Implementing Remote CLIL during the Covid-19 Pandemic: A Teacher’s Voice

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Abstract. Delivering content and language at the same time is believed to equip students with excellent and balanced competence. The goal of this study is to investigate and describe the implementation of CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) in an English class during the COVID-19 pandemic. A qualitative case study design was employed in this research. The participant in the study is an English teacher at a private junior high school in Cimahi, West Java, Indonesia. The data was collected through observations and in-depth interviews. The findings indicate that CLIL is implemented based on the 4C’s framework (communication, content, cognition, and culture) in all stages of learning activity (pre-while-post activity). Although CLIL is theoretically mentioned to be applied flexibly, the teacher emphasized the particular pattern: communication comes first, followed by content, continued by cognition, and last is culture, with the intention of accommodating and facilitating both students’ cognitive and affective sides, as well as learning engagement and interactivity during remote learning in the pandemic era. Some challenges are also reported to emerge, but the school's support has helped this approach be executed successfully. This study implies that CLIL can provide ideal outcomes when all components of the school work together to be ready to execute it, despite the obstacles that grow in cyberspace that hamper face-to-face learning.

Keywords: CLIL; pandemic; remote learning

Penerapan CLIL Jarak Jauh di Masa Pandemi Covid-19: Suara Guru


Kata kunci: CLIL; pandemi; pembelajaran jarak jauh
INTRODUCTION
The Covid-19 pandemic has disrupted the process of education on a global scale, with education around the world being affected by school closures and abrupt transitions in the learning process. The outbreak has shifted face-to-face learning to forced online learning and has challenged teachers to struggle with the new learning form (Setyaningrum & Purwati, 2020). As in Italy, during the unprecedented period of covid-19, the majority of teachers struggle to adapt to internet skill issues since they are not prepared enough to conduct the online learning situation (Cinganotto, 2020). While in Indonesia it is even worse, not only do teachers and students have to struggle with internet skills matters (Pradana & Syarifuddin, 2021), but also, they have to start all over again to recognize what online learning is. This matter is what then becomes the emergency needs during covid-19 in Indonesia. To deal with the emergency needs of teachers and students during the pandemic, the Ministry of Education has released the policy for the implementation of online learning (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2020). Since the policy has been implemented, it has provided the arrangement and a lead for schools in Indonesia to conduct online learning as well as technical training for teachers to reinforce their skill in using online learning platforms in order to optimize the online learning process. This policy has given new hope to schools because of its flexibility and adjustable use for teachers’ and students’ needs (Almahasees et al., 2021; Dhawan, 2020). The use of online learning is also considered sufficient for the ongoing learning process especially for students in this situation (Dong et al., 2020).

In fact, although teachers and students are provided with the arrangement and technical solutions related to online learning, there are still some problems and challenges appearing during the process. For teachers, online learning carried out some difficulties in delivering the material to students and doing the assessment. Teachers may find it difficult to adjust their style in delivering materials (Bhuana & Apriliyanti, 2021) from face-to-face learning or traditional learning to online learning (Dhawan, 2020). While for students, online learning made the challenge double. Low ability of English skills leads them to low comprehension of learning materials. This problem is also noticed to hinder the English learning process (Purnama, 2021).

In addition to the problem of adapting to the use of technology at class, integrating content and language at the same time is sometimes problematic for teachers. First, because the knowledge keeps changing and teachers should always update it. This is no wonder as teaching content and language keeps changing (Lopriore, 2018). Second, teachers frequently cannot balance the proportion of content delivery and language uses. As highlighted by Villabona & Cenoz (2022), it is difficult to strike a balance between content and language because some classes are content-oriented with insufficient emphasis devoted to language, while others are language-oriented with insufficient attention paid to content. Such orientation is also it gets worsen when English teachers might have to pick the right online learning tools to teach language skills while they are still adapting on how to use it, while students have to face a lack-of-motivation issue, self-confidence, or even hesitation to participate in the online learning process (Ying et al., 2021).

Considering these appearing problems, then comes the urgency to provide a proper preparation before conducting the online learning process. An approach of teaching that may help
students and teachers dealing with such difficulties is CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning).

As its name, this approach combines the delivery of content knowledge of the field and its language uses at one time, which is termed by Dallinger et al., (2016) as killing two birds with one stone. Coyle (2007) conceptualizes this approach as a means of increasing students' content understanding through the use of English as a medium of delivery, which consists of 4Cs element: content, communication, cognition, and culture. CLIL is also seen as being very beneficial from basic to higher education, in terms of fostering and advancing students' cultural awareness, cognitive skills, and subject-matter knowledge (Le & Nguyen, 2022).

A number of studies have revealed how CLIL helps students learn during online learning. The research of Daraini et al. (2021) revealed that students perceive the implementation of CLIL positively, as they are able to understand their teacher's instructions, learn the subject comfortably, and CLIL assists them with vocabulary mastery enhancement. Another research points out that CLIL has been shown to help pupils learn a new language effectively. Simultaneously, it assists in the development of other talents such as cognitive, cultural awareness, and general academic understanding (Le & Nguyen, 2022). Students’ vocabulary mastery has statistically improved after the use of CLIL, and they see CLIL positively (Nugroho, 2020). Teachers also positively respond to the implementation of CLIL (Waloyo et al., 2021).

The above listed studies have highlighted the assistance of CLIL in students’ learning process, however, the detailed implementation of CLIL 4C’s framework during classroom instruction has not been presented clearly. By way of addition, challenges during the implementation are also worth researching. Therefore, the present research would like to portray the detailed process of how CLIL including its 4Cs is implemented and what challenges faced by the teacher during its implementation. The results of the current study are anticipated to improve the practical use of CLIL during the epidemic and to guide educators and stakeholders in putting into practice the best strategies for balancing and integrating language and content use.

**CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning)**

In 1994, Marsh brought the CLIL idea to Europe (Cinganotto & Cuccurullo, 2015). It is described as a teaching strategy that incorporates real-world materials with curriculum information (Lesca, 2012). CLIL is a learning and teaching methodology that teaches non-linguistic subjects through a foreign language, with a dual focus on developing topic knowledge and competences as well as skills and competences in the foreign language (Georgiou, 2012). It was suggested that CLIL possesses the methodological tools necessary to accomplish two goals: language proficiency and content proficiency, with the foreign language serving as the means by which the content objectives are accomplished. On the other hand, it is important to pay attention to language development. Remembering that a foreign language in CLIL situations fulfills the same function as a native language in conventional contexts is crucial.

According to Gabillon (2020), the CLIL tasks contain a built-in cognitivist theoretical approach. The cognitivist models that have set the CLIL method apart are the emergentist viewpoint (such as complexity theory, connectionism, and dynamic systems theory), as well as the updated Bloom's taxonomy (Ellis, 1998). Emergentist theories contend that language and language development are intricate systems with many interconnected components (Larsen-
Theoretical perspectives from the social and cognitive domains such as emergentist, constructivist, socio-constructivist, and socio-interactionist are combined with rational justifications in CLIL, according to Gabillon (2020). She made the case that emergentists believe language is more heavily reliant on examples than on rules. This shows that mastery of grammatical rules is not the key to efficient language use, but rather a broad knowledge base acquired via exposure and frequent practice. According to Ellis (1998), the amount of utterances used before has a direct correlation with language development. Language acquisition is successful when associations are plentiful and repeated regularly. Cognitive engagement in one’s own learning is the foundation of CLIL. The updated Bloom’s taxonomy provides a framework for the cognitive skills that students need to learn in order to master their own knowledge construction (Krathwohl, 2002).

**CLIL 4Cs Elements**

According to Mehisto et al. (2008), CLIL is a technique for simultaneously learning and teaching a subject and a foreign language. The 4Cs paradigm was first presented by Coyle et al. (2010) as a comprehensive CLIL strategy that clarified the interactions between content (subject matter), communication (language), cognition (learning and thinking), and culture (fostering intercultural awareness). It considers how diverse CLIL components, like subject learning, language learning, communication with cultures, and intercultural experiences, are related to one another.

**CLIL General Principles**

Mehisto (2012) outlines some broad guidelines for the CLIL elements to be utilized in any sort of learning material in order to achieve an interrelationship in the implementation of CLIL. Mehisto also offers guidelines on how to apply each guideline in a classroom setting.

A teacher of CLIL must take into account the CLIL components that are used in the 4Cs: communication, content, culture, and cognition. Additionally, in order to give effective education, teachers must use a variety of lesson preparation strategies in order to execute CLIL successfully. The key CLIL implementation guidelines that a teacher must adhere to are as follows: authenticity, multiple focus, active learning, safe learning environment, and scaffolding.

**CLIL Learning Objectives**

Although the general goals of CLIL may vary, Dalton-Puffer (2007) states that they must include:

1. Practicing intercultural communication;
2. Preparing for a globalized world;
3. Providing opportunities for information to be studied from a variety of perspectives;
4. Using technical vocabulary to the subject in the target language;
5. Improving target language proficiency overall;
6. Improving oral communication skills;
7. Diversifying practice methods used in the classroom; and
8. Increase learner motivation.

Here we see that the goals are incorporated to unite content knowledge and specific typical language. Distinctly, they are all leading to the 4Cs elements: communication, content, cognitive, and culture.

**CLIL Nowadays**

Yaguara et al.’s study (2022) shown that the CLIL method contributes to learning in an EFL setting since it makes use of virtual tools in the virtual learning environment. To be more specific, CLIL has been shown to help students improve their listening skills, oral output, motivation, critical thinking, and
development of cultural awareness. This is in addition to content vocabulary, contextualized lessons, assignments, and virtual games. The conclusions of this study are pertinent to the contemporary pedagogical trends and expectations, even though the study does not specifically emphasize its relation to the current pandemic scenario.

CLIL may be a different approach to teaching EFL in a distant context, according to Birdsell's research (2021). He noted that even though the contents are supplied online, CLIL still allows for communication between students and professors. The online sessions also encourage cognition and content-related features. Remote English instruction offers opportunities for cultural understanding to develop as well. The recommendation of Birdsell demonstrates the applicability of his work to the pandemic learning scenario, much to Yaguara et al.'s study (2022).

In a similar vein, a different study suggested that using CLIL to teach EFL in Indonesia may offer fresh insights for teaching online in the midst of this epidemic (Setyaniningrum & Purwati, 2020). According to their research, students' language development and learning engagement have benefited from the adaption of CLIL implementation from offline to online classes. According to the study's findings, CLIL helped the teacher accomplish the learning goals.

According to a recent study by Kuzembayeva et al. (2022), CLIL can be successfully implemented in EFL settings during pandemics. Although the method of delivery differs from face-to-face learning, the online CLIL teachers that they investigated delivered effective CLIL classes. During the online CLIL classes, the students also demonstrated a positive attitude toward learning. The school also provided the online CLIL teachers with training, expert advice, opportunities to share successful strategies, joint projects, and financial incentives.

METHODS
A qualitative approach with a case study design was employed in this research. This form of research intended to define and interpret the object's meaning, as well as what event influenced and altered the current state, in reference to what Miles et al. (2014) stated, that this type of research shall provide rich description and explanation of processes. It is further said that the purpose of the study was to portray a real-life situation that occurred at the research site without administering any interventions to the participants. Furthermore, Yin (1989, 2018) states that case studies have been employed in decision-making, program formulation, organizational reformation, and implementation. Sharpening the focus of case studies, VanWynsbergh & Khan (2007) proposed that in case studies, the phenomena being researched, including event, concept, program, process, etc. for which evidence is being gathered should be carefully portrayed.

The study was conducted at a private junior high school in Cimahi, West Java, Indonesia. The participant involved in this study is an English teacher. The teacher was chosen due to the length of her school's CLIL implementation in this well-established school.

The data of the research were collected through observations and depth interviews.
1. Observations
   The observations were conducted in 8 meetings from 26 October-2 December 2021. The observations focused on how the English teacher implemented the CLIL based on its frameworks. The whole learning activities carried out in pre-activity, whilst activity, and post activity were well recorded.
2. Interviews
   The interviews were administered to the English teacher to find out what challenges she found during the implementation. Besides referring to the
4Cs elements of CLIL suggested by Coyle (2007) and Coyle et al. (2010), the interview schedule was also arranged based on the taxonomy of challenge of e-learning suggested by Aini et al. (2020). The taxonomy adapted covers:
1. Competency and operational,
2. Self-regulation, and
3. Teacher’s isolation

The data analysis was structured according to Creswell's recommendations (2012). Before beginning an analysis, there are two stages to take: organizing and preparing data. The preparation process entails sorting data into different kinds based on the information sources. Transcribing interview data and observations, typing up field notes, and sorting data from documents are all part of the process.

The data analysis was structured in such a way that the results could be accurately comprehended. Data organization and preparation were the first steps. Reading came next to obtain a general understanding of the situation. Data coding was the next task to be completed. The next step was to create a description of the entire dataset, which was followed by the representation of the description and themes. Before the data was eventually given, the last stage was to interpret it.

Triangulation was used to validate the data obtained from the three instruments. The endeavor to ensure that the data acquired via observations, interviews, and document analysis matched each other was viewed as vital. There were two sorts of triangulation applied in reference to Creswell (2013): data sources and methodologies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
CLIL Implementation with Its 4Cs

The results of the first finding will be presented based on the learning process: pre, whilst, and post-activity. To illustrate the findings at a glance, the 4Cs elements take place in the following flow, as pictured in Figure 1.

Figure 1. The CLIL implementation process in 4Cs

Pre-activity

During pre-activity, the researchers found out that the teacher dominantly applied a communication strategy. According to the observations, the teacher with existing efforts applied the CLIL 4C’s framework during the online learning. Communication emerges as the primary framework during the pre-activities phase. In this phase, the teacher utilized video conferencing tools such as Zoom Meeting or Google Meet. The teacher communication in online mode greatly determines the direction of student focus while paying attention to the ongoing learning. If the teacher is used to physical interaction with students during face-to-face learning, this is constrained by screens in online mode.

The communication strategy for the pre-activity is giving the students questions, then allowing them to ask questions regarding the a to z topic of the day in advance. Questioning students more about personal things that may be relevant to the current learning topic was observed to occur. For example, that day’s learning topic was ‘hobby’, so the teacher inquired about students' interests during the pandemic, such as whether they started to learn how to garden? Do students enjoy watching Korean dramas? Are students enthusiastic about writing a daily journal? or do students have a cooking hobby? etc. Personal questions like these appear to stimulate students' interest to keep them tuned in while
staring at the screen. As justified by Zaim (2019) learners are encouraged to acquire language to communicate when they are interested in a topic, therefore personal questions also play a ‘spot on’ role in tapping on students’ attention during online learning. Additionally, the questions that are developed should be such that increase student participation (Jacobs & Renandya, 2021).

When one student raised his hand to ask and explore the topic of the day, other students spontaneously and consciously paid attention to what their friends were doing. This is very beneficial for the teacher because when all students focus on the screen, the teacher can brainstorm related to the learning topic that day.

The observations also show that the more teachers let students respond to each question, the more likely students are to stay tuned on the screen. Of course, this is not effortless, the teacher must stand by with a ‘bank of questions and answers’ so the teacher will not run out of ideas technically during the implementation. Moreover, the observations also managed to capture these moments when a creative teacher was able to bring an online classroom into a lively mode with this kind of interaction strategy.

**Whilst activity**

In this phase, the teacher still emphasized the use of communication strategies. She also started infusing content strategy due to the time of material delivery. Fortunately, the well-established school had first implemented a hybrid learning system where learning in the pre-pandemic period had been conducted in online and offline modes so that both teacher and students had been familiar with learning content that was published in online mode. In other words, the teacher and students did not experience extreme difficulties in terms of technical use, while the teacher experienced challenges in terms of innovation of teaching content. This fact is in agreement with a research conducted by De la Barra et al. (2018) that displayed the benefit of CLIL in students’ improvement in content learning.

To overcome this difficulty in providing teaching content, school management accommodated teachers by providing a learning platform called LMS (Learning Management System). In this LMS, the Google Classroom is used to post learning materials and exercises, while Google Meet is used to conduct face-to-face learning via screens. Students can automatically learn the posted teaching materials and explore them by browsing on Google since the available teaching content is integrated with the internet system. The designed teaching content is also tailored to the pandemic condition and must be accessible to students at all occasions. This form of school support is consistent with Mahmud’s (2020) assertion that schools play a critical role in meeting the needs for teaching materials or content. Moreover, the idea of using ICT to support CLIL is very beneficial as a tool for showcasing students’ work (Kussaiynkyzy & Dringő-Horváth, 2022).

During the observation, the teaching content that was seen emphasized the exploration of the use of English at the speaking and writing levels. These two skills are provided in the intention of getting it easier for students to complete an assignment that they can submit to their digital accounts. Students, for example, are encouraged to be creative when given the responsibility of creating a product presentation video and then uploading it to their YouTube account.

In summary, teaching content developed during the pandemic must be easily accessible and digitally arranged so that it is not boring and in line with how the LMS functions, as well as to facilitate teacher evaluation at the end of the learning. Nevertheless, this can only be done when teachers, students, and school
management no longer face technological issues when using digital platforms. Because if this type of teaching content is used in schools that have not had adequate training in digital skills, the results will be less than optimal.

Post activity
The teacher is observed to use the 4C framework’s cognitive and culture dimensions in the post-activity phase.

Despite the fact that these two features are not the most prominent, they are both present as a result of the previous phase’s use of the communication and content aspects. Cognition is realized by the enhancement of students’ thinking skills. The use of online learning mode delivery leads the students to think more and critically. The study of Banegas (2020) emphasizes the importance of fostering students’ thinking skills and strategies, which at the end will direct students to obtain a deeper understanding of instruction in the target language. Moreover, the use of online learning enables them to prepare themselves for learning and be more independent. In a nutshell, the cognition aspect helps them foster their learning attitude.

The culture aspect is observed to build students’ social awareness to their peers. The students socialize and interact with their friends to cooperate and engage themselves in online learning. This finding is in harmony with the research conducted by Budiarta et al. (2020) signifying that CLIL enables teachers to concentrate on developing students’ social skills.

The English Teacher's Challenges and Solutions during CLIL Implementation

Based on the observations and interviews, referring to the framework suggested by Aini et al. (2020), the teacher experienced challenges in the terms of competency and operational. The challenges are observed to occur during the pre and whilst activity.

In the pre-activity, the teacher should struggle with how to maintain interaction and engagement with her students when using the video conferencing tools. The issue of students’ engagement during online learning (Rannastu-Avalos & Siiman, 2020), and interaction (Manan & Daterdiwala, 2022) is indeed a challenge for teachers. She then attempted to use some enticing questions as part of the apperception stage as a method to engage the pupils. This type of question-and-answer session is thought to be one of the ways that students and their teacher can interact (Bolliger & Martin, 2018). The types of questions play significant roles here; giving rhetorical questions should be avoided because it might not attract attention and expected answers.

The teacher found it a bit challenging to provide more adaptable resources for the while activity that suited the online delivery mode. Her pedagogical and technological competence are obviously being put to the test at this time. On this basis, it is thought to be crucial to combine instructional strategy, subject matter, and educational technology (Joubert et al., 2020). As was indicated in the implementation, it was useful that the school helped teachers and students adjust to a virtual learning environment. It should come as no surprise that school facilitation and encouragement are essential for the instructional procedure to be successful.

CONCLUSION
Integrating content and language in teaching English is pivotal to equipping students with content and language competence. Especially in the era of the pandemic, in which online learning is at the top of the priority list, integrating content and language can also be assisted by the use of educational technology.
The present research has portrayed how the procedure of integrating content, language, and the assistance of technology has facilitated meaningful learning for students. Even if the situation is online learning, CLIL is able to accommodate language learning objectives to develop students’ abilities in the mother tongue and target language, either on the cognitive or affective side. In addition, it also develops social and thinking skills through activities that involve student cooperation and contain cultural aspects of daily life. Despite the barriers that build up in cyberspace that hinder face-to-face learning, CLIL can produce optimal results when all aspects of the school can work together to be ready to implement it.

Due to its appropriateness for usage in almost all levels of education, educators and stakeholders may consider this approach to be applied at schools. Equipping English teachers with sufficient language competence and content expertise including the best practices of CLIL will be a great help for more CLIL effective implementation. On this basis, investigating the effectiveness of CLIL implementation is worth researching. In a much broader sense, contrasting the use of CLIL in fully online, hybrid, and conventional face-to-face learning is worthwhile to look into.

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