

A Bibliometric Study of Communicative Language Teaching in Indonesian High School and Vocational School

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ABSTRACT

The global shift toward communication-driven education has positioned Communicative Language Instruction (CLI) as a vital approach in teaching English, particularly in Indonesian secondary and vocational schools. Despite its increasing application, a systematic understanding of CLI's scholarly development remains limited. This study aims to fill that gap through a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of CLI research published between 2014 and 2024. Using structured searches across Google Scholar, Scopus, and Dimensions, an initial dataset of 223 articles was collected. After applying inclusion and exclusion criteria focusing on peer-reviewed studies in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, a total of 97 articles were selected for analysis. Bibliometric tools including VOSviewer and Publish or Perish (PoP) were employed to examine metadata such as publication trends, authorship patterns, keyword frequencies, and country distributions. The results show a substantial rise in CLI-related publications, from 7 in 2014 to a peak of 29 in both 2021 and 2022. Indonesia produced the highest number of studies ($n = 11$), followed by Iran ($n = 10$). Keyword co-occurrence revealed dominant themes such as "language teaching," "practice," and "interaction," with a strong emphasis on English for Specific Purposes (ESP), particularly in tourism and hospitality. Citation mapping identified three major research clusters and emerging authors contributing to this field. These findings highlight the growing relevance of CLI in vocational education and underscore the importance of integrating ESP content, intercultural competence, and technology-enhanced learning to prepare students for participation in an increasingly globalized workforce.

1. Introduction

In today's globalized world, communicative competence is essential for students, as traditional grammar-based instruction has struggled to meet the needs of a multicultural workforce (Azizah et al., 2022; Maulana, 2021). Communicative Language Instruction (CLI) prioritizes practical language use and real-world interactions, helping students develop critical communication skills (Yang et al., 2020). The integration of technology into CLI has further enhanced language learning by providing interactive, tech-rich environments for practice (Loewen et al., 2020). As international contexts demand intercultural competence, CLI continues to play a vital role in preparing learners for global challenges (Huang, 2021). This shift aligns with broader educational

trends, including English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), promoting personal and academic development (Ernawati et al., 2021; Setyaningrum & Purwati, 2020).

This pedagogical shift in Communicative Language Instruction (CLI) aligns with global and Indonesian educational trends, particularly through integrating language instruction with content learning via EMI and CLIL. These models emphasize the simultaneous development of language skills and subject knowledge, ensuring students are well-prepared for global contexts. Ernawati et al. (2021) and Setyaningrum & Purwati (2020) argue this approach fosters a more immersive learning environment that enhances both communicative

competence and content mastery. Internationalization further strengthens CLI's role by promoting intercultural competence, enabling students to thrive in real-world, globally engaged scenarios (Huang, 2021; Nguyen & Hung, 2021).

In vocational education, Communicative Language Instruction (CLI) plays a crucial role in equipping students with practical communication skills tailored to their career paths. Industries such as tourism, hospitality, and technical fields benefit from English for Specific Purposes (ESP) models, which enhance employability by providing industry-specific language instruction (Hajar & Triastuti, 2021; Irawan et al., 2022). ESP helps students develop the necessary vocabulary, cultural competence, and situational skills to navigate global interactions (Nguyen & Hung, 2021). Additionally, incorporating CLI into vocational training supports student readiness for specific industries by focusing on sector-relevant communication challenges (Loewen et al., 2020). These targeted interventions ensure that vocational learners are prepared for the demands of the global workforce, further aligning CLI with trends in EMI and CLIL (Azizah et al., 2022; Chaayasat & Intakaew, 2023; Yang et al., 2020).

In vocational school, Communicative Language Instruction (CLI) equips students with essential communication skills tailored to their specific career paths. English for Specific Purposes (ESP) models help students in industries like tourism and hospitality by providing industry-specific language skills, enhancing their employability (Hajar & Triastuti, 2021; Irawan et al., 2022). These programs foster cultural competence and real-world language use, especially through international mobility initiatives, which further develop intercultural skills (Handayani & Wienanda, 2020). Additionally, the integration of technology into CLI supports practical language practice in authentic environments, improving student adaptability (Huang, 2021; Loewen et al., 2020). By combining CLI with sector-focused instruction, students are better prepared for global workforce demands, aligning with trends in EMI and CLIL (Azizah et al., 2022; Maulana, 2021; Gu & Zhao, 2021; Huang, 2021).

Overcoming gaps in practical communication skills remains a challenge in implementing Communicative Language Instruction (CLI), especially in vocational education, where students must apply language in real-world contexts (Hajar & Triastuti, 2021). English for Specific Purposes (ESP) models, tailored to industry needs, have helped bridge this gap (Gu & Zhao, 2021). Interactive technology, such as digital simulations, further enhances practical language application in real-life scenarios (Toscu & Erten, 2020). International mobility programs also develop intercultural competence, preparing students for global careers (Handayani & Wienanda, 2020). Bibliometric analysis offers valuable insights to

address these gaps and guide future research (Gu & Zhao, 2021; Huang, 2021; Mason & Payant, 2019; Nguyen & Hung, 2021).

As CLI continues to address communication gaps, its role in global education is becoming increasingly significant. Beyond Indonesia, CLI aligns with broader international trends, including Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) and English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI), enhancing students' ability to navigate global industries and multicultural environments (Mason & Payant, 2019; Nguyen & Hung, 2021). Globally, CLI is recognized for its capacity to equip students with practical communication skills necessary in sectors like tourism, business, and international relations (Huang, 2021). Technology further amplifies CLI's impact by enabling cross-cultural communication in authentic settings (Toscu & Erten, 2020). As CLI continues to gain traction worldwide, it remains crucial for preparing students to succeed in an increasingly interconnected world (Gu & Zhao, 2021).

To address the evolving role of Communicative Language Instruction (CLI) in education, this paper aims to fill the research gap by providing a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of current literature. This analysis will categorize publications based on trends, authorship, and key research themes, allowing for the identification of gaps in the existing body of work and opportunities for further exploration. By employing tools such as Publish or Perish (PoP) and VOSviewer, this study will systematically review the landscape of CLI research, focusing on how international collaboration and technological integration have shaped its development. The results will offer valuable insights for educators and policymakers seeking to enhance communicative competence through more effective and globally relevant approaches, ensuring that CLI continues to evolve in response to the needs of a connected world.

3. Method

The function of this section is to describe all experimental procedures, including controls. The description should be complete enough to enable someone else to repeat your work. If there is more than one part to the experiment, describe the methods and present the results in the same order in each section. Decide what order of presentation will make the most sense to the readers.

3.1 Research Design

To provide a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of Communicative Language Instruction (CLI) in secondary and vocational education, this study adopted a systematic approach to data collection and analysis. The methodology involves several steps, beginning with the determination of search keywords, followed by initial and refined searches, data compilation, and a thorough analysis.

3.2 Sample and Data Collection

The first step involved selecting appropriate search terms to capture relevant studies. The search keywords included “Communicative Language Instruction,” “EFL,” “secondary education,” and “vocational education.” These terms were chosen to ensure the inclusion of studies that specifically focus on the use of CLI in both secondary schools and vocational institutions.

An initial search was conducted using the selected keywords across multiple databases, including Google Scholar, Scopus, and Dimensions. The search covered studies published between 2014 and 2024. A total of 223 articles were retrieved in this stage, covering topics related to CLI, its application in secondary and vocational education, and its impact on communicative competence.

After the initial search, the results were refined by applying inclusion and exclusion criteria. Only peer-reviewed articles focusing on CLI in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, within secondary or vocational education, were included. Studies unrelated to CLI, or those not available in full text, were excluded. This refinement process resulted in a final dataset of 97 articles.

The selected articles were then compiled into a database. The preliminary data included metadata such as the authors, publication year, journal name, and article title. This information was used to generate basic statistics, including the distribution of publications over the years and the identification of key contributing researchers and institutions.

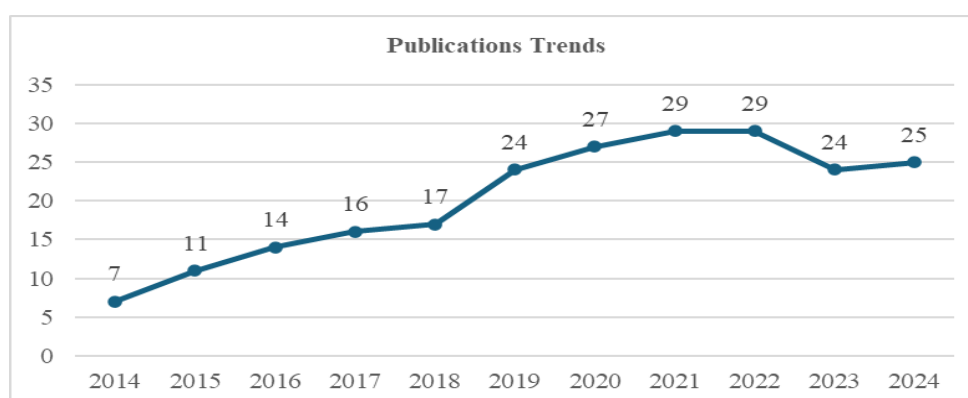


Figure 1. Publications Trends 2014-2024

3.3 Data Analysis

To analyze the selected articles, bibliometric analysis tools such as VOSviewer and Publish or Perish (PoP) were utilized. VOSviewer was employed to visualize co-citation networks and keyword occurrence maps, helping to identify research clusters and emerging trends in CLI research. The analysis revealed key themes such as the role of CLI in enhancing intercultural competence and its application in real-world vocational contexts. These findings were used to inform conclusions about the current state of CLI research and its future direction in education.

4. Result

Publications Trends

The analysis of publication trends from 2014 to 2024 reveals a significant increase in research focused on Communicative Language Instruction (CLI) in Indonesian high schools and vocational schools. Starting with only 7 publications in 2014, the number of studies rose steadily, reaching a peak of 29 in both 2021 and 2022. This growth trend, followed by a slight decline to 24 and 25 publications in 2023 and

2024 respectively, underscores the growing recognition of CLI's importance in enhancing English language teaching. This surge in research output reflects a shift towards prioritizing practical communication skills over traditional grammar-focused methods, driven by the needs of an increasingly interconnected world.

Research Categories

The research on CLI is primarily categorized into two key areas: Language Communication and Culture, and Education. The Language Communication and Culture category includes studies that focus on integrating language teaching with cultural education. This approach aligns with the objectives of CLI to develop students' communicative competence by emphasizing practical language use in diverse contexts. In contrast, the Education category encompasses research on pedagogical methods, curriculum development, and educational policies related to CLI. Studies in this category aim to enhance the effectiveness of language instruction, ensuring that students in both high schools and vocational schools acquire the necessary skills for their future careers.

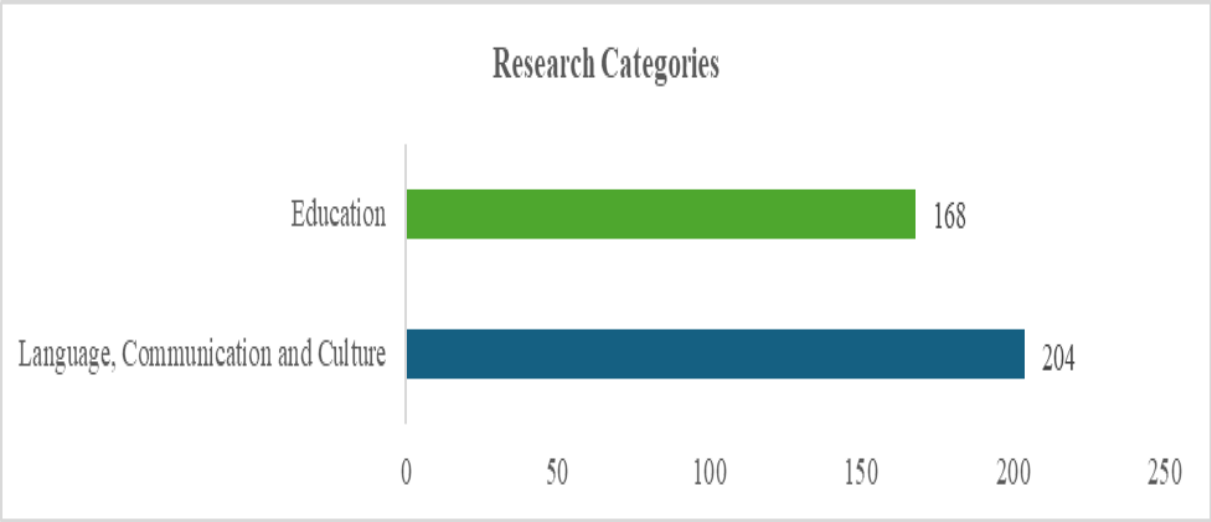


Figure 2. Research Categories 2014-2024

Countries

The geographic distribution of research indicates that CLI has garnered international attention beyond Indonesia. Indonesia leads with the highest number of publications (11), followed by Iran (10), with contributions also from countries such as the United

States, Japan, Brazil, and Malaysia. This international interest highlights the global relevance of CLI in improving English language education. The participation of diverse countries in CLI research underscores the widespread recognition of the need for effective communicative language teaching methods.

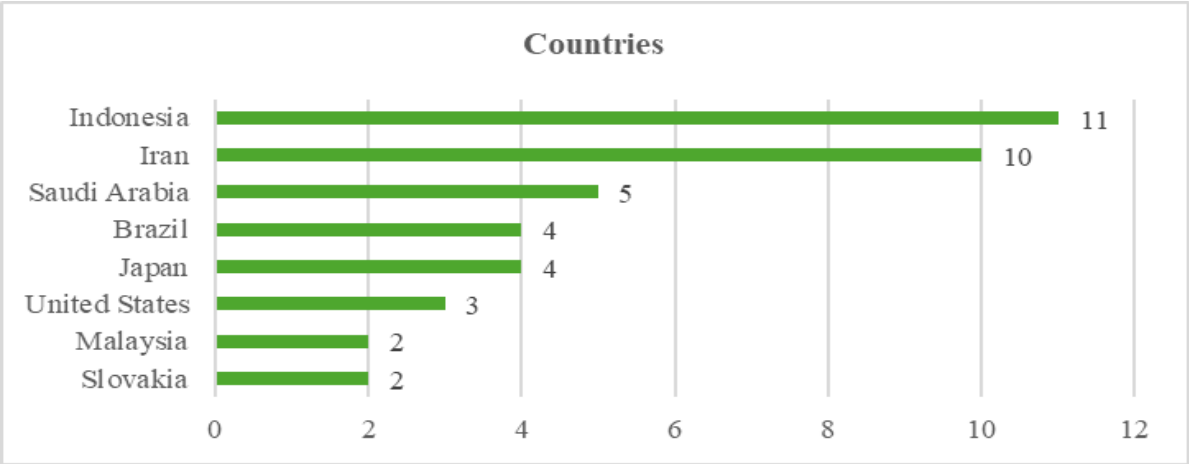


Figure 3. Publications Based on Country 2014-2024

Key Terms

"Language teaching" stands out as the most prominent term, highlighting its central role. Other significant terms like "practice," "interaction," "effectiveness," and "learner" emphasize the research focus on practical implementation, learner engagement, and teaching outcomes. Additionally, terms like "problem," "challenge," and "development"

underscore the research focus on addressing difficulties and developing innovative teaching approaches.

This network map provides a snapshot of the key themes and trends in this research area, highlighting the importance of practical, learner-centered, and effective language teaching methods in addressing challenges and fostering language development

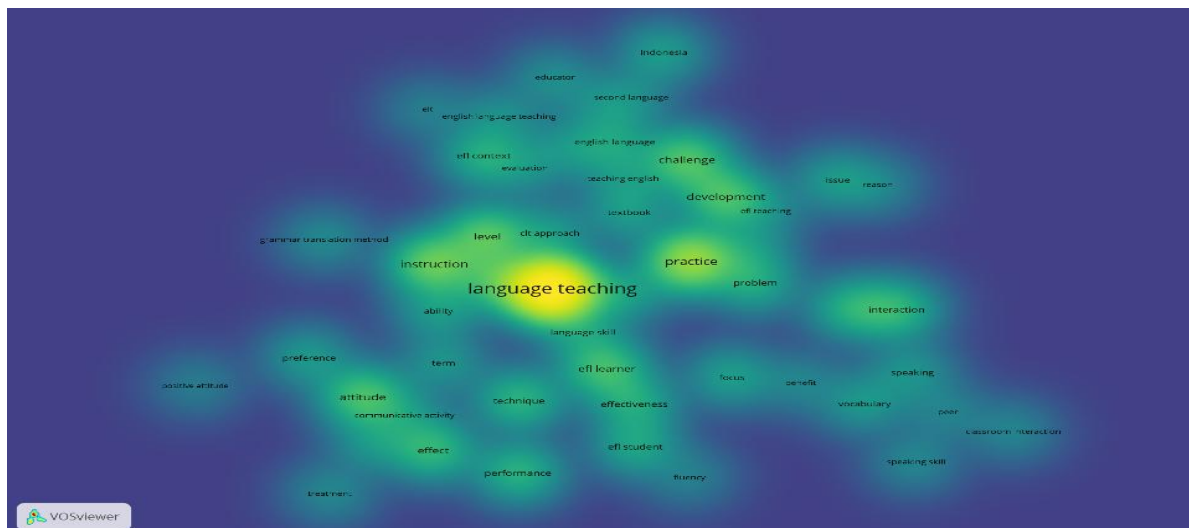


Figure 4. Key Terms

Citation Analysis

The citation analysis of research on Communicative Language Instruction in Indonesian high schools and vocational schools reveals a diverse and collaborative landscape. Three primary clusters of authors emerge, each exhibiting a high frequency of citations of one another's work, indicating shared research interests and potential for collaboration. The green cluster includes Kusumayati, Lusiana Dewi, Ibnian, Salem Saleh Khalaf, and Al-Garni, Shorouq Ali, while the red cluster comprises Sabrina, Arini, Qasemi, Ahmad Shah, Takal, Ghazi Mohammad, and Ibrahim, Noor Mala. It is noteworthy that Losi, Rizky Vita represents a singular presence within the blue cluster, suggesting a distinctive research focus or citations that diverge from the primary network. Additionally, Itmeizeh, Mahmoud J, and Sylvia Tiara emerge as isolated nodes, indicating less engagement within this specific research network or potentially unique research trajectories. Overall, this analysis illuminates a dynamic research community with discernible areas of focus, collaborative endeavors, and potential avenues for further investigation and knowledge exchange.

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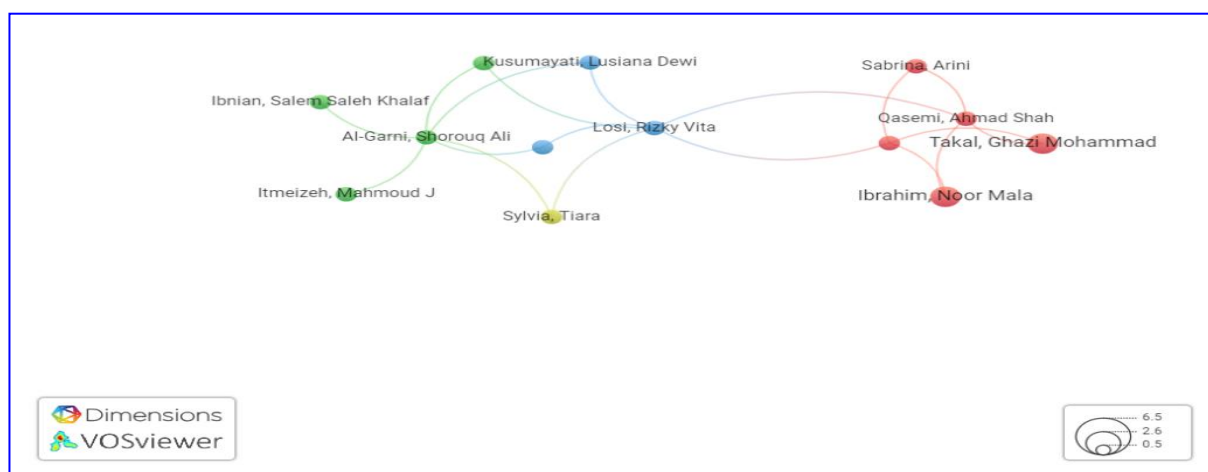


Figure 5. Citation Analysis

5. Discussion

The bibliometric analysis of Communicative Language Instruction (CLI) in Indonesian secondary and vocational education demonstrates a marked growth in research output over the past decade, particularly between 2021 and 2022. This study confirms the increasing integration of English for

Specific Purposes (ESP) within vocational programs, especially in tourism and hospitality, reflecting the demand for industry-specific communication skills (Hajar & Triastuti, 2021; Irawan et al., 2022). The findings also underscore the significance of intercultural competence as a central theme in CLI research, aligning with global educational trends that prioritize cross-cultural communication (Nguyen &

Hung, 2021; Gu & Zhao, 2021). Moreover, the study reveals that CLI research has benefited from the integration of technology-enhanced learning, which supports interactive and authentic language practice (Loewen et al., 2020; Huang, 2021). The results highlight that CLI has become increasingly relevant for addressing practical communication needs in globalized industries. Scholars have emphasized that CLI promotes real-world interaction and communicative competence, which traditional grammar-based approaches have failed to achieve effectively (Azizah et al., 2022; Maulana, 2021). The strong presence of ESP-focused research indicates that vocational programs are adapting to labor market demands by equipping students with sector-specific linguistic skills that enhance employability and professional readiness (Hajar & Triastuti, 2021; Irawan et al., 2022; Gu & Zhao, 2021). This aligns with international trends in EMI and CLIL, which combine language learning with content knowledge to foster integrated academic and professional competencies (Ernawati et al., 2021; Setyaningrum & Purwati, 2020).

Technology has emerged as a key enabler of CLI, providing platforms for authentic interaction and collaboration across cultural boundaries (Loewen et al., 2020; Toscu & Erten, 2020; Huang, 2021). Virtual reality and app-based tools have proven effective in facilitating immersive communication experiences, supporting students' ability to practice language in meaningful contexts (Yang et al., 2020). Furthermore, international mobility programs have been shown to enhance intercultural competence by exposing students to real-world communication settings beyond their local environment (Handayani & Wienanda, 2020). Citation analysis also reveals that research clusters are forming around these themes, indicating active scholarly collaboration and the emergence of influential authors contributing to CLI scholarship (Mason & Payant, 2019; Phoeun & Sengsri, 2021).

The steady increase in publications from countries such as Indonesia and Iran, alongside contributions from the United States, Japan, Brazil, and Malaysia, reflects the global recognition of CLI's potential to improve communicative competence (Nguyen & Hung, 2021; Gu & Zhao, 2021). The diversity of research contexts suggests that CLI is adaptable to various cultural and educational settings, further underscoring its role in preparing students for global participation. The focus on intercultural competence resonates with Huang (2021) and Toscu and Erten (2020), who emphasize the importance of developing students' cultural awareness through communicative practices supported by technology and mobility programs.

While the study offers valuable insights, it also presents several limitations. The dataset was restricted to selected databases, which may have excluded relevant studies from other sources. The chosen time

frame of 2014 to 2024 may not have captured earlier influential works or the most recent publications that have yet to accumulate citations. Furthermore, the emphasis on ESP within vocational contexts potentially overlooked broader applications of CLI in other educational settings such as primary and tertiary education (Ull & Agost, 2020). These limitations suggest that the findings, while informative, may not fully represent the global body of CLI scholarship. The novelty of this research lies in its comprehensive bibliometric approach that systematically maps the development of CLI scholarship over a ten-year period. By employing tools such as VOSviewer and Publish or Perish, the study consolidates fragmented evidence into a coherent overview of publication trends, key themes, and influential authors. Unlike previous studies that often addressed CLI in fragmented pedagogical contexts, this study provides a structured knowledge map that captures emerging research clusters, international collaboration, and thematic evolution. The implications are significant for curriculum developers and policymakers seeking to design language programs that integrate ESP, intercultural competence, and technology-enhanced learning. Such approaches can equip vocational students with practical language abilities and cultural adaptability required for participation in a global workforce.

Future studies should broaden the scope of analysis by incorporating additional databases and expanding the time frame to capture both foundational and emerging works in CLI. Longitudinal research is recommended to examine the long-term impact of ESP-oriented CLI programs on students' career outcomes, particularly in fields beyond tourism and hospitality. Further investigations should explore how artificial intelligence and adaptive learning technologies can be integrated into CLI to enhance student engagement and communication skills (Yang et al., 2020). Comparative studies across different educational levels and underrepresented regions would also deepen the understanding of how CLI can be effectively adapted to diverse contexts.

6. Conclusions

This bibliometric study provides a comprehensive overview of the scholarly development of Communicative Language Instruction (CLI) in Indonesian high schools and vocational education between 2014 and 2024. The analysis reveals a significant upward trend in CLI-related publications, particularly during 2021 and 2022, with Indonesia emerging as a leading contributor alongside countries such as Iran, Japan, and the United States. Keyword co-occurrence and citation mapping indicate a dominant focus on English for Specific Purposes (ESP), intercultural competence, and digital integration in vocational language instruction. The study's novelty lies in its methodological approach,

which synthesizes diverse research outputs into a structured knowledge map using tools such as VOSviewer and Publish or Perish. Unlike previous literature that often addressed CLI in fragmented pedagogical contexts, this research offers a consolidated empirical foundation for understanding CLI's trajectory, scholarly influence, and thematic evolution.

The findings underscore the growing importance of CLI in preparing learners for industry-specific communication demands and intercultural interactions in globalized settings. For educators and curriculum developers, the study provides actionable insights into enhancing language instruction through sector-relevant, technology-enhanced, and communication-centered models. Future research should explore the longitudinal impact of CLI-informed ESP programs on students' career readiness and examine how emerging technologies, such as AI-based language platforms, can further support communicative competence. Expanding bibliometric inquiries to other educational levels and underrepresented regions would also deepen the global understanding of CLI's pedagogical significance.

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