

DIGITAL DIALOGIC READING IN CLIL PROGRAM FOR EFL MUSLIM PRIMARY SCHOOL LEARNERS

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ABSTRACT

Dialogic reading has been valued by number of researchers to accelerate young learners' literacy skills. This study aims to explore the implementation of dialogic reading method with Islamic content to students at Islamic primary school. Six-meeting teaching practices followed with a survey research was employed in this study. Results reveal that majority of students perceived positively toward the use of dialogic reading book with Islamic content as it enhances their engagement, comprehension, and vocabulary retention. Furthermore, their engagement and enjoyment are sourced in the dialogue undertaken between the teachers and students as well as the interactive quizziz given after each topic discussion. This study has shed a light that dialogic reading integrated with contextualized reading materials offers practical strategies in fostering young learners' literacy skills.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Dialogic reading, an interactive and engaging method of reading, has been recognized as a valuable tool for enhancing literacy skills and promoting learning among young learners in various educational settings, including Islamic schools (Alharbi et al., 2023; Guevara et al., 2024). Dialogic reading focuses on building relationships between readers and the text, encouraging students to ask questions and engage in meaningful conversations (Whitehurst et al., 1988; Whitehurst et al., 1994). Research has shown that dialogic reading interventions positively impact children's literacy development, particularly in terms of expressive vocabulary, comprehension, and motivation to read. By engaging students in discussions and encouraging active participation during reading sessions, dialogic reading not only improves language skills but also fosters critical thinking and social-emotional learning (Asrifan et al., 2022; Chow et al., 2008; Dong et al., 2022).

In the context of Islamic education, dialogic reading holds significant potential for transforming traditional teaching methods and promoting a deeper understanding of Islamic principles and values among students. By incorporating dialogic theories and practices into Islamic pedagogy, educators can create a more engaging and interactive learning environment that enhances students' motivation and reading achievement (Nurasih et al.,

2022). This can also help to foster a sense of community among students, as they are able to discuss and debate various Islamic concepts and ideas in a respectful and collaborative manner. Additionally, dialogic reading can help to bridge the gap between traditional Islamic knowledge and modern school (Sabilah & Rifah, 2024). Furthermore, dialogic reading can be instrumental in promoting moral development and religious attitudes among students in Islamic schools, aligning with the broader goals of Islamic education to nurture holistic individuals with strong ethical foundations (Cook et al., 2018; Müller et al., 2023).

Moreover, dialogic reading can serve as a bridge between cultural heritage and language development, as seen in the use of local culture-based literature to engage young learners and preserve cultural traditions. Dialogic reading can also help children develop literacy skills, as well as become more confident in speaking and reading in their own language. Additionally, it can help children develop a better understanding of their own culture. By integrating dialogic reading with Islamic instructional materials, educators can not only enhance students' understanding of Islamic texts but also cultivate a sense of cultural identity and appreciation for their heritage. This approach not only enriches students' language skills but also deepens their connection to Islamic teachings and values (Cook et al., 2018; Fettig et al., 2018; Tompo et al., 2023).

Dialogic reading is a method where children are read a storybook and engaged in interactive conversation. It has been recognized as a powerful strategy for fostering language development and literacy skills in young learners (Xu et al., 2022). This approach involves adults using strategic questioning and thoughtful responses to children's interests during book-reading sessions, thereby enhancing children's language acquisition and learning (Sim & Berthelsen, 2014). Studies have shown that dialogic reading interventions in early childhood education positively impact vocabulary acquisition, narrative production skills, and emergent literacy (Girbés-Peco et al., 2024). Furthermore, dialogic reading can help improve young students' expressive vocabulary skills, which are crucial for later reading success (Parsons & Lyddy, 2016). Research has also highlighted the benefits of dialogic reading for specific groups, such as bilingual children, where it aids in the language learning process (Novara & Widyasari, 2023). Additionally, dialogic reading has been found to be effective in promoting active participation in book reading for preschoolers with autism spectrum disorder, encouraging children to engage in the reading process actively (Fleury et al., 2014). Moreover, dialogic reading interventions have been shown to stimulate young children's cognitive abilities, such as repeating patterning skills, through interactive picture book reading (Wijns et al., 2022). Overall, dialogic reading not only enhances language development and literacy skills but also fosters a love for reading, increases vocabulary, and improves expressive language abilities in young learners (Amalia & Arditiya, 2021). By incorporating dialogic reading into educational settings, educators can create a fun learning atmosphere that enhances motivation and participation, ultimately contributing to children's overall language and cognitive development (Ratminingsih & Budasi, 2018).

Designing books for young learners with Islamic content is crucial to shaping the educational experiences of Muslim children. Islamic education aims to transmit knowledge and cultivate morals, identity, and character in line with Islamic teachings (Kasmar et al., 2019). Including Islamic content in books for young learners supports the holistic development of children by instilling values and principles aligned with their faith. Research indicates that incorporating learner voice in educational materials can shift the focus from academic assessment to meaningful learning experiences for students (Abdalla et al., 2020). Designing books that resonate with young Muslim learners can create a more engaging and relevant learning environment that meets the needs and perspectives of the students. The

representation of Muslims in children's literature is a significant topic, emphasizing the importance of accurate and positive portrayals in shaping young minds (Torres, 2016). Books with Islamic content not only offer knowledge about the religion but also help foster a sense of belonging and understanding of diverse cultural and religious perspectives among young readers. In the digital age, designing online educational materials, including books, is essential for effectively engaging learners (Farrell et al., 2016). Interactions with the content and interface are crucial in online education program design, highlighting the need for thoughtful and engaging materials for young learners. Furthermore, the selection of children's books with Islamic content can impact the moral identity construction of young readers (Mufti, 2022). Parents often seek books that align with Islamic moral values, underscoring the importance of integrating such content into educational materials for children.

The integration of digital dialogic reading within a CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) program for EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners, particularly in Muslim primary schools, can be informed by several studies. Dialogic reading (DR) has been shown to significantly enhance reading comprehension and linguistic skills among young EFL learners, as evidenced by a study that demonstrated improved comprehension and positive attitudes towards English through shared reading activities using DR strategies (Atamturk et al., 2019). Meanwhile, the CLIL approach, which combines language learning with subject content, has been recognized for its potential to improve language proficiency, including reading skills, when integrated with digital tools. This integration fosters motivation and engagement, as well as the development of 21st-century skills such as critical thinking and communication (Qi et al., 2024). In the context of teaching science through English, the CLIL approach has been effectively implemented in primary schools, providing rich subject-specific vocabulary and engaging students through multimodal resources (Khoiriyah et al., 2024). However, research comparing CLIL and EFL contexts suggests that while both can enhance critical reading skills, EFL students may benefit more from explicit strategy instruction due to their unfamiliarity with such approaches (Zarobe & Gutiérrez, 2024). Additionally, individual differences, such as out-of-school exposure to English and family background, play a significant role in the effectiveness of CLIL programs, indicating that these factors should be considered when implementing such educational strategies (Soto-Corominas et al., 2024). Therefore, integrating digital dialogic reading within a CLIL framework could potentially enhance EFL learning by combining the strengths of both approaches, while also considering individual learner differences and the cultural context of Muslim primary schools.

Digital dialogic reading (DR) within a Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) framework offers a promising avenue for enhancing English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning, particularly in Muslim primary schools. Previous studies have demonstrated that dialogic reading strategies significantly improve reading comprehension and linguistic skills among young learners (Atamturk et al., 2019) and that CLIL approaches foster language proficiency and motivation through the integration of language and content learning with digital tools (Qi et al., 2024). However, while CLIL has been effectively applied in primary school contexts, especially in teaching science through English (Khoiriyah et al., 2024), limited research examines how dialogic reading can be digitally adapted within this framework to meet the unique needs of EFL learners in culturally specific settings, such as Muslim primary schools. Additionally, existing studies highlight the role of individual differences, including family background and exposure to English, in CLIL program effectiveness (Soto-Corominas et al., 2024), yet there is a lack of exploration into how these factors interact with digital tools and DR strategies. This gap underscores the

novelty of examining the integration of digital dialogic reading within a CLIL program, addressing not only the linguistic and cognitive development of young EFL learners but also their cultural and individual learning contexts. By doing so, this study seeks to bridge the gap between digital literacy practices in Muslim primary schools. In a nutshell, this research aims to explore the students' perceptions in one of Islamic-affiliated school where CLIL program has been implemented in teaching and learning of English lesson as an extracurricular. Furthermore, this study will contribute to expanding the existing body knowledge on implementing dialogic reading with Islamic content that offers cultural relevance in diverse educational context.

2. METHOD

In education setting, surveys are an effective way to collect information about students' thoughts, feelings, preferences, and behaviors (Fink, 2024). Survey research in a classroom setting is a method used to gather information about students' experiences, preferences, and attitudes toward specific topics or activities (Berends, 2012). This approach involves distributing a structured questionnaire to collect data from participants, which can then be analyzed to identify patterns or trends. In related to this research, the setting of this research was in CLIL classroom in which English is integrated into content learning such as Math, Science and Islamic values. During the implementation of CLIL classes, based on the preliminary observation, the teachers already implemented Dialog Reading activities using e-book. Thus, eighteen EFL primary schools in one Islamic-affiliated primary schools in Malang regency were voluntarily involved as participants in this research.

Furthermore, the survey enables to reveal students' attitudes toward their reading behaviors as well their thought on the use digital dialogic reading activities in CLIL classes. To avoid the deceptive question that would have produced inaccurate data, the Indonesian language was utilized. Meanwhile, as a part of the article writing requirement, the survey instrument was translated into English. The questionnaire was structured around the following set of close-ended questions: students' experience in using digital book for dialogic reading activities (3 questions); Students' reading comprehension and motivation (3 questions); Students' experience with regard to the implementation of Dialogic Reading in their CLIL classes (4 questions); Students' experience in completing interactive quizzes in digital book (4 questions); and Students' overall perception in Dialogic Reading activities during their CLIL classes (2 questions). The questionnaire was distributed online via G-form to have more efficient data generating process.

In the data analysis phase, the survey responses were systematically analyzed to gain insights into students' experiences with digital books for dialogic reading activities. After collecting survey responses, the data was organized into a table format, categorizing each question and the corresponding responses. Responses were grouped under predefined categories (*Such as "Do you enjoy reading e-books about animals?" with four optional responses including Yes, I do. I am very happy, Yes, I do. I am happy, Not really, and Not at all*). Each response category was assigned a numerical value or percentage in order to make more comprehensive interpretation. Finally, those quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (Siendlecki, 2020; Fink;2024) by interpreting the frequency and percentage of responses for each question.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the survey are expected to offer valuable insights into students' attitudes toward their reading behaviors and perceptions of digital dialogic reading activities in CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) classrooms. The results reveal that

while a majority of students are familiar with English e-books, their frequency of engagement with digital reading varies. Notably, the study highlights positive attitudes toward reading e-books about “*Animals mentioned in the Qur’an*”, with most students expressing enjoyment and happiness in this activity. These findings underscore the potential of digital dialogic reading to enhance engagement and foster positive reading experiences in CLIL settings. For the details of each response are explained in the following.

Table 1. Students’ experience in using digital book for dialogic reading activities

No.	Questions	Responses	The result of responses
1	Is this your first time using an English e-book?	Yes	5 (27.7%)
		No	13 (72.3%)
2	How often do you use electronic books to read?	Every day	2 (11.1%)
		Several times a week	3 (16.7%)
		Once a week	7 (38.9%)
		Rare	4 (22.3%)
3	Do you enjoy reading e-books about animals?	Yes, I do. I am very happy	10 (55.5%)
		Yes, I do. I am happy	6 (33.3%)
		Not really	2 (11.1%)
		Not at all	0

Table 1. depicts the students’ experience in using digital book for dialogic reading activities. The majority of students (72.3%) have used English e-books before, suggesting that digital reading is not a new experience for most participants. This indicates a relatively high level of familiarity with e-books, which could positively influence their comfort and engagement with dialogic reading activities.

In related to the reading habits, the students’ reading habit vary. In more detail, the most common frequency from students’ responses is *Once a week* (38.9%) suggests that a significant portion uses e-books regularly, but not excessively. Meanwhile, as in moderate use, students’ responses show about 27.8% (11.1% daily and 16.7% several times a week), meaning a higher level of engagement in using electronic books in reading. Overall, the students’ reading frequency is diverse, indicating varying levels of engagement and accessibility to e-books.

Furthermore, the enjoyment of reading e-books about animals is generally positive. Based on the result of survey, ten students (55.5%) expressed that they are "very happy" with this activity, showing high enthusiasm and strong enjoyment. Four students, in moderate enjoyment (33.3%), are "happy", reflecting a good level of interest and only one student shows low enjoyment, meaning that only 11.1% indicated they "not really" enjoy it, while no students reported complete dissatisfaction (*Not at all*). Overall, it can be interpreted that using animal-themed content in e-books could be a motivating factor for the majority of students in dialogic reading activities.

Table 2. Students’ reading comprehension and motivation to read

No.	Questions	Responses	The result of responses
1	Do you find this electronic book easy to understand?	Yes, I do. It’s very easy	2 (11.1%)
		Easy	9 (50%)
		It’s hard sometimes	4 (22.2%)
		No, it’s very difficult	3 (16.7%)
2	How interesting are the topics about animals in this book for you?	Very interesting	8 (44.4%)
		Interesting	8 (44.4%)
		So so	0
		Not interesting	2 (11.1%)

No.	Questions	Responses	The result of responses
3	Did you learn anything new about animals from this book?	Yes, lots of new things	12 (66.7%)
		Some new things	4 (22.2%)
		Not that much	0
		Nothing	2 (11.1%)

From the Table 2., the findings revealed the students' reading comprehension skill and their motivation to read. The majority of students (61.1%) found the book easy to understand, either very easy or easy. However, four students (22.2%) found it challenging at times, and other three students (16.7%) struggled significantly with understanding the material. From this findings, it can be worth-mentioned that while the book is generally accessible, there may be areas where clarity could be improved for certain readers.

In addition, the e-book used "*Animal mention in the Qur'an*" consists of several topics related science and Islamic values. With the regards to its topics, the animal topics in the book were quite engaging for most readers, with sixteen students (88.8%) describing the content as either "very interesting" or "interesting." Only a small minority (11.1%) found the content uninteresting, suggesting that the subject matter resonated well with the majority of readers. This book also helps students to learn new materials. A large proportion of respondents (12 students), 66.7%, felt that they learned a lot of new information about animals, while 22.2% (4 students) learned some new things. Only a small number of respondents (11.1%) felt they didn't learn anything new, indicating that the book was educational for most readers, successfully imparting new knowledge.

Overall, the result of survey in related to students' motivation and reading skills, it was indicated that the electronic book on animals in the Quran is generally well-received. Most students found the book easy to understand, engaging in its topics, and informative. This finding is supported by some previous findings that reveal the effectiveness of dialogic reading integrated with cultural content (Cohen et al., 2012). It is further claimed that culturally relevant stories used in dialogic reading not only can accelerates students' cognitive development but also promotes moral and ethical development (Farah et al., 2021; Ratminingsih & Budasi, 2018).

Table 3. Students' experience with regard to the implementation of Dialogic Reading in their CLIL classes

No.	Questions	Responses	The result of responses
1	Did you take part in a dialogic reading session (discussing the content of the story with a teacher or friend)?	Yes, I did.	16 (18.9%)
		No, I did not.	2 (11.1%)
2	Does discussion of animal stories help you better understand the contents of the book?	Yes, it does. It's very helpful	10 (55.5%)
		Yes. It's helpful	7 (38.9%)
		Not very helpful	0
		No. It doesn't help at all	1 (5.5%)
3	Do you find it easier to remember information about animals after discussing them?	Yes, it does.	13 (72.2%)
		Not really	3 (16.7%)
		No. It's difficult	1 (5.5%)
4	Do you enjoy asking and answering questions during dialogic reading?	Yes, absolutely.	8 (44.4%)
		Yes	8 (44.4%)
		So so	1 (5.5%)
		Not at all	3 (5.5%)

Table 3. discusses the students' experience with regard to the implementation of Dialogic Reading activities in their CLIL classes. First, in related students' participation in Dialogic Reading sessions, sixteen students (88.9%) participated in dialogic reading sessions and only two students (11.1%) did not participate. It can be concluded that majority of students actively engaged in dialogic reading sessions, indicating that this practice was well-implemented in the class.

Second, examining the usefulness of discussions in understanding animal stories, 10 students (55.5%) found discussions "very helpful."; 7 students (38.9%) found discussions "helpful."; and only 1 student (5.5%) found discussions unhelpful. It means that most students (94.4%) perceived discussions as either helpful or very helpful in understanding the content of the book as it is projected the objective of CLIL approach is learning language as well as content knowledge. Only a minimal number students found the discussions ineffective, highlighting the positive impact of dialogic reading on comprehension.

Third, related to the easiness in remembering content knowledge about animals, the findings show that thirteen students (72.2%) found it easier to remember information after discussions, three students (16.7%) found it "not really" helpful, and only one student (5.5%) found it "difficult" to remember information. It can be claimed that the majority of students reported that discussing the content helped them retain information more effectively, suggesting that dialogic reading reinforces memory and ease them to comprehend the content knowledge.

Last, for the enjoyment in asking and answering questions, the findings depicted that eight students (44.4%) enjoyed it "absolutely.", other eight students (44.4%) simply enjoyed it, only one student (5.5%) found it "so-so."; and other one student (5.5%) did not enjoy it at all. Overall, most students (88.8%) enjoyed the interactive aspect of dialogic reading, showing its effectiveness in engaging students. However, a small portion found it less enjoyable, indicating room for improvement in making the activity more inclusive or interactive for all. For further implication, the findings indicates that dialogic reading is a highly effective teaching approach in CLIL classes. Most students actively participated and found the discussions helpful for understanding and remembering content. Additionally, the majority enjoyed asking and answering questions, which further supports the value of dialogic reading as an engaging and educational strategy. Such finding has also been reported by the previous researchers revealing that dialogic reading has enhanced their learning as it is interactive in its nature (Barak & Lefstein, 2022; Hui et al., 2020).

Table 4. Students' experience in completing interactive quizzes in digital book

No.	Questions	Responses	The result of responses
1	Did you find the interactive quizzes in this book fun?	Yes, I did. It was super fun. Yes. So so. No, I did not. It was boring.	11 (61.1%) 4 (22.2%) 1 (5.5%) 2 (11.1%)
2	Did the interactive quiz help you remember information about the animals in the book?	Yes, it did. It's very helpful Yes. It's helpful Not very helpful No. It didn't help at all	9 (50%) 9 (50%) 0 0
3	How often do you manage to answer correctly in interactive quizzes?	Always Often Sometimes Rarely	3 (16.7%) 8 (44.4%) 7 (38.9%) 0

No.	Questions	Responses	The result of responses
4	Would you like there to be more interactive quizzes in other e-books?	Yes, of course	11 (61.1%)
		Yes	6 (33.3%)
		No problem	1 (5.5%)
		Not necessary	0

Table 4. presents data from students' experiences with interactive quizzes in a digital book. A significant majority (83.3%) of students found the interactive quizzes enjoyable, with over 60% describing them as "super fun." However, a small portion of students (16.6%) did not find the quizzes engaging, indicating that while the quizzes were popular overall, there might be a need to improve their appeal for all students.

In terms of the use of interactive quizzes in helping students remember information about the animals in the book, half of the students felt the quizzes were very helpful in retaining information, while the other half found them helpful. None of the students found the quizzes ineffective. It is then worth to mentioned that the quizzes are an effective tool for reinforcing learning and improving memory as it is supported by the result of the students' correct answer in doing the quizzes. Most students (61.1%) reported that they often or always answered the quizzes correctly, indicating that they were able to grasp the content effectively. Nonetheless, a significant portion (38.9%) could only answer correctly "sometimes," suggesting that while the quizzes are challenging, they are accessible for most students. Surprisingly, students also deemed to have more interactive quizzes in other e-books as the major responses (94.4%) expressed interest in having more interactive quizzes in other e-books, suggesting that quizzes are a well-liked feature that students find valuable and would appreciate in future learning materials.

In general, the findings verified that interactive quizzes in the digital book were generally well-received by students. Most found them fun and helpful in retaining information about animals. While some students found the quizzes less engaging, the majority enjoyed the quizzes and reported that they helped with memory retention. Additionally, there is a strong interest in having more interactive quizzes in future e-books, indicating that this feature enhances the learning experience for most students. This is in line with previous studies which reveal that the use of technology has booted students' engagement (Twait et al., 2019; Xu et al., 2022).

Table 5. Students' overall perception in related to their intention to use Dialogic Reading activities during their CLIL classes

No.	Questions	Responses	The result of responses
1	Do you want to continue using English e-books with interactive quizzes to study?	Yes, I really want to.	10 (55.5%)
		Yes. I want to.	6 (33.3%)
		Not sure	1 (5.5%)
		No, I don't want to.	1 (5.5%)
2	Did you think using English e-books help you learn better? Both language and content knowledge?	Yes, it did. It's very helpful	9 (50%)
		Yes. It's helpful	7 (38.9%)
		Not very helpful	1 (5.5%)
		No. It didn't help at all	5 (5.5%)

Table 5 overviews the students' overall perception regarding their intention to use Dialogic Reading activities and interactive quizzes during their CLIL classes. The majority

of students (88.8%) expressed a strong willingness to continue using English e-books with interactive quizzes, showing a strong interest on the use of e-book "*Animal mentioned in the Qur'an*". Meanwhile, some students (5.5%) is uncertain, and another 5.5% does not want to continue using them, indicating that while most students are enthusiastic, there is still some possibility that students might find that reading this e-book was not as impressive as others. Additionally, in terms of the students' perception on using English e-books help them learn netter in both language and content knowledge, half of the students (50%) felt that using English e-books was "very helpful" for improving both language and content knowledge, and another 38.9% found it "helpful." This indicates that the majority of students perceived the e-books as effective tools for learning.

In a nutshell, the findings implies a positive overall perception of using English e-books with interactive quizzes in CLIL classes. Most students want to continue using these e-books, as they find the quizzes both enjoyable and effective for memory retention. The results suggest that interactive quizzes are a valuable tool for engaging students and enhancing their learning experience, though a few students may need further motivation or improvements in the format to fully benefit from the activity.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the result of the survey, the findings from this research highlight the positive impact of digital books, particularly the "*Animal Mentioned in the Qur'an*" e-book, in enhancing students' engagement, comprehension, and learning outcomes within a Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) framework. A majority of students were familiar with digital reading, with a significant portion engaging with e-books on a regular basis. The interactive elements, such as discussions and quizzes, were largely well-received and contributed to students' enjoyment, reading comprehension, and content learning. Most students found the animal-themed topics both interesting and educational, with the e-book facilitating the acquisition of new content knowledge, *Science and Islamic values*.

Dialogic reading sessions were particularly effective in supporting comprehension and memory retention. Students actively participated, with discussions playing a crucial role in helping them understand and remember the content. The quizzes, though universally appreciated, proved to be particularly helpful in reinforcing learning, with a strong desire for more interactive quizzes in future e-books. While the overall response was overwhelmingly positive, some areas for improvement were noted, particularly in ensuring the e-book's clarity for all students and refining the appeal of the quizzes for those who were less engaged. Nonetheless, the results suggest that the integration of interactive digital books with dialogic reading activities and quizzes is a promising approach to enhance language and content knowledge in CLIL classrooms. The study also points to the potential for continued use and further development of such digital tools to improve student motivation and learning outcomes in the future.

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