



PRIMARY TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS CLIL INTEGRATION IN FAMILY AND FRIENDS TEXTBOOK SERIES

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Abstract: This study surveyed the attitudes of 119 primary English teachers in Southern Vietnam towards the integration of the Content and Language Integration (CLIL) approach through the *Family and Friends National Edition*. A mix method was used; data were collected through a 24-item questionnaire based on the 4Cs framework (Content, Communication, Cognition, Culture) and analyzed according to the ABC model (Affective, Behavioral, Cognitive), combined with semi-structured interviews. The quantitative results showed that teachers generally had positive attitudes towards the CLIL approach, demonstrated by high Mean values in all three components, but there was still a certain variation between groups of teachers, reflected by high SD indexes. Qualitative data revealed three key themes that influenced teachers' attitudes and readiness for implementation: (1) the attractiveness and relevance of CLIL topics, (2) teachers' scaffoldings and their emphasis on the four pillars (4Cs) and (3) issues related to policy and implementation. The findings showed that teachers' attitudes were closely linked to the feasibility of CLIL implementation; in particular, the sustainability of integration depended on ongoing professional development, clear pedagogical guidance, and appropriate institutional support from management.

Keywords. CLIL, teacher attitudes, primary education, Family and Friends National Edition, ABC model.

1. Introduction

In the context of international integration, increasing attention has been paid to foreign language education at the primary level in Vietnam, not only to develop language competence but also to promote academic and cultural competences (Cenoz et al., 2014; Coyle et al., 2010). The Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach is considered an outstanding solution, allowing students to simultaneously acquire knowledge and practice foreign languages in an interdisciplinary learning context (Dalton-Puffer, 2007).

In Vietnam, the 2018 National Curriculum for General Education identifies foreign languages as a key tool for integration, with the encouragement to integrate CLIL into English language teaching and learning. This is a significant turning point, but the effectiveness of implementation also depends greatly on the awareness and attitude of teachers – one of the key stakeholders who directly implement this policy and decide how CLIL should be introduced into the classroom (Sahragard & Rahimi, 2018).

Numerous studies have shown that teacher attitudes play a key role in the success or failure of pedagogical innovation. In the context of Vietnam, although CLIL opens many opportunities, recent studies show that primary school teachers still have concerns and challenges in the application process (Bui & Truong, 2020; Nguyen & Nguyen, 2024; Nguyen et al., 2023). This raises the need to systematically explore teachers' attitudes towards the integration of CLIL in English language teaching.

From this starting point, this study focuses on exploring the attitudes of primary school teachers when implementing CLIL through *Family and Friends National Edition series (F&F series)*, to answer the following question: In what ways are teachers' attitudes towards CLIL approach in the F&F series articulated across the emotional, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions?

2. Literature review

2.1. Teacher's attitudes

In educational innovation research, teacher attitude is a key variable that predicts actual teaching intentions and behaviors. According to Ajzen (1991), attitude constitutes a central component of Planned Behavior Theory, while the ABC model of Eagly and Chaiken (1993) allows the analysis of attitudes through three components: Affective, Behavioral, and Cognitive.

In primary school, the Affective component is expressed through teachers' emotions, particularly excitement or worries when students have access to academic content in a foreign language, which has been documented in the Vietnamese context and may foster or undermine teachers' confidence in the feasibility of CLIL (Banegas, 2012; Nguyen et al., 2023). The Behavioral component reflects the degree to which emotions are transformed into actions: when the attitude is positive, teachers actively implement CLIL activities such as organizing Fluency Time and integrating cultural themes in Family and Friends; on the contrary, reticence leads to a tendency to reduce the use of target language and dependence on tasks available in the book, as well as warnings about document dependency and the need for specific guidance in adapting CLIL-oriented learning materials (Sahragard & Rahimi, 2018). The Cognitive component is reflected in the belief and knowledge of the value of CLIL for the development of higher-order thinking and intercultural competence. When this perception is clear, teachers have a justification for investing time and maintaining the practice (Cenoz et al., 2014; Coyle,

2007), which has been reflected in studies in Vietnam on positive attitudes accompanied by enforcement concerns (Bui & Truong, 2020; Nguyen et al., 2023; Nguyen & Nguyen, 2024).

The three aforementioned factors are closely related: lack of confidence in language at the Affective level is likely to lead to a decrease in CLIL use at the Behavioral level, thereby weakening cognitive trust at the Cognitive level, consistent with Ajzen's (1991) behavioral predictive logic. The ABC approach thus provides a multidimensional analytical framework to explain teacher barriers to implementing CLIL and to guide supportive interventions in this study.

2.2. The 4Cs theoretical framework of CLIL

One of CLIL's key contributions to language education is its ability to integrate language teaching and academic content simultaneously. According to Coyle et al. (2010), CLIL not only helps improve language proficiency but also aims to gain subject matter; develop higher-order thinking, and promote intercultural sensitivity. These principles are summarized in the 4Cs framework: Content, Communication, Cognition and Culture (Coyle, 2007), considered one of the most important theoretical tools in the CLIL lesson design process. Each of the main components of the 4Cs Framework supports specific goals for integrating content and language in the CLIL classroom.

Accordingly, Content, the first component of the 4Cs framework, requires teachers to not only teach English but also integrate subject content. CLIL-supported students learn vocabulary and grammar, and are exposed to science, mathematics, and social studies. Integrating subjects into language teaching helps students develop real-life language skills, helping them better understand academic knowledge (Coyle, 2007; Coyle et al., 2010).

The second component, Communication, aims to develop language skills through real-life situation, and is extremely important in CLIL. Students learn grammar and use language to express themselves, participate in group discussions and present concepts on various topics. This helps students communicate in academic and social situations (Coyle et al., 2010; Dalton-Puffer, 2007).

The third component, Cognitive, focuses on improving students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills. When implementing CLIL, students have a space for creative learning and logical thinking through integrated lessons (Mehisto, Marsh, & Frigols, 2008).

Last but not least, the Culture component helps students understand and communicate better about different cultures. This is extremely important in today's globalized era because learning languages through the classroom not only helps students acquire knowledge but also helps them understand and respect cultural diversity (Dalton-Puffer, 2007).

However, international studies highlight that the full realization of these four pillars is not simple, as teachers must meet the dual requirements of language and subject knowledge, which is inherently a challenge even in education systems with a long tradition of CLIL (Dalton-Puffer, 2007; Cenoz et al., 2014).

2.3. CLIL approach in Family and Friends (F&F) textbook series

In the context of Vietnam, the implementation of F&F series in the curriculum of some primary schools in Ho Chi Minh City is considered a turning point, as this textbook series formally integrates CLIL approach and addresses this as one of their approaches of teaching (Tran & Truong, 2023b). Specifically, the series is built on the basis of integrated teaching methods, focusing on the four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, combining modern teaching techniques such as the use of images, storytelling, games, and group activities (Tran & Truong, 2023a). It is a localised version adapted from the Family and Friends international one, designed for Young Learners by Oxford University Press, to fit the 2018 National Curriculum for General Education. Compared with the international edition, this textbook series includes additional activities, materials, and cultural content tailored to Vietnamese contexts, such as Fluency Time and Values, which help students develop their language proficiency and engage with academic content and cultural values (Tran & Truong, 2023a; 2023b).

The CLIL element in the book is demonstrated through the "Fluency Time!" section – an interdisciplinary integrated learning section, allocated after every three units. According to the syllabus and the "Scope and Sequence" part at the beginning of each textbook, students in Grades 1 and 2 have 2 CLIL periods per school year, while students in Grades 3, 4 and 5 have approximately 4 CLIL periods. The CLIL topics are selected to match the cognitive and linguistic abilities of primary school students, and include areas such as Science, Mathematics, Arts and Geography, clearly illustrated in the table of content. In addition to the official CLIL lessons, the book series also integrates elements of moral and civic education through the "Values" section at the table of contents, which is clearly shown in the lessons with messages such as sharing, respecting others, maintaining personal hygiene or helping those around them. This is a clear manifestation of the "Culture" pillar in the 4Cs model of CLIL, and at the same time contributes to enriching the content of English lessons towards comprehensive development of learners' competencies. Besides, the cultural elements are integrated into every lesson, which teachers can make full use of to expand lessons, or to organize experiential activities for students to form cultural awareness and broaden their worldview. These open, flexible design and rich supporting resources of the series have created a foundation for teachers to proactively integrate CLIL into their lessons in a natural and effective way, in line with the orientation of comprehensive competency development proposed by the new general education program. This, however, means that when put into practice, the effectiveness of CLIL

implementation depends not only on documentation but also closely tied to pedagogical capacity and institutional support. The textbook series thus creates a unified framework to promote CLIL in elementary schools, but also puts teachers in a situation where they must balance the program requirements and enforceability.

2.3. Related studies

Studies on CLIL in the international contexts have shown that the implementation of this method is always associated with not only opportunities but also challenges.

Internationally, Dalton-Puffer (2007) and Cenoz et al. (2014) affirm that CLIL could improve learners' higher-order thinking and intercultural competencies. However, this effect is only achieved when teachers have solid language and academic preparation, which Mehisto et al. (2008) argue is a double burden in teaching. The synthesis of literature review indicates challenges and limitations in applications, especially in activities related to communication and culture, due to the lack of detailed guidance and supplementary learning resources (Sahragard & Rahimi, 2018). Morton (2018) adds that, without the right learning materials, teachers are often biased towards teaching content rather than developing communication and cultural competencies, leading to an imbalance in CLIL implementation.

In the context of Vietnam, many projects have emphasized the potential but also reflected the difficulties of teachers when approaching CLIL. Bui and Truong (2020) show that primary school teachers appreciate the opportunity to develop language competencies through CLIL but are concerned about the pressure of integrated knowledge volume and time constraints. Nguyen et al.'s (2023) research shows that teachers often lack confidence in using the target language and have difficulty balancing teaching academic knowledge and developing communication competencies. Similarly, Nguyen and Nguyen (2024) claim that limitations in foreign language competence and lack of professional experience make it difficult for teachers to design appropriate activities. They emphasize the role of the institutional context as many teachers believe that they have not received enough support to be able to implement CLIL comprehensively. These findings are somewhat similar to those of international studies, but at the same time reflect the specificity of Vietnam's educational environment, where language proficiency, curriculum pressures and support from schools play a decisive role.

The synthesis of the above studies reveals the research gap of teachers' attitudes towards the implementation of CLIL in practice, especially in relation to specific learning materials such as F&F series. While this series is expected to support the integration of CLIL in the direction of the 2018 National curriculum for general education, there is not much empirical evidence on how teachers perceive, adjust, and respond during instruction. The current research gap lies in the need to clarify teachers' attitudes and practical experiences towards the implementation of CLIL through this book, thereby proposing practical and sustainable solutions to the issue.

3. Methodology

With the aim of surveying teachers' attitudes towards the integration of CLIL teaching in the F&F National Edition for elementary school students, this study uses a mixed approach. The quantitative research part is used to describe the overall picture of the level of consensus and feedback of teachers through a survey questionnaire. Meanwhile, qualitative research is implemented to further explore practical perspectives and experiences, and at the same time clarify the quantitative results.

3.1. Participants

The size of the quantitative research sample is determined in the direction of convenience sampling, that is, the selection of teachers who are eligible to participate and suitable for the research objectives. In this study, 150 subjects were invited to participate in answering questionnaires, of which 129 responded. After cleaning the data, there were 119 valid votes for quantitative data. For qualitative research, five typical teachers were selected based on purposeful sampling to ensure diversity in teaching experience (less than 5 years, 5–10 years, and more than 10 years), grade levels taught (from Grade 1 to Grade 5), and self-reported familiarity with CLIL as indicated in the questionnaire responses. This selection aimed to represent a range of professional backgrounds and perspectives relevant to the study's objectives. The aim is to dig deeper into personal perspectives, experiences and judgments related to the CLIL application process, which helps explore how contextual factors influence teachers' affective, behavioral, and cognitive attitudes toward CLIL implementation in real-life classrooms.. Quantitative research stopped after interviews with the fifth teacher, ensuring the principle of "data saturation" when no new information appeared (Guest et al., 2006).

3.2. Data Collection Tools

One of the main tools used is the teacher survey questionnaire. The questionnaire is based on CLIL theory (Coyle, et al., 2010), the ABC model of attitudes, and the 4Cs model in CLIL. The main section of the questionnaire consists of 24 questions, built on the ABC (Affective – Cognitive – Behavioral) model to measure teachers' attitudes towards the implementation of CLIL. They were then divided into three components: Affective (8 questions), Cognitive (8 questions), and Behavioral (8 questions). The Affective component explores teachers' feelings and motivations towards CLIL, their level of enjoyment, confidence in using English to deliver content and their sense of professional development in implementing CLIL. The Cognitive component assesses teachers' beliefs and understandings about CLIL, including pedagogical perceptions of the method, its potential to enhance students' thinking skills, cultural awareness and language development. Finally, the Behavioral component reflects teachers' reported practices, examining how often they integrate interdisciplinary content, use support strategies,

design exercises based on CLIL lessons and participate in training or collaborative planning related to CLIL teaching.

The reliability of the scale is tested using Cronbach's Alpha. The results in Table 3.1 showed that the entire scale reached $\alpha = 0.956$, and the component groups were highly reliable (Affective: $\alpha = 0.958$; Cognitive: $\alpha = 0.974$; Behavioral: $\alpha = 0.937$). Thus, the scale meets the reliability benchmark (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994, as cited in Mohammed & Pandhiani, 2017, p.467).

Table 3.1. Scale reliability test with Cronbach's Alpha

Attitude Component (ABC)	Items	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient	Assess
Affective	8	0.958	Very high reliability
Cognitive	8	0.974	Very high reliability
Behavioral	8	0.937	Very high reliability
Total Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient	24	0.956	Very high reliability

The second tool is a protocol for semi-structured interviews to exploit qualitative data, supplementing the results of the quantitative survey. The protocol consists two parts: the introduction aims to introduce the research objectives and create comfort for the participants; the main part consists of 7 questions built up around three content groups. The semi-structured form was chosen because it both ensured a general orientation framework and facilitated participants to share more flexibly and in detail. The interviews were conducted with 5 teachers to supplement and explain the survey data. The questions of the interview protocol focus on seven topics: CLIL relevance, communication support, knowledge acquisition, changes in awareness, scope beyond textbooks, pros/cons, and suggestions for improvement. Data were recorded, transcribed, and encoded by topics for integration with quantitative results.

3.4. Data analysis

Quantitative data are processed using SPSS 27 with descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation) and reliability analysis (Cronbach's Alpha). Qualitative data from the interviews were thematically encoded (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

To ensure comprehensiveness, the study presents the results based on a synthesis between two data sources: (i) quantitative results (Mean, SD of each item in the questionnaire), and (ii) qualitative evidence from the interviews to explain or extend the findings. This approach creates complementarity between the two types of data, while enhancing the reliability and applicability of the research results.

4. Findings

4.1. Teachers' attitudes towards CLIL approach

4.1.1. The general result

To get an overall view, the study first analyzes the average score and standard deviation of the three components in the ABC model, shown in Table 4.1. below.

Table 4.1. Descriptive statistics of teachers' attitudes towards CLIL implementation in the F&F book series

Cluster	Mean	Std. Deviation
Affective Component (Teachers' feelings)	4,16	0.810
Cognitive Component (Teachers' Knowledge and Understanding)	4,14	0.809
Behavioral Component (Teachers' action)	4,07	0.720

The statistical results described in Table 4.1 show that teachers generally have a high level of consensus on the factors related to the implementation of CLIL in F&F series, with the average score of the statements being approximately 4 on a 5-scale Likert scale. The results of the analysis according to the ABC model showed that the emotional group had the highest average score ($M = 4.16$), followed by the cognitive group ($M = 4.14$) and the behavioral group ($M = 4.07$). Although these values show a slight difference, it is obvious that the difference is not significant. This proves that teachers' attitudes towards CLIL are generally high and uniform in all three components. A detailed analysis for each group will be presented below.

4.1.2. The Affective Component

Table 4.2. Teachers' feelings towards the integration of CLIL approach in F&F series

No.	Variables	4Cs element	Mean	Std. Deviation
Affective Component (Teachers' feelings)			4,16	0.810
A1	I feel confident when delivering CLIL-based lessons in the <i>Family and Friends National Edition</i> textbook series.	Content	4,09	1.000
A2	I find CLIL content in the Fluency Time! sections relevant and engaging for primary students.	Content	4,13	0.982

No.	Variables	4Cs element	Mean	Std. Deviation
A3	I enjoy using the Values sections as part of building a more meaningful lesson.	Culture	4,28	0.873
A4	I feel that CLIL lessons improve the learning atmosphere in my class.	Cognition	4,16	0.911
A5	I am satisfied with the current time allocation for teaching CLIL through the Family & Friends textbook.	Cognition	4,04	0.969
A6	I am excited when designing lessons that help students understand other cultures through content-based learning	Culture	4,10	0.906
A7	I feel that using CLIL in the Family & Friends textbook makes English more practical and connected to real life.	Communication	4,23	0.848
A8	I feel that using CLIL creates an interesting and engaging learning environment for my students.	Communication	4,21	0.872

The results in Table 4.2 showed that the teachers' affective component of CLIL implementation was generally positive, with a group average score of 4.16. The observed variables of 8 items in this cluster ranged from 4.04 to 4.28, indicating teachers' strong agreement that CLIL enhances engagement and helps link English learning with subject content. The finding is consistent with another Vietnamese study of Bui and Truong (2020) on teachers' attitudes toward the CLIL approach. They also (2020) affirmed that teachers showed a high level of consensus on positive emotions towards CLIL. The standard deviations of the whole cluster as well as of each item in the present study, however, were quite high (from 0.81 to 1.00), indicating that there were still significant differences in views among teachers. It implies that the level of enthusiasm and confidence is not evenly distributed, but may be influenced by teaching experience, language proficiency, or specific school context. This point has not been explored in depth by previous studies such as Bui and Truong (2020) or Nguyen and Nguyen (2024), which mostly stopped at describing general emotional trends. The current findings suggest that, although teachers generally have positive emotional attitudes towards CLIL, there are subtle differences in personal experiences and emotions – aspects that need to

be explored further through qualitative data to better understand teachers' internal psychological and cognitive contexts.

The attractiveness and relevance of CLIL topics

One of the significant themes arising from the interviews that influences teachers' affective attitudes towards CLIL approach lies in the topics and their presentations in the textbooks. Sharings from teachers reveal that if the topics are considered interesting or attractively illustrated, they receive favourable dispositions from teachers. On the contrary, the CLIL topics cause concerns or doubts if they are regarded as irrelevant to their students' cognitive levels.

A teacher commented that *"CLIL is very suitable for Grade 1 students because they are curious and interested in the images and stories in the Culture section"* (T1), while another teacher said that *"CLIL is perfectly suitable for Grade 5 students; they are receptive to social knowledge in English and like challenges"* (T5). These comments show a connection between students' interest and teachers' emotional attitudes, as they feel more encouraged if CLIL content triggers curiosity and positive responses from learners.

Conversely, some teachers expressed caution when CLIL topics were seen as unfamiliar or beyond students' cognitive level. One teacher shared: *"CLIL is only suitable at a moderate level (...) if the topics are unfamiliar to students, it is very difficult to understand if you only use English"* (T2). These statements show that, although most teachers appreciate the novelty of CLIL, they still consider the interest and cognitive relevance of primary school students.

Notably, some teachers mentioned that topics such as *"traditional costumes and food of Japan and Korea"* (T2) or *"Countries and Flags"* (T5) attract students because they create opportunities for cultural comparison and broaden their understanding of the world, in line with the Culture orientation in the 4Cs model (Coyle, 2007). However, when the topics become too abstract or have no connection to the Vietnamese context, students' interest and thus teachers' attitudes tend to decrease.

Taken together, the themes in the Family and Friends book not only affect teachers' perceptions of the feasibility of CLIL but also affect their professional feelings. When teachers feel that students are curious, they tend to internalize CLIL positively as a method that brings about meaningful learning; conversely, when the topic is beyond students' cognitive level, CLIL is perceived as a challenge that requires a lot of linguistic and pedagogical adaptation.

4.1.3. The Cognitive Component

Table 4.3. Teachers' knowledge and understanding towards CLIL implementation

No.	Variables	4Cs element	Mean	Std. Deviation
Cognitive Component (Teachers' Knowledge and Understanding)			4,14	0.809
C9	I clearly understand the goals of CLIL as defined by the 4Cs framework.	Cognition	4,16	0.873
C10	I know how to identify appropriate units in the textbook for integrating CLIL.	Content	4,13	0.863
C11	I understand how the Fluency Time! sections can be used to develop students' communication skills during CLIL-based lessons.	Communication	4,13	0.863
C12	I am aware that CLIL in the textbook aims to help students reach A1 level in CEFR.	Content	4,13	0.920
C13	I know how to create a classroom environment that encourages students to use English meaningfully in CLIL lessons.	Communication	4,13	0.888
C14	I can explain the rationale behind using Values and Culture lessons as CLIL support tools.	Culture	4,13	0.901
C15	I understand how CLIL can help students develop intercultural competence.	Culture	4,13	0.888
C16	I believe CLIL lessons in this textbook contribute to 21st century skills (e.g., critical thinking, collaboration).	Cognition	4,18	0.840

In Table 4.3, quantitative results for the Cognitive group showed a mean value of 4.14, reflecting the overall positive tendency of teachers to grasp CLIL's core goals and principles. The finding is greatly different from those of Nguyen and Nguyen (2024) or Nguyen et al. (2023), which mainly concentrate on tensions and challenges faced by CLIL teachers, partly because their teacher participants were content teachers, and partly because of the focus of their research.

Besides, when looking at each item in detail, it can be seen that items such as C9 and C16 – reflecting a general perception of CLIL at the policy and educational orientation level – have the highest mean scores in the group. In contrast, the remaining items, especially questions directly related to the application of CLIL in specific lessons of the F&F National Edition, have lower mean values. The difference, although not much, shows that teachers tend to understand and agree with the theoretical meaning and educational policy of CLIL, but when it comes to practical perception in each specific lesson, they are still hesitant or have not really grasped the integrated nature of the method. This variation in the cognitive component also suggests that, although teachers generally have a positive understanding of CLIL, there is a gap between awareness and pedagogical readiness – an issue that needs to be further clarified through qualitative data in the next section to identify factors that influence teachers' cognition in the context of teaching practice.

Issues related to the policy and implementation

Teachers' perceptions of CLIL approaches and implementation in primary school contexts vary considerably, largely due to how they understand and interpret the policy of implementation. Interview data show that the majority of teachers agree with the Ministry of Education and Training's innovative orientation in encouraging the integration of content and language in primary school English programs. One teacher shared that *"CLIL is quite suitable for the current trend, developing both foreign languages and content knowledge for students"* (T3), while another teacher emphasized the practicality of this approach: *"CLIL is appropriate for primary students because practicing communication and understanding knowledge at the same time, helps prepare students for future work and study. You know, English is a must now... it's not just about the language, but the language in use..."* (T4). These statements reflect teachers' belief in the topicality and guiding value of CLIL, and also demonstrate an awareness of the connection between policy intentions and classroom practices. However, when moving to the implementation level, many teachers expressed concerns and confusion about the implementation conditions. The most common concerns came from time allowance and workload, especially the pressure to complete all the content in the Family and Friends National Edition textbook. One teacher admitted that *"the amount of vocabulary is huge, it is easy to get overloaded... Applying CLIL lessons requires a lot of modification and extension"* (T3). Another said: *"The time allowance is limited. If I cover both Contents and Language, I don't have time for other important points such as grammar... I have to make sure students can do the final tests"* (T2). One teacher even admitted that although students really enjoy topics such as Countries and Flags, *"it takes a lot of time really... so I sometimes expand the lessons, not always... it depends on the timeframe"* (T5).

These findings suggest that there is a policy-practice gap: while teachers agree with the CLIL orientation ideologically, its implementation is affected by many contextual constraints such as lesson length, vocabulary volume, and testing requirements. Some teachers choose to

narrow the scope of implementation or intersperse Vietnamese to save time, while others try to expand but are limited by program progress. This trend is similar to the observation by Coyle et al. (2010) that CLIL policy at the system level can only be effective when supported by institutional scaffolding, including teaching guidelines, teacher training, and appropriate time allocation.

4.1.4. The Behavioral Component

Table 4.4. Teachers' perceived practice of implementing the CLIL approach

No.	Variables	4Cs element	Mean	Std. Deviation
Behavioral Component (Teachers' action)			4,07	0.720
B17	I incorporate Fluency Time! lessons as designed in the syllabus.	Content	4,06	0.866
B18	I adapt tasks or extend the CLIL topics beyond the textbook where necessary.	Content	3,94	0.876
B19	I integrate Culture sections to enhance students' global and cultural awareness.	Culture	4,15	0.880
B20	I provide scaffolding (e.g., vocabulary support, sentence starters, visuals) when teaching CLIL.	Communication	4,17	0.806
B21	I adjust my teaching pace and explanations depending on the students' understanding of both content and language.	Cognition	4,17	0.837
B22	I assess students' content understanding and English language use simultaneously.	Cognition	4,19	0.805
B23	I use group activities or realia to support learning in CLIL lessons.	Communication	4,18	0.809
B24	I use students' first language to connect CLIL topics with their cultural background and real-life experiences.	Culture	3,68	1.016

The quantitative results in Table 4.4 showed that the Mean score of the behavioral group remained high ($M = 4.07$; $SD = 0.720$). Although it accounted for the lowest among the three components, this difference is not statistically significant. With the high SD values (0.8-1.0), the level of classroom practice was varied between individuals, meaning that some teachers perceived the CLIL implementation quite flexibly, while others remained reserved or limited within the textbook framework. Variables with high mean value such as B22 ($M = 4.19$; $SD = 0.805$) and B23 ($M = 4.18$; $SD = 0.809$) reflect teachers' efforts to both assess content knowledge and encourage communication through group and visual activities. In contrast, some indicators had a low mean and a higher SD, like B18 ($M = 3.94$; $SD = 0.876$) and B24 ($M = 3.68$; $SD = 1.016$), reflecting the limitations in expanding activities beyond textbooks and connecting content with cultural experiences through the mother tongue. This finding is similar to Banegas's (2012) study, which highlighted CLIL teachers' difficulties in extending activities beyond the textbook due to time constraints and curricular pressures. Similarly, Nguyen and Nguyen (2024) also pointed out that Vietnamese teachers tend to apply CLIL to a limited extent within pre-guided lessons, rather than developing additional content or cultural elements. The following section reveals the ideas and sharing from the interview sections regarding teachers' support or concerns about the CLIL approach implementation.

Teachers' scaffoldings and their emphasis on the four pillars (4Cs) of CLIL

In CLIL pedagogy, scaffolding is considered a core teaching strategy, helping students access subject knowledge through appropriate language support (Coyle et al., 2010; Dalton-Puffer, 2007). The way teachers implement scaffolding not only reflects their linguistic-pedagogical competence but also shows the level of priority among the four pillars of CLIL: Content, Communication, Cognition and Culture. Interview data showed that most teachers use different forms of scaffolding to make CLIL lessons more accessible and suitable for the abilities of primary school students.

Some teachers proactively adjust the teaching pace, choose age-appropriate activities, provide necessary vocabulary or intersperse Vietnamese to support students to participate more confidently. For example, one teacher said that in the lesson on healthy food choices, she *"let them make a simple debate... Students discuss and persuade each other in English enthusiastically"* (T5). A first-grade teacher shared that *"if they talk about science, they lack both the language and knowledge... I have to ask questions in both English and Vietnamese so students can catch up with the lesson"* (T1). Meanwhile, another teacher said that in the lesson on protecting the environment, *"students discuss in small groups, give many ideas in English, and are more confident, less afraid of making mistakes"* (T4). These shares show that many teachers are flexible in supporting students to access content knowledge through guided practice and language exchange activities.

However, there are also cases where teachers choose to use avoidant scaffolding, that is, to omit or simplify activities if they find the task too difficult for students. One teacher

admitted: *"Sometimes, I skip the tasks or explain quickly in Vietnamese... some CLIL lessons ask students to practice math or use professional words like 'row', 'column', which are too complicated for young learners"* (T4). This suggests that although teachers are aware of the value of CLIL, they still tailor their activities based on students' language abilities and readiness, and reflect their own limits of confidence in maintaining the target language throughout the lesson.

Notably, the choice of scaffolding also suggests that teachers prioritize the Content and Cognition pillars more than the Communication and Culture pillars. Activities such as debates and group discussions are used quite frequently, but mostly in a combination of English and Vietnamese, limiting opportunities for natural communication practice and cultural exploration. This trend is similar to Dalton-Puffer's (2007) observation that CLIL teachers tend to focus on subject content rather than on the ability to use the target language, especially when faced with barriers in learners' language or cognitive abilities.

In relation to the quantitative results in the Behavioral component, this phenomenon is also consistent with the lower mean compared to the two groups Affective and Cognitive. This shows that although teachers have a positive attitude and understanding of CLIL, the application in the classroom is still cautious and selective. Therefore, scaffolding is not only a tool to support students, but also an indicator that teachers are having to balance between the ideals of the 4Cs framework and the reality of implementation in the context of primary school classrooms in Vietnam.

In short, the results show that while some teachers had positive attitude, others were cautious about the CLIL approach implementation in the textbook series. Simultaneously, teachers have positive perceptions of CLIL goals, but there is still heterogeneity in actual application behavior. In other words, they believe in the idea but struggle with the practice. The qualitative data thus contribute to clarifying this paradox – showing that although teachers clearly understand the importance of CLIL and related policy, they still need additional support through training programs and pedagogical guidelines to bridge the gap between policy and practice.

5. Implications and Conclusions

The study paints a clear picture of primary school teachers' attitudes toward the CLIL approach and its implementation in F&F series. The quantitative results show that primary school teachers have generally positive attitudes towards the use of CLIL in teaching, especially in the two components Affective and Cognitive. However, the qualitative data have highlighted more clearly aspects that are difficult to reflect in the quantitative data, thereby forming three key themes. Combining these two data sources shows that positive attitudes are only a

necessary condition, while translating attitudes into concrete actions depends on systemic and contextual factors.

The first theme highlights the gap between pedagogical beliefs and actions. Teachers agree that CLIL is an inevitable trend and beneficial for students' thinking development, but they still lack confidence to apply it in the classroom. This is consistent with Dalton-Puffer's (2007) observation that the biggest challenge of CLIL lies in the transition from awareness to practice. To overcome this, there is a need for classroom-based training models, such as "lesson study" or peer mentoring, to help teachers practice integrating content and language in real-life contexts.

The second theme shows the obstacles in the two pillars of Communication and Culture of the 4Cs framework. Many teachers easily exploit subject content (Content) and develop thinking (Cognition), but struggle to organize communication in English or integrate cultural elements. This is also the challenge that Coyle, Hood and Marsh (2010) have emphasized: fully realizing all four pillars always requires rich learning resources and language skills. In the context of Vietnam, where most teachers are familiar with English language-oriented textbooks, integrating cultural and social content becomes more difficult. Therefore, it is necessary to build a sample learning material bank related to familiar topics (family, local community) before expanding to new areas, thereby helping teachers and students have a foothold to gradually move towards interculturality.

The third theme reflects systemic obstacles. Even when teachers are motivated, the lack of specific support policies, pressure on current programs and limited infrastructure conditions still hinder the application of CLIL. Banegas (2012) also pointed out that in many countries outside Europe, the lack of a synchronous policy framework and investment makes it difficult to sustain CLIL. For Vietnam, when F&F series was first implemented by the Ministry of Education and Training, the opportunity for innovation opened, but it was not accompanied by a standardized training system and documents. As Nguyen and Nguyen (2024) emphasized, content choice is best facilitated by specific guidance and appropriate support resources.

From the three themes above, it can be concluded that positive attitudes are the foundation, but need to be supported by three levels of support. First, developing teachers' pedagogical capacity through training programs linked to practice. Second, designing and providing CLIL support resources appropriate to the local socio-cultural context. Third, strengthening support mechanisms from schools and management agencies, such as flexible time allocation or organizing training for clusters of schools. When these three levels are combined, CLIL implementation in the Family and Friends National Edition textbook series can be effective and sustainable in the local primary education conditions.

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