

Implementing CLIL in Myanmar: Upper Secondary Content Teachers' Perspectives and Readiness Across Urban and Rural Settings

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Abstract

This study investigated the perspectives of upper secondary content teachers regarding Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) and their willingness to implement it in Myanmar. Six science teachers using English-language textbooks—three from an urban setting (Yangon) and three from a rural setting (Mau-bin)—participated in the study. Using a qualitative case study design, data were collected through semi-structured interviews after teachers were introduced to CLIL concepts, the 4Cs framework, and sample teaching materials. The findings indicated that urban teachers held positive perspectives on CLIL and showed strong willingness to adopt CLIL-based practices, viewing the approach as beneficial for enhancing content understanding, English use, student motivation, and critical thinking. By contrast, rural teachers expressed more cautious and varied perspectives, citing concerns related to limited English proficiency, large class sizes, examination-oriented assessment, and insufficient training. Overall, the teachers' willingness to implement CLIL was shaped by contextual constraints and perceived instructional readiness. The study highlighted the need for systematic and context-sensitive CLIL training to support effective implementation in Myanmar's upper secondary content classrooms.

Keywords: Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), Myanmar teachers' perspectives, CLIL implementation, teacher training, upper secondary school

Introduction

The rise of internationalization has led to the use of English for communication, trade, and academic research across the globe. In academic settings, English has become a teaching language (Kirst et al., 2023). Myanmar, similar to other countries in the Mekong region such as Vietnam (Phan Thi Ngoc Le, 2023), recognizes the importance of English proficiency and has adopted education policies that emphasize English as a key language for national development. Thus, English language has been included in the country's education policy, which is aimed at equipping students with deep content knowledge, target language knowledge, and critical thinking skills. These three aspects reflect effective 21st century workforce characteristics (Wagner, 2008). One example that could reflect Myanmar educational policy is classrooms that teach science subjects. To further explain, in a science class of an upper secondary school, English holds a central position in textbooks, facilitating the development of content knowledge. In such

content-based classes, teachers need to be skilled at managing classes that use English language textbooks effectively.

In Myanmar, the education system adheres to traditional teaching, particularly the grammar translation approach which emphasizes rote memorization over critical thinking and practical language skills. This teaching approach predominantly involves translating English into Myanmar language, focusing on memorization. This approach hinders students' meaningful understanding of the content knowledge as well as their development of the 21st-century skill of critical thinking. The same situation occurs in secondary education, where science subjects are taught in grammar translation classes. That is to say, sciences are initially taught in Myanmar language at the primary school level, but they transition to English-language textbooks at the secondary school level.

The shift to English as the principal medium of instruction has created substantial challenges for content teachers with limited English proficiency, particularly in managing subject teaching and supporting meaningful student engagement (Htay and Ngonkum, 2023). Research in similar EFL contexts has shown that such challenges often result in teacher-centered practices and heavy reliance on rote learning, thereby limiting students' opportunities to develop language skills, critical thinking, and active learning strategies (Ulla, 2017). To address these constraints, Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) has been widely recognized as a pedagogical approach that can simultaneously support content understanding, language development, and higher-order thinking skills (Coyle et al., 2010; Lasagabaster and Sierra, 2010). However, successful CLIL implementation is strongly influenced by teachers' beliefs, perceptions of feasibility, and pedagogical preparedness. Studies consistently indicate that without adequate training and contextualized support, teachers may struggle to integrate content and language objectives effectively in CLIL classrooms (Aguilar and Rodríguez, 2012; Strotmann et al., 2014).

Marsh (2000) and Coyle (2010) characterized CLIL as a dual-focused approach, employing a second language for both content delivery and language instruction. In essence, CLIL extends beyond mere content acquisition; it integrates the target language into the learning of subject matter. In this regard, many scholars have suggested that embracing CLIL could expand opportunities for students to apply the target language within their subject-specific lessons (Dafouz et al. (2007); Lasagabaster (2008); Lasagabaster et al. (2010); Lasagabaster (2011).

According to Marsh (2000) and Coyle et al. (2010), students' ability to think critically is also a result of CLIL classroom teaching. In the same line, Onoda (2021) confirmed that Japanese university students could improve their critical thinking skills as well as interactional skills after attending a CLIL classroom.

In addition, CLIL has been claimed to provide a highly motivating classroom learning environment especially at the secondary school level. This is congruent with results from a study conducted by Lasagabaster and Sierra (2010) revealing that when 191 participating secondary school students engaged in tasks within a CLIL classroom context, they were more likely to feel motivated than when they engaged in tasks in traditional English as a Foreign Language (EFL) setting. Lasagabaster and Sierra (2010) further suggested that increased motivation ultimately leads to greater interest in language learning among students, facilitated by the more effective approach employed in CLIL context.

Although CLIL was introduced in Myanmar more than a decade ago, there is little evidence that teachers, particularly those at the upper secondary level, recognize the benefits of CLIL in classroom instruction and learning. Hence, it is crucial to explore content teachers' awareness of CLIL and their willingness to integrate it into their classes.

Teachers play a crucial role in shaping instructional practices; therefore, their perspectives significantly influence how CLIL is interpreted and implemented in classrooms. Previous research has shown that teachers' beliefs and perspectives affect their willingness to adopt CLIL and their ability to integrate content and language objectives effectively (Kos and Bergner, 2026). When teachers view CLIL as pedagogically meaningful and feasible, they are more inclined to experiment with integrated teaching practices that go beyond traditional teacher-centered approaches.

A substantial body of research has highlighted teachers' positive perspectives on the pedagogical benefits of CLIL, particularly in supporting integrated content and language learning. Studies of basic education contexts have reported that teachers perceive CLIL as enhancing students' subject understanding, language development, and classroom engagement through authentic learning activities (Infante et al., 2009; Trang et al., 2015). In Vietnam, for example, teachers implementing CLIL through the 4Cs framework observed improvements in students' vocabulary, grammar, speaking fluency, and content comprehension, reinforcing the perceived value of CLIL in EFL contexts (Trang et al., 2015).

Despite these perceived benefits, research has consistently identified a range of challenges that hinder effective CLIL implementation. Teachers have reported difficulties related to lesson planning, limited teaching materials, insufficient collaboration, and challenges in balancing content demands with language support (Infante et al., 2009; Wenger, 2012). At the secondary level, some teachers have expressed uncertainty about CLIL's effectiveness in supporting content learning, even when they maintain positive attitudes toward its potential for language development (Wenger, 2012).

Another recurring theme in CLIL research concerns teachers' willingness to implement CLIL and their need for professional training. Studies at the tertiary level have shown that although teachers are generally willing to adopt CLIL, many feel unprepared to teach content through English without targeted pedagogical support (Aguilar and Rodriguez, 2012; Strotmann et al., 2014). These findings suggest that teachers' confidence, instructional competence, and access to professional development are critical factors shaping successful CLIL implementation.

In contexts where English-medium content teaching experience is limited, teachers' perspectives and training needs become particularly important. In Asian EFL contexts such as Myanmar, understanding how teachers perceive CLIL, the challenges they anticipate, and their readiness to implement the approach is essential for ensuring its feasibility and sustainability. Therefore, the study described in this article focused on upper secondary science teachers in Myanmar who were new to CLIL, aiming to explore their perspectives and willingness to implement CLIL in relation to contextual constraints and professional support needs.

Objectives of the Study

The main goals of this study were 1) to examine the perspectives of upper secondary school teachers in Myanmar CLIL, and 2) to examine the willingness of upper secondary school teachers in Myanmar to incorporate CLIL into their classrooms.

The research questions were 1) how do upper secondary school teachers in Myanmar perceive the principles and potential benefits of CLIL? and 2) how willing are upper secondary school teachers in Myanmar to incorporate CLIL into their classroom practices?

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), coined by Marsh and colleagues in 1994, is an educational approach that uses an additional language for both content and language learning. With its roots dating back to the 1960s, it has gained prominence through successful use in Canadian French immersion education and North American bilingual language programs (Mehisto et al., 2008).

CLIL is drawn from theories such as Vygotsky's (1896) Sociocultural Constructivist Theory, Krashen's (1982) Input Theory, and Swain's (1995) Output Theory. During the 1970s, the United Kingdom embraced an approach to teaching that integrated content and language instructions. From that point, CLIL is vital in today's globalized society, fostering second or foreign language skills for communication and knowledge sharing. Dale (2012) defined CLIL as teaching subjects through another language, while Marsh (2009) viewed CLIL as related to language and intercultural knowledge. Mehisto et al. (2008) considered CLIL as an umbrella term covering several education approaches such as immersion, bilingual education, multilingual education, and a special language program.

At the core of the CLIL approach, the 4Cs framework serves as the central concept for classroom teaching and learning. This framework comprises four crucial components: *Content*, *Cognition*, *Culture*, and *Communication*. *Content* relates to the topic or theme within CLIL, encompassing not only understanding the subject matter but also advancing in acquiring new knowledge and skills (Coyle, 2007). *Cognition* in CLIL includes students' critical thinking skills, involving their engagement with course content, problem-solving, and reflective learning (Coyle, 2007). Furthermore, Bloom's Taxonomy (Bloom, 1956), which is a framework comprising six different thinking processes, is also employed to enhance cognition in CLIL (Coyle, 2007). *Culture* encompasses developing intercultural understanding and global citizenship (Coyle, 2010). In this regard, many European models of CLIL often encourage learners to think of themselves as part of a larger group in society and to respect or accept others (Marsh et al., 2010). Learners must be conscious of both the culture of the subject they are learning and the cultural dynamics within the CLIL class (Dalton-Puffer, 2011). *Communication* in a CLIL classroom involves students utilizing the target language to convey their thoughts, opinions, and attitudes about the lesson's content (Coyle, 2007). This emphasis on both speaking and writing supports students in learning to use language effectively and using language as a tool for learning (Coyle, 2007).

Because of their integrative nature, these four elements provide a comprehensive theoretical and methodological basis for designing CLIL lessons and creating materials (Coyle, 2007). This can be the case in Myanmar. Putting the 4Cs framework of CLIL into mathematics and science classes of upper secondary schools can facilitate students' learning subject content and the target language of English. This could also allow students to build critical thinking skills.

Therefore, it is crucial to investigate teachers' perspectives and comprehension of this integrated 4Cs framework of CLIL. This research sought to explore the perspectives of upper secondary school teachers on their CLIL knowledge, particularly the 4Cs framework. This study also explored the teachers' willingness to use CLIL's 4Cs framework in their classroom teaching. Findings from this study could reflect the real picture of the teachers' knowledge of CLIL as well as whether they want to employ it in their classrooms.

Methodology

Research Context

This study was conducted in Myanmar's upper-secondary education context, where science subjects are taught using English language textbooks. To capture contextual variation, the study involved teachers from two contrasting educational settings: Yangon, a major urban center, and Mau-bin, a small town in a rural area. Although participating teachers shared similar professional backgrounds in terms of subject specialization and teaching experience, differences in instructional conditions were evident across settings. In rural schools, classroom practice was constrained by large class size and limited institutional support, factors that restricted opportunities for interactive or communicative teaching approaches.

Participants

In this study, six female content teachers from upper-secondary schools in Myanmar who teach science subjects participated. In this regard, they taught biology, chemistry, or physics using English-language textbooks and shared a common background of experiencing challenges when teaching science through English, particularly in explaining subject content and supporting student comprehension. In addition, none of them had prior experience with CLIL. Their existing practice primarily involved teaching science through English, supported by translation and teacher-centered methods, which differ from CLIL's integrated focus on content, language, cognition, and communication. This distinction was clarified during the study to ensure that participants evaluated CLIL as a pedagogically distinct approach rather than as conventional English-based teaching. Among these six teachers, three were from Yangon, which is a major city, while the other three were from Mau-bin, a small rural town. Convenience sampling was employed because of practical constraints related to access, time, and teacher availability. Participants were drawn from both urban and rural schools to ensure contextual representation of teaching practices in Myanmar. Data saturation was achieved after six interviews, as no new themes emerged, suggesting that the sample size was adequate for the purposes of this qualitative study.

Research Instruments

1. Semi-structured interviews

This qualitative study used semi-structured interviews composed of three sections: General Information, Perspectives on CLIL, and Willingness for CLIL Implementation. In the General Information Section, data on participants' educational backgrounds were collected. In the Perspectives on CLIL Section, data eliciting participants' perspectives of CLIL were collected. Questions in this section probed participants' understanding of CLIL, how they viewed its effectiveness, and benefits or challenges they perceived associating with its implementation. The Willingness for CLIL Implementation Section elicited data that informed the participants' willingness to implement CLIL in their classrooms. Questions in this section were used to find out participants' thoughts about using the CLIL teaching approach, their perceived barriers to implementation, and any support or resources they felt they needed to effectively integrate CLIL into their teaching practice. The interview consisted of 20 open-ended questions.

2. CLIL Video Clips and Lesson Plan

In this study, the researcher used CLIL video clips and a lesson plan to introduce participants to CLIL through two main activities. Two CLIL video clips were used in Activity 1. The first video introduced the theoretical foundations of CLIL, with particular emphasis on the 4Cs framework (Content,

Communication, Cognition, and Culture). This clip explained how CLIL differs from conventional science teaching through English by highlighting the deliberate integration of language objectives, cognitive development, and communicative interaction alongside content instruction. The second video presented a simulated CLIL classroom lesson, demonstrating how CLIL principles can be enacted in practice. It illustrated key instructional stages, including activation of prior knowledge, explicit introduction of subject-specific vocabulary, guided cognitive tasks, and communicative activities, such as pair and group work. The classroom shown in the video served as a model example and did not represent the participants' own teaching contexts.

Following the video presentations, Activity 2 involved the introduction of a CLIL lesson plan specifically developed for this study. The lesson plan was designed for an upper-secondary science subject and adhered to the 4Cs framework. It included clearly-stated content objectives, language objectives, cognitively demanding tasks, and communicative activities intended to promote student interaction and meaning making. The lesson plan functioned as a pedagogical illustration, enabling participants to visualize how CLIL could be structured and managed in a classroom without requiring them to implement it in their own teaching.

Research Procedures and Data Collection

This research was conducted through two main sessions. In Session 1, participants were presented with CLIL video clips and a sample lesson plan designed specifically for this study. This session included two activities. Activity 1 consisted of two video clips that covered both the theoretical aspects of CLIL and its practical application in content classrooms. Following the video presentations, Activity 2 in this session involved providing participants with a CLIL lesson plan. In Session 2, participants engaged in semi-structured interviews composed of three sections: General Information, Perspectives on CLIL, and Willingness for CLIL Implementation.

Data Analysis

Data from the semi-structured interviews were analyzed using systematic qualitative procedures. Interview recordings conducted in Myanmar were transcribed verbatim and translated into English. Translations were checked against the original transcripts to ensure accuracy. The data were then examined through inductive content analysis, involving multiple readings to identify meaningful units related to teachers' understanding of CLIL, perceived benefits and challenges, and willingness to adopt the approach.

Initial codes were generated from the data and subsequently grouped into broader categories and themes through an iterative constant-comparison process. To enhance credibility and dependability, member checking was conducted by sharing thematic summaries with selected participants, and minor clarifications were incorporated. An audit trail documenting coding and theme development was maintained throughout the analysis. Salient words and illustrative excerpts were selected to support interpretation and reporting.

Ethical procedures were observed. Participants provided informed consent after being informed of the study's purpose and procedures. Participation was voluntary, with the right to withdraw at any time. Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured through pseudonyms and secure data storage.

Results

Findings from semi-structured interviews can be organized into three sub-sections: General Information, Perspectives on CLIL, and Willingness to Implement CLIL.

General Information of the Participants

Among the six teachers included in the study, an equal number came from two different environments: three from urban Yangon and three from rural Mau-bin. The data collected highlighted significant similarities in their teaching backgrounds. Teachers in Yangon had teaching experience ranging from five to 16 years, while those in Mau-bin had experience spanning seven to 14 years. Likewise, there was little variation in their ages; Yangon educators were aged between 34 and 51, while their Mau-bin peers were between 38 and 50. Moreover, regardless of their location, all six teachers taught the same subjects—biology, physics, and chemistry. This uniformity emphasizes the shared educational context among teachers, despite the urban-rural distinction. The general information of the participants can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1 Demographic and Professional Information of Participating Teachers

Teacher	Region	Age group	Years of teaching experience	Subject	Prior CLIL experience
Teacher 1	Yangon	34	5	Biology	No
Teacher 2	Yangon	51	16	Physics	No
Teacher 3	Yangon	45	11	Chemistry	No
Teacher 4	Mau-bin	50	14	Physics	No
Teacher 5	Mau-bin	43	12	Chemistry	No
Teacher 6	Mau-bin	38	7	Biology	No

Teachers' Perspectives on CLIL

Overall, teachers responded positively to the CLIL introduction, comprehending the 4Cs framework, and gaining insights into classroom practice. They understood the CLIL lesson plan and classroom management after being introduced to CLIL lesson planning. However, slight differences between urban and rural teachers were observed, as explained below.

1. Teachers in the urban settings

Urban teachers in Yangon found the 4Cs framework presented in the videos clear and understandable. They recognized its utility in enhancing students' content knowledge acquisition, English language development, and critical thinking skills in content classroom teaching. Furthermore, they grasped how to conduct effective CLIL lesson plans after understanding the elements introduced in Activity 2. Their perspectives on how CLIL contributes to classroom learning were categorized accordingly.

To begin with, CLIL facilitates content subject and target language learning. The three teachers acknowledged that CLIL has the potential to support students' learning of both subject content and language. Two teachers (Teachers 2 and 3) emphasized CLIL's dual focus, noting its capacity to facilitate the simultaneous development of content knowledge and English language skills. By contrast, one teacher (Teacher 1) viewed CLIL as primarily enhancing students' content knowledge. She explained that

content learning in CLIL classrooms is strengthened through knowledge-sharing activities and engagement with diverse learning sources, viewing peer interaction as a key mechanism for deepening subject understanding.

Teachers 2 and 3 further highlighted CLIL's potential to promote active use of the target language during content learning. They observed that CLIL provides meaningful opportunities for students to notice language structures in the text, practice them through guided tasks, and express their understanding using the target language. Moreover, they believed that communicative activities embedded in CLIL lessons could further enhance students' language development. In elaborating on how CLIL supports the integration of content and language learning, the remarks of Teachers 2 and 3 are given below.

There would be advantages in developing **both content and language knowledge**. They have to learn two new topics—specific content and a foreign language— at the same time. ... Language and content should build upon each other and upon what was previously taught and learned **so that at the same time, both can be developed after the lesson** (Teacher 2 [Pseudonym], 2024).

The **4 Cs concept is useful for students who are learning content written in English**. Starting from brainstorming to the end, all procedures are related to each other and it fulfilled the lesson's aims (Teacher 3 [Pseudonym], 2024).

In elaborating how communicative activities enhanced content and language knowledge, Teacher 2 said:

As the students have **understood the content and mastered the language structures used in the text**, they will be able to produce what they learned using their own words in the target language appropriately (Teacher 2 [Pseudonym], 2024).

Teaching the target language structures in the communication tasks is very interesting and it is effective for them. They would have learned the language structures used in the text, and then they will be able to use the structures in their real-life communication (Teacher 2 [Pseudonym], 2024).

Only one teacher (Teacher 1) viewed CLIL as predominantly enhancing student's content knowledge, saying that CLIL could provide learning procedures that help students acquire content knowledge:

The students can understand the content to some extent and then they become interested in learning more about the content knowledge. **When they read the text carefully, they could get a better understanding of the content. During the activities, they asked each other and shared what they thought. It made them improve their content knowledge** (Teacher 1 [Pseudonym], 2024).

Second, CLIL helps build critical thinking skills. Two teachers (Teacher 1 and Teacher 3) saw CLIL as building student's critical thinking skills. They made the following remarks:

I will definitely use CLIL. I also would prefer using CLIL exercises that help students **develop their thinking skills** (Teacher 1 [Pseudonym], 2024).

The 4Cs concept is useful for students who are learning content written in English. Starting from brainstorming to the end, all procedures are related to each other and it fulfilled the lesson's aims. **The students can also develop their thinking skills through CLIL lessons** (Teacher 3 [Pseudonym], 2024).

The third perspective is that it increases motivation. All three teachers recognized that CLIL could boost students' motivation through active participation and collaboration, transforming the classroom from teacher-centered to engaging, student-centered learning. The three teachers could notice that students actively participated in CLIL lessons, driving their motivation through collaborative activities resulting in their desire to learn both content and language. These observations are reflected in the following observations:

The students are actively involved in the learning process. Showing pictures and doing group work made them motivated. The students want to learn more and more content, they are motivated to learn more and more languages, and therefore **their motivation for learning increases**. The students enjoyed talking with classmates and sharing what they thought openly (Teacher 2 [Pseudonym], 2024).

The students can be motivated and active in class. Because of this method, I believe that they will be able to understand and use the language (vocabulary/ structures) in their own way. I want to reduce their rote learning, so I will definitely use it in my class (Teacher 2 [Pseudonym], 2024).

Teaching the target language structures **in the communication tasks is very interesting** and it is effective for them (Teacher 2 [Pseudonym], 2024).

The students can understand the content to some extent and then **they become interested in learning more** about the content knowledge (Teacher 1 [Pseudonym], 2024).

The teaching procedures are very good and it is easy to enable students understand the content. For me, it is new and interesting. **The students can learn the content lessons full of interest** (Teacher 3 [Pseudonym], 2024).

Finally, the teachers felt that CLIL facilitates active learning environment. The teachers generally reported having positive impressions stating that the CLIL classroom teachings provide a friendly learning environment promoting effective learning. These ideas can be seen in the excerpts below.

The teaching procedures are very good and it is easy to make students understand the content. For me, it is new and interesting. The students can learn the content lessons full of interest (Teacher 3 [Pseudonym], 2024).

The students are actively involved in the learning process. Showing pictures and doing group work made them motivated ... **The students enjoyed talking with classmates and sharing what they thought openly** (Teacher 2 [Pseudonym], 2024).

I want to reduce their rote learning, so I will definitely use it in my class (Teacher 2 [Pseudonym], 2024).

I am sure that it is a good way to reduce rote learning (Teacher 2 [Pseudonym], 2024).

Because of this method, I believe that they will be able to understand and use the language (vocabulary/ structures) in their own way. I want to reduce their rote learning (Teacher 2 [Pseudonym], 2024).

In summary, the findings indicate that urban teachers in Yangon viewed CLIL positively and regarded it as a meaningful alternative to traditional, translation-based science instruction. Most teachers emphasized CLIL's dual focus on content and language learning, while one teacher highlighted its primary value in strengthening content knowledge through structured learning and knowledge-sharing activities. Overall, CLIL was seen as capable of supporting content and language development through structured and communicative tasks. In addition, the approach was associated with enhanced critical thinking, increased student motivation, and more active classroom participation, reflecting a shift toward a more student-centered learning environment. Consistent with these perceptions, urban teachers expressed strong willingness to implement CLIL in their future teaching.

2. Teachers in the rural setting

In general, the teachers in Mau-bin approached the CLIL 4Cs framework and teaching example positively but with caution, contrasting slightly with their peers in Yangon. Despite having favorable perceptions of the teaching example, they generally expressed reservations about its future use. Notably, they thought that they might not be able to design appropriate CLIL learning activities, despite being informed about lesson planning. They felt that they needed CLIL training. These perspectives are explained in the following remarks.

The first perspective is that CLIL facilitates content subject and language learning. The three teachers in Mau-bin had different perspectives on the extent to which CLIL supports students' content knowledge and language knowledge development. One teacher expressed strong belief that students could develop content knowledge and language knowledge in a CLIL class.

In a CLIL classroom, I believe that the students can use their outside knowledge of specific content subjects to better understand it. **Using knowledge-sharing activities, the students can get a better understanding and develop their content knowledge more. Students are interested in learning the content and language** used in the text at the same time. They notice the language structures and they can use them in producing their content knowledge in written or spoken form. They also want to use them in real situations. It can help them to improve their language skills. They also have enough practice to improve their language skills... **CLIL is also new and I think it can make it easier for students to learn content written in English easier than the current teaching method.** They will understand the content and also develop language skills (Teacher 4 [Pseudonym], 2024).

Another teacher expressed positive thoughts about CLIL's capacity to increase student content and language knowledge. She stated that she did not expect that students in a content class taught by a content subject teacher could enhance their language knowledge in the CLIL classroom practice. She said:

I am a science teacher and not a language teacher. It is interesting. I am surprised that the students could learn the language together with the content knowledge. **I really like the way the teacher taught the vocabulary** at the beginning of the lesson, asked the students to do the critical thinking exercise, and finally they practiced the language structures. It was successful (Teacher 5 [Pseudonym], 2024).

The third teacher seemed to show marginal certainty that CLIL would successfully help students develop well in some content classrooms. Her reasons behind this were that the content subject teachers might not be proficient enough to transfer language knowledge to their students. Thus, she felt that students might encounter difficulties in acquiring both content and language knowledge at the same time. In addition, inappropriate classroom design and large class size might affect the students' success in cultivating content and language knowledge in a CLIL class. In this regard, she said:

I think it will be difficult for the subject teachers to analyze the language structures in the text. For me, I am not good at English, so it is difficult. **It will also be difficult for students to learn the language during the content class.** In designing the lesson, **it will also be hard to include collaborative activities.** It will be difficult to include all 4Cs in a lesson. The students do not have such experience and I am not sure that they can do the activities. **We also need to think about the class size.** As the class size is big, it is impossible to do the activities (Teacher 6 [Pseudonym], 2024).

Second, CLIL builds critical thinking skills. Only two teachers (Teachers 4 and 5) believed that a CLIL class having appropriate teaching and learning activities can result in students' critical thinking: Students like interactive content activities..., **critical thinking**, and exercises, they get more interested. CLIL classes make them happy and engaged (Teacher 4 [Pseudonym], 2024).

I really like the way the teacher taught the vocabulary at the beginning of the lesson and then she asked the students to **do the critical thinking exercise** and then they practiced the language structures. It was successful (Teacher 5 [Pseudonym], 2024).

The third perspective is that CLIL enhances motivation. Overall, motivation was believed to occur in CLIL classroom practice. One of the three teachers teaching in Mau-bin felt that the teacher-centered approach employed in Myanmar's educational context could not motivate the students. However, the communicative activities embedded in a CLIL classroom CLIL could create student motivation:

When students were encouraged to ask questions, engage in critical thinking, and participate in exercises, **they became more interested.** CLIL classes make them happy and engaged... The students can learn both effectively at the same time and they will also **be interested in both** (Teacher 4 [Pseudonym], 2024).

One teacher had a different view about whether CLIL increases student motivation. She thought that due to difficulties that can occur in a CLIL class as well as the unmatched learning goals, students might not feel motivated to learn:

The students may or may not be interested in it as their goal is to get high marks on the exam. So, I am not sure that the method is appropriate for their goal. The assessment method has to be changed. But I think it is difficult. We may have the support and training, yet managing time in preparing lessons won't be easy (Teacher 6 [Pseudonym], 2024).

The next perspective is that CLIL facilitates active learning environment. Teachers in Mau-bin seemed to seek a teaching approach that could overcome the learning problems encountered by Myanmar students in the current teaching practice. Among three teachers, two believed that CLIL could be the solution: Teacher 5 thought that students encountered challenges in the current classroom practice in Myanmar. She endorsed CLIL as a solution as it can reduce reliance on rote memorization:

They are facing difficulties at the final exam, mostly, because of language proficiency. ... However, **in CLIL, they will be able to write/produce what they have understood in correct English. They needn't parrot the text** (Teacher 5 [Pseudonym], 2024).

Teacher 5 showed her satisfaction of CLIL classroom practice, noting that a CLIL classroom, if well managed, would allow students to learn language and practice critical thinking skills:

I like it. I'll try the way the CLIL teachers are teaching the content lessons in the classroom... I really like the way the teacher taught the vocabulary at the beginning of the lesson (Teacher 5 [Pseudonym], 2024).

Teacher 4 viewed CLIL as creating an active learning environment through important classroom activities like class interaction, class engagement:

Students like **interactive content activities**. When they were encouraged to asked questions, and engage in critical thinking and other exercises, they became more interested. CLIL classes made them happy and engaged. (Teacher 4 [Pseudonym], 2024).

She also indicated that CLIL could give students an active learning environment as it allows them to share knowledge with their classmates for knowledge clarification:

In a CLIL classroom, I believe that the students can use their outside knowledge of specific content subjects to better understand it. **Using knowledge-sharing activities, the students can get a better understanding and develop their content knowledge more** (Teacher 4 [Pseudonym], 2024).

According to Teacher 4, through the interaction with their classmates in the CLIL class, students not only gained content knowledge and language knowledge, but they could also enhance their communication skills:

They are interested in learning the content and language used in the text at the same time. They notice the language structures and they can use them in producing their content knowledge in written or spoken form. They also want to use them in real situations. It can help them to improve their language skills. They also have enough practice to improve their language skills. **Their communication skills can be developed through group work and pair work** (Teacher 4 [Pseudonym], 2024).

In conclusion, rural teachers in Mau-bin displayed responses to CLIL that were more cautious and varied than those of their urban counterparts. Two teachers expressed generally positive views, perceiving CLIL as a means of supporting content learning, language development, critical thinking, student motivation, and more active classroom engagement, though for different reasons. One teacher (Teacher 4) emphasized CLIL's potential to enhance learning through interaction and knowledge-sharing activities, while the other (Teacher 5) expressed surprise at its effectiveness, particularly in enabling content teachers to support language learning.

By contrast, one teacher (Teacher 6) did not view CLIL as a viable approach, citing constraints, such as limited English proficiency, large class size, lesson design complexity, and examination-oriented assessment. Overall, the findings suggest that although CLIL is viewed as promising by some rural teachers, its acceptance is strongly influenced by contextual constraints and perceived instructional readiness, highlighting the need for targeted training and context-sensitive support before implementation.

Teachers' Willingness to Implement CLIL

1. Teachers in the urban setting

Teachers in Yangon displayed a strong willingness to embrace the CLIL approach in their teaching. Their reasons were slightly different from each other, ranging from CLIL giving opportunities of content and language learning, allowing students' critical thinking, and replacing Myanmar's traditional rote learning. Their willingness was evident in the following excerpts:

I am willing to use it in my class. I will definitely use it as it is **good for both content and language teaching** (Teacher 3 [Pseudonym], 2024).

I will definitely use CLIL. I also would prefer using CLIL exercises that help students develop their **thinking skills** (Teacher 1 [Pseudonym], 2024).

I want to use it in my teaching. **It would be an advantage for both content knowledge and thinking skills** ... Because of this method, I believe that [students] will be able to understand and use the language (vocabulary/ structures) in their own way. **I want to reduce their rote learning**, so I will definitely use it in my class (Teacher 2 [Pseudonym], 2024).

2. Teachers in the rural setting

The teachers teaching in rural Mau-bin expressed moderate willingness to implement CLIL in their future classes. Reasons ranged from CLIL being an innovative approach to their wanting to try it with effective classroom activities. The following extracts demonstrate their willingness to implement CLIL in their teaching.

I am willing to use it though it is **a new method** for me (Teacher 4 [Pseudonym], 2024).

It is possible to use CLIL in my class. **I want to try it**. I love to analyze the language used in the text and find activities suitable for the students about the target lessons. I want to help the students to learn the subject matter in a more effective way and to produce what they have learned in their own words. **I also want to use the activities that promote students' critical thinking ability** (Teacher 5 [Pseudonym], 2024).

Their overall moderate willingness to implement CLIL in their classes was revealed in the analyzed data. In the case of Teacher 6, although she found CLIL interesting, she believed there were some constraints in implementing it. She found it potentially confusing and time-consuming, especially given the current assessment methods and students' focus on exam scores. She also mentioned that there were difficulties in facilitating group activities in large classes and teaching language during subject-specific lessons due to her limited English ability. This is illustrated in the following extracts.

I am interested in CLIL, but I am not sure that it will be successful in Myanmar. I feel confused about using it in my class. The students may or may not be interested in it as their goal is to get high marks on the exam. So, I am not sure that the method is appropriate for meeting their goal. The assessment method has to be changed, but I think that is difficult to do. We may have the support and training, yet managing time in preparing lessons won't be easy (Teacher 6 [Pseudonym], 2024).

I think it will be difficult for the subject teachers to analyze the language structures in the text. For me, I am not good at English, so it would be challenging for me. It will also be difficult for students to learn the language during the content class. In designing the lesson, it will also be difficult to include collaborative activities. It will be difficult to include all C's in a lesson (Teacher 6 [Pseudonym], 2024).

Teacher 5 was another who felt that CLIL could work beyond her expectations of CLIL implementation.

I like it. I'll try the way the CLIL teachers are teaching the content lessons in the classroom. I am a science teacher and not a language teacher, but it is interesting. I am surprised that the students could learn the language together with the content knowledge (Teacher 5 [Pseudonym], 2024).

Although they had different degrees of concerns, the two teachers thought that they needed training before the CLIL implementation:

It is possible to use CLIL in my class... **But what I think is that we need training in the CLIL method before using it** (Teacher 5 [Pseudonym], 2024).

I am interested in the CLIL, but I am not sure that it will be successful in Myanmar... **We may have the support and training, yet managing time in preparing lessons won't be easy** (Teacher 6 [Pseudonym], 2024).

In summary, educators in the rural setting demonstrated only moderate determination to adopt the CLIL approach. While they recognized its potential to enhance content and language knowledge, promote critical thinking, and diminish rote learning, they stressed the importance of receiving adequate training for successful implementation. They anticipated challenges related to practicalities, such as limited lesson planning time and managing group activities in larger classes.

Discussion and Conclusion

Overall, the findings indicate that teachers' responses to CLIL were influenced more by contextual conditions and perceived instructional readiness than by individual background differences.

Although the teachers worked in different geographical settings, both urban and rural participants shared similar professional profiles, including subject specialization, teaching experience, and lack of prior CLIL exposure. All taught science through English language textbooks within largely teacher-centered and translation-based classrooms. This common instructional context suggests that differences in perspectives and implementation readiness are primarily attributable to institutional and contextual factors rather than to teachers' qualifications or experience.

Following exposure to the 4Cs framework and sample CLIL materials, teachers generally viewed CLIL positively. Urban teachers perceived CLIL as a feasible and pedagogically meaningful alternative to traditional instruction, associating it with improved content understanding, greater use of English, enhanced critical thinking, increased student motivation, and more active classroom participation. Rural teachers also recognized these potential benefits but expressed greater caution, particularly regarding feasibility. Their concerns—such as limited English proficiency, large class sizes, lesson design demands, and examination-oriented assessment—reflect challenges commonly reported in CLIL research in EFL contexts (Aguilar and Rodríguez, 2012; Trang et al., 2015) and underscore the role of contextual realities in shaping teachers' evaluations of CLIL (Kos and Bergner, 2026).

Teachers' willingness to implement CLIL mirrored these perspectives. Urban teachers expressed strong readiness to adopt the approach, viewing it as a means of reducing rote learning and promoting more interactive instruction. Rural teachers showed moderate willingness, with openness to experimentation tempered by concerns about workload, classroom management, and assessment alignment. Across both contexts, the need for CLIL-specific professional development emerged as a key condition for successful implementation, reinforcing the importance of targeted and practical training (Strotmann et al., 2014).

In conclusion, the findings suggest that CLIL has strong potential to enhance content learning, language development, and higher-order thinking in Myanmar's upper-secondary science classrooms. However, effective and sustainable implementation requires context-sensitive strategies, particularly targeted training and institutional support for teachers in rural settings. Addressing these contextual needs is essential to ensure equitable and effective adoption of CLIL across diverse educational environments in Myanmar (Htay and Ngonkum, 2023).

The findings also suggest that CLIL can support more interactive and meaning-focused science instruction through English, offering an alternative to rote-based teaching. Effective implementation, however, requires gradual and scaffolded integration, beginning with practical strategies such as explicit vocabulary support, guided communicative tasks, and structured cognitive activities. For teachers, particularly in rural contexts, CLIL should be supported through lesson planning, language scaffolding, and large-class management. In addition, consistency between CLIL practices and assessment requirements is necessary to enable sustainable classroom adoption.

This study has several limitations. The small sample size and case study design may limit the generalizability of the findings, and reliance on self-reported interview data rather than classroom observations may have influenced participants' responses. In addition, the analysis focused on teachers' perspectives and stated willingness without examining student outcomes or classroom interaction. Future

research could address these limitations by involving larger and more diverse samples, examining CLIL implementation longitudinally, and exploring student learning outcomes, assessment alignment, and the impact of CLIL-specific professional development on teachers' instructional competence.

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Interviews

- Teacher 1. (Pseudonym) (2024, January, 14). **Interview.** Biology teacher in an upper secondary school in Yangon.
Online interview conducted at a university in Yangon.
- Teacher 2. (Pseudonym) (2024, January, 14). **Interview.** Physics teacher in an upper secondary school in Yangon.
Online interview conducted at a university in Yangon.
- Teacher 3. (Pseudonym) (2024, January, 14). **Interview.** Chemistry teacher in an upper secondary school in Yangon.
Online interview conducted at a university in Yangon.
- Teacher 4. (Pseudonym) (2024, January, 14). **Interview.** Physics teacher in an upper secondary school in Mau-bin.
Online interview conducted at a university in Yangon.
- Teacher 5. (Pseudonym) (2024, January, 14). **Interview.** Chemistry teacher in an upper secondary school in Mau-bin.
Online interview conducted at a university in Yangon.
- Teacher 6. (Pseudonym) (2024, January, 14). **Interview.** Biology teacher in an upper secondary school in Mau-bin.
Online interview conducted at a university in Yangon.