

Analysis of Functional English Competency Needs of Primary School Teacher Education Students For Bilingual Learning

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the readiness of Primary School Teacher Education (PGSD) graduates in facing bilingual school programs, specifically concerning functional English competency. Utilizing the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method on journal articles published from 2017 to 2025, the synthesis results indicate that the competency needs for bilingual primary school teachers extend beyond general language ability, centering on the mastery of Classroom English and English Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) to support the CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) approach. The identified gaps are that Primary School Teacher Education curricula tend to be less functionally oriented and are exacerbated by inconsistent linguistic modelling challenges in the academic environment. Therefore, the study recommends a reorientation of the Primary School Teacher Education curriculum towards explicit CLIL integration, an increase in minimum competency standards, and the development of practical Classroom English modules to bridge the gap and produce job-ready prospective bilingual teachers.

Keywords: Needs Analysis, English Competency, Primary School Teacher Education Students, Bilingual Learning, CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning).

Analisis Kebutuhan Kompetensi Bahasa Inggris Fungsional Mahasiswa Pendidikan Guru Sekolah Dasar (PGSD) Untuk Pembelajaran Bilingual

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis kesiapan lulusan Pendidikan Guru Sekolah Dasar (PGSD) dalam menghadapi program sekolah bilingual, khususnya terkait kompetensi Bahasa Inggris fungsional. Dengan menggunakan metode Systematic Literature Review (SLR) terhadap artikel jurnal yang diterbitkan antara tahun 2017 hingga 2025, sintesis hasil menunjukkan bahwa kebutuhan kompetensi guru bilingual SD melampaui kemampuan bahasa

517 || Tiarnita Maria Sarjani, et. al || Analysis of Functional English Competency Needs

umum, berpusat pada penguasaan Classroom English dan English Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) untuk mendukung pendekatan CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning). Kesenjangan yang teridentifikasi adalah bahwa kurikulum PGSD cenderung kurang berorientasi fungsional, diperburuk oleh tantangan pemodelan linguistik yang tidak konsisten di lingkungan akademik. Oleh karena itu, penelitian merekomendasikan reorientasi kurikulum PGSD menuju integrasi CLIL yang eksplisit, peningkatan standar kompetensi minimum, dan pengembangan modul Classroom English praktis untuk menjembatani kesenjangan tersebut dan menghasilkan calon guru bilingual yang siap kerja.

Kata Kunci: Analisis Kebutuhan, Kompetensi Bahasa Inggris, Mahasiswa Pendidikan Guru Sekolah Dasar, Pembelajaran Bilingual, CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning).

INTRODUCTION

The 21st century is characterized by the intensity of globalization and technological development, which places English language competency as a fundamental skill for competitiveness and access to information. Primary Schools as the foundation of education play a crucial role in preparing the younger generation, who are increasingly exposed to bilingual learning models through the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach. This model demands that teachers not only possess a strong pedagogical understanding but also the ability to use English as the medium of instruction. The successful implementation of this bilingual program is entirely dependent on the readiness and quality of the teachers, especially graduates of the Primary School Teacher Education Study Program. This demand implies the necessity for a deep understanding of the specific English competencies required by prospective primary school teachers.

Although the need for bilingual teachers continues to increase, there is often a significant gap between the general English competency possessed by Primary School Teacher Education students and the functional competency demanded in CLIL teaching practice (Classroom English). Nisak and Niam (2023) indicated that a need is recognized by students, but there is no adequate mapping of the ideal type and level of specific competency. This void is aggravated by literature findings indicating that the Primary School Teacher Education curriculum is still insufficiently oriented towards the development of English-based Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK). Based on these conditions, this study aims to fill the gap by conducting a systematic analysis of the English competency needs for Primary School Teacher Education students.

This study is limited to a systematic literature review focusing on three research questions: (1) What are the types and levels of English competency required by Primary School teachers in the context of implementing bilingual learning? (2) Based on the literature review, what are the common challenges and English competency gaps faced by Primary School Teacher Education students or novice Primary School teachers when assigned to bilingual school programs? (3) What are the implications of

these competency needs findings for the curriculum development of the Primary School Teacher Education Study Program, especially in courses related to English or content? In line with these research questions, the objectives of this study are to analyze the types and levels of competency, identify the challenges and gaps, and formulate the implications of the competency needs findings for the curriculum development of the Primary School Teacher Education Study Program. The results of this literature review are expected to provide theoretical benefits by providing a conceptual framework regarding the competency needs of bilingual teachers from a Needs Analysis perspective in the CLIL context, and practical benefits by providing concrete recommendations for Primary School Teacher Education administrators and curriculum policymakers.

METHODS

This study employs the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) or Qualitative Literature Review approach. This approach was chosen because it aims to identify, evaluate, and synthesize all available findings relevant to the English competency needs of Primary School Teacher Education students. Thus, the research process becomes transparent, and the findings are methodologically accountable.

Data Sources and Selection Procedure

The data in this study are secondary data sourced from credible academic documents, namely scientific journal articles (national and international), seminar proceedings, and research reports. Literature searches were conducted on reputable academic search engines such as Google Scholar, DOAJ, ERIC, and SINTA. To ensure relevance and currency of information, articles used as primary sources were limited to the publication range from 2017 to 2025. The data collection process began with the determination of keywords reflecting the title and research questions, such as 'English Needs Analysis for Primary School Teacher Education', 'Bilingual Primary School Teacher Competency', and their English equivalents ('English Needs Analysis Primary Teachers', 'CLIL Primary Curriculum').

Every article found must meet the inclusion criteria, namely addressing the topic of English needs analysis or language competency of Primary School Teacher Education teachers/students/Primary School teachers and discussing bilingual learning or CLIL at the basic education level. Articles focusing solely on English teaching at the junior/senior high school level or those that were mere opinions were excluded. Selection was carried out in stages: (1) Title and Abstract Selection, (2) Introduction Reading, and (3) Full Text Reading to ensure relevance to the Research Questions (Q1, Q2, Q3).

Data Analysis Technique

The collected data (in the form of findings, definitions, and arguments from the selected articles) were analyzed using Qualitative Content Analysis and Descriptive Synthesis methods. Key findings from each article were identified, recorded, and grouped into thematic categories tailored to the three research questions: (A) Competency Needs, (B) Gaps/Challenges, and (C) Curriculum Implications. Critical

synthesis aimed to find consensus (similarities in findings) among authors, identify differences or gaps in arguments, and subsequently construct a single coherent argument to comprehensively answer each research question.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Analysis of Functional English Competency Needs for Primary School Teacher Education

The literature review indicates that the English competency needs for Primary School Teacher Education graduates in bilingual schools go beyond basic ability, focusing on Specific Instructional Language Competency. Fundamentally, the readiness of Primary School Teacher Education students is supported by an adequate level of general English proficiency, which is recognized as important for supporting academic success and job readiness (Nisak & Niam, 2023). However, the actual need is for language ability oriented towards the function of classroom teaching (Yulia, 2017). The main demand of bilingual programs is the teacher's ability to use English as a tool of instruction. This need specifically covers two critical aspects. Firstly, the mastery of Classroom English, which are functional phrases essential for instructional management and daily classroom interaction (Maisaroh, Endahati, & Budiharti, 2022).

Secondly, the mastery of English-based Pedagogical Content Knowledge (English PCK/CLIL Competence). Darasawang and Singhasiri (2022) imply that the focus of training should be on PCK, which enables teachers to explain subject concepts (content) with correct English that is appropriate for the Primary School students' level of understanding (López-Hernández, 2021). Thus, the competency need for Primary School Teacher Education is a combination of a strong intermediate level (B1/B2) of general language ability, which is processed into functional Classroom English Competence and CLIL Competence for content teaching.

Gaps and Challenges in the Primary School Teacher Education Curriculum

Although the need for Specific Instructional English Competency is very high, the literature review identifies several significant challenges and gaps faced by Primary School Teacher Education students. The main gap lies in the transfer of the general English language ability (General English) possessed by students towards the functional competency required in the classroom. This indicates a gap between the current abilities and the professional standards needed in bilingual schools, aggravated by the Primary School Teacher Education curriculum which still tends to focus on basic abilities and is less oriented towards actual teaching skills (Yulia, 2017). This gap reflects the lack of emphasis on the development of English-based PCK (Darasawang & Singhasiri, 2022). Academic environmental challenges also play a role; Fatsah and Purnama (2022) found problems in the language input environment due to the practice of code-switching by lecturers, which results in students lacking a consistent model of how English is used professionally. This gap is exacerbated by the fact that the Primary School Teacher Education curriculum has not fully adopted the adequate integration of language and content (CLIL) (López-Hernández, 2021).

Furthermore, prospective Primary School Teacher Education graduates also face contextual challenges due to the complexity of bilingual teaching in Primary Schools, including Phasing Management Challenges (Akbar et al., 2025; Dinda et al., 2025) which demand high linguistic flexibility.

Implications of Findings for Primary School Teacher Education Curriculum Development

Based on the needs analysis and identified gaps, there are significant implications that must be considered in the development of the Primary School Teacher Education Study Program curriculum, namely a shift in focus from general English instruction to a stronger integration of language and content (CLIL). The Primary School Teacher Education curriculum must explicitly incorporate modules or courses that teach CLIL methodology and how English is used to deliver other subject matter, in line with the effectiveness of CLIL in primary school students' science learning (Huang, 2020). Based on the need for Classroom English, the curriculum must prioritize courses focusing on Functional English (Maisaroh et al., 2022). The second implication is the necessity for increasing the minimum English competency standard required for prospective graduates, ideally equivalent to level B2 (Upper Intermediate). The gap arising from code-switching demands increased professionalism from lecturers to provide consistent linguistic input (Fatsah & Purnama, 2022). Furthermore, the curriculum must include teaching simulations (PPL/Teaching Practice) conducted entirely in English to train the adaptation of general competency into English PCK (Darasawang & Singhasiri, 2022). Referring to the Merdeka Curriculum framework (Oktavia et al., 2023), Primary School Teacher Education can develop certified modules that specifically cater to the needs of bilingual teaching to prepare students for contextual challenges (Akbar et al., 2025).

CONCLUSION

Based on the systematic analysis of literature regarding the English competency needs of Primary School Teacher Education students in the context of bilingual learning, several main conclusions are drawn. First, the required competency for bilingual Primary School teachers is a combination of strong General English Competency and Specific Instructional Language Competency (Pedagogical English), which specifically includes the mastery of Classroom English and English PCK ability for CLIL implementation. Second, there is a significant gap between the functional needs in the field and the abilities provided by the Primary School Teacher Education curriculum, which tends to focus on general English and is less oriented towards pedagogical and content aspects. This gap is exacerbated by the lack of consistent language modeling within the Primary School Teacher Education academic environment. Third, the analysis results imply the need for a curriculum focus shift in Primary School Teacher Education from general language instruction toward explicit CLIL integration, accompanied by the addition of materials that specifically develop

Classroom English and English PCK abilities to ensure the bilingual teaching readiness of Primary School Teacher Education graduates.

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