

Effects of CLIL on English Language Acquisition in Primary Education: A Case Study of Elementary Schools in Taipei

Rachel Yi-fen Wu & Anne Liu

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is an emerging, experimental approach to English education adopted by schools in Taiwan's major cities. In Taipei, a CLIL program was launched in 2017 in elementary and junior high schools to increase the use of English. In these CLIL classrooms, at least one third of the courses are taught in English, with students learning English as a foreign language and content knowledge simultaneously.

This paper presents the results of a joint study by the Taipei City Government Department of Education and the Language Training and Testing Center (LTTC) to examine the effectiveness of CLIL implementation in Taipei elementary schools. Listening and speaking tests were used to compare the English proficiency of students who attended CLIL schools and students who did not. Our sample, taken in May 2021, consists of 287 second, third, and fourth graders and 28 teachers from five CLIL schools and five non-CLIL schools. In addition to the tests, questionnaires were administered, with students providing information about their English learning background and teachers reporting the amount of time they used English with students, their attitudes toward CLIL lessons, and the teaching materials and assessment tools used.

The results of our study show a general positive correlation between CLIL instruction and performance on listening and speaking tasks. Overall, students at CLIL schools performed better than students at non-CLIL schools, especially for subject-specific tasks. It was also found that the greater number of years of CLIL instruction the students received and the higher proportion of English used in the classroom, the better the students performed on the tests. The results of the study support the continued implementation of CLIL in primary education in Taipei.