, Manzano (2015) suggests that the world is becoming increasingly complex, continuously imposing new social, cultural, and professional demands on individuals. This includes the growing need for multilingual skills, which has prompted the systematic search for new teaching methods that promote learning foreign languages in the school context. One such approach is teaching Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). It integrates language learning and content simultaneously, allowing students to apply the CLIL technique in studying one or more subjects in the target language. Synonymous terms for CLIL, as noted by Gabillon (2020), include bilingual content, educational learning, or content-based language learning. This approach represents a dual-focused educational strategy considering content and language aspects.

In the CLIL classroom, teachers encounter several challenges in facilitating language learning, a significant one being maintaining a balance between imparting subject knowledge and fostering language skills. As highlighted by Metlí & Akis (2022), CLIL instructors must delicately balance delivering subject content and promoting language development, which can be demanding. To tackle this challenge, teachers must adapt their teaching methodologies to cater to the diverse linguistic needs of their students. CLIL teachers are challenged to balance subject content delivery and language development, which is a demanding task. Charunsri (2019) claims that CLIL teachers face the challenge of balancing subject content delivery and language development, necessitating proficiency in both the subject matter and the language of instruction.

This investigation is grounded in the belief that high school students should have more vital English skills than their elementary and junior high counterparts, suggesting that implementing CLIL in senior high school will improve students' English proficiency. This study focuses on the challenges teachers face in language learning within CLIL classrooms at senior high schools, offering a unique and valuable contribution to the field of education. It has the potential to not only improve educational practices at Tumbuh Senior High School but also provide insights into pedagogical strategies based on the CLIL method.

Research Method

This research is descriptive, using a case study combined with qualitative inquiry. A case study approach was selected to investigate a unique phenomenon in a particular Tumbuh Senior High School subject. This case study also provides rounded, detailed information on the subject. In addition, this qualitative inquiry deals with well-grounded data, detailed descriptions, and explanations of any human processes (Miles, Huberman, and Saldana, 2014). Thus, detailed and rich descriptions were displayed to

describe the unique phenomenon in this research. The investigation focused on understanding the challenges teachers at Tumbuh Senior High School face when implementing bilingual teaching, including the curriculum, syllabus, lesson plans, materials, and language learning process in CLIL classrooms. The research aimed to describe and understand the phenomenon without external constraints comprehensively. A case study approach was used to achieve this, following the guidance of McMillan (2012).

The research was conducted at Tumbuh Senior High School in Yogyakarta. The selection of Tumbuh High School as the research site was based on the fact that the students were simultaneously acquiring English language skills and academic knowledge. Furthermore, the school's effective implementation of the international curriculum adds to its appeal as a research setting. The data collection took place over one month, from January to February 2024, during the second semester of the academic year 2023/2024. Subjects of this research were subject teachers who teach in English. Interviews were conducted with bilingual subject teachers from Grade 10 to investigate the challenges of teaching subjects in English.

In this research, data collection techniques included semi-structured interviews, observation checklists, and document checklists. The semi-structured format was essential for developing questions and obtaining more information about the research needs. The interview session occurred around 35 minutes per teacher. The interview conducted in Bahasa Indonesia aimed to enhance communication clarity. The researcher devised a set of questions as an interview guideline and employed a mobile phone as an additional tool for recording data, facilitating more manageable data analysis. The subsequent approach to data collection in this study involved an observation checklist. The investigation took place within the actual context of the teaching process at Tumbuh Senior High School in Yogyakarta, adopting a naturalistic approach. The researcher acted as a purely passive observer, focusing solely on observation without involvement in the teaching process. The researcher closely observed and listened to classroom activities, meticulously recording and checklist key points to compile a comprehensive report of the observed process. Furthermore, the outcomes of these observations were carefully compared with interview transcripts and documents to identify and confirm similarities.

Another data collection method employed in this study involved the use of documents. The targeted documents comprised the lesson plans, learning materials created by teachers, assessment guides, and other pertinent printed information related to government-issued teaching guidelines, among other sources. Hence, the researcher focused on credibility, dependability, and confirmability to ensure trustworthiness and assess this qualitative case study. In this investigation, triangulation is a method used to verify the accuracy of the data. Creswell and Poth (2016) states that qualitative research is an investigation process based on numerous methodological traditions of inquiry that analyze a social or human problem. This means that the researcher used a variety of data sources, observers, and verification processes to ensure the data collected is consistently accurate.

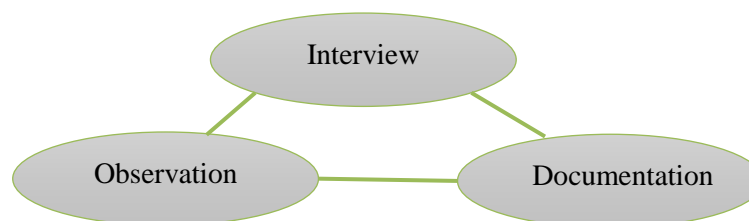


Figure 1. Triangulation process

Employing this technique, the researcher incorporated verbatim language from participants, field notes, and reports of both. This study uses a dual approach, combining data source triangulation and theoretical triangulation until the data is comprehensive. The concurrent implementation of these triangulation methods during field activities is designed to ensure meticulous data recording by

researchers. The implementation of the thematic analysis is organized into five steps, as delineated below: Preparing the raw data for analysis by organizing and transcription, reading through the data, coding the data, finding the patterns to interpret, and presenting and reporting.

Result and Discussion

Result

The result of this study presents the data obtained through interviews, observation checklists, and document checklists to underscore the complexity of the challenges faced by the teachers in the language learning process in CLIL classrooms. The teachers in the interview confirmed this fact to know the challenges teachers face in implementing teaching in CLIL classrooms.

Int: *“Apa tantangan yang ibu hadapi saat proses belajar mengajar dikelas CLIL?”* (What challenges do you encounter during the teaching and learning process in the CLIL class?)

T1: *“Tantangannya lebih ke kalau misalnya kita ngomong bahasa Inggrisnya enggak lancar ya, nah tantangannya lebih ke term-termnya physics itu kan beda sekali ya antara bahasa Inggris sama bahasa Indonesia itu beda. Tantangannya itu ada tambahan lagi karena ada anak yang spesial, yang spesial itu kalau untuk materinya sama, hanya penyampaiannya yang berbeda.”* (C5/29-1-24)

(The challenge is significant for those who are not fluent in English, particularly concerning physics terms, which differ significantly between English and Indonesian. Teaching special needs children adds another layer of challenge, as the material remains the same but requires a different delivery approach)

T2 *“Karena bahasa Inggris itu bukan bahasa pertama saya, jadi untuk mengajar secara langsung full speaking ada beberapa vocab yang saya inget sebelumnya tapi lupa pas dikelas“* (C5/29-1-24)

(Because English is not my first language, I sometimes struggle to recall certain vocabulary items when teaching speaking directly in class)

From the statements above, it can be concluded that one of the challenges in teaching using the CLIL method is the obstacle in using English as a teaching medium. These challenges include poor speaking skills, difficulty dealing with pronunciation and confidence in using English, and difficulties in explaining material thoroughly in English. In addition, there are obstacles to mastering everyday vocabulary and special terms in certain subjects. The interviews' outcomes were supported by classroom observations conducted from February 1 to 6, 2024. The checklist observations confirmed that teachers encountered several challenges in conducting teaching and learning activities in CLIL classrooms. This was further reinforced by the checklist documentation carried out on February 6, 2024.

The researcher outlines the findings regarding the strategies employed by teachers to address the challenges of language learning in the CLIL classroom. These findings were derived from interviews, observation checklists, and document checklists. This finding aimed to identify strategies for overcoming these obstacles and improving the implementation of the CLIL method. Implementing the CLIL method can present various challenges for teachers' strategies for overcoming challenges in the language learning process in CLIL classrooms. This part explains the data that has been found related to teachers' strategies for overcoming challenges in the language learning process in CLIL classrooms. The teachers in the interview confirmed the fact to know the strategy teachers face in teaching and implementing teaching in CLIL classrooms.

Int: “*Apa strategi ibu dalam mengatasi tantangan dalam pembelajaran bahasa dikelas CLIL?*”
(What strategies do you employ to surmount challenges in language learning within CLIL classes?)

T1: “*Strateginya ya itu dua kali pengulangan, lebih ke ini loh guys ini artinya seperti ini, seperti ini, seperti ini. jadi kadang menjelaskan dulu secara bahasanya Inggris dulu baru bahasa Indonesia, karena ada di satu kelas yang ada yang satu anak ini memang tidak bisa bahasa Indonesia sama sekali, ada yang bahasa Inggrisnya tidak selancar teman-temannya. Mereka harus paham dulu ini istilah-istilah ini maksudnya apa baru bisa dilanjutkan ke step berikutnya. kadangkala juga saya harus menyampaikannya pakai gerakan karena kan ada yang tidak bisa mendengar dan bahasa Inggris bukan bahasa mereka.*” (S5/29-1-24)

(The strategy involves repetition, such as saying, 'Like this, guys, this means like this, like this, like this.' I sometimes begin by explaining in English, then switch to Indonesian, as there may be a student who doesn't speak Indonesian or whose English proficiency is not as advanced as their peers. They need to grasp the meaning of these terms first before moving on. Occasionally, I also use gestures to convey the information, especially for students who are hard of hearing or for whom English is not their first language)

T2: “*Saya improve istilah-istilah bahasa Inggris. Kalau bahasa Inggris ada banyak sinonimnya mungkin ada yang levelnya advance intermediate sama yang lebih rendah, nah itu mungkin seharusnya saya pakai yang lebih scientific language tapi karena saya lupa istilahnya jadi saya turunkan lagi gitu. Kadang juga saya menggunakan bahasa Indonesia kalau udah susah mengingat vocabnya, jadi campur bahasanya*” (S5/29-1-24)

(I enhance my English vocabulary, recognizing its diverse synonyms across different proficiency levels. If I struggle to recall a more technical term, I simplify it. I also integrate Indonesian words when necessary, blending the languages for clarity).

From the statements above, it can be concluded that the teachers employ various strategies to overcome language barriers and ensure effective communication in the classroom. T1 emphasizes repetition and explanation in English and Indonesian, using gestures to aid understanding, especially for students with limited language proficiency. T2 focuses on improving English vocabulary and adjusting language complexity based on students' proficiency levels, sometimes using Indonesian when struggling to recall English terms.

Discussion

This discovery has made me interested in understanding the specific challenges faced by the teachers in the language learning process within CLIL classrooms, as well as the strategies they employ to overcome these challenges. The study's focus stems from the critical need to comprehend the difficulties subject teachers encounter in language learning within CLIL classrooms. The research conducted by Villabona and Cenoz (2022) explores the difficulties faced by subject teachers in the process of language learning within CLIL classrooms. This understanding is essential for devising practical strategies to help teachers overcome challenges during the teaching and learning process in CLIL classrooms.

One of the challenges in teaching using the CLIL method is the obstacle of using English as a teaching medium. These challenges include poor speaking skills, concerns about pronunciation and confidence in using English, and difficulties in explaining material thoroughly in English. Apart from that, there are obstacles to mastering everyday vocabulary and special terms in certain subjects. Thus, language differences and the need to adapt to different varieties of English are essential challenges in language learning within CLIL classrooms. As Charunsri (2019) noted, the CLIL method, which involves

utilizing English as the first language for teaching particular subjects, presents several challenges. These challenges include difficulties teachers face in adapting subject-specific language and methods and learners needing to cultivate specific language and cognitive skills, particularly when their English proficiency is limited.

The teachers employ various strategies to overcome language barriers and ensure effective communication in the classroom. The teacher emphasizes repetition and explanation in English and Indonesian, using gestures to aid understanding, especially for students with limited language proficiency. On the other hand, it focuses on improving English vocabulary and adjusting language complexity based on students' proficiency levels, sometimes using Indonesian when struggling to recall English terms. These strategies demonstrate a commitment to ensuring all students can understand and engage with the material despite language differences. Metlí & Akıs (2022) assert that implementing CLIL presents common challenges, including the struggle to comprehend critical concepts due to limited vocabulary and the issue of translating knowledge from the first language to the target language. Addressing these challenges requires an approach centered on enhancing vocabulary and promoting thinking in the target language.

Conclusion

CLIL is a method of teaching a language that incorporates content into lessons. This study contains various factors, specifically focusing on the challenges confronted by teachers in language learning within CLIL classrooms at Tumbuh Senior High School. To find out what challenges teachers face in acquiring language in CLIL classrooms, researchers used a case study method with a qualitative inquiry approach—regarding the research findings, using English as a teaching medium presents obstacles such as poor speaking skills, pronunciation concerns, confidence issues, and difficulties in explaining concepts and mastering specialized vocabulary. Language differences and the need to adapt to various English varieties pose significant challenges in language learning in CLIL classrooms. Despite these challenges, The teachers focus on improving English vocabulary and adjusting language complexity based on student proficiency levels, occasionally using Indonesian for clarity. Despite language differences, these strategies demonstrate a commitment to ensuring all students can comprehend and engage with the material.

This research emphasizes the importance of understanding and addressing the challenges to improve the effectiveness of CLIL implementation. Integrating language learning objectives with content while maintaining depth in teaching poses a significant challenge. In addition, teachers employ various strategies to ensure the effectiveness of learning content and language in the CLIL classroom. This is crucial as CLIL classes focus on subject matter and serve as a indirect English language learning platform.

Regarding the conclusion, several suggestions are proposed. One essential suggestion is that teachers should continually refine their strategies to surmount these challenges, including enhancing proficiency in organizing learning materials and being more creative in teaching the learning process in language learning in CLIL classrooms. Moreover, teachers should be attentive to variances in students' language proficiency levels and employ diverse strategies to enhance language mastery in CLIL classrooms, such as integrating technology into learning. Doing so can significantly improve the language learning process in CLIL classrooms.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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