

Arabic Language Learning through the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) Approach to Develop Language Skills at Ma'had Hidayatullah Batu.

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe and analyze the implementation of Arabic language learning through the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach at Hidayatullah Islamic Boarding School Batu, identify its supporting and inhibiting factors, and examine its impact on students' language skills development. This research employed a qualitative descriptive-analytical approach. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation involving the head of the boarding school, the principal, Arabic language teachers, and students. Data analysis was conducted through data collection, reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing, while triangulation was used to ensure data validity. The findings revealed that the implementation of the CLIL approach integrated the four main components of CLIL: Content, Communication, Cognition, and Culture. Arabic was used as the medium for learning Islamic and cultural content through discussions, dialogues, text analysis, and interactive activities. Supporting factors included institutional support, teacher competence, a conducive language environment, and students' learning motivation. Inhibiting factors included differences in students' language proficiency, limited use of Arabic outside the classroom, and inadequate learning media. The study also found that the CLIL approach positively contributed to the development of students' listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, as well as improving their linguistic and communicative competence in Arabic. Therefore, the study concludes that the CLIL approach is effective in enhancing students' Arabic language skills and communicative competence at Ma'had Hidayatullah Batu.

Keywords: *CLIL approach, Arabic language learning, language skills, communicative competence.*

ABSTRACT

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan dan menganalisis pelaksanaan pembelajaran bahasa Arab melalui pendekatan Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) di Pondok Pesantren Hidayatullah Batu, mengidentifikasi faktor-faktor pendukung dan penghambatnya, serta mengkaji dampaknya terhadap pengembangan keterampilan berbahasa siswa. Penelitian ini menggunakan

pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif-analitis. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi yang melibatkan pimpinan pondok pesantren, kepala sekolah, guru bahasa Arab, dan para siswa. Analisis data dilakukan melalui tahap pengumpulan data, reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan, sedangkan triangulasi digunakan untuk menjamin keabsahan data. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penerapan pendekatan CLIL mengintegrasikan empat komponen utama CLIL, yaitu Content (isi), Communication (komunikasi), Cognition (kognisi), dan Culture (budaya). Bahasa Arab digunakan sebagai media pembelajaran materi keislaman dan budaya melalui diskusi, dialog, analisis teks, dan kegiatan interaktif. Faktor-faktor pendukung meliputi dukungan lembaga, kompetensi guru, lingkungan bahasa yang kondusif, dan motivasi belajar siswa. Adapun faktor-faktor penghambat meliputi perbedaan kemampuan bahasa siswa, terbatasnya penggunaan bahasa Arab di luar kelas, dan kurang memadainya media pembelajaran. Penelitian ini juga menemukan bahwa pendekatan CLIL memberikan kontribusi positif terhadap pengembangan keterampilan menyimak, berbicara, membaca, dan menulis siswa, serta meningkatkan kompetensi linguistik dan komunikatif mereka dalam bahasa Arab. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa pendekatan CLIL efektif dalam meningkatkan keterampilan berbahasa Arab dan kompetensi komunikatif siswa di Ma'had Hidayatullah Batu.

Kata Kunci: Pendekatan CLIL, Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab, Keterampilan Berbahasa, Kompetensi Komunikatif.

A. Introduction

Arabic language learning for non-native speakers has become one of the most rapidly developing fields in contemporary language education. Significant efforts have been devoted to curriculum design and instructional innovation in order to meet learners' needs in various educational contexts, particularly in Islamic boarding schools and institutions located in non-Arabic-speaking countries.

Despite these developments, many students still experience difficulties in mastering the four

fundamental language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. This condition indicates the need for more effective and integrative teaching approaches that enable students to use the language communicatively and meaningfully in real-life contexts.

Several factors contribute to these difficulties, including limited instructional time, insufficient opportunities to practice Arabic in authentic communicative situations, and the dominance of traditional teaching methods that emphasize memorization and grammatical

explanation rather than active language use. In many educational settings, language instruction is often separated from meaningful academic content, causing students to perceive Arabic merely as a subject to be studied rather than a tool for communication, understanding, and critical thinking. As a result, learners' motivation and communicative competence tend to remain low.

In response to these challenges, educational researchers have proposed more contextual and student-centered approaches to language teaching. One of the most prominent approaches is Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), which integrates language learning with subject-matter content. Through CLIL, students learn academic content and language simultaneously, allowing them to use the target language in meaningful and authentic contexts. According to CLIL theory, learning occurs through the integration of four essential dimensions: Content, Communication, Cognition, and Culture. This approach not only develops linguistic competence but also promotes critical thinking, interaction, and intercultural awareness.

Previous studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of CLIL in improving students' language proficiency and learning motivation. Sarip (2019) reported that CLIL contributed positively to the improvement of speaking skills (Sarip et al 2022), while Anova et al. (2025) found that the approach enhanced students' motivation as well as their reading and writing abilities. Furthermore, Muhammad Iqbal et al. (2025) highlighted the role of CLIL in strengthening communicative competence despite several implementation challenges. (Iqbal et al 2025) Similarly, Anindita Badiyanti et al. (2025) emphasized that CLIL encourages greater classroom interaction and active participation among learners (Badianti et al 2025). Another study by Joni Tiara (2019) revealed that CLIL was more effective than the direct method and strongly correlated with students' learning motivation (Theodosiou 2016).

In the context of Arabic language education, CLIL is particularly relevant because Arabic functions not only as a language of communication but also as a medium for understanding Islamic sciences and culture. Through this approach, students are

encouraged to use Arabic while learning religious and academic subjects, enabling them to connect linguistic knowledge with meaningful content. Consequently, Arabic becomes an active instrument for communication, problem-solving, and knowledge construction rather than merely an object of memorization.

Hidayatullah Islamic Boarding School Batu (MAHABA) represents an educational environment that supports the implementation of the CLIL approach. The institution integrates Arabic into classroom instruction and daily communication through language programs, interactive activities, and Islamic learning contexts. Arabic is used not only during formal lessons but also in students' everyday interactions within the boarding school environment. Such conditions create a semi-immersive language environment that reflects the principles of CLIL implementation.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to describe and analyze the implementation of Arabic language learning through the CLIL approach at Hidayatullah Islamic Boarding School Batu. The study specifically focuses on the

development of students' language skills and examines the supporting and inhibiting factors influencing the implementation of CLIL in an authentic educational context. The findings of this research are expected to contribute to the development of more effective and integrated approaches to Arabic language teaching in similar educational institutions.

B. Method

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical case study design to obtain an in-depth understanding of the implementation of the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach in Arabic language learning at Hidayatullah Islamic Boarding School Batu. The qualitative approach was chosen because it enables the researcher to comprehensively describe social phenomena occurring naturally within the educational environment, particularly the interaction between teachers and students during the Arabic learning process. Data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and documentation analysis involving the head of the Islamic boarding school,

the school principal, Arabic language teachers, and students. The study focused on the implementation of Arabic language learning through the integration of language and academic content within classroom instruction (Moleong 2004).

Data analysis was conducted using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, including data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. To ensure the validity and credibility of the findings, triangulation techniques were employed by comparing data obtained from various sources and research instruments (Sugiyono 2015).

Through this methodology, the study aimed to analyze the implementation of the CLIL approach, identify its supporting and inhibiting factors, and examine its contribution to the development of students' Arabic language skills and communicative competence at Hidayatullah Islamic Boarding School Batu.

C.Results and Discussion

1. The Implementation of Arabic Language Learning through the CLIL Approach at Hidayatullah Islamic Boarding School Batu

The findings of this study revealed that the implementation of Arabic language learning through the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach at Hidayatullah Islamic Boarding School Batu was conducted through the integration of four essential components: Content, Communication, Cognition, and Culture. This finding is consistent with the 4Cs Framework proposed by Do Coyle, which emphasizes that successful CLIL implementation requires the integration of content, communication, cognition, and culture within the learning process (Coyle et al 2010). The integration of these components was reflected through the use of Islamic texts, the encouragement of Arabic communication, the development of analytical thinking skills, and the incorporation of Islamic cultural values into classroom and boarding school activities. The researcher argues that the balanced implementation of these elements made Arabic language learning more effective because students did not merely study Arabic as a theoretical subject, but also used it as a medium for understanding, interaction, and communication in

authentic educational contexts (Coyle 2006).

a. Content Integration in Arabic Language Learning

The findings showed that the topic Al-Mu'jizah Al-Khalidah (The Eternal Miracle) enabled students to learn Arabic while simultaneously understanding Islamic knowledge related to the Qur'an. This finding supports the meaningful learning theory proposed by David Ausubel, which states that learning becomes more meaningful when new knowledge is connected to students' prior experiences and interests. The result also corresponds with previous studies indicating that integrating Islamic content into Arabic language instruction can increase students' motivation and improve both linguistic and conceptual understanding. The researcher observed that the success of learning at the institution was influenced by the relevance of the instructional materials to students' religious and intellectual backgrounds, making the learning process more contextual, meaningful, and engaging.

b. Communication in Arabic Language Learning

In terms of communication, the findings demonstrated that the

continuous use of Arabic as the primary language of instruction, supported by communicative activities such as discussions, question-and-answer sessions, and group work, significantly contributed to the development of students' communicative competence. This finding is consistent with communicative language teaching theory, which argues that language acquisition occurs effectively through authentic interaction and meaningful communication rather than through memorization alone. The researcher found that students became increasingly accustomed to using Arabic naturally within classroom interactions, while the teacher's supportive attitude toward students' language errors helped create a positive learning environment that encouraged active participation and reduced students' anxiety in speaking Arabic.

c. Cognition and Critical Thinking Development

The cognition component was reflected in the teacher's efforts to develop students' analytical and critical thinking skills through analytical questions, classroom discussions, interpretation activities,

and connections between new information and students' prior knowledge. This finding aligns with Benjamin Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives, particularly higher-order thinking skills such as analysis, evaluation, and inference. The findings also support previous studies asserting that CLIL contributes positively to critical thinking and deeper comprehension. The researcher argues that Arabic language learning should not be limited to vocabulary memorization and grammatical knowledge, but should also encourage students to think, analyze, and interpret ideas through the target language, thereby making learning more meaningful and sustainable.

d. Cultural Integration in Arabic Language Learning

Furthermore, the cultural component was strongly integrated into Arabic language learning through Islamic texts, Arabic expressions, and institutional activities that promoted the use of Arabic in daily life. This finding supports the sociocultural perspective in language learning, which emphasizes that language learning cannot be separated from understanding the culture and values

associated with the language itself. The researcher observed that the boarding school environment played a significant role in supporting the implementation of CLIL because students were exposed not only to classroom instruction, but also to communicative and cultural practices related to Arabic and Islamic identity in their daily activities. Consequently, Arabic language learning became more authentic and contributed not only to students' linguistic development, but also to their intellectual and cultural awareness.

2. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in the Implementation of Arabic Language Learning through the CLIL Approach

The findings revealed that the successful implementation of Arabic language learning through the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach at Hidayatullah Islamic Boarding School Batu was influenced by several supporting factors as well as a number of challenges encountered during the learning process. One of the major supporting factors was the institutional support and the existence of a conducive language environment that encouraged students to use Arabic

both inside and outside the classroom. This finding is consistent with Lev Vygotsky's social learning theory, which emphasizes that social interaction and educational environment play significant roles in language development and cognitive growth (Vygotsky 1978). The study also aligns with previous research conducted by Elvina Sari (2022), which found that language environments in Islamic boarding schools significantly support students' Arabic acquisition through continuous exposure and daily interaction (Sari 2022). In the researcher's view, the availability of a supportive Arabic-speaking environment increased students' confidence and willingness to communicate, even though their linguistic proficiency still required further improvement.

Another important supporting factor identified in this study was the integration of Islamic and cultural content into Arabic language learning. The use of topics related to the Qur'an, Islamic history, and religious values made the learning materials more meaningful and relevant to students' backgrounds and interests. This finding corresponds with contextual learning theory, which argues that

learning becomes more effective when it is connected to learners' real-life experiences and prior knowledge. Similarly, the findings support the study of Rahmati Hidayah (2021), which demonstrated that integrating Islamic culture into Arabic instruction enhances students' learning motivation and engagement. The researcher observed that students were more enthusiastic when discussing religious texts because the materials were closely related to their daily lives and Islamic identity, thereby facilitating a natural integration between language and content learning (Hidayah 2021).

Furthermore, the competence of teachers and the implementation of communicative classroom activities also contributed significantly to the success of CLIL implementation. Teachers employed various interactive methods such as discussions, dialogues, group work, and text analysis, which encouraged active student participation throughout the learning process. This finding is in line with communicative language teaching theory, which maintains that language acquisition develops more effectively through authentic interaction and meaningful

communication. In addition, the results are supported by the study conducted by Muhammad Arifin (2023), which found that communicative activities improve students' speaking skills and self-confidence in using Arabic (Arifin 2023). The researcher believes that teachers' encouragement and positive feedback played an essential role in creating an interactive and supportive learning atmosphere where students were not afraid of making mistakes while practicing the language.

Despite these supporting factors, the study also identified several obstacles affecting the implementation of the CLIL approach. One of the primary challenges was the difference in students' language proficiency levels. Some students demonstrated strong abilities in understanding texts and communicating in Arabic, while others experienced difficulties in comprehending vocabulary and expressing their ideas. This finding is consistent with the theory of individual differences, which explains that learners possess varying linguistic abilities and learning capacities. In addition, the study found that integrating language and content simultaneously was challenging, particularly when students

encountered complex texts containing unfamiliar Islamic concepts and terminology. This result supports the findings of Abdul Hakim Fuad (2020), who argued that successful CLIL implementation requires careful instructional planning to balance language learning and content comprehension effectively. According to the researcher, teachers need to apply flexible teaching strategies to accommodate students' diverse proficiency levels and prevent weaker learners from feeling discouraged during the learning process (Fuad 2020)

Another inhibiting factor identified in this study was the limited availability of instructional media and the insufficient use of Arabic outside classroom activities. Although the institution had implemented several language programs, many students still relied heavily on Indonesian during informal communication. This finding corresponds with the study of Nurlaila Hassan (2024), which stated that limited language practice outside the classroom slows the development of communicative competence among learners (Hassan 2024). The researcher argues that the success of the CLIL approach does not solely

depend on classroom instruction but also requires a continuous language environment that encourages students to use Arabic naturally in their daily interactions. Therefore, improving learning facilities and increasing extracurricular Arabic activities are considered essential steps in strengthening students' communicative competence and maximizing the effectiveness of CLIL implementation.

3. The Impacts of the CLIL Approach on the Development of Students' Language Skills

a. Listening Skills Development

The findings revealed that the implementation of the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach at Hidayatullah Islamic Boarding School Batu contributed positively to the development of students' listening skills. Through continuous exposure to Arabic during classroom instruction, discussions, and interactions, students gradually became more capable of understanding oral instructions, questions, and explanations. This finding is consistent with Stephen Krashen's language acquisition theory, which emphasizes that frequent exposure to comprehensible

input facilitates natural language acquisition. The findings also support the study conducted by Fatimah Al-Zahra Yusuf (2022), which stated that the consistent use of Arabic in classroom instruction improves students' listening comprehension and understanding of spoken texts. (Yusuf 2022). The researcher believes that integrating listening activities with meaningful content encouraged students to focus not only on language forms but also on understanding the ideas and concepts conveyed through the instructional materials.

b. Speaking Skills Development

The study also demonstrated that the CLIL approach gradually improved students' speaking skills through classroom discussions, dialogues, and question-and-answer activities conducted in Arabic. Students became more confident and willing to communicate despite still making minor grammatical or pronunciation errors. This finding aligns with communicative language teaching theory, which views language acquisition as a process developed through authentic interaction and meaningful communication. The results are also consistent with the study of Abdullah

Ramadan (2023), which concluded that communicative and collaborative activities significantly improve speaking proficiency and students' self-confidence in using Arabic. (Ramadan 2023). According to the researcher, the teacher's emphasis on meaningful communication rather than grammatical perfection encouraged students to participate actively without fear of making mistakes.

c. Reading Skills Development

Regarding reading skills, the findings indicated that the use of Arabic texts related to Islamic and cultural content helped students improve their reading comprehension and ability to analyze main ideas within texts. Students showed greater ability to identify key points, answer comprehension questions, and interpret textual meaning after reading activities. This finding is in line with reading comprehension theory, which states that effective reading involves understanding meaning and analyzing content rather than merely decoding words. The findings also support the study conducted by Nur Arifat (2021), which showed that integrating reading instruction with meaningful content enhances students' comprehension skills and vocabulary acquisition

(Arifat 2021). The researcher argues that selecting texts closely related to students' religious and cultural backgrounds made reading activities more accessible and meaningful because students already possessed prior knowledge that facilitated deeper understanding.

d. Writing Skills Development

The study further revealed that the CLIL approach positively affected students' writing skills through content-based writing activities such as summarizing texts, answering analytical questions, and writing the main ideas of lessons in Arabic. Observation results showed that students gradually became more capable of organizing sentences and using newly acquired vocabulary appropriately in written form. This finding is consistent with functional language learning theory, which explains that writing develops more effectively when learners use language to express meaningful ideas connected to their educational experiences. Similarly, the results support the study by Zainab Mustafa (2020), which emphasized that integrating writing with content comprehension improves students' ability to express and analyze ideas in

Arabic (Mustafa 2020). In the researcher's perspective, writing activities within the CLIL approach encouraged students not merely to memorize information but also to think critically and organize their thoughts before expressing them in written language.

e. Development of Linguistic and Communicative Competence

Moreover, the findings demonstrated that the CLIL approach significantly enhanced students' linguistic and communicative competence. Students became more capable of understanding vocabulary, sentence structures, and language expressions while using them appropriately during classroom interaction and discussion. This was reflected in increased classroom participation and improved ability to utilize vocabulary related to Islamic and cultural topics. The findings correspond with Dell Hymes' communicative competence theory, which argues that language learning involves not only mastering grammatical rules but also using language appropriately in various communicative contexts. The findings also align with the study of Budiarti (2025), which reported that CLIL

effectively develops both linguistic and communicative competence through meaningful language use in authentic learning situations (Budiarti 2025) The researcher concludes that one of the most significant impacts of the CLIL approach at Hidayatullah Islamic Boarding School Batu was its success in transforming Arabic from a subject focused merely on memorizing vocabulary and grammar into a functional tool for communication, interaction, and knowledge construction within the learning process.

D. Conclusion

The findings of this study conclude that the implementation of Arabic language learning through the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach at Hidayatullah Islamic Boarding School Batu was successfully carried out through the integration of Arabic language instruction with Islamic and cultural content based on the four core components of CLIL: Content, Communication, Cognition, and Culture. The learning process emphasized the use of Arabic as a medium of interaction, understanding, and communication rather than merely focusing on grammar and vocabulary

instruction. The study also identified several supporting factors, including institutional support, a conducive language environment, relevant Islamic content, teacher competence, communicative classroom activities, and students' motivation in learning Arabic. However, several challenges were also found, such as differences in students' language proficiency, difficulties in integrating language and content simultaneously, limited instructional media, and the insufficient use of Arabic outside the classroom. Furthermore, the findings demonstrated that the CLIL approach positively contributed to the development of students' listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, as well as improving their linguistic and communicative competence. Through this approach, students became more capable of understanding Arabic explanations, participating in discussions, comprehending Arabic texts, and expressing their ideas both orally and in writing, which ultimately increased their confidence in using Arabic within the educational environment.

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