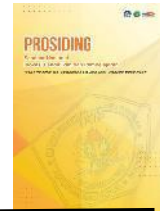




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## Scaffolding Academic Reading through Reading to Learn in a CLIL Classroom

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**Abstract**— When studying Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), students are not only required to understand the subject matter but also to be proficient in the language used in the process. This challenge creates difficulties for some students in understanding English-language academic texts. Therefore, this study aims to describe the implementation of Reading to Learn (R2L) in CLIL classrooms and to identify how this approach supports students' reading comprehension. Using a qualitative approach, this study involved students in a CLIL-based classroom as subjects of observation. Data collection was conducted using observation, interviews, analysis of students' written responses, and field notes. The results indicate that the implementation of R2L stages—such as Preparing before Reading, Detailed Reading, and Independent Reading—helps students understand the content of texts in a more structured manner. Students found it easier to identify main ideas, master vocabulary, and answer questions based on the text they read. Additionally, students demonstrated positive responses because reading activities were conducted in a step-by-step and guided manner. Therefore, the implementation of Reading to Learn can serve as an effective solution to enhance students' reading comprehension in CLIL classrooms.

**Keywords**— CLIL, Qualitative Approach, Reading Comprehension, Reading to Learn (R2L)

**abstrak**— Dalam mempelajari Pembelajaran Terpadu Isi dan Bahasa (CLIL), siswa tidak hanya dituntut untuk memahami materi pelajaran, tetapi juga menguasai bahasa yang digunakan dalam proses tersebut. Tantangan ini menimbulkan kesulitan bagi sebagian siswa dalam memahami teks akademis berbahasa Inggris. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan penerapan Reading to Learn (R2L) di kelas CLIL serta mengidentifikasi bagaimana pendekatan ini mendukung pemahaman bacaan siswa. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif, penelitian ini melibatkan siswa di kelas berbasis CLIL sebagai subjek observasi. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui observasi, wawancara, analisis tanggapan tertulis siswa, dan catatan lapangan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penerapan tahapan R2L—seperti Persiapan sebelum Membaca, Membaca Mendalam, dan Membaca Mandiri—membantu siswa memahami isi teks secara lebih terstruktur. Siswa merasa lebih mudah mengidentifikasi ide utama, menguasai kosakata, dan menjawab pertanyaan berdasarkan teks yang mereka baca. Selain itu, siswa

menunjukkan respons positif karena kegiatan membaca dilakukan secara bertahap dan terarah. Oleh karena itu, penerapan Reading to Learn dapat menjadi solusi efektif untuk meningkatkan pemahaman membaca siswa di kelas CLIL.

**Kata kunci** – CLIL, Pendekatan Kualitatif, Pemahaman Membaca, Membaca untuk Belajar (R2L)

## INTRODUCTION

English language learning in higher education today focuses not only on language proficiency but also on students' ability to understand academic content through English. One approach that supports this integration is Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). CLIL is a learning approach that integrates language learning and subject matter simultaneously, enabling students to learn academic content while developing their English language skills. Rohmah, Ima Isnaini Taufiqur and Saleh, Mursid and Faridi, Abdurrachman and Fitriati, (2020) explain that CLIL helps learners understand learning materials through the contextual and meaningful use of the target language. Additionally, Do Coyle, Hood and Marsh (2010) state that CLIL positions language as a tool for building understanding of subject matter, thereby making the learning process more integrative and communicative.

In CLIL learning, reading skills play a crucial role because students are required to comprehend academic texts containing subject matter concepts. However, many students still struggle to understand text content, identify main ideas, grasp academic vocabulary, and connect reading content with the learning context. This situation prevents the integration of subject matter and language learning from functioning optimally. Muktamir & Rohmah, (2022) state that learners in CLIL classrooms often face the challenge of understanding both the language and the subject matter simultaneously, so learning strategies are needed that can provide gradual support to students. Dalton C., (2011) also explains that one of the main challenges in CLIL learning is learners' ability to comprehend academic texts in the target language.

Based on initial observations conducted by the researcher in a CLIL class at a university, some students still struggle to comprehend the content of academic texts during reading activities. Students tend to have difficulty identifying key information

in the text, understanding academic terminology, and connecting the reading content with the subject matter being studied. Additionally, some students appear passive during text discussion sessions due to a lack of confidence in simultaneously grasping both the language and the subject matter. These conditions indicate that students require a learning approach that can help them understand texts in a more focused and step-by-step manner.

One approach that can support the implementation of CLIL is Reading to Learn (R2L). This approach helps students understand texts through systematic learning stages such as Preparing Before Reading, Detailed Reading, and Independent Reading. Through these stages, students not only learn to understand the language in the text but also grasp the content within it. Komarawan, (2024) explains that Reading to Learn helps learners comprehend academic texts through the scaffolding provided by the teacher during the learning process. Rose and Martin (2012) also explain that the R2L approach is designed to help students understand text structure and content in stages through active interaction between teachers and students.

Furthermore, several previous studies indicate that the CLIL approach can enhance student engagement in the learning process. Indriani and Nurdianingsih (2025) found that the implementation of CLIL helps students become more active in the learning process and improves their mastery of English vocabulary. Another study by Cinganotto & Cuccurullo, (2019) also shows that CLIL supports the development of language skills as well as academic content comprehension because students learn the language in real-world contexts. Meanwhile, research on Reading to Learn has primarily focused on improving students' reading skills and learning outcomes following the implementation of this strategy.

Nevertheless, previous research has largely focused on the effectiveness of CLIL or Reading to Learn regarding students' learning outcomes and language skills. Studies discussing how the CLIL approach is implemented through Reading to Learn to integrate subject knowledge into the language learning process remain limited, particularly in the context of higher education. Furthermore, there is a lack of research exploring the learning processes at each stage of Reading to Learn within CLIL classrooms and how these stages help students understand both subject matter and

language simultaneously. Thus, the research gap in this study lies in the limited existing research on the implementation of the CLIL approach through Reading to Learn in integrating subject knowledge into language learning within the higher education context.

This study is important because its findings are expected to contribute to the development of reading instruction strategies in CLIL classrooms, particularly in helping students comprehend academic texts more effectively. Additionally, this study is expected to serve as a reference for instructors in implementing teaching approaches that integrate language learning and subject matter simultaneously. Thus, the learning process focuses not only on students' English language proficiency but also on their understanding of academic content.

Based on these issues, this study aims to analyze how the CLIL approach is implemented through Reading to Learn in integrating subject matter knowledge into language learning. This study also aims to describe the learning processes that occur at each stage of Reading to Learn in CLIL classrooms.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive qualitative design. The qualitative approach was chosen because this study aims to explore and understand the meanings derived from social issues through an inductive process Creswell, J.W. and Creswell, (2018) In this study, the researcher sought to gain a deeper understanding of the integrated reading learning process through the application of Reading to Learn (R2L) within the context of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), particularly in academic text-based learning at the university level. The research focus was directed toward describing and interpreting the learning process as it naturally unfolds without any manipulation of variables.

A qualitative descriptive design was chosen because this study aims to describe in detail how integrated reading instruction is implemented through the integration of the R2L and CLIL approaches, as well as how these approaches help students understand subject knowledge presented through academic texts. Sandelowski, (2000) states that a qualitative descriptive design aims to present a comprehensive summary

of an event or phenomenon using easily understandable language. Through this design, researchers can explore the stages of reading learning, student responses, and student experiences during structured, content-based reading activities in greater depth.

This study was conducted with sixth-semester students in the English Language Education Program who participated in CLIL learning through the Reading to Learn (R2L) approach. During the learning process, the instructor implemented several stages of the R2L approach, such as Preparing Before Reading, Detailed Reading, and Independent Reading, to help students understand the content of academic texts while also grasping language usage within the context of the learning material. After the learning activities concluded, the researcher selected ten students as research participants using purposive sampling. The participants were selected because they were considered capable of providing relevant information regarding their experiences and understanding during their participation in CLIL learning through the Reading to Learn approach.

Research data were obtained through semi-structured interviews and documentation. Semi-structured interviews were used to gather information regarding students' experiences during the learning process, their understanding of the academic text content, and how the Reading to Learn approach helped them integrate subject matter comprehension with language learning. Sugiyono (2019) explains that semi-structured interviews allow researchers to obtain more in-depth data because participants can describe their experiences more freely and openly.

In addition to interviews, documentation was used as supporting data in this study. Documentation in the form of academic texts used during learning, records of learning activities, and other documents related to the learning process were used to reinforce the interview data. The use of documentation helped the researcher understand the learning context more comprehensively, thereby making the data obtained more accurate.

Research data was analyzed by organizing the interview results and documentation, then grouping the data based on the research focus. Subsequently, the researcher described and interpreted the data narratively to explain how the CLIL

approach through Reading to Learn was implemented in the learning process and how this approach helped students integrate subject knowledge into language learning. The analysis process was conducted in stages, aligning the obtained data with the research objectives.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on interviews with ten participants, this study found that the implementation of Reading to Learn (R2L) in the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) classroom helped students understand academic texts through a gradual and guided reading process. Most participants explained that the stages in Reading to Learn made it easier for them to understand the content of the text, identify main ideas, understand academic vocabulary, and connect information in the text with the learning material discussed in class. These findings show that Reading to Learn supported students in understanding both language and content at the same time through structured reading activities.

The implementation of Reading to Learn in this study consisted of three stages, namely Preparing Before Reading, Detailed Reading, and Independent Reading. The lecturer used an academic text entitled "*The Importance of Academic Literacy in Higher Education*" adapted from Wingate (2015) and Lea and Street (2006). The text was chosen because it contains academic content related to higher education and also introduces students to academic English vocabulary and sentence structures commonly found in academic texts. Through this activity, students were guided not only to read the text but also to understand how language is used in academic contexts.

In the Preparing Before Reading stage, the lecturer introduced the topic and explained the general overview of the text before students started reading in detail. This stage helped students build background knowledge related to the topic so they were more prepared to understand the text. Samanhudi & Sugiarti, (2011) explain that pre-reading activities in Reading to Learn can help students connect their prior knowledge with new information from the text. Some participants also mentioned

that understanding the context before reading reduced confusion when they read difficult academic texts.

After that, students continued to the Detailed Reading stage. In this stage, the lecturer and students read the text together sentence by sentence and paragraph by paragraph. The lecturer guided students to identify important information, understand difficult vocabulary, and discuss the meaning of complex sentences. Husein et al., (2021) state that Detailed Reading helps students interact with texts more deeply through guided reading and classroom discussion. In this study, many participants considered this stage the most helpful because they could understand the text more clearly with lecturer guidance.

The last stage was Independent Reading. In this stage, students reread the text individually to strengthen their understanding of the material. Some students also wrote notes about unfamiliar vocabulary or difficult parts of the text. According to Cycle et al. (2019), Independent Reading helps students reinforce their understanding through repeated reading activities. Nasution & Damanik, (2025) also explain that independent reading activities support students in developing independent learning skills and monitoring their own comprehension.

The interview results showed that students experienced several benefits from the implementation of Reading to Learn. Participant 1 stated:

“Tahapan Reading to Learn membantu saya memahami isi teks secara bertahap. Saya lebih mudah memahami ide utama, kosakata sulit, dan hubungan antar paragraf karena ada bimbingan dalam proses membaca.” (P1 diwawancarai pada April 2026)

From this response, it can be seen that lecturer guidance during the reading process helped students understand academic texts more easily. The participant explained that the reading stages made it easier to understand difficult vocabulary and relationships between ideas in the text. This finding is similar to the study *Negotiating Meaning in Primary CLIL Classroom*, which found that scaffolding and classroom interaction support students in understanding language and content simultaneously.

Participant 2 also explained:

“Tahapan Reading to Learn membantu saya memahami teks secara bertahap, mulai dari memahami konteks, membaca detail teks bersama dosen, hingga menemukan ide pokok dan informasi penting dengan lebih mudah.” (P2 diwawancarai pada April 2026)

This response shows that Reading to Learn helped students understand texts step by step. Students did not only focus on translating words but also understood the meaning and purpose of the text more generally. The gradual process in Reading to Learn made students feel more confident when reading academic texts in English.

Participant 7 stated:

“Membantu saya memahami konteks dulu sebelum baca detail. Jadi saya bisa menghubungkan pengetahuan awal dengan informasi baru, mengidentifikasi ide pokok, dan memahami struktur teksnya.” (P7 diwawancarai pada April 2026)

This statement indicates that understanding the context before detailed reading helped students connect their prior knowledge with new information from the text. Students were also able to identify the structure and main ideas of the text more easily. This finding shows that the Preparing Before Reading stage played an important role in helping students prepare for academic reading activities.

The findings also revealed that Detailed Reading became the stage that most students considered the most useful. Eight out of ten participants stated that this stage helped them analyze the text more deeply because the lecturer explained difficult vocabulary, sentence structures, and the meaning of the text directly. Participant 4 stated:

“Detailed Reading adalah yang paling membantu saya karena saya bisa membedah teks secara mendalam dan lebih bisa fokus terhadap teks bersama dosen.” (P4 diwawancarai pada April 2026)

Participant 7 also explained:

“Detailed Reading paling membantu. Karena dosen ngajak baca teks secara rinci bersama. Jadi kalimat panjang dan istilah sulit bisa dijelaskan langsung dan saya jadi paham makna keseluruhan, bukan cuma terjemah kata per kata.” (P7 diwawancarai pada April 2026)

These responses show that lecturer guidance during Detailed Reading helped students understand the overall meaning of the text more clearly. Students felt that discussing the text together with the lecturer reduced confusion, especially when they found difficult vocabulary or long sentences. Instead of only translating word by word, students could understand the meaning of the text as a whole.

However, some participants also considered the Preparing Before Reading stage important because it gave them an overview of the text before reading in detail. Participant 8 stated:

“Tahap awal membantu saya mengetahui gambaran umum teks terlebih dahulu.” (P8 diwawancarai pada April 2026)

This finding suggests that understanding the topic and context before reading helped students approach academic texts with better preparation. Students became more familiar with the topic and could follow the content more easily during the reading process.

The findings further showed that the implementation of CLIL through Reading to Learn supported students in learning language and academic content simultaneously. Students learned new academic vocabulary while also understanding the material discussed in class. Participant 5 stated:

“Bahasa digunakan langsung dalam konteks materi pembelajaran.” (P5 diwawancarai pada April 2026)

Participant 8 also explained:

“Saya belajar kosakata akademik baru sekaligus memahami teori tentang literasi.” (P8 diwawancarai pada April 2026)

Similarly, Participant 10 stated:

“Saya belajar bahasa Inggris sekaligus memahami isi materi.” (P10 diwawancarai pada April 2026)

These responses indicate that students learned English through the learning material used in the classroom. Language learning did not happen separately from the subject content because students learned vocabulary and language structures while discussing academic topics.

This finding supports the study *Analysis of the Implementation of the CLIL Approach in Learning Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS)*, which found that CLIL improved both students' academic vocabulary and understanding of subject content.

Another important finding in this study was the role of lecturer guidance during the reading process. Several students mentioned that lecturer explanations helped them understand difficult parts of the text more clearly. Participant 1 stated:

“Saya lebih mudah memahami isi teks karena ada bimbingan dalam proses membaca.” (P1 diwawancarai pada April 2026)

Participant 4 also explained:

“Kosakata sulit dan kalimat panjang menjadi lebih jelas karena dijelaskan bersama dosen.” (P4 diwawancarai pada April 2026)

Participant 7 mentioned:

“Kalimat panjang dan istilah sulit bisa dijelaskan langsung.” (P7 diwawancarai pada April 2026)

Based on these responses, it can be seen that lecturer guidance functioned as support for students during the reading process. Through explanations and classroom discussions, students could understand academic vocabulary, sentence structures, and text content more easily. This finding is also consistent with the study *Classroom Interaction in CLIL: A Case Study at Primary Classroom Context*, which explains that teacher interaction and guidance help students understand both language and content in CLIL classrooms.

Overall, the findings of this study show that the implementation of Reading to Learn in a CLIL classroom helped students understand academic texts in a more structured and gradual way. The stages in Reading to Learn, supported by lecturer guidance and classroom interaction, helped students improve reading comprehension, understand academic vocabulary, and learn subject content at the same time. Therefore, Reading to Learn can be considered an effective strategy to support academic literacy development in CLIL-based learning contexts.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that the implementation of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) through the Reading to Learn (R2L) approach is capable of integrating language learning and subject matter knowledge simultaneously in the academic reading learning process. The implementation of the Preparing Before Reading, Detailed Reading, and Independent Reading stages helps students understand academic texts in a more structured, step-by-step, and contextual manner. Through these stages, students not only grasp the content of the text but also develop an understanding of academic vocabulary, language structure, main ideas, and the relationships between information within the academic text.

This study found that Detailed Reading is the most dominant stage in helping students understand academic texts due to the guided reading process and direct explanations from the instructor. Instructor guidance serves as a form of scaffolding that helps students understand difficult vocabulary, complex sentence structures, and the overall meaning of the text more deeply. Additionally, the Preparing Before Reading stage also helps students build prior knowledge and understand the text's context before reading in greater detail.

The findings of this study indicate that the implementation of CLIL through Reading to Learn creates more meaningful language learning because English is used directly in an academic context. Thus, Reading to Learn not only supports the development of students' academic reading skills but also helps students integrate language comprehension and subject knowledge more effectively through a structured, interactive, and academic-context-based learning process.

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