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THE IMPLEMENTATION CONTENT AND LANGUAGE INTEGRATED LEARNING (CLIL) IN SPEAKING CLASSES AT UIN SAYYID ALI RAHMATULLAH TULUNGAGUNG

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Abstract:

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is increasingly regarded as an effective approach in fostering both language and content knowledge simultaneously. While numerous studies emphasize its application in various educational contexts, there remains a significant gap concerning its implementation in higher education, particularly in speaking classes. This qualitative study investigates the implementation of CLIL in 5 speaking classes at UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung, with particular attention to pedagogical practices, challenges, and learners' perceptions. Data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. The results indicate that although CLIL enriches communicative competence, various challenges such as limited material, teacher preparedness, and student readiness persist. The findings offer insights into improving speaking instruction and enhancing the integration of content and language in tertiary education.

Keywords: *CLIL, speaking class, higher education, language integration*

INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly globalized educational landscape, English has emerged as a pivotal medium for academic communication, serving as the lingua franca in many higher education institutions worldwide. English has emerged as a pivotal medium for academic communication (Doiz et al., 2014; Marsh, 2002). This trend underscores the growing need for pedagogical approaches that not only promote language proficiency but also facilitate subject matter comprehension. Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) responds to this need by offering an innovative framework that simultaneously supports content mastery and language development. Rooted in the European educational context, CLIL has demonstrated considerable success in fostering both academic language proficiency and disciplinary understanding through integrated instruction. CLIL has demonstrated considerable success in fostering both academic language proficiency and disciplinary understanding (Lasagabaster, 2008; Mehisto et al., 2008).

In recent years, this approach has begun to attract interest in non-European settings, including Indonesia, where English continues to gain prominence in higher education. However, despite its theoretical appeal and potential benefits, the implementation of CLIL in Indonesian tertiary institutions remains in its early stages. The implementation of CLIL in Indonesian tertiary institutions remains in its early stages (Darnon, 2020; Yuliana, 2022). In particular, its application in speaking classes is still limited, hindered by factors such as a lack of teacher training, insufficient instructional materials, and limited institutional support. This highlights the need for further research and capacity-building efforts to explore and expand the effective integration of CLIL into Indonesian higher education, especially within the domain of oral communication skills.

Given these challenges, it becomes imperative to investigate how CLIL can be effectively implemented in speaking classrooms at the tertiary level in Indonesia. Such exploration not only addresses the gap in pedagogical practice but also contributes to a broader understanding of how integrated

approaches can enhance learners' communicative competence in authentic academic contexts (Pantaleon, 2021). Moreover, speaking classes often regarded as spaces for active verbal engagement present an ideal platform for applying CLIL, as they allow students to articulate content knowledge while simultaneously developing language skills (Richards, 2008).

By embedding content based tasks that require critical thinking, collaboration, and contextualized language use, CLIL has the potential to transform traditional speaking activities into more meaningful, cognitively engaging learning experiences (Llinares et al., 2012). However, the success of this approach depends heavily on contextual adaptation, including the readiness of instructors, availability of resources, and alignment with institutional policies. Therefore, a thorough investigation into current practices, challenges, and strategies for implementing CLIL in speaking classes at Indonesian universities is essential to inform policy and practice, and to pave the way for more effective language education models in the future.

Speaking is one of the core language skills that often poses significant challenges to language learners, particularly in contexts where English is used as a foreign or second language. Mastery of speaking involves not only fluency and accuracy but also the ability to convey ideas clearly, respond appropriately in various communicative situations, and engage in meaningful interaction (Parupali, 2019). This skill becomes even more crucial in academic settings, where learners are expected to articulate complex concepts, participate in discussions, and present arguments coherently. Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) offers a pedagogical framework that addresses these demands by combining subject matter learning with language development (Harmer, 2003). Through CLIL, learners are exposed to content-rich discussions and cognitively demanding tasks that naturally require communication, thereby providing authentic opportunities to practice and improve their speaking abilities. As such, CLIL not only supports the development of subject knowledge but also fosters communicative

competence, making it a promising approach for enhancing speaking skills in academic and educational contexts.

Despite its promising potential, the implementation of CLIL in speaking-focused classrooms requires thoughtful adaptation to local educational contexts, especially in regions where English is not the primary medium of instruction. When effectively implemented, CLIL can transform speaking classes into dynamic, interdisciplinary spaces where learners actively construct knowledge, use language with purpose, and develop the confidence to express themselves in both academic and real-world settings (Brown & Bradford, 2017). Therefore, further empirical research and pedagogical innovation are essential to fully realize the benefits of CLIL for speaking skill development, particularly in higher education environments like those in Indonesia.

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is an educational approach where subjects are taught through a foreign language, simultaneously promoting both subject matter understanding and language proficiency (Mehisto et al., 2008). CLIL differs from traditional language learning in that it does not prioritize grammar and vocabulary drills, but instead emphasizes the natural acquisition of language through meaningful content. The key principle of CLIL is dual-focused learning: learning a subject and a second language at the same time. This dual focus aligns with the 4Cs framework Content, Communication, Cognition, and Culture which serves as the pedagogical foundation for CLIL (Meyer, 2010). By integrating subject matter with language learning, CLIL creates opportunities for learners to use the target language as a tool for thinking, problem-solving, and engaging in authentic academic discourse. In speaking classes, this means that students are not only developing fluency and accuracy but also enhancing their ability to discuss, debate, and present ideas on complex topics. Consequently, CLIL fosters deeper cognitive engagement and intercultural awareness, preparing learners for both academic and professional contexts where English functions as a medium of communication.

The implementation of CLIL has gained popularity in Europe and Asia due to its effectiveness in developing learners' cognitive, linguistic, and cultural competencies. It promotes active learning, higher-order thinking skills, and intercultural communication all of which are essential in the 21st-century global context. CLIL promotes active learning, higher-order thinking, and intercultural communication essential competencies in 21st-century education (Mehisto et al., 2008). Dalton-Puffer (2007) emphasizes that CLIL enhances learner motivation by providing learners with contextually relevant input, arguing that the integration of subject content and language use fosters a learning environment where students perceive greater purpose and authenticity in their communicative tasks. However, teachers require dual competence in subject matter and language proficiency, necessitating collaborative planning and professional development (Ball et al., 2015).

Despite its advantages, the implementation of CLIL is not without challenges. Teachers are required to possess both subject expertise and high proficiency in the target language, a dual competence that can be difficult to attain. As Marsh et. al. (2010) note, "successful CLIL requires careful planning, collaboration between language and content teachers, and the development of appropriate assessment tools that reflect both content and language outcomes." Therefore, for CLIL to be effectively adopted in diverse educational contexts such as in Indonesian universities ongoing professional development, institutional support, and context-sensitive curricular design are critical components.

Coyle (2010) proposes a conceptual framework known as the 4Cs—Content, Communication, Cognition, and Culture—which serves as a foundational guide for designing and evaluating CLIL lessons. Content refers to the subject matter being learned, such as science, history, or environmental issues, while Communication highlights the use of language both as a medium for learning and as a skill to be developed. Cognition emphasizes the thinking processes that enable learners to understand, analyze, and construct knowledge. Finally, Culture encourages learners to appreciate

their own identities and those of others, fostering intercultural awareness and promoting global citizenship.

In CLIL-based speaking classes, the integration of the 4Cs Content, Communication, Cognition, and Culture is typically realized through classroom activities that encourage learners to engage with subject matter while using the target language. Generally, tasks are designed to help students understand and discuss academic topics (Content), express ideas and interact meaningfully in English (Communication), process information and solve problems (Cognition), and develop awareness of broader social or cultural perspectives (Culture). Rather than focusing on a single topic or activity, CLIL lessons usually incorporate these elements holistically, ensuring that language and content learning progress in tandem. This general framework provides a foundation for understanding how CLIL functions pedagogically, even if the specific task types may vary across different classroom contexts (Bower et al., 2020).

The 4Cs framework not only ensures that linguistic and academic objectives are met simultaneously but also supports the development of 21st-century competencies, such as creativity, collaboration, and intercultural awareness. As Marsh et. al. (Coyle et al., 2010) emphasize, “CLIL is not just about learning another language, but about using language to learn”. This principle is particularly powerful in speaking classes, where oral communication becomes a medium for deeper engagement with content, rather than mere language practice. Tasks embedding the 4Cs (Content, Communication, Cognition, Culture) transform speaking classes into immersive environments where language is a tool for inquiry (Coyle et al., 2010). This approach increases learner ownership and risk-taking in language use (Lasagabaster & Zarobe, 2010). Moreover, incorporating the 4Cs into speaking tasks can significantly increase learner motivation and confidence. When students are given purposeful, real-world topics to discuss rather than artificial dialogues or scripted conversations they are more likely to feel ownership of their learning and to take risks in using the language. This shift

from language as an end to language as a means of inquiry and expression reflects the essence of CLIL, and highlights its transformative potential in the language classroom.

CLIL provides authentic opportunities for extended discourse, argumentation, and negotiation of meaning critical for academic speaking (Dalton-Puffer, 2007). Collaborative tasks (e.g., group projects) foster interaction and scaffolding, creating intellectually stimulating environments (Llinares et al., 2012). Furthermore, CLIL provides natural opportunities for extended talk, argumentation, and negotiation of meaning all of which are essential features of spoken discourse. Through this process, learners not only expand their vocabulary and improve syntactic accuracy, but also develop discourse competence, such as organizing ideas coherently and responding appropriately to others' viewpoints. These skills are often underemphasized in traditional EFL speaking classes but are crucial for academic and professional success.

Despite its pedagogical benefits, implementing CLIL in speaking classes poses several challenges. One of the most cited obstacles is the lack of teacher preparation and training in CLIL methodology. Many EFL teachers may not have content expertise or experience in integrating subject matter with language teaching (Ball et al., 2015). Material scarcity and cognitive overload are key barriers (Coyle et al., 2010; Mehisto et al., 2008). Assessment complexities arise from the dual focus on content and language, while institutional fragmentation inhibits sustainability (Ball et al., 2015). In Indonesia, lecturers lack CLIL pedagogy exposure (Yuliana, 2022). Another significant issue is material availability. CLIL requires customized materials that align with both language and content objectives, and such materials are often scarce, particularly in non-European contexts. Additionally, students' proficiency levels may affect their ability to engage with complex content, especially if their foundational vocabulary or background knowledge is limited.

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engage with complex content, especially if their foundational vocabulary or background knowledge is limited. This challenge can lead to cognitive overload, where learners struggle to simultaneously process new subject matter and express their ideas in a foreign language. As Mehisto et. al. (Mehisto et al., 2008) observe, “CLIL requires carefully scaffolded instruction to avoid overburdening learners and ensure that both content and language goals are achievable”. Without appropriate support, students may become disengaged or anxious, particularly in speaking activities that require spontaneous language production.

Institutional support also plays a critical role in CLIL success. In many educational settings, especially in Indonesia, the lack of clear policies, curriculum integration, and collaboration between language and content departments hinders sustainable implementation. Teachers often work in isolation, without opportunities for interdisciplinary planning or professional development. As Ball et. al. (Ball et al., 2015) emphasize, “successful CLIL practice is dependent not only on individual teacher competence but also on systemic support and a collaborative school culture.” Therefore, while CLIL offers substantial potential to enhance speaking skills in EFL contexts, these challenges highlight the need for strategic planning, professional development, and contextual adaptation. Addressing these issues is essential to unlock the full benefits of CLIL and ensure its effectiveness in diverse educational environments.

In Indonesia, CLIL has been introduced in some bilingual and international programs, but it is still in a developmental stage within most universities. Research by (Darnon, 2020; Yuliana, 2022) found that while Indonesian lecturers are increasingly open to CLIL, they often lack institutional support and training to implement it effectively. At UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung, CLIL’s potential is counterbalanced by local challenges like varying student proficiency and scarce materials (Darnon, 2020). Culturally sensitive content (e.g., Islamic studies) requires adapted frameworks (Kustati, 2014). At UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung,

where English is taught not only as a language but also as a medium for academic and religious discourse, CLIL offers a promising avenue for improving speaking performance

However, more empirical research is needed to understand how it is practiced in classroom settings, particularly in relation to speaking classes, where student output and interaction are primary goals. Given the dual function of English at UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung as both a communicative tool and a medium for engaging with academic and religious texts the integration of CLIL has the potential to enrich students' cognitive and linguistic development simultaneously. Speaking activities grounded in relevant content, such as Islamic studies, intercultural ethics, or social issues, can provide authentic contexts for students to develop fluency, accuracy, and critical thinking in English.

Nevertheless, the implementation of CLIL in such a context must account for various local challenges, including students' varying language proficiencies, the availability of content-appropriate English materials, and the readiness of lecturers to design interdisciplinary speaking tasks. As Yuliana (2022) points out, many instructors still rely on traditional EFL approaches due to limited exposure to CLIL pedagogy and the absence of collaborative planning between language and content departments. Moreover, there is a lack of localized models or frameworks to guide CLIL integration in Indonesian Islamic universities, where the content often includes culturally and theologically sensitive material. This necessitates a careful adaptation of the 4Cs framework to suit the socio-religious values of the institution (Coyle et al., 2010). Thus, investigating the current practices, perceptions, and pedagogical strategies of lecturers at UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung can provide valuable insights into how CLIL can be effectively contextualized and optimized for speaking instruction in Indonesian higher education.

METHOD

This research used qualitative research method. This study employed a qualitative research method using a case study design to explore the implementation of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in intermediate-level speaking classes at UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung. The qualitative approach was chosen to gain an in-depth understanding of the pedagogical practices, perceptions, and experiences of both lecturers and students within a real-world instructional context. As a bounded system, the case focused on specific classes, lecturers, and students involved in CLIL-informed speaking instruction, allowing for rich, contextualized insights. Multiple data collection techniques including classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis were used to ensure methodological triangulation and enhance the credibility of the findings. By adopting this design, the study aimed to illuminate the complexities and dynamics of CLIL implementation as experienced by participants within their authentic educational environment.

The case was deliberately bounded, focusing intensively on specific CLIL-informed speaking classes, the lecturers facilitating them, and the students enrolled, thereby enabling the generation of rich, contextualized insights grounded in the realities of the educational setting. To ensure comprehensiveness and methodological rigor, multiple data collection techniques were implemented: sustained classroom observations provided direct evidence of teaching practices and student interactions; semi-structured interviews with lecturers yielded detailed accounts of their pedagogical reasoning, challenges, and successes; focus group discussions with students uncovered collective perspectives and shared experiences; and document analysis (including syllabi, lesson plans, teaching materials, and student work) offered crucial supplementary context.

This deliberate methodological triangulation served to enhance the credibility, trustworthiness, and depth of the findings by cross verifying evidence from diverse sources. By adopting this holistic design, the study

aimed to illuminate the intricate complexities, emergent dynamics, and situated realities of CLIL implementation as experienced and interpreted by the key participants themselves within their natural educational environment. Following this intensive data collection phase, the gathered qualitative data comprising detailed field notes from observations, verbatim interview and focus group transcripts, and relevant documents underwent a rigorous process of thematic analysis. This involved iterative cycles of coding to identify recurring patterns, salient themes, and significant variations related to the enactment and reception of CLIL in the speaking classroom.

Respondents

This study involved 2 English lecturers and 162 students from 5 speaking class, English Education Department of Uin Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung. The lecturers selected had at least two years of experience teaching speaking classes using content based approaches. The lecturers were purposefully selected based on their qualifications and teaching experience, specifically having a minimum of two years of consistent involvement in teaching speaking courses that integrated content-based approaches, such as thematic discussions, project-based presentations, and issue-driven dialogues. Their prior exposure to CLIL-informed pedagogy, either through independent study, workshops, or institutional initiatives was considered an important factor in selecting participants who could provide rich, informed insights into classroom practices.

The student participants were drawn from five parallel intermediate-level speaking classes in the fifth semester, which is typically a stage where students are expected to transition from basic interpersonal communication to more academic and content-driven discourse. They had completed foundational speaking courses and were beginning to engage with more complex speaking tasks, including argumentative speaking, academic presentations, and group discussions centred on interdisciplinary themes. The selection of these students was intended to capture a more mature and cognitively prepared group capable of reflecting on their learning experiences

within the CLIL framework.

Their prior exposure to structured speaking activities provided a solid basis for integrating content-focused instruction with language learning objectives. By engaging these students in tasks that required both subject mastery and linguistic competence, the study aimed to observe how CLIL could enhance not only their communicative fluency but also their ability to process and articulate discipline-specific concepts in English. Moreover, the inclusion of multiple classes allowed for a broader representation of instructional dynamics and learning outcomes, enabling comparisons across different teaching approaches, classroom interactions, and student engagement patterns. This diversity of learning contexts was expected to yield richer insights into the adaptability and effectiveness of CLIL in fostering higher-order thinking skills, collaborative learning, and cross-disciplinary knowledge integration.

Instruments

Data were collected using three primary instruments: classroom observation checklists, semi-structured interview guides, and documentation reviews. The observation checklists focused on CLIL principles such as integration of content and language, scaffolding strategies, and student interaction. Interviews with lecturers and focus group discussions with students provided insights into pedagogical experiences and perceptions. The documentation reviews included lesson plans, teaching materials, and student performance records, which were analyzed to triangulate findings from observations and interviews. This multi-instrument approach ensured methodological rigor by capturing both the observable teaching–learning processes and the subjective experiences of participants. Observations were conducted over multiple sessions to account for variations in classroom dynamics, while interviews and focus group discussions were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim for thematic analysis. All instruments were designed to align with the study’s research questions, thereby enabling a comprehensive examination of how CLIL was implemented and perceived

in the intermediate-level speaking classes.

To further enhance the validity of the findings, data from the three instruments were cross-compared through a process of methodological triangulation. This approach allowed the researcher to identify convergences and divergences among observed practices, participant accounts, and documented evidence. The thematic analysis followed by (Braun & Clarke, 2006) framework, involving iterative coding, theme development, and refinement to ensure that the emerging patterns accurately reflected the participants' experiences and the realities of classroom implementation. By integrating quantitative indicators from observation checklists with qualitative insights from interviews, FGDs, and document analysis, the study was able to construct a nuanced portrayal of CLIL practices that accounted for both instructional intentions and learner engagement in intermediate-level speaking classes.

To obtain a comprehensive understanding of how CLIL is implemented in speaking classes, this study utilized three primary instruments: classroom observation checklists, semi-structured interview guides, and document analysis. Each instrument was carefully designed to capture different dimensions of the teaching and learning process within a CLIL framework. The classroom observation checklists were developed to monitor the extent to which CLIL principles such as the integration of content and language, scaffolding techniques, and opportunities for meaningful interaction were evident during instructional activities. Semi-structured interview guides were crafted to elicit detailed reflections from lecturers and students regarding their experiences, challenges, and perceived benefits of CLIL in speaking classes. Document analysis involved the systematic review of lesson plans, instructional materials, and student performance records to corroborate and enrich data obtained from observations and interviews. Together, these instruments provided a triangulated dataset that enabled the researcher to examine both the pedagogical strategies employed and the learners' responses, thereby ensuring a holistic understanding of CLIL implementation

in this context. Multiple data collection sessions were conducted across different weeks to account for variations in instructional delivery and learner engagement over time. All interviews and focus group discussions were audio-recorded with participants' consent, transcribed verbatim, and subjected to thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and unique insights. Observation notes were supplemented with qualitative descriptions of classroom activities, allowing for deeper interpretation beyond checklist ratings. This systematic approach ensured that findings were grounded in both quantitative indicators and rich qualitative narratives, ultimately strengthening the validity and reliability of the study's conclusions regarding CLIL implementation in intermediate-level speaking classes.

The classroom observation checklists were constructed based on established CLIL principles, focusing on indicators such as the integration of content and language objectives, the use of scaffolding techniques (e.g., modelling, guided practice, visual aids), classroom interaction patterns, and the extent to which students used the target language meaningfully. Observations were conducted over multiple sessions to ensure consistency and to capture both routine and innovative teaching practices. Field notes were taken alongside the checklist ratings to document specific examples of teacher student interactions, task designs, and instances of spontaneous language use.

These qualitative descriptions complemented the quantitative observation scores, allowing for a richer interpretation of classroom practices. Particular attention was paid to how lecturers balanced content delivery with language support, as well as how students engaged with tasks requiring higher-order thinking skills. By capturing both the frequency and quality of CLIL-related behaviors, the observation data served as a robust foundation for cross-verifying findings from interviews and document analysis. This comprehensive observation process also made it possible to identify patterns of instructional consistency as well as adaptive variations in teaching methods across different class sessions. Instances where lecturers

deviated from planned activities were noted and later compared with their stated pedagogical rationales in the interviews. Moreover, the observation records highlighted not only the presence of CLIL principles but also the depth and quality of their application, providing insight into how theoretical frameworks were translated into actual classroom practices. Such detailed documentation ensured that the observation data could be meaningfully integrated with other data sources, thereby enhancing the validity and depth of the overall analysis.

The semi-structured interview guides were used to explore the lecturers' pedagogical approaches, their understanding of CLIL, challenges encountered in implementation, and strategies used to overcome those challenges. Interviews allowed for flexibility, enabling the researchers to probe deeper into specific issues that emerged during classroom observations. Each interview was conducted in a conversational manner to encourage openness, while still following a structured set of core questions to ensure consistency across participants. The lecturers' responses provided nuanced insights into their instructional decision-making, the rationale behind their lesson designs, and their reflections on student engagement and learning outcomes.

Additionally, focus group discussions with students were incorporated to capture learner perspectives, particularly regarding their experiences with content-integrated speaking tasks, perceived language gains, and areas of difficulty. All interviews and discussions were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and subjected to thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and divergent viewpoints, thereby contributing to a comprehensive understanding of CLIL implementation in the observed classes. The thematic analysis process involved multiple cycles of coding to ensure that both anticipated and emergent themes were captured. Initial codes were derived from the research questions and CLIL theoretical framework, while additional codes emerged inductively from the data itself. Special consideration was given to identifying intersections between lecturer and student perspectives,

particularly in relation to perceived challenges and successful strategies. This comparative approach not only enriched the interpretation of findings but also highlighted areas where pedagogical intentions aligned or diverged from learner experiences. By integrating these qualitative insights with observation and document analysis data, the study was able to construct a multidimensional portrayal of CLIL practices in the speaking classes.

In addition, focus group discussions (FGDs) with students were conducted to gather their perceptions, experiences, and reflections on learning speaking through CLIL-based instruction. These discussions provided a platform for students to articulate their learning challenges, motivations, and opinions on content selection and classroom interaction. The FGDs were organized in small groups to create a comfortable environment that encouraged active participation and candid sharing. Guided by open-ended questions, the discussions explored how students perceived the balance between language development and content learning, the relevance of the topics covered, and the effectiveness of the teaching strategies employed. Insights from these discussions offered valuable learner-centered perspectives that complemented the lecturers' accounts and observational data. All sessions were audio-recorded with participants' consent, transcribed verbatim, and analyzed thematically to identify common trends, unique viewpoints, and areas for pedagogical improvement in the CLIL-based speaking classes.

The findings from the FGDs were then cross-referenced with classroom observation notes and document analysis results to identify consistencies and discrepancies in student and lecturer perspectives. This process allowed the researcher to pinpoint areas where learners' experiences aligned with the intended instructional design, as well as instances where gaps existed between pedagogical goals and actual learning outcomes. Furthermore, the rich qualitative data from these discussions provided contextual depth to the quantitative observation measures, thereby contributing to a more nuanced and balanced understanding of how CLIL functioned in the intermediate-level speaking classes.

Finally, the document analysis included syllabi, lesson plans, teaching materials, and selected student outputs. These documents were examined to triangulate observational and interview data and to identify the alignment between planned instruction and actual classroom implementation. Particular attention was given to how lesson objectives incorporated both content and language goals, the extent to which materials reflected CLIL principles, and whether assessment tasks measured integrated learning outcomes. Student outputs, such as presentation scripts, project reports, and reflective journals, were analyzed to gauge the depth of content understanding and the accuracy and fluency of language use. This document analysis not only provided concrete evidence of the instructional design but also offered insights into how learning objectives were operationalized in practice. By comparing planned curriculum documents with observed teaching practices and participant accounts, the study ensured a comprehensive and credible representation of CLIL implementation in the speaking classes.

Procedures

Data collection took place over one academic semester. Five class sessions were observed for each participating lecturer. Interviews were conducted after classroom observations and were recorded and transcribed. Document analysis included syllabi, lesson plans, and selected student assignments. The data collection process was carried out over the course of one academic semester to allow for an in-depth and sustained observation of CLIL implementation in the speaking classes. During this period, three classroom sessions were observed for each participating lecturer, providing a longitudinal perspective on teaching practices, consistency in instructional strategies, and student engagement. These observations were strategically scheduled during different phases of the semester early, midterm, and final to capture variations in lesson planning, delivery, and assessment.

Following the classroom observations, semi-structured interviews were conducted individually with each lecturer to gain a deeper understanding of their pedagogical reasoning, instructional choices, and challenges

encountered in applying the CLIL approach. These interviews, lasting approximately 45-60 minutes, were audio-recorded with consent and transcribed verbatim for thematic analysis. The interview protocol included both predetermined questions aligned with the research objectives and flexible prompts that allowed lecturers to elaborate on specific incidents observed in their classes. This approach ensured that the discussions addressed core themes such as content language integration, scaffolding strategies, classroom management, and assessment practices, while also accommodating emergent topics relevant to each participant's unique teaching context. Thematic coding of the transcripts was conducted iteratively, enabling the identification of recurring patterns as well as distinct individual perspectives. These insights were later triangulated with observation and document analysis data to build a comprehensive understanding of how CLIL principles were interpreted and enacted in the speaking classes.

In parallel, focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted with groups of 5-7 students from each class, aiming to elicit student perspectives on the integration of content and language in speaking tasks. The FGDs encouraged open dialogue and reflection, offering rich qualitative data on students' experiences, motivation, and learning difficulties. The document analysis phase involved a systematic examination of teaching-related materials, including course syllabi, lesson plans, handouts, PowerPoint slides, and selected student assignments. This analysis helped to identify how the lecturers designed and structured their instruction around CLIL principles and to what extent content and language objectives were explicitly integrated into their planning and materials. Attention was also given to the alignment between stated learning outcomes, classroom activities, and assessment practices, allowing for an evaluation of the coherence and fidelity of CLIL implementation. Student assignments, such as presentation scripts and project reports, were reviewed to assess both content mastery and language proficiency, providing tangible evidence of learning outcomes. By cross-referencing these documents with observational and interview data,

the analysis offered a comprehensive picture of how pedagogical intentions translated into classroom realities. This multi-source approach ensured that findings were grounded in both planned curriculum design and actual learning experiences, thereby enhancing the validity and depth of the study's conclusions on CLIL-based speaking instruction.

By combining these procedures, the study ensured data triangulation, enhanced the credibility of the findings, and provided a multi-dimensional perspective on the implementation of CLIL in speaking classes at UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung. The integration of observational data, interview insights, focus group discussions, and document analysis allowed for a balanced representation of both teacher and student experiences, as well as the alignment between planned instruction and enacted practices. This comprehensive approach not only strengthened the trustworthiness of the results but also enabled the identification of nuanced factors influencing CLIL implementation, such as contextual constraints, resource availability, and lecturer adaptability. Ultimately, the triangulated evidence provided a robust foundation for interpreting the effectiveness of CLIL in enhancing both language proficiency and content mastery in intermediate-level speaking classes.

Data analysis

All qualitative data obtained from observations, interviews, focus group discussions, and document reviews were analysed using thematic analysis, a flexible yet rigorous method suitable for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns within qualitative data. The researcher adopted the Braun & Clarke's (Braun & Clarke, 2006) six-phase framework, which provides a clear and systematic guide for processing complex qualitative information. The process began with familiarization, wherein the researcher immersed herself in the data by repeatedly reading transcripts, reviewing field notes, and examining relevant documents to gain a holistic understanding of the content. This was followed by generating initial codes that captured both semantic and latent meanings within the data, guided by the research questions and

CLIL theoretical framework. In the subsequent phases, potential themes were identified, reviewed for internal consistency and distinctiveness, and then clearly defined and named to reflect their conceptual scope. The final phase involved weaving these themes into a coherent narrative that addressed the study's objectives, supported by illustrative excerpts from the data. This systematic approach ensured that the analysis remained transparent, replicable, and grounded in the participants' authentic voices, thereby enhancing the trustworthiness and credibility of the findings.

The first phase involved familiarization with the data, where the researcher immersed themselves in the raw data by reading and re-reading transcripts, observation notes, and documents to gain an initial holistic understanding. This stage included taking preliminary notes and observations that informed the next steps. In the second phase, initial codes were generated manually by identifying meaningful data segments and labelling them based on recurring ideas, behaviours, or linguistic patterns related to CLIL implementation. These codes were then organized into potential categories across data sources. The third phase focused on searching for themes, where the researcher clustered the codes into broader, meaningful units that represented significant features or issues in the dataset. This involved identifying relationships between codes and grouping them into potential overarching themes.

Further, the fourth phase, reviewing themes, involved refining and validating these candidate themes by checking how well they fit the coded extracts and the entire data set. At this point, some themes were merged, modified, or discarded based on coherence and relevance. The fifth phase consisted of defining and naming themes, in which each theme was clearly defined, given a concise and descriptive label, and supported by specific data excerpts to demonstrate its validity and relevance. In the final phase, producing the report, the researcher compiled a comprehensive narrative analysis that connected the themes to the research questions and theoretical framework, providing a detailed and nuanced interpretation of the findings.

Throughout all phases, constant comparison across data sources observations, interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis was employed to ensure that the emerging themes were firmly grounded in the evidence. This iterative process not only enhanced the credibility and trustworthiness of the analysis but also allowed for the identification of converging and diverging perspectives between lecturers and students. By systematically following Braun & Clarke's (Braun & Clarke, 2006) six-step framework, the study ensured that the final thematic structure provided a rich, coherent, and well-substantiated account of CLIL implementation in intermediate-level speaking classes. The integration of multiple data sources also facilitated a more comprehensive interpretation of the findings, capturing both the pedagogical intentions behind CLIL practices and the lived experiences of learners in the classroom. This multidimensional approach enabled the researcher to move beyond surface-level descriptions toward deeper explanations of how contextual factors, instructional choices, and learner engagement interacted to shape the implementation process. As a result, the analysis not only addressed the study's research questions but also generated insights that could inform future pedagogical strategies and policy decisions related to CLIL-based language instruction.

To ensure the trustworthiness and credibility of the analysis, data triangulation was employed by cross-referencing the results from different instruments observations, interviews, FGDs, and document reviews. This methodological triangulation enhanced the validity of the findings and minimized potential researcher bias. In addition, member checking was conducted by sharing preliminary interpretations with selected participants to confirm the accuracy and resonance of the findings with their experiences. Peer debriefing sessions with colleagues familiar with CLIL research were also carried out to critically review the coding process, thematic development, and analytical decisions. An audit trail documenting all stages of data collection and analysis was maintained to ensure transparency and allow for the replication of the study. These combined strategies strengthened the

overall rigor of the research, ensuring that the conclusions drawn were both credible and grounded in the participants' authentic perspectives.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings reveal that lecturers at UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung adopt various strategies aligned with the principles of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in their speaking classes. Based on classroom observations, lecturers rarely teach speaking in isolation; instead, they embed language practice within subject-related themes such as environmental issues, Islamic economics, or local cultural studies. This approach was consistently confirmed during interviews, where lecturers stated that integrating content helps students "have something meaningful to talk about," which aligns with (Bonnet, 2012) argument that content integration enhances meaningful language use.

Data from the FGD further show that lecturers perceive CLIL as a way to encourage deeper engagement, as students are required not only to practice spoken English but also to analyse, explain, and present content knowledge. This indicates that the integrated approach fosters both linguistic fluency and cognitive engagement. Interview excerpts also highlight those lecturers intentionally design tasks requiring students to articulate complex ideas, such as evaluating case studies or proposing solutions demonstrating the dual goals of CLIL, namely language development and subject understanding. Overall, the triangulated data suggest that CLIL-based speaking instruction in this context supports students' ability to engage in academic discourse while expanding their content knowledge.

In practice, lecturers embed these content themes into communicative speaking tasks, including individual presentations, structured debates, collaborative problem-solving, and role plays. For instance, students may be asked to present an environmental campaign, argue a case related to cultural tolerance, or simulate a panel discussion on youth and technology all using English as the medium of expression. These tasks are designed

not only to assess students' language output but also to encourage critical thinking, collaboration, and subject understanding, in line with the CLIL 4Cs framework: Content, Communication, Cognition, and Culture.

This holistic integration creates an immersive environment in which language is acquired naturally as a tool for learning, rather than as an isolated subject. Such task design not only promotes active participation but also mirrors real-world communicative situations, thereby enhancing learners' confidence and functional language use. By situating language learning within meaningful and context-rich activities, students are encouraged to go beyond memorizing vocabulary or grammar rules and instead focus on purposeful expression and problem-solving. Moreover, the integration of culturally relevant topics fosters greater intercultural sensitivity and awareness, enabling students to connect classroom learning with global perspectives. This approach ultimately transforms speaking classes into dynamic spaces where linguistic competence and subject mastery develop in tandem.

Table 1 CLIL 4Cs Components and Corresponding Classroom Activities

CLIL 4Cs Component	Observed/Reported Activities	Representative Data Snippet (Observation/FGD)
Content	Integration of themes like Islamic ethics, cultural identity.	"Students used terms like 'cultural relativism' and 'global citizenship' in the debate." (Observation Note, Class A)
Communication	Structured debates, panel discussions, role-plays.	"The students were genuinely arguing their points, not just reciting grammar. It was meaningful talk." (FGD Remark)
Cognition	Tasks promoting critical thinking, problem-solving, analysis.	"The assignment required them to analyze three different solutions to a social issue and justify the best one." (Lecturer Interview 5)
Culture	Discussions on local and global societal issues, tolerance.	"We often start with a local cultural practice and then compare it to a global one to foster cross-cultural awareness." (Lecturer Interview 1)

a. Content and Communication: Meaningful Discourse

The study demonstrates a strong emphasis on Content and Communication, shifting the focus from isolated linguistic drills to meaningful, theme-based discourse. Rather than teaching general English, lecturers integrate relevant, interdisciplinary themes such as Islamic ethics and cultural identity. For example, observed activities often involve structured tasks like debates and panel discussions, which provide a clear purpose for language use. This focus on substantive topics compels students to use language authentically; as noted in a Focus Group Discussion remark, "The students were genuinely arguing their points, not just reciting grammar. It was meaningful talk." This commitment to using language for subject-specific purposes is further confirmed by observation notes, which documented students employing discipline-specific terminology like "cultural relativism" and "global citizenship" during tasks.

b. Cognition and Culture: Critical Engagement

Furthermore, the implementation successfully targets the higher order aims of Cognition and Culture. Activities are designed to stimulate critical thinking and problem solving, moving beyond simple information recall. Evidence from lecturer interviews confirms the cognitive demands of the tasks: "The assignment required them to analyze three different solutions to a social issue and justify the best one." This emphasis ensures students are not just practicing fluency but developing the ability to articulate complex, reasoned arguments.

In terms of Culture, speaking tasks are utilized to foster tolerance and cross-cultural awareness. Lecturers deliberately select topics that prompt discussions on local and global societal issues. One lecturer explained this process, stating, "We often start with a local cultural practice and then compare it to a global one to foster cross-cultural awareness." This holistic application of the 4Cs framework ensures that the speaking class outcomes are dual-focused, simultaneously enhancing linguistic proficiency and deepening students' critical thinking and understanding of relevant academic

and cultural content.

Based on observation, to support successful task completion, lecturers often provide pre-task input sessions, such as vocabulary building, content briefings, and modelling of expected language structures. During the tasks, they monitor and facilitate interaction, offering strategic feedback and prompting students to use more precise or sophisticated language when appropriate. Post-task reflections, both oral and written, are used to consolidate learning by encouraging students to evaluate their performance, identify areas for improvement, and connect the language learned to the content discussed. This cyclical process of preparation, performance, and reflection ensures that learning outcomes address both communicative competence and deeper content mastery, thereby embodying the integrated nature of CLIL pedagogy in the speaking classroom.

Before engaging in speaking activities, students are often provided with content input through various formats such as short articles, videos, infographics, or mini-lectures. This input phase enables students to build background knowledge, comprehend key concepts, and acquire domain-specific vocabulary. Lecturers then guide students to use this content knowledge to articulate their ideas in English, either orally or in structured discussions. Through this process of content exploration followed by language production, learners are not only practicing their speaking skills but are also developing academic literacy in a second language.

These challenges highlight the need for targeted professional development for lecturers, the creation of accessible yet content-rich materials, and the implementation of strategies that gradually build students' linguistic and conceptual readiness for CLIL-based speaking tasks. From the lecturers' perspective, a major concern was the scarcity of ready-to-use teaching materials that effectively integrate both content and language objectives. Most commercially available English language textbooks tend to focus solely on linguistic skills without embedding meaningful academic or interdisciplinary content. As a result, lecturers were compelled to design their

own materials or adapt existing resources to align with CLIL principles. This process was time-consuming and often lacked institutional support in terms of access to content resources or collaborative planning forums. The absence of standardized, CLIL-oriented syllabi also contributed to inconsistency in implementation across different classes.

Furthermore, the lack of formal CLIL training meant that lecturers relied heavily on personal teaching experience and informal peer exchange, resulting in varied interpretations of how to balance content and language integration. While some lecturers successfully embedded authentic materials and task-based activities, others struggled to maintain coherence between thematic content and targeted linguistic outcomes. This variability not only affected the uniformity of student learning experiences but also posed challenges in evaluating the overall effectiveness of CLIL within the program. Lecturers emphasized the need for institutional initiatives such as professional development workshops, shared resource banks, and collaborative curriculum design to ensure more consistent and sustainable implementation of CLIL in speaking classes (Graaff et al., 2007).

Another significant issue was the lack of formal training in CLIL methodology. Although lecturers had a good command of English and teaching experience, most had not been formally introduced to the pedagogical underpinnings of CLIL, such as the 4Cs framework or content-language task design. This led to varied interpretations of how content should be integrated with language, with some lecturers placing heavier emphasis on discussion and others on content delivery. Such pedagogical inconsistency sometimes resulted in unclear instructional focus, leaving students uncertain about the expected learning outcomes. In some cases, the absence of a shared methodological foundation also limited opportunities for collaborative lesson planning and peer observation, which could have served as platforms for professional growth and pedagogical alignment. Without structured guidance, lecturers often relied on trial-and-error approaches, adapting strategies based on immediate classroom responses rather than

evidence-based CLIL practices (Vásquez & Rubio, 2010). This situation not only affected the coherence of instruction across different classes but also hindered the systematic development of students' content knowledge and language proficiency over time. Addressing this gap through targeted professional development, mentorship programs, and institutional policy support would be essential for ensuring more consistent and effective CLIL implementation in speaking courses.

Moreover, many students reported feeling intimidated and less confident when expected to speak on academic topics without adequate support. The challenge was not only expressing ideas in a foreign language but doing so with accuracy, coherence, and content relevance. These barriers were particularly evident among students with lower English proficiency or weaker academic literacy skills (Leong & Ahmadi, n.d.). To address these difficulties, some students prepare scripted responses, which limited opportunities for spontaneous interaction and communicative competence development. Others tended to rely excessively on peers with stronger language skills, creating an imbalance in group dynamics and reducing individual accountability. Classroom observations showed that in the absence of structured scaffolding or tailored support, several learners stayed at the margins of classroom interaction, thus missing valuable opportunities to practice and improve their speaking abilities, without structured scaffolding and differentiated support, these learners often remained on the periphery of classroom discourse, missing valuable chances to practice and refine their speaking abilities. Over time, such disengagement risked widening the performance gap between higher- and lower-proficiency students, undermining the inclusive and collaborative principles central to CLIL pedagogy.

Both lecturers and students agreed that greater scaffolding, resource support, and training would significantly improve the implementation of CLIL in speaking classes. Without these components, the dual aims of CLIL developing content knowledge and language fluency risk becoming fragmented or unevenly achieved. They emphasized the need for institutional

initiatives such as professional development workshops, collaborative material design sessions, and access to high-quality, CLIL-oriented teaching resources. Lecturers suggested that peer observation and mentoring could help standardize best practices, while students advocated for preparatory sessions focusing on both topic familiarity and key language structures before engaging in speaking tasks. By systematically addressing these needs, the university could create a more supportive learning ecosystem in which content and language objectives are cohesively pursued, thereby maximizing the pedagogical potential of CLIL in the speaking classroom (Massler, 2011).

Student feedback indicated a mixed response. While most acknowledged the relevance and stimulating nature of content-rich discussions, they also admitted feeling overwhelmed, particularly in early sessions. Students appreciated the opportunity to learn real-world topics and believed that CLIL helped them become more confident and spontaneous in speaking English. They also valued the shift from rote learning to critical engagement. However, they suggested that more scaffolding, such as vocabulary lists and pre-task content briefs, would make the learning experience smoother. Several students also proposed integrating more collaborative learning activities, such as group research projects or peer-led presentations, to share the cognitive load and promote mutual support. They felt that working in teams could help bridge knowledge gaps, reduce anxiety, and foster a more inclusive speaking environment.

Additionally, they expressed interest in having access to supplementary multimedia resources such as podcasts, short documentaries, and interactive quizzes to reinforce both content comprehension and language skills outside the classroom. Such enhancements, they believed, would not only improve their preparedness for speaking tasks but also sustain their motivation and engagement throughout the course. Many students stated that CLIL activities helped them become more spontaneous, confident, and expressive in English, particularly because they were not merely practicing language forms but were also communicating ideas, making arguments, and presenting

informed opinions. The integration of content gave them a clear purpose for speaking, which they believed enhanced their motivation and sense of achievement. Several students also mentioned that the approach fostered critical thinking, as they had to process information, form viewpoints, and interact with others in a more substantive way than in traditional speaking exercises. They observed that this deeper engagement not only improved their fluency but also enriched their ability to articulate nuanced perspectives, even on complex or abstract topics. For some, this was the first time they had engaged in academic-level discussions in English, which they found both challenging and rewarding. The necessity to substantiate their arguments with evidence from the provided content pushed them to listen more attentively, read more critically, and choose their words more precisely. Over time, many students reported feeling a stronger sense of agency in discussions, viewing themselves not just as language learners but as active contributors to meaningful academic discourse.

Overall, while students appreciated the educational depth and communicative purpose of CLIL, they emphasized the need for balanced task design and continuous support to ensure that the learning process remains both challenging and accessible. While students appreciated the educational depth and communicative purpose of CLIL, they emphasized the need for balanced task design and continuous support to ensure that the learning process remains both challenging and accessible. They suggested that tasks should be carefully calibrated to match their language proficiency while gradually increasing cognitive demand, allowing them to build confidence without feeling overwhelmed. Regular formative feedback, clear learning objectives, and structured pre-task preparation were viewed as essential in maintaining motivation and ensuring steady progress.

Students also recommended incorporating more collaborative activities, where peer support could help bridge both linguistic and conceptual gaps. By striking this balance, they believed CLIL could maximize its dual potential enhancing both language competence and subject mastery without

compromising learner engagement.

However, these findings also come with several limitations that warrant further research. This study was conducted within a limited context, focusing on a small number of CLIL-based speaking classes at UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung. The insights were drawn primarily from student perceptions, which, although valuable, may not fully capture the complexity of classroom dynamics or the long-term impact of CLIL implementation. Additionally, the data reflect a specific institutional setting, meaning that the challenges and preferences identified here may differ in institutions with different learner profiles, teacher expertise, or curricular frameworks.

Therefore, future studies should expand the scope by involving larger and more diverse samples, incorporating longitudinal designs to observe changes over time, and integrating multiple data sources such as classroom observations, performance-based assessments, and teacher reflections. Such follow-up studies would provide a more comprehensive understanding of how task design, scaffolding strategies, and collaborative structures influence CLIL effectiveness across varied teaching contexts.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the implementation of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in speaking classes at UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung, focusing on pedagogical practices, challenges, and student perceptions. The findings suggest that when implemented thoughtfully, CLIL serves as a powerful instructional approach that promotes both language proficiency and subject matter understanding. By embedding content topics such as environmental education, Islamic perspectives, and social issues into speaking tasks, lecturers provide learners with rich opportunities to engage in authentic, purposeful communication that extends beyond traditional language learning paradigms.

The integration of content into speaking activities was found to stimulate critical thinking, academic discourse, and contextualized language

use. Students were not only practicing grammatical forms but also developing their ability to express ideas, construct arguments, and interact meaningfully in English. This dual focus enhances both communicative competence and cognitive engagement, aligning with the principles of the CLIL 4Cs framework. By fostering communication, cognition, content learning, and cultural awareness simultaneously, CLIL creates a richer learning environment than traditional language teaching methods. The emphasis on authentic and purposeful interaction enables students to link linguistic forms to real-world functions, thereby deepening retention and transferability of skills. Moreover, the collaborative nature of CLIL speaking tasks encourages peer learning and the negotiation of meaning, both of which are essential for advancing fluency and accuracy. In this way, the approach not only addresses language proficiency but also prepares students for participation in academic and professional communities where English serves as a medium of communication.

However, the study also identified key challenges that must be addressed to optimize the implementation of CLIL. These include the lack of accessible, integrated teaching materials, the absence of formal training or professional development for lecturers, and varying levels of student preparedness, particularly in dealing with complex or unfamiliar content. Without adequate support, these factors can hinder the intended outcomes of CLIL and contribute to unequal learning experiences. Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive institutional strategy that combines curriculum design, lecturer capacity building, and learner support mechanisms.

Furthermore, developing standardized CLIL-oriented syllabi, investing in context-relevant materials, and organizing ongoing workshops or peer-learning forums for lecturers can enhance pedagogical consistency. For students, providing pre-task vocabulary support, background content briefings, and structured scaffolding can help bridge knowledge gaps and build confidence. By implementing these measures, institutions can create a more equitable and sustainable framework for CLIL, ensuring that both

content mastery and language proficiency are effectively achieved.

Despite these obstacles, student responses were largely positive. Learners appreciated the relevance and practicality of CLIL-based instruction and reported improvements in both speaking confidence and critical engagement. Nonetheless, they highlighted the need for more scaffolding tools, such as vocabulary lists, pre-task content input, and structured guidance, to reduce cognitive overload and increase their participation. Such feedback underscores the importance of balancing challenge and support within CLIL-based speaking activities. While authentic and cognitively demanding tasks promote deeper learning, insufficient scaffolding can lead to frustration and disengagement, particularly among less proficient learners. Incorporating step-by-step guidance, gradual exposure to complex topics, and opportunities for collaborative learning can help students navigate both linguistic and content-related challenges. In doing so, lecturers can maintain high expectations while ensuring that the learning process remains accessible, motivating, and inclusive.

To strengthen the impact of CLIL in speaking classes, it is recommended that educational institutions: provide systematic training and workshops for lecturers on CLIL pedagogy and instructional design; develop or facilitate access to CLIL-oriented materials that align with both language and content goals; design speaking tasks with built-in scaffolding and differentiation strategies to support diverse learner needs.

Finally, future research is encouraged to explore the long-term effects of CLIL on students' academic performance, retention of content knowledge, and communicative fluency. Mixed-method or longitudinal studies may offer deeper insights into how CLIL evolves in tertiary EFL contexts and contributes to sustainable learning outcomes. Such investigations could also examine the role of lecturer expertise, institutional support, and material availability in shaping the effectiveness of CLIL implementation over time. Additionally, comparative studies between CLIL and non-CLIL classes may highlight specific pedagogical benefits and limitations, thereby informing

evidence-based policy and curriculum design.

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