

## Research Article

# CLIL MODELS TO DEVELOP STUDENTS' COMMUNICATION SKILLS BASED ON THEIR ATTITUDES TOWARD READING

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**Abstract.**

This study proposed Content and Language Instruction Learning (CLIL) as a model for building students' English communication skills, which are essential in the 21st century. The CLIL model is proposed based on students' attitudes toward reading materials in their EFL reading classes. This survey study involved 828 Junior High School students completing an online questionnaire about their reading attitudes. Nine teachers were interviewed to obtain data about the challenges they faced in teaching reading and how they coped with those challenges. The study discovered that some students have apprehension feelings toward English reading material that make them unable to catch up with the class. Additionally, teachers encounter challenges while planning and selecting learning materials because of students' different abilities. Besides, the CLIL model has been implemented by one of the teachers, even though it has not been planned further. Thus, models B1, B2, B3, and B4 of CLIL are proposed to solve the problem found. However, this study is limited to the CLIL model recommendation based on the context, so further researchers need to elaborate on the implementation of the model across primary and tertiary school levels.

**Keywords:** *CLIL, students' attitude, EFL reading*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Content and Language Instruction Learning (CLIL) is curricular models commonly used in bilingual education that integrates English in teaching content subjects. It uses language variety instruction with a dual emphasis on language learning and subject matter knowledge which has been operated in bilingual education for decades (Coyle, Hood, & Marsh, 2010; Hurajová, 2015; Muniroh, Febrianti, Kusumaningrum, Rachmajanti, & Sobri, 2022). CLIL is used to promote students' development of English communication skills and knowledge of the subject matter, while preserving the local values and cultures. CLIL offers its flexibility for teachers to use the local language to support students' understanding of the content. It is proven by Fang and Liu (2020), Rasman (2018), and Rosiers (2020) that incorporating local languages can improve content understanding,

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clear classroom management, and a warm classroom atmosphere. Moreover, combining Indonesian and English in bilingual education can promote the country's national identity and support the current internationalization (Muniroh et al., 2022; Surdyanto, 2018). Based on the database of international schools (<https://www.international-schools-database.com/country/indonesia>) and education (<https://dapo.kemdikbud.go.id/>), there are 113 international schools and 16 bilingual secondary schools in Indonesia, but the number of schools/institutions implementing bilingual education in Indonesia that are not registered in the government database could exceed the number in those two databases. Some scholars have explored the Islamic boarding schools/*pesantren* that implement bilingual and international-based curriculum, and they found that these schools/*pesantren* require their students to communicate in English and Arabic language (Fitranti, 2020; Karima, 2022; Mahmudi & Saputra, 2018). While the practice of bilingual education is popular in Indonesia as it is viewed as beneficial to shape students to be bilinguals or even multilinguals, limited information is found on whether they implemented curricular models such as CLIL for the practice of bilingual education. The researchers believe that CLIL curricular models are potential to be implemented in schools (although they do not explicitly claim as bilingual schools) to facilitate students' development in English communication skills. Therefore, in this study, the researchers attempt to foresee relevant models of CLIL based on junior high school students' reading attitude toward English reading class.

Research literature confirms that positive reading attitudes contribute positively to reading skills (Akhmetova, Imambayeva, & Csapó, 2022). Unfortunately, as students grow older and continue to junior high schools their reading attitudes tend to decrease (McKenna, Conradi, Lawrence, Jang, & Meyer, 2012), and this affects their reading outcomes (Woolly, 2011). Meanwhile, reading is essential to knowledge acquisition and academic achievement (Akhmetova et al., 2022), and regular reading activity impacts positively to students' communication skills (Cain & Oakhill, 2011; Schatz & Krashen, 2006). Communication skill as productive skills both in oral and written forms is promoted in the 21st century education (Hirschaman & Wood, 2018) to empower students to be more competitive in the job market and global interaction, as it facilitates students' knowledge construction and real-world problem-solving alongside collaboration skills (Stehle & Peters-Burston, 2019). To develop students' communication skill, teachers play a vital role in designing strategies based on students' contexts (Darling-Hammond, 2006; He, Xu, & Kruck, 2014; Griffin & Care, 2014; Kim, Raza, & Seidman, 2019; Rezandy, Artini, & Dewi, 2020). Taken together with the CLIL primary concept to encourage

students' English communication skill development, CLIL model is necessary to be employed.

CLIL provides diverse models of instructional processes from primary to tertiary level. This study focuses on the secondary school level in which CLIL enables the use of more sophisticated models integrated with technology since students at this age have mastered more advanced skills and are motivated to use technology. Hence, Coyle et al. (2010) provide curricular models namely Model B1-B5 for this level. Model B1 emphasizes dual school education by providing school-based support, as well as institutional cooperation, for instance, holding a virtual conference related to a subject matter where two or more languages are used. Meanwhile, model B2 deals with bilingual education by combining two or more languages. Model B3 is an interdisciplinary module which refers to the specific module developed by the content teacher by considering a knowledge-based society, for instance developing a biology module which integrated with environmental science. Model B4 is a language-based project which is more focused on the language teacher as a material developer. Language teacher has a responsibility in designing modules with a more formal form of language instruction. Thus, students see this module as an authentic way of using language to learn non-language content. Lastly, Model B5 focuses on specific-domain vocational and professional education sectors. Additionally, CLIL is also integrated with four key principles (4Cs) according to Coyle et al. (2010) which are cognition (learning and thinking process), content (subject matter), communication (learning through interaction), and culture (to the norms, values, and beliefs of the target language, in this study English).

The curricular models of CLIL for the secondary school level still lack exploration. Previous studies focus on the effect of CLIL on EFL and content subject mastery (Evnitskaya & Dalton-Puffer, 2020; Feddermann, Möller, & Baumert, 2021; Granel et al., 2019), the impact on genre-based pedagogy on students' academic literacy (Lo & Jeong, 2018), and the implementation of CLIL during pandemic (Yang & Yang, 2022). Moreover, the questionnaire data obtained from a longitudinal study in an Indonesian secondary school context showed that students still lack motivation in reading English learning materials. It shows that only a few students enjoyed reading classes, whereas others show an apprehensive reaction when given the assignment to read English learning materials. Considering the gap, this study is intended to propose a CLIL model based on students' reading attitudes toward English reading texts. Recognizing curricular models of CLIL implementation in such different contexts will enable teachers to further develop learning activities and give insight to readers in regard to CLIL curricular models at the secondary school level in Indonesia.

## 2. METHOD

This study is a part of survey study (Creswell, 2014) investigating how teachers' reading engagement shaped their teaching practice in EFL reading classes practices. This study only focused on the students' reading attitude to propose CLIL models relevant to students' contexts. There were 828 Junior High School Students completed an online questionnaire about their attitude towards reading materials in EFL reading classes. Nine teachers (T1-T9) were interviewed as triangulation to obtain their insights about a question: "What problems do you faced in EFL reading class and how do you cope with those problems?" The whole questionnaire consists of 19 close-ended and 14 open-ended questions. This study focused the analysis on the data from two open ended questions from the questionnaire for the students: 1) "What do you think about the reading material in your EFL classes?" and 2) "What is your reaction when you are instructed to read in your EFL classes? The data obtained were then analyzed using thematic analysis with the aid of Nvivo to help classify the participant answers into a specific category (Creswell, 2014). The themes and categories found were 1) students' attitude toward EFL reading materials: positive, neutral, and negative; 2) Students' reaction towards EFL reading assignments: happy, so-so, and negative; 3) problems and strategies: reading materials and students' English proficiency.

## 3. FINDINGS

This section is geared towards the findings of the study; mainly dealing with the results of data from questionnaires and followed with data from interviews to strengthen the findings from the questionnaire. It begins by presenting the result from the questionnaire focusing on students' attitudes toward reading class, followed by the result from the interview focusing on teachers' problems in teaching reading.

The result from the questionnaire showed that students' attitude toward teaching material in English reading class was mostly positive. Six hundreds sixteen (74%) students from 828 had a positive attitude, 99 (12%) were neutral, and 51 (6%) students showed a negative attitude. Most of the students who had a positive attitude toward reading class said that reading class is fun and interesting. However, students who had a negative attitude toward reading class said that they lack understanding of the subject.

This study also found that students had different reactions toward EFL reading class. A hundred seven (13%) students said that they are happy, and 95 (12%) mentioned that

it was so-so. However, the rest of the students had more negative reactions than those 202 (24%) students. They said they felt nervous, unable to follow the class, afraid and unhappy, experienced difficulty, complained, and were annoyed.

From that data, an interesting finding was discovered. Students who said that they were unable to follow the class said that they felt hesitant because if they do not know the meaning, they cannot understand the point of what is being discussed. Some students also mentioned that they do not understand what the reading text is talking about. They cannot even read it at all. Most of their reasons were because of their ability to understand the text.

Another interesting finding was the reason behind their fear and nervousness. Students who felt nervous during the reading class said that they felt nervous about whether they read the text correctly or not. They also said that they felt nervous because they were not used to it. Not only that, they mentioned that they are afraid of mispronouncing some words so they felt nervous. They are really concerned whether they read it fluently or not, and it ends up making them lack confidence and fear.

Students who claimed they felt unhappy and experienced difficulty had their own reasons. They said that they did not understand the text which triggered them to be unable to follow the activities. They also said that they cannot translate the English text into the Indonesian language. Their ability to get the meaning of the text frustrated them and led to feelings of being annoyed and they complained about that.

Furthermore, data obtained from the interview with 9 teachers also portrayed an interesting finding. This data focused on the problem and strategy that English teachers did in teaching reading. T1 mentioned in the interview that the problem during teaching reading was finding the proper text.

*T1: First, choose the reading material. If we directly copy-paste text. For example, choosing a certain topic is easy. However, it is not always suitable for the students. There are some materials or texts that demotivate students, instead, such as a topic that contains difficult terminology or is too complicated, that.. that will demotivate students.*

The same idea is also mentioned by T2, T5, and T6. It was stated that the biggest challenge in teaching reading was students did not understand the basic concepts of English, such as grammar and vocabulary.

*T2: There are so many challenges. So, the students still do not know.. like the basic concepts, the meaning of a certain vocabulary.*

As this study involved different backgrounds of students, an interesting finding was also found from an English teacher who teaches in the Islamic boarding house school. Their problems were basically the same with T1 which was about choosing the proper text, however, their background also became the factor why this problem occurred.

*T3: So indeed the information that is conveyed to the students must be selected first. That is also one of the obstacles because indeed, what is it called, one of the Marwah's is that the student is not allowed to read it, it's weird, meaning that the reading is really scientific and the language is. So, if it's factual information, maybe it's factual right now, maybe I'll avoid it a bit.*

From that statement, we can conclude that school background also becomes one of the challenges in teaching reading.

In designing teaching reading interesting finding was also obtained from the interview with T2. It was stated that in designing the reading class, the teacher integrated it with another course.

*T2: I usually collabs with the Computer teacher to create a greeting card. Later on, we worked together. I said 'Sir, please help students to finish their English assignment. Then, you can integrate the Computer subject with my course.'*

From this finding, we can conclude that English can be integrated with another subject.

## 4. DISCUSSION

Regarding students' attitudes toward English class and reading materials, it's clear that some students still felt apprehensive due to the lack of vocabulary mastery which can affect their reading comprehension. As a result, students are unable to follow the learning activities since they are demotivated at the beginning. To overcome this problem, incorporating both English and the local language is necessary in order to make a negotiation between teacher and students to clarify the instruction or teaching material. It is supported by previous studies, Fang and Liu (2020), Rasman (2018), Rosiers (2020) which claim that combining two languages can accommodate multilingual students by mixing both EFL and local language in giving clarification during teaching and learning. Fang and Liu (2020) go into further detail about the switching between English and the local language in terms of concept or language point explanation, comprehension check, content knowledge localization, and instruction reinforcement, so students will be able to catch up with the materials. Besides, the CLIL communication principle which refers to the teacher's ability in delivering his/her lesson needs to be enhanced in this

situation (Coyle et al., 2010). Thus, students' misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the learning activities can be solved.

Furthermore, in fostering students' interest, Model B1 of the CLIL is suitable to be employed as it deals with dual school education which relates to school collaboration with institutions or individuals that have the same field, so the students can learn both content and language authentically. For instance, in mathematics classes, the teacher offers conferences or interactive work-based learning with a math expert where two other languages are utilized, such as inviting Jerome Polin as a math expert in Indonesia. Model B2 concurrently followed Model B1 in this practice, which refers to bilingual education. According to Coyle et al. (2010), the aim of the bilingual model is to develop advanced CLIL language skills for a particular subject. Employing this model can accommodate students in understanding the subject taught by using both English and the student's local language to make students feel enjoyed during the learning activities (Gracia, 2009), so they would not be anxious in reading English materials. Thus, it needs school policymakers' support to develop a bilingual curriculum.

The second finding portrays challenges faced by teachers in choosing appropriate reading materials based on students' abilities. They claim that the reading material should be appropriate for their requirements in terms of both subject matter and linguistic style, to make students feel enjoy in the reading class. Thus, it relates to the teacher's cognition and content principle which concerns the teacher's ability and mastery of his/her subject matter and the appropriate subject content chosen (Coyle et al., 2010). In these terms, teachers need to have the ability in his/her field to analyze and elaborate reading material which matches students' needs, abilities, and conditions and close with them, so they will be easier to comprehend the text. Moreover, the cultural principle which refers to the norms, values, and beliefs of the target language also should be considered in choosing the material.

Along with the basic principle of CLIL, the models of instructional process for the secondary school level also need to be explored. On this occasion, the B3 model of the interdisciplinary modules is required. According to Coyle et al. (2010), model B3 deals with the specific module designed by both content and language teachers in order to facilitate students, so it should be adjusted to students' needs and conditions. This model represents a knowledge-based society education model which emphasizes skills as well as the convergence of knowledge and application. For instance, environmental science can be integrated with biology through the CLIL using English and local language as the language instruction. This model can be followed up with Model B4 which deals with the language-based project. In Model B4, the language teacher takes

primary responsibility for designing the CLIL module. Model B4 emphasizes language development which compliments more formal forms of language instruction more than Model B3 which focuses on the content

To sum up, all four key principles (4Cs) of CLIL: cognition, content, communication, and culture, and CLIL models should be mastered by the teacher in order to design the learning strategies and the materials. Thus, students' apprehension reaction to receiving reading materials can be decreased and they will enjoy the class atmosphere and be able to follow learning activities. Whereas, CLIL curricular models that are appropriate in this situation include Model B1, which discusses institutional collaboration to create authentic learning; Model B2, which relates to the implementation of English and local language in order to help students in understanding the lesson; Model B3, which concentrates on the integration of content with the knowledge-based society; and Model B4, which emphasizes language development. However, Model B5 is excluded from this circumstance since it focuses on vocational and professional sectors while this study focuses on the general secondary school level. It can be concluded that to create 21st-century learners with communication skills, combining these four models of the CLIL is believed can both assist students to feel less anxious and teachers to design learning materials by cooperating with other subject teachers.

## 5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The purpose of this study is proposed Content and Language Instruction Learning (CLIL) curricular models to building students' English communication skills which is essential as the 21st century skills. The findings reveal that both secondary school students and teachers in Indonesia still face several challenges in English class, among others are students' apprehension reaction in receiving English materials due to the lack of English ability and teachers' problems in selecting materials based on students' needs and condition. Thus, the CLIL curricular models is necessary to be implemented to overcome these problems and accommodate students to achieve 21<sup>st</sup> century learner with skilled communication. Hence, the findings add knowledge that models B1 (dual school education), B2 (bilingual education), B3 (interdisciplinary module), and B4 (language-based project) of CLIL can be adapted in this context. Besides, the findings also improve practice on teaching English and specific subject matter using the CLIL with certain models. However, this study is only limited on the recommendation of the relevant CLIL models based on the students' attitude toward EFL reading classes at the secondary school level in Indonesia. Therefore, future research is recommended to explore the



effectiveness of the CLIL model implementation and also further investigation toward CLIL models at the primary or tertiary level of education.

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