

# **CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING CONTENT LANGUAGE INTEGRATED LEARNING (CLIL) FOR PRESCHOOL LEARNERS IN PEKALONGAN**

## **A THESIS**

Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
*Sarjana Pendidikan* in English Education Department



By:  
**M. WILDANUR RIZQI**  
SN. 2521108

**ENGLISH EDUCATION DEPARTMENT  
FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND TEACHER TRAINING  
K.H. ABDURRAHMAN WAHID STATE ISLAMIC  
UNIVERSITY PEKALONGAN  
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Yang membuat pernyataan,



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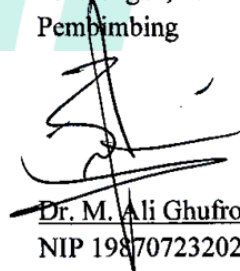
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(CLIL) for Preschool Learners in Pekalongan

Dengan ini mohon agar skripsi tersebut segera dimunaqosahkan.

Demikian nota pembimbing ini dibuat untuk digunakan sebagaimana mestinya. Atas perhatian bapak/Ibu, saya sampaikan terima kasih.

Wassalamu'alaikum Wr.Wb.

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Has been examined and approved by the panel of examiners on Monday, 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2025 as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Sarjana Pendidikan (S.Pd.) in English Education.

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## **MOTTO**

"Through language we reach the heart, through content we shape the mind."



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

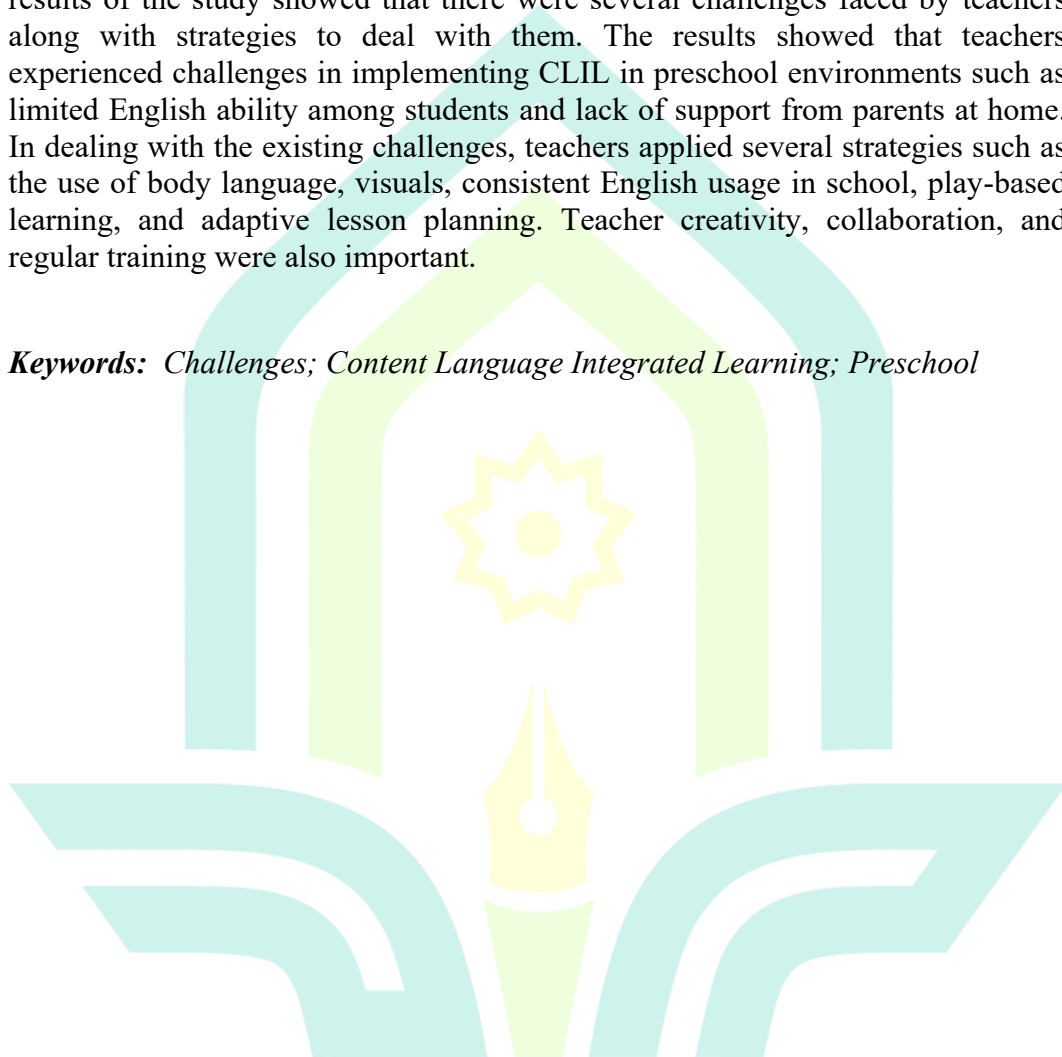
All praise and gratitude I offer to the presence of Allah SWT, because by His grace I can complete this thesis with all the new knowledge that I have gained in the process. The process of writing this scientific paper is not an easy process, and the support, assistance, and prayers of many parties have played an important role in helping me complete this task. I express my deepest gratitude to all parties who have contributed to my journey, may Allah bless them all.



## ABSTRACT

This study aims to identify challenges and strategies in implementing Content Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in one of the preschools in Pekalongan. This study uses a qualitative approach and is a case study research. Data collection was conducted through semi-structured interviews with teachers who have experience in using CLIL methods, classroom observations, and document analysis. The researcher used the theory of Braun and Clarke (2006) in analyzing the data. The results of the study showed that there were several challenges faced by teachers along with strategies to deal with them. The results showed that teachers experienced challenges in implementing CLIL in preschool environments such as limited English ability among students and lack of support from parents at home. In dealing with the existing challenges, teachers applied several strategies such as the use of body language, visuals, consistent English usage in school, play-based learning, and adaptive lesson planning. Teacher creativity, collaboration, and regular training were also important.

**Keywords:** *Challenges; Content Language Integrated Learning; Preschool*

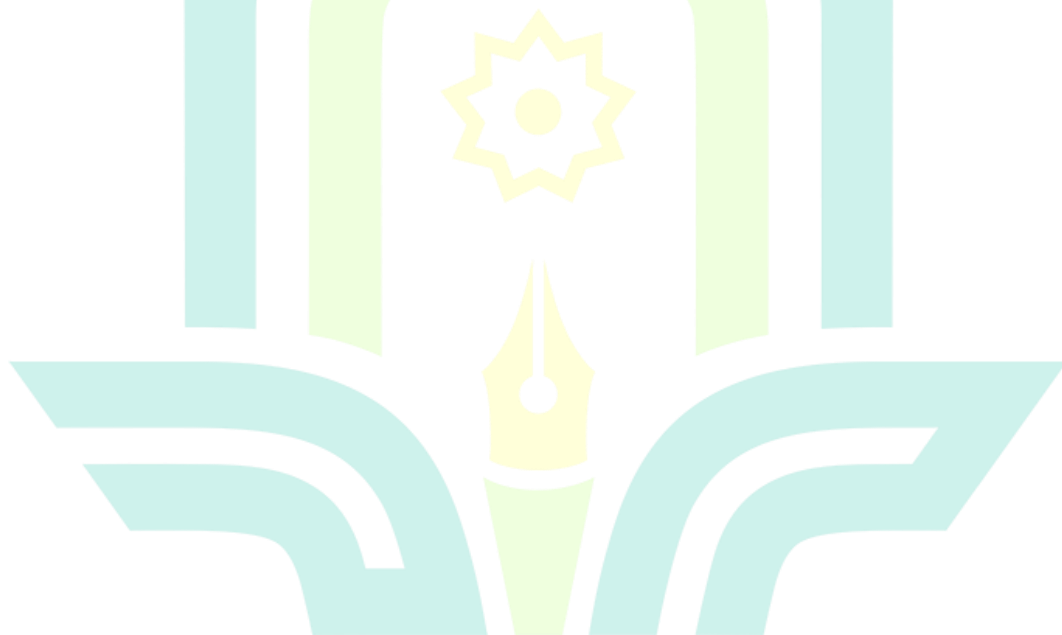




## ABSTRAK

*Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi tantangan dan strategi dalam penerapan Content Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) di salah satu PAUD di Pekalongan. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dan merupakan penelitian studi kasus. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui wawancara semi terstruktur dengan guru yang telah berpengalaman dalam menggunakan metode CLIL, observasi kelas, dan analisis dokumen. Peneliti menggunakan teori Braun dan Clarke (2006) dalam menganalisis data. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa terdapat beberapa tantangan yang dihadapi guru beserta strategi untuk mengatasinya. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa guru mengalami tantangan dalam menerapkan CLIL di lingkungan PAUD seperti keterbatasan kemampuan bahasa Inggris siswa dan kurangnya dukungan dari orang tua di rumah. Dalam menghadapi tantangan yang ada, guru menerapkan beberapa strategi seperti penggunaan bahasa tubuh, visual, penggunaan bahasa Inggris yang konsisten di sekolah, pembelajaran berbasis permainan, dan perencanaan pelajaran yang adaptif. Kreativitas guru, kolaborasi, dan pelatihan rutin juga penting.*

**Kata kunci:** Tantangan-tantangan, Content Language Integrated Learning, Prasekolah



## PREFACE

Praise and gratitude we offer to the presence of Allah SWT who has bestowed His grace and kinds so that the process of writing a thesis entitled "Challenges in Implementing Content Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) for Preschool Learners in Pekalongan" can be completed. This thesis is submitted to the English Language Education Department of UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan to fulfill one of the requirements to obtain a Degree of *Sarjana Pendidikan*.

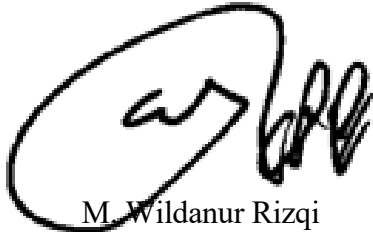
I acknowledge that this thesis may have limitations, and I am open to constructive criticism and suggestions for improvement. I hope that this research contributes to the existing body of knowledge and serves as a valuable resource for those interested in enhancing reading comprehension skills.

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the following individuals:

1. Prof. Dr. H. Zaenal Mustakim, M.Ag., who serves as the Rector of UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan.
2. Prof. Dr. H. Muhlisin, M.Ag., the Dean of the Faculty of Education and Teacher Training at UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan., M.Ag., the Dean of the Faculty of Education and Teacher Training at UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan.
3. Mr. Ahmad Burhannudin, M.A., Head of the English Education Department, and Mrs. Eros Meilina Sofa, M.Pd., Secretary of the English Education Department within the Faculty of Teachers' Training at UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan.

4. Mr. M. Ali Ghufon, M.Pd., my supervisor, whose invaluable suggestions, guidance, and dedicated time were crucial throughout the writing of this thesis.
5. The teachers at Cambridge Preschool Pekalongan who have kindly accepted me to conduct this research at their institution.
6. All lecturers and staff members of the English Education Department, Faculty of Teachers' Training, UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan.
7. My beloved family who have given me endless support, prayer, advice, and encouragement in writing this thesis.

Pekalongan, 13 June 2025

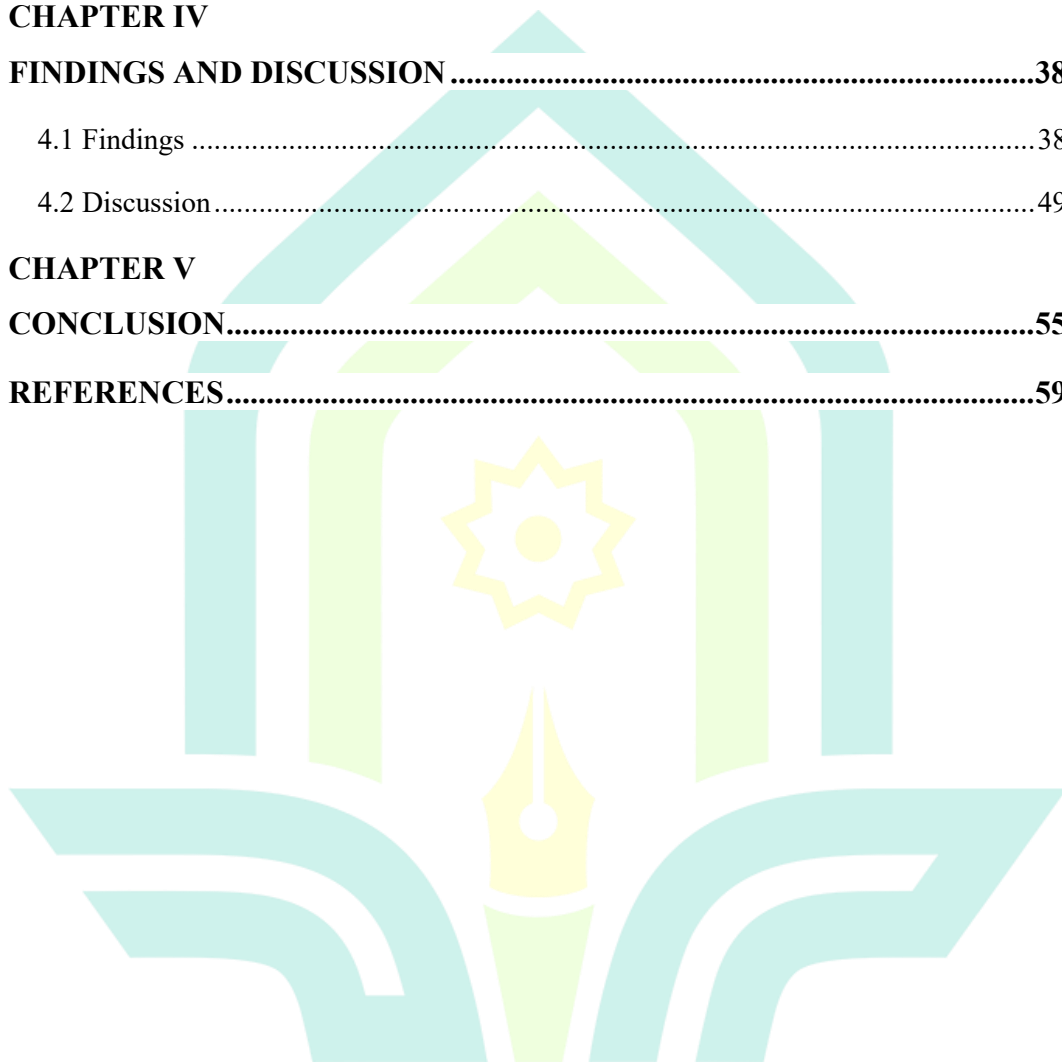


M. Wildanur Rizqi

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background of Research

The world of education has undergone changes and developments in this era of globalization, where in the use of language systems, foreign languages are often used as the language of instruction by educational institutions in teaching and learning activities. Currently, the integration of English and learning content has begun to be implemented in schools in Pekalongan, even starting from preschool. The use of English as the language of instruction in Preschool is a phenomenon that the author has made the focus of research, and this happened at Cambridge Preschool Pekalongan.

Learning English from a young age is undoubtedly one of the best ways to master English. If we start learning something from an early age, it will be easier for us to master it, at least that's what people think. Learning English, therefore, is also included in this. Todd (2003) stated that the optimum achievement of a second language is determined by age factors. This is also supported by the CPH (Critical Period Hypothesis) theory which states that in the age range of two years to early adolescence, a person will find it easier to acquire a language (Brown, 2000).

Furthermore, Ryan (2004) emphasized that utilizing the entire early age for language training is a must. Paradis (2004) and Johnstone (2009) stated that learning English from an early age has several interesting advantages. They stated that there is a great enthusiasm for learning language in children,

especially the sound system and describing implicit knowledge where the knowledge is held unconsciously. Children undoubtedly have higher quality in acquiring the sounds and rhythms of the target language, but they have lower quality in the affective filter. They have good intuition and are less insecure. Likewise, they have more time in learning another language and a greater ability to gain awareness of intercultural identity.

When children learn earlier, they may have more advantages to improve their abilities. Therefore, the idea of "the younger the better" suggests that younger students have better learning abilities and that longer exposure results in significant learning experiences in the end (Enever and Moon, 2009). As stated by McCloskey (2014), there are eight principles that teachers should consider when teaching English to young students. They include: providing enjoyable learning experiences for students; helping students develop and practice language through collaboration; using multidimensional and thematically organized activities; using an active vocabulary learning approach; integrating language and content; validating and integrating the home language and culture; and providing clear goals and feedback.

The integration of language and content as one of the eight principles in teaching English to young learners proposed by McCloskey has been implemented by Cambridge Preschool in Pekalongan. Cambridge Preschool is the only early childhood education center in Pekalongan that implements an international curriculum based on Singaporean standards, focusing on six key areas of child development through a play-based and child-centered approach.

Lessons cover language, numeracy, science, motor skills, and socio-emotional development, and are delivered entirely in English using simplified language and gestures, especially for younger learners. This reflects the CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) approach, where English is used to teach both content and language skills. An immersive English environment is supported by visual aids and structured routines, helping students gradually use English naturally, even beyond class time. Materials are adapted to developmental stages, and upper-level classes include Indonesian to ensure readiness for both local and international education paths.

Although various studies have examined the implementation of CLIL at various levels of education, studies that focus on the preschool level are still limited, especially in Indonesia. Most previous CLIL research has focused on primary, secondary, or tertiary education, as well as on the context of countries that speak English as a second language (ESL) or a foreign language (EFL). In addition, there is not much literature that specifically explores the challenges faced by teachers in early childhood education institutions such as Cambridge Preschool, which implements an international curriculum with a play-based approach and holistic child development. This study fills this gap by exploring how teachers at Cambridge Preschool overcome challenges to implementing CLIL effectively.

This study offers a unique contribution to understanding the implementation of CLIL at the preschool level in Indonesia. By focusing on Cambridge Preschool Pekalongan as a case study, this study not only provides



insight into the challenges faced by teachers, but also the practical strategies used to overcome these challenges. Therefore, this study provides a new perspective that is relevant for other early childhood or higher education institutions that wish to adopt a similar approach. To explore the challenges faced by preschool teachers in implementing CLIL and how the preschool teachers solve those challenges is the aims of this study.

### **1.2 Identification of the Problem**

Based on the description of the background of the problem above, research problems can be identified, including the following:

1. What are the challenges faced by preschool teachers in implementing Content Language Integrated Learning?
2. How do the preschool teachers solve the challenges in implementing Content Language Integrated Learning?

### **1.3 Scope of the Study**

This research focuses on the challenges faced by preschool teachers in implementing CLIL and to analyze how the preschool teachers solve these challenges in implementing CLIL.

### **1.4 Formulation of the Problem**

Based on identification the research question can be formulated as follows:

1. What are the challenges faced by preschool teachers in implementing Content Language Integrated Learning?

2. How do the preschool teachers solve the challenges in implementing Content Language Integrated Learning?

### **1.5 Aim of the Research**

This study aims to identify and analyze the main challenges in implementing Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) for preschool learners in Pekalongan. This study seeks to understand the specific obstacles faced by teachers in adapting and implementing CLIL pedagogy in this context, and provides recommendations to overcome these challenges in order to improve the effectiveness of CLIL implementation in preschool education.

### **1.6 Significance of the Research**

#### **1. Theoretical**

This research contributes to existing language learning theories, especially those related to the Content Language Integrated Learning approach. It supported and expanded frameworks such as Coyle's 4Cs theory by providing insight into how preschool teachers experienced and navigated challenges in CLIL implementation that used the 4Cs as a framework to ensure that learning in CLIL classrooms focuses not only on language acquisition but also on deepening subject knowledge, encouraging cognitive development, and increasing cultural awareness.

#### **2. Empirical**

This study provides empirical insights into the challenges faced by teachers implementing CLIL at Cambridge Preschool Pekalongan. As the

only early childhood education center in Pekalongan applying international curriculum and standards, Cambridge Preschool offers a unique context for understanding CLIL implementation. The research documents specific challenges related to the use of English as the language of instruction in preschool, the adaptation of Singaporean curriculum, and bilingual language approach with Cambridge Preschool, where the language of instruction are English and Indonesia.

### 3. Practical

This research offers practical solutions for preschool teachers implementing CLIL. By exploring the challenges faced by teachers at Cambridge Preschool, the study provides insights that can inform teaching methods, curriculum design, and teacher training. This research identifies the issues that preschool teachers face in implementing CLIL in Cambridge Preschool and can be used as a reference and a new perspective for other early childhood or higher education institutions that wish to adopt a similar approach. Additionally, the study provides guidance on how to address these challenges in a practical and effective manner.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

#### 5.1 Summary of the Findings

This study explored the challenges faced by teachers in implementing Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) and the strategies they used to overcome those challenges at Cambridge Preschool Pekalongan. Data were collected through interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis, which provided insights into both obstacles and practical approaches employed in the CLIL context for early childhood education.

One of the primary challenges identified was the children's limited English proficiency. Many students entered the preschool with little to no exposure to English, making it difficult for them to understand instructions and participate fully in English-based learning activities. This gap in language readiness created disparities among students and hindered their engagement with both content and language learning. Another key challenge was the lack of parental support at home. Teachers found that children who were not exposed to or supported in using English outside school struggled to retain what they had learned in class. The absence of consistent language reinforcement at home limited the effectiveness of CLIL and created a disconnect between school-based learning and students' everyday environments.

In terms of strategies, the findings revealed several effective approaches used by teachers to facilitate CLIL instruction. First, teachers utilized body

language, visual aids, and sign language to enhance student comprehension, particularly in lower-level classes such as Nursery 1. These multimodal strategies provided accessible entry points for students new to the English language. Second, maintaining consistency in using English throughout the school day, both in teacher-student and teacher-teacher interactions, helped establish English as the functional language of the learning environment. Visual displays, classroom rules, and routines further supported this immersion strategy.

Third, teachers integrated language and content through play-based learning activities. Subjects like pre-math and gross motor skills were taught in English using hands-on, movement-based games, aligning with the developmental needs of young children. Fourth, adapting lesson plans according to the individual abilities and classroom conditions. Although teachers followed a set curriculum, they frequently modified activities to meet students' needs and learning pace, ensuring greater accessibility and engagement. Fifth, teacher creativity was found to be a crucial factor. Engaging and interactive teaching styles helped maintain student attention and made the language-learning process more enjoyable and less intimidating for young learners.

Finally, professional development and collaboration among teachers played an essential role in ensuring CLIL quality. Teachers received basic training prior to teaching and regularly discussed classroom strategies with colleagues, enabling knowledge sharing and continuous improvement. These

findings highlight the multifaceted nature of CLIL implementation in preschool and the need for flexible, developmentally appropriate, and context-sensitive teaching strategies. They also underscore the importance of supportive environments both at school and at home to ensure the success of bilingual education in early childhood settings.

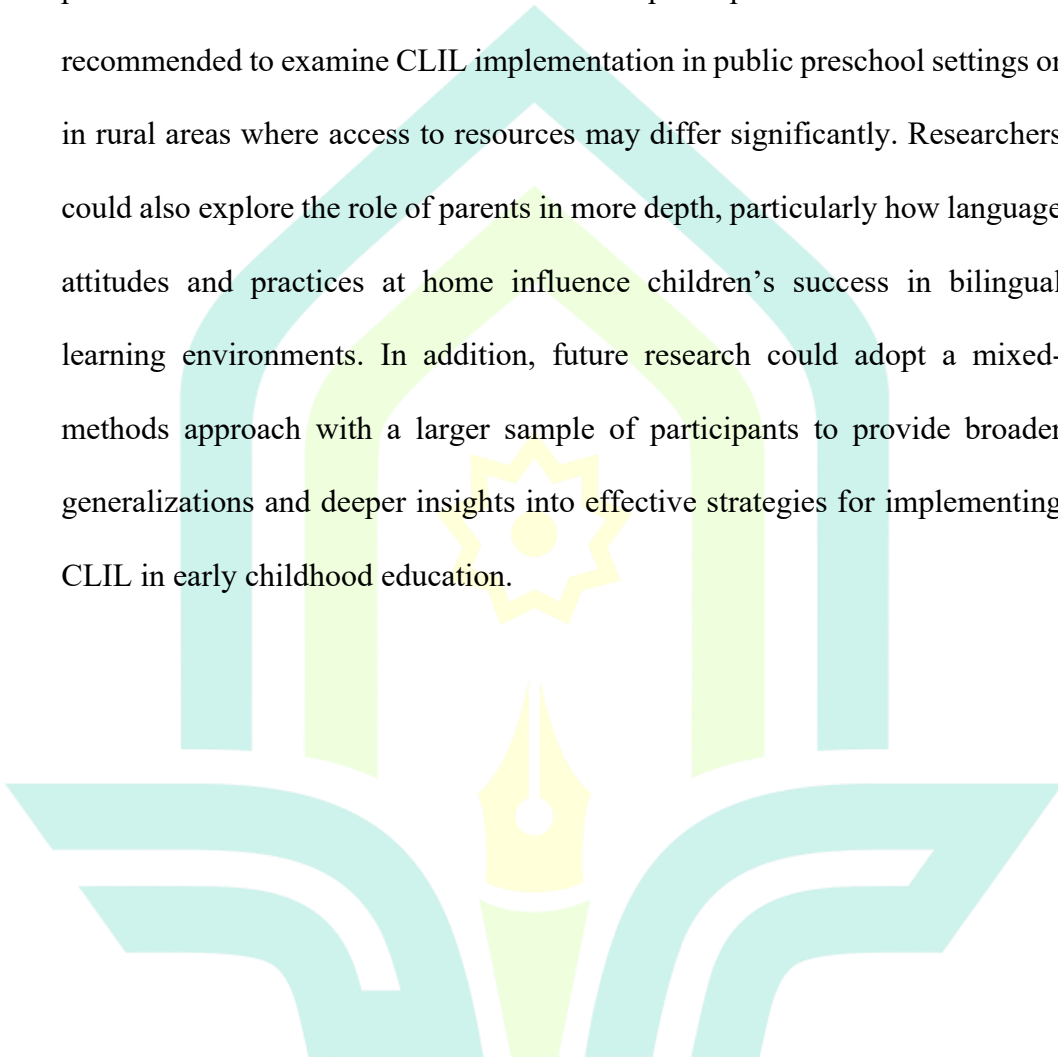
## **5.2 Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the researcher recommends that educators, preschool teachers, and pre-service teachers consider implementing CLIL in early childhood education not only as a language teaching method but also as a pedagogical approach that supports integrated learning. Teachers should consider the importance of addressing students' limited English language proficiency by implementing differentiated instruction, using non-verbal communication tools such as gestures and visuals, and designing developmentally appropriate lessons. Furthermore, collaboration with parents should be strengthened, as support at home plays a vital role in strengthening students' language learning. Educators are encouraged to actively engage parents through consistent communication and by offering simple suggestions to support English use at home.

Teachers who have understood the strategies and challenges presented in this study may also be better prepared to design and deliver effective CLIL lessons. They are advised to maintain consistency in using the target language, implement creative and play-based activities, and continually adjust lesson plans based on students' abilities and needs. In addition, institutional support

such as regular teacher training, peer collaboration, and flexible curriculum guidelines are needed to support teachers in the successful implementation of CLIL.

This study is limited in scope because it focused on only one private preschool with a small number of teacher participants. Future research is recommended to examine CLIL implementation in public preschool settings or in rural areas where access to resources may differ significantly. Researchers could also explore the role of parents in more depth, particularly how language attitudes and practices at home influence children's success in bilingual learning environments. In addition, future research could adopt a mixed-methods approach with a larger sample of participants to provide broader generalizations and deeper insights into effective strategies for implementing CLIL in early childhood education.



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