



# Implementation of CLIL Program in Islamic Affiliated Primary School: Teaching Assistants Project

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## Abstract

English teaching at primary school needs some improvement, particularly in its giving exposure and contextualizing English content. Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach can be an effective way to the success of English teaching at the primary school level. Thus, this community service aims at empowering SD Aisyiyah Kota Malang with teaching thematic lessons through CLIL concepts by infusing Islamic content. The strategies implemented were formulated in five stages: need analysis, professional development workshop to school teachers and teaching assistants, syllabus and material design, implementation, and evaluation. Results show that school teachers and teaching assistants were able to integrate CLIL approach observed from the syllabus and material design. Also, students were all enthusiastic and engaged during the classroom activities. This community service implies that teaching assistants in implementing CLIL approach can foster English learning engagement for primary school graders.

**Keywords:** CLIL; Islamic school; teaching assistants

## Introduction

Decentralization of education in Indonesia has encouraged local governments to make their own decisions about some curricular areas, such as the use of some learning hours for what has come to be known as "local contents" (Musthafa, 2013). Schools and primary school teachers are free to design a variety of teaching methods in elementary school because there is no government legislation governing the English teaching and learning process. Currently, primary school teachers use thematic learning in their day-to-day teaching and learning as it is mandated by the current curriculum. The government determines the themes students learn in grades 1-6 through shared thematic books, a mandated ready-to-use printed book (Wardani et al., 2020). Further, English lessons are excluded from theme learning and are considered an extracurricular subject (Khoiriyah et al., 2022;

Waloyo et al., 2021). As a result, the time allotted for English lessons and the teaching model differ from one school to another. In this research, the targeted primary school for the community service program is SD Aisyiyah Kota Malang which has designed English lessons as extracurricular.

SD 'Aisyiyah Kota Malang, which is located at Jalan Gajayana Gang III D / 570 D Dinoyo, Lowokwaru District, Malang, was established on July 19, 2004. Based on observations in the field, currently, SD Aisyiyah Malang City has nine classes, ranging from grade 1 to grade 6. For the lower class (grade 1 - grade 3), there are two study groups. As for the higher classes (grade 4 - grade 6) there is only one group for each class. In the academic field, the Principal of SD Aisyiyah Malang is supported by 16 teachers and two administrative staff. There are 9 homeroom teachers who are responsible for teaching thematic lessons in class. Furthermore, there are four content teachers who teach PE and Islamic science. As an effort to accelerate academic excellence, this school carries out a "Multilingual Program" where students are expected to be able to speak two foreign languages, namely Arabic and English, in daily communication. Therefore, students are trained to greet and pray in Arabic and English every morning.

However, based on the explanation from the principal and the results of the FGD with subject teachers and class teachers, learning English is still considered less effective. This is because English is only an extracurricular which is taught by subject teachers once a week. Thus, learning English at SD Aisyiyah Kota Malang so far was not documented based on a syllabus or design for specific learning activities. For this reason, it is necessary to have detailed planning of the English learning model that suits the needs of students. Therefore, a need analysis activity is needed to design learning tools (including syllabus and teaching materials) and design learning models that are under the school's vision and mission. Therefore, the learning model is expected to be a reference for developing students' English skills and increasing students' knowledge of Islamic values as proclaimed in the vision and mission of SD Aisyiyah Kota Malang.

To reach the success of English teaching at primary school level, number of researchers have studied on the importance of teaching assistant's role. Farrel et al., confirms that primary school graders' academic achievement was improved with the intervention made by teaching assistants. Furthermore, a study shows that primary school students were identified to have a positive view towards teaching assistants as they consider to be more confident and have the willingness to ask for help (Freaser & Meadows, 2008). It can be highlighted that teaching assistants have their capacity to the attainment of learning success for primary aged pupils.

This community service program is the further implication of the proposed project team that has been carried out previously. Khoiriyah (2021) and Waloyo et al., (2021) found that English in elementary school is only an extracurricular. The available textbooks and worksheets are not following students' abilities, so teachers

still need to create their own learning materials. However, English subjects are still considered a requirement for the next level of education. Furthermore, Farah (2020) found that integrating Islamic content with English received a positive response from students studying in Islamic institutions. Finally, Farah & Sukarma (2020) found that the motivation and behavior of students in Islamic institutions were high in learning English. Still, there was a resistance to certain cultures of the language being studied.

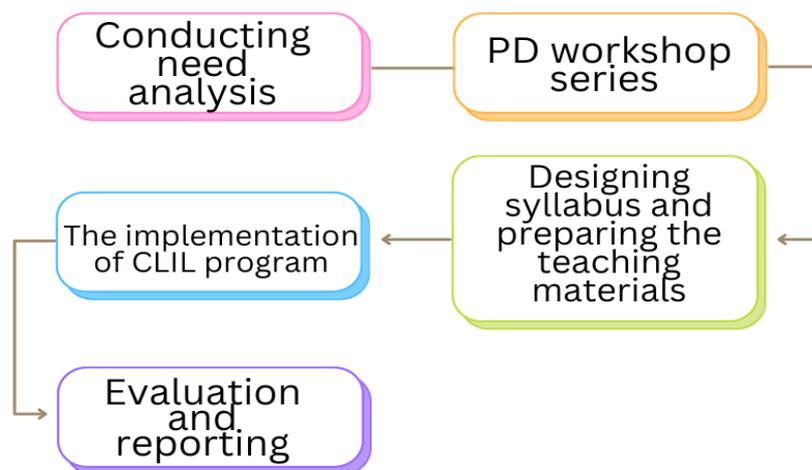
To provide an effective integration between English and Islamic science in language learning, one of the approaches that can be implemented is Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). CLIL refers to an approach in which the teaching and learning process have dual-focus, language learning and content learning (Banegas & Beamud, 2020; Coyle, 2015; Mehisto, 2012). Because it uses dual-focused activities that address both language and content aspects, the CLIL approach is primarily appropriate for teaching English at the primary level. The implementation of thematic lessons, in which the topics of the lesson are integrated from various content areas such as math, science, civic education, and physical education (PE), supports the CLIL program in the context of Indonesian primary schools (Setyaningrum & Khoiriyah, 2022; Yusrina et al., 2018). By implementing this approach, EFL students in primary school are expected to receive an ample language exposure as well as the content knowledge related to the thematic lesson.

In a nutshell, the purpose of this community service program is to provide solutions to problems that exist in partners and to support efforts to teach English at the elementary school level through an approach to assisting the implementation of Content and Language Integrated Learning with Islamic content, which is a collaboration between classroom teachers and English subject teachers, and teaching assistants who are currently university students in the third year of their undergraduate program. This program is expected to be able to provide examples or pioneer models of English learning based on local wisdom so that teaching materials follow the school context and focus on the needs of students, which have a dual focus, namely language learning and content learning. The targets of this activity program are students in grades 4 – 6, subject teachers, especially English teachers and classroom teachers, and school principals as policy makers at Aisyiyah Elementary School. As for implementing this Community Partnership Program, target partners will be given training and assistance in making syllabi and teaching materials and implementing learning using the CLIL model with Islamic content. Thus, this research was an attempt to depict the detail implementation of teaching assistant project on the implementation of CLIL approach in one of Islamic affiliated primary school in Indonesia. Hence, it was expected that this report might provide pedagogical references to EFL teachers, to be specific primary school teachers and CLIL practitioners as well.

## Method

The researchers employed qualitative research design to explore the design of the CLIL program in one of the Indonesian Islamic-affiliated primary schools. A qualitative research design aims to investigate the quality of relationships, activities, situations, and materials (Creswell, 2013). Descriptive qualitative methodology is a method that emphasizes generating systematic and accurate descriptions based on facts, data, and specific criteria objects (Brandão, 2015). Thus, the researchers described the teaching assistant project in primary school regarding the implementation of the CLIL program.

Specifically, the community service program was aimed at primary school teachers at SD Aisyiyah Kota Malang. This school was selected as a school partner since it has been projected to provide English lessons as an extracurricular to enrich the students' English language skills. The details of the implementation are shown in the following figure.



*Figure 1.* The implementation of mentoring program on implementing CLIL Program in Islamic Affiliated Primary Schools

As it is shown in Figure 1, during the mentoring program, the project team designed the program into several stages, including conducting a need analysis, Professional Development (PD) workshop series, designing syllabus and preparing the teaching materials, assisting the implementation of CLIL program, and conducting program evaluation.

Further, the data collection during the implementation of this community service involved several techniques. Since the stages consisted of five different phases (See Figure 1), the researchers conducted data collection through interview, classroom-observation, and document analysis. First, in conducting need analysis, the researcher employed document analysis (such as syllabus, teaching materials, and teaching media) and interview with the teacher and the school principal. Second, for conducting PD series, designing syllabus and preparing the teaching materials, assisting the implementation of CLIL program, the researcher conducted

classroom observation and document analysis. Lastly, to evaluate the project team conducted FGD (Focus Group Discussion) involving involved the school principal, the teachers, the volunteers of the PMM program, and the students. All the collected data was then presented descriptively in accordance to the steps in the implementation of mentoring program on implementing CLIL Program in Islamic affiliated primary school.

## **Result and discussion**

### ***Need analysis for related stakeholders (school principal and teacher)***

In order to conduct the community service, the project team firstly conducted need analysis. Based on the framework of (Trujeque-Moreno et al., 2021), the need analysis was conducted in five areas, including target situation analysis, discourse analysis, learner factor analysis and teaching context analysis. Thus, interviews with the school principal and FGD (Focus Group Discussion) for selected primary school teachers were administered to collect the preliminary data in relation to the problems encountered by school partners.

Implementing the 2013 curriculum, English in Elementary School is an extracurricular subject. Thus, there is no certain standard in the implementation of teaching and learning activities. However, at SD Aisyiyah Malang City, English is taught by an English teacher one meeting a week. This policy is considered an effort to integrate English with other thematic subjects. Meanwhile, the time allocation for English subjects is 35 minutes to 60 minutes, once a week. Unfortunately, there is only one English teacher who teaches English for all classes. The teacher is a non-permanent faculty member and has three years of experience teaching English in primary schools. However, there is no textbook that is suitable for thematic learning in elementary schools (Fajriah et al., 2019; Puspitasari et al., 2018; Usman et al., 2020). Moreover, this textbook is indispensable for learning English in order to support school programs.

In the context of English language teaching, textbooks have an important role to mediate students' language learning inside and outside the classroom. However, when there is no suitable language textbook, this needs to get great attention. As is the case with teaching English in primary schools, teachers need to create their own textbooks or rely on available published textbooks that do not fit the context of their teaching. The results of the FGD with teachers at SD Aisyiyah also concluded that so far, there has been no syllabus and design of English learning programs as extracurricular, so it is necessary to have policies and design English learning programs that are in accordance with the needs of students and in accordance with the vision and mission of the partner school. The result of the need analysis is summarized as follows.

Table 1. The summary of need analysis

Problems	Solutions	Indicator of achievement
Lack of appropriate teaching materials or textbooks	Mentoring program in the development of teaching materials and student's activity book using CLIL framework	Teachers of SD Aisyiyah Kota Malang are able to develop teaching materials and LKPD (activity book) with the CLIL concept by integrating Islamic science and English content.
The need of improving the students' English skills	Mentoring program in the implementation of CLIL program	The implementation of the CLIL program as an extracurricular program.

**Workshop series on professional development**

After conducting need analysis, the next stage is organizing Professional Development (PD) workshop series in relation to the CLIL program and designing teaching materials. The workshop was attended by the teachers (both language teacher and homeroom teachers), the volunteers of the PMM program and project team members. The workshop entitled "CLIL in Primary Schools" covers several topics such as a short introduction to CLIL, CLIL framework, how to bring CLIL into classes and integrating CLIL materials for thematic lessons or Kurikulum Merdeka. The workshop was captured in the following figure.



*Rafika Farah Rabba, Khoiriyah*  
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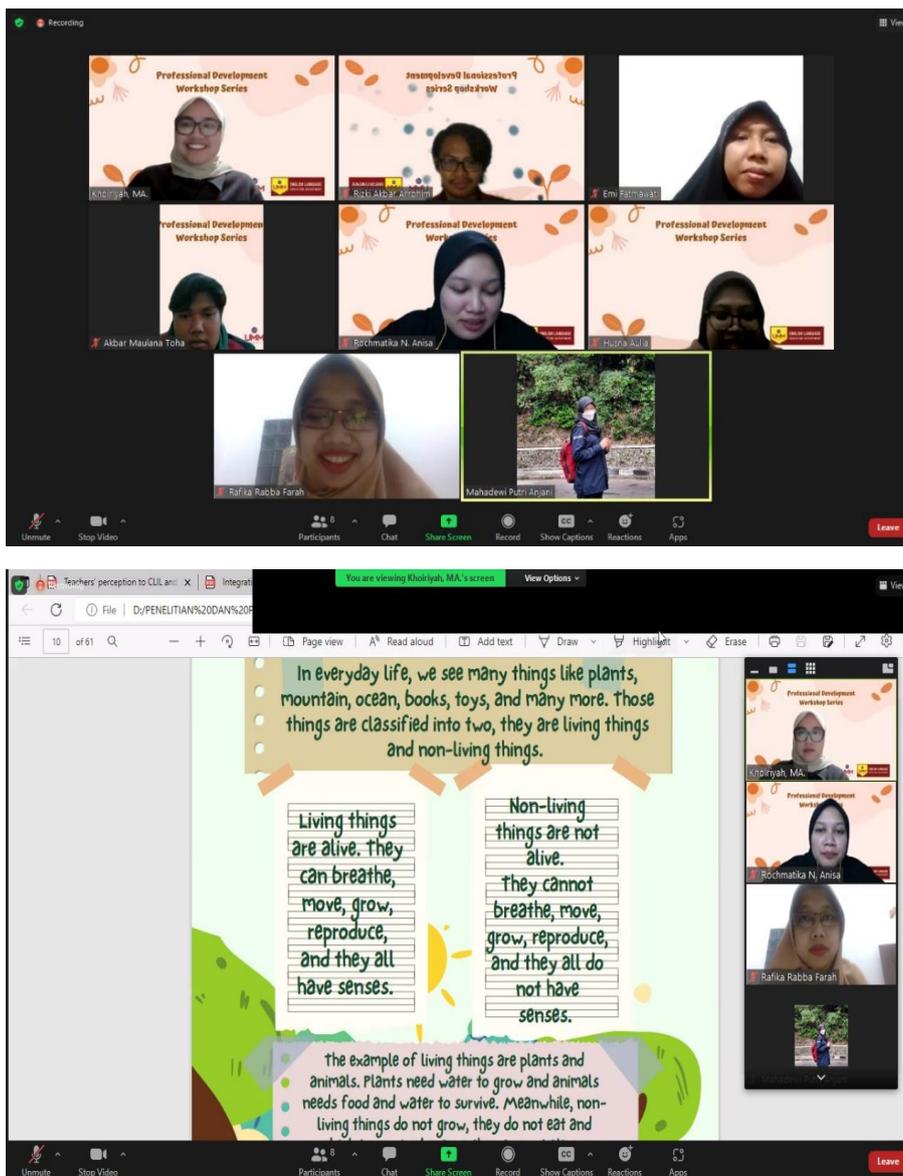


Figure 2. PD workshop series in introducing CLIL in primary school

***Designing syllabus and preparing the teaching materials***

The next step is designing the syllabus and preparing the teaching materials. The student teachers who were joining the PMM program designed the syllabus along with its lesson plan (see figure 3).

## Lesson Plan Meeting 4

Theme : Animal Classification

Time Allotment : 90 minutes

Learning Objective :

- Student can remember from the last meeting about living and non-living things
- Student can classify animals correctly like mammals, insect, bird, reptiles, and amphibians
- Student can identify parts of plants

Stages	Teaching and Learning Activities	Materials	Time Allotment
Opening	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Greet student</li> <li>2. Start class by saying “Basmalah”, pray “Mencari Ilmu” and sing “Classroom Password”.</li> </ol>	Classroom Password <a href="https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Yv65InXeaYZtKhBj3dFIPFiV3Jx9iMCn">https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Yv65InXeaYZtKhBj3dFIPFiV3Jx9iMCn</a>	15’
Main Activity	<b>Activity 1</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Divide student into small groups</li> <li>2. Read the material of Fabulous Book lead by PMM member</li> <li>3. Discuss the answer together</li> </ol>	Fabulous Book page 1	20’
	<b>Activity 2</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Watch the video Animal Classification</li> <li>2. Read the material of Fabulous Book lead by PMM member</li> <li>3. Students do activity 2. They classified the animals. Matching the correct answer based on the picture.</li> <li>4. Discuss the answer together</li> </ol>	Fabulous Book page 2  Animal classification <a href="https://youtu.be/JEVqHLeQHKc">https://youtu.be/JEVqHLeQHKc</a>	20’
	<b>Activity 3</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Watch the video Part of Plan</li> <li>2. Read the material of Fabulous Book lead by PMM member</li> <li>3. Students do activity 3. They need to fill the blank part of the plant based on the picture.</li> <li>4. Discuss the answer together</li> </ol>	Fabulous Book page 3  Part of plant <a href="https://youtu.be/X6TLFZUC9gI">https://youtu.be/X6TLFZUC9gI</a>	25’
Closing Activity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ask the students about how they feel..</li> <li>2. Recall the materials given</li> <li>3. End the class activity by saying ‘Hamdalah’ and pray ‘Doa Penutup Majelis’</li> </ol>		10’

Figure 3. An exemplary of lesson plan in implementing CLIL program

### ***The implementation of CLIL classes as an enrichment program through teaching assistants***

In the implementation stage, four teaching assistants from third-year undergraduate students were trained to teach English club as an extracurricular

activity. The English club was held every Saturday morning for ten weeks. Students who attended the sessions were as many as 25 fourth graders. The sessions lasted an hour and a half, including theoretical sessions, group work, and practical activities that enforced students' productive skills, such as oral and written work.

Among the four teaching assistants, one assistant was in charge as the primary teacher of the day, while the rest acted as co-teachers assisting the primary teacher in running the classroom activities. This role would be shifted in every meeting; thus, every assistant had his/her turn for the teaching practice. All the teaching assistants were selected as they had taken Teaching English as Foreign Language in Context Course at the time; therefore, they had a theoretical understanding of teaching English strategies and how to create a lesson plan. Also, before their teaching practice, teaching assistants were given a workshop by the project team to have more enrichment on teaching English to young learners at Islamic-affiliated schools. In such cases, the project team, homeroom teacher, and the English teacher had a role in lesson planning consultation, teaching practice supervision, and evaluation.

The teaching materials were selected from the *Fabulous* handbook, an English thematic book for primary school graders, published by the project team in the previous community service program. The topic selected was *Caring for Living Things* which explained subjects like Natural Science, Islamic Science, Math, and Arts. Each section enriched vocabulary-based activities, reading aloud, and productive skill materials.



Figure 4. Teaching activities in the classroom using the students' workbook "Fabulous"



Figure 5. Teaching activities in the classroom led by teaching assistants

### **Evaluation**

Lastly, after the implementation of the CLIL program, the project team assessed the outcome from the program. The evaluation stage involved the school principal, the teachers, the volunteers of the PMM program, and the students. Overall, all related stakeholders deemed positive feedback.



Figure 4. Interview session with the school principal of SD Aisyiyah Kota Malang to evaluate the program

## Conclusion

This community service accentuates the implementation of CLIL approach by infusing Islamic content to four graders at SD Aisyiyah Kota Malang. Results emphasize that school teachers including homeroom teacher, English teacher, and teaching assistants can implement the aforementioned approach well after receiving some workshops and trainings from the project team. This paper also underlines the role of teaching assistants in fostering students' engagement during classroom activities. Lastly, the result of this research might provide pedagogical references to EFL teachers, to be specific primary school teachers and CLIL practitioners as well.

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