

# **“English-only or Nothing”: Practitioners’ Perspective on the Policy and Implementation of CLIL in Higher Education**

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*With the inception of internationalism, Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) has been adopted in many classroom settings in higher education to enhance students’ global competitiveness after graduation. However, research on CLIL has been primarily focused on learners, leaving teachers’ reflection unexplored in the Asia-Pacific region. This inquiry thus attempts to bridge this gap by exploring practitioners’ experience of teaching CLIL that underpins their critical praxis in Taiwan where CLIL has been adopted and promoted by the government in higher education. Qualitative data were collected and analyzed based on nine practitioners of such various disciplines as humanities, social sciences, engineering and commerce from nine different universities in northern, central and southern Taiwan where CLIL has prevailed. Through a phenomenology framework, several recurrent themes emerge from the data such as the unequivocal English elitism, limited creativity and spontaneity, lacking teacher preparation, and biased recruitment. The results also suggest that although these practitioners are optimistic about the implementation of CLIL as revealed in the extant literature, the practice of CLIL promoted by the government has resulted in several such potential issues as inequality and stress for them. Pedagogical implications are further discussed.*

*Keywords: Content and Language Integrated Learning; higher education; language policy*

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## Introduction

To enhance social cohesion and cultural diversity, Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) has been promoted by the European Union (EU) as a model to teach content knowledge and language in 2003 in the face of globalization (European Commission, 2010). It is an umbrella term that refers to the instruction that uses an additional language to teach a subject. It is also supported by the policy makers, teachers and parents from the EU member states as a response to today's fast-paced international arena where students need to interact with people of various backgrounds after graduation (Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2009). Since its official implementation in 2003, CLIL has been incorporated into the compulsory education of various degrees to facilitate language and content learning within the EU (Smit & Dafouz, 2012). However, the history of CLIL can be dated back to the 1840s when the English-medium instruction (EMI) was launched in Hong Kong during its English colonial period (Lin, 2015). The English language was perceived as a colonial language by locals under the British rule and later flourished during the 1980s that made Hong Kong an international city (Poon, 2013). After a few decades, the economic boom that came with the trend of globalization has made English an international language used in Hong Kong that made EMI popular among schools. The EMI approach has since been adopted and promoted by many schools as a means to provide students with more opportunities when searching for high-paid jobs after graduation (for a review, see Lo & Macaro, 2012).

The contemporary rise of EMI globally is related to the neoliberal discourse in education in which English is valued in the market of higher education owing to the increasing personal mobility and intercultural communication (Gray, 2010). English is not only regarded as the only language used by the majority, but also serves as a lingua franca to fulfill the need to communicate internationally and transmit information widely. As Byun et al. (2011) have aptly indicated, the political dimension of EMI can be observed when English dominates the academic discourse where scholars are encouraged to present and publish their work in English. Most top-tier journals are also published in English that makes scholars and readers conform to the *Englishnization* where more value is carried in the polemics of neoliberalism that has made English an international language that is politics-laden (for a review, see Pennycook, 2017).

To better understand the theoretical rationale of CLIL, Coyle (2007) proposed four different dimensions as to how CLIL can be used to design future curriculum. This framework can be divided into content (subject matter), cognition (thinking process), communication (language), and culture (intercultural awareness) (Coyle, Holmes, & King,

2009, p. 12). Regarding the content, subject matter should be taught using an additional language across the curriculum. During this time, learners' thinking process can be facilitated through more creativity and criticality. Afterward, learners' language proficiency will be heightened along with their intercultural awareness based on ample opportunities to interact with one another.

### ***CLIL in Education: Pros***

From Coyle's (2007) framework, research on CLIL has been conducted extensively over the past decade pertaining to how it can enhance learning. Coonan (2007) and Dalton-Puffer (2008) propounded that learners' language skills have been improved due to CLIL. Other improvements such as creativity and critical thinking were also discovered to be positively correlated with CLIL. Moore (2009) indicated that CLIL could strengthen students' content knowledge because curricula are usually more carefully designed to tailor to their need. Meanwhile, learners' affect can be motivated to further their language development. Bruton (2011) pointed out that teachers tend to provide learners with more detailed feedback in class based on CLIL; it is thus easier and more effective for students to learn due to ample opportunities to think and interact with peers. Pérez-Cañado (2012) found that CLIL could promote learners' intercultural awareness while learning different content areas in another language. Pérez-Cañado argued that students not only learn from constant comparing and contrasting during the learning process, but also cooperate with each other (teacher) to conceptualize their own *Zone of Proximal Development*, which was proposed by Vygotsky (1978) as the trajectory for learners to acquire knowledge more effectively through interaction and cooperation.

In Asia, research on CLIL has also been conducted for the past few years based on learners' perspectives even though it is still a relatively new concept compared with the EU context where it originated (Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2009). In China, Jiang (2010) indicated that CLIL could motivate students more and facilitate their multiple intelligences to assist them in cultivating a more positive learning attitude for both content and language learning. In Japan, Sasajima, Ikeda, Hemmi, and Reilly (2011) opined that students' language proficiency improved over the course of CLIL. They not only appeared to be more ready to learn more independently, but also more motivated to learn a subject matter in another language. In Taiwan, Chang (2010) discovered college students' enhanced English proficiency and content knowledge based on CLIL. In other words, they were more perceptive and willing to take on more challenges academically based on CLIL's

affordances for their content learning and language development. Yang (2017) further argued that CLIL increases college students' employability and mobility after graduation in Taiwan. They hence found it easier to join the workforce due to the content and language teaching that CLIL entails. From the literature reviewed, it can be seen that though CLIL is a new learning concept in Asia, numerous studies have been conducted detailing the affordances of CLIL to promote effective learning.

### ***CLIL in Education: Cons***

Some negative effects that problematize CLIL can also be found at the same time. Yip, Tsang, and Cheung (2003) propounded that students in Hong Kong did not learn their subject matter (Geography and Science) more effectively from CLIL due to their low English proficiency. Some detrimental effects were also detected regarding their content learning simultaneously along with their lower learning motivation. Nikula (2010) showcased that students in Finland are sometimes forced to learn content knowledge in another language before their mother tongue is fully developed, causing them to experience frustration and difficulty as a result. In Japan, Sasajima et al. (2011) illustrated that CLIL might endanger learners' Japanese learning based on CLIL since English is the medium of instruction in many content classrooms. That is, students' content learning might not be that effective if their English is not solid enough for more cognitive processing when learning a subject matter. From a critical review, Coyle (2013) found that CLIL lessons somehow lack a sequential progression that leverages learners' content learning in a systematic manner. This is especially true in the Spanish context in which a more scaffolded approach is called for that pertains to both content and language instruction.

For practitioners, while it is important to note that they indeed witnessed students' improvement based on the CLIL framework as reviewed earlier (for a review, also see Tedick & Cammarata, 2012), various concerns were further raised. Bigelow (2010) explored CLIL teachers' experience and perception of designing content-based curricula, and the results revealed that they encountered difficulties when articulating language objectives, did not know students' need, and lacked the knowledge of metalinguistics for content to be taught in another language. Cammarata (2010) illustrated CLIL practitioners' perspective on effective instruction by indicating that they think they should be more prepared about the language functions, finding the appropriate teaching materials, and the training to integrate content with language more seamlessly to make CLIL more effective. Tan (2011) investigated the CLIL policy in Malaysia based on a group of mathematics, science and

language teachers' view and the findings showcased that both language and content instructors held the belief that they had several distinct roles in school, which further renders their failure when it comes to integrating content and language as a result. It is clear to observe that while CLIL indeed has its merit for students' cognitive and language development, practitioners have encountered hardships that might influence their teaching trajectory adversely.

The concept of CLIL has also been critiqued in the field of language learning since it automatically makes English the default language given its status as an international language nowadays. Phillipson (1992) described this *linguistic imperialism* in higher education when English is imposed on students irrespective of their preferred language of instruction. This can hence have several adverse effects. For example, Nunan (2003) argued that this phenomenon hinders learners' first language development and sophisticated cognitive processing when learning content-specific subjects. Jambor (2007) contended that this imperialism in education gives rise to students' weakened local language and cultural identities since English dominates in the classroom setting, which somehow makes their indigenous language and culture less important compared with English. CLIL has since been challenged by scholars who problematize the practicality and effect that students have when language (English) is combined with content area courses (for a review, see Crystal, 2012; Spolsky, 2012).

### ***The Study***

Research on CLIL has been focused on students' learning outcome in Taiwan since it is a new concept in higher education pertaining to the pros and cons of its implementation (Hou, Morse, Chiang, & Chen, 2013). A review of the literature reveals that all recent empirical investigations seem to focus on either content knowledge or language as far as students are concerned (Alejo & Piquer-Piriz, 2016; Coyle, 2013), leaving teachers' voice unheard in regard to their perspective after the implementation of CLIL encouraged by the Ministry of Education (MOE) in Taiwan recently (Chang, 2010). From the literature reviewed, studies with regard to CLIL practitioners' perception can be seen in Malaysia (Tan, 2011), America (Cammarata, 2010), Canada (Bigelow, 2010), and Hong Kong (Lin & Lo, 2017; Lo & Macaro, 2012). Little attempt has been made to explore CLIL practitioners' practice in Taiwan that could have several salient pedagogical implications for policy makers, educators and students (Yang, 2017). As Lin (2015) and Yang (2017) have called for more research on CLIL from such various dimensions as teachers' experience and

trajectory in the Asia-Pacific region for CLIL to be implemented more effectively, this study thus aims to answer their call by exploring CLIL teachers' perspective and experience in Taiwan's higher education that has not been explored at this point. The implications derived from this study will shed more light on how CLIL is conceptualized from the practitioners' view that further constitutes effective teaching and learning. Issues identified will also inform future practice that refines the current policy in relation to other international contexts. With this goal in mind, the research question proposed here is: What is practitioners' perspective on the policy and implementation of CLIL?

## **Methodology**

### ***Participants and Context***

To keep up with internationalism and globalization, Taiwan's MOE has been encouraging universities to adopt CLIL to increase students' competitive edge (Yang, 2017). English is used as the medium of instruction to teach content knowledge to make Taiwan's higher education more visible from a more global perspective. It is also assumed by the MOE that CLIL will attract more international enrollment for more language and cultural exchange in today's globalized world. At present, there are 92 CLIL programs in Taiwan conferring undergraduate and graduate degrees (Yang & Gosling, 2014). Since then, evaluations have been conducted by the MOE to ensure the quality of each program for funding and enrollment. During this time, teachers have been recruited to teach CLIL courses based on each program's need from a broader scale; that is, both international and local faculty members are considered for hiring.

Purposeful sampling (Patton, 2005) was used when recruiting the participants targeted for this study. E-mails were sent initially to 24 instructors at eleven universities that have adopted CLIL programs in humanities, social sciences, engineering and commerce located in northern, central and southern Taiwan. After the first inquiry, nine (see Table 1 for their respective field and background) agreed to participate in this study. Pseudonyms were used to protect their privacy during data analysis. As CLIL is a relatively new learning approach promoted by Taiwan's MOE, all the instructors in this study have been teaching CLIL for 3–4 years on average when the data were collected in accordance with the CLIL policy launched in Taiwan since 2013. This makes the data more comparable based on the same group of teachers who have started their CLIL practice that can be served as an important reference. Consent forms were also sent through e-mails afterward.

**Table 1: Participants' Respective Field and Educational Background**

Name	Title	Field	Years of teaching CLIL	School's location
Josh	Assistant Professor	Humanities (History)	3	South
Amy	Professor	Humanities (English)	4	Central
Lee	Associate Professor	Social Sciences (Economics)	3	North
Wei	Assistant Professor	Social Sciences (Political Science)	3.5	North
Chen	Associate Professor	Engineering (Material Science)	3	Central
Lai	Assistant Professor	Engineering (Electronic Engineering)	3	Central
Ning	Associate Professor	Engineering (Mechanical Engineering)	4	South
Tu	Associate Professor	Commerce (Accounting)	3.5	South
Hung	Professor	Commerce (Business Management)	3	North

### *Instruments and Data Analysis*

A researcher journal and semi-structured interviews were used for data collection in this study. As Bryman (2006) argued, participants' actual feedback and perspective can be more accurately reflected through a qualitative approach in education. My research team thus utilized semi-structured interviews to collect data with an aim to unravel the intricacies of these participants' experience that underpins their CLIL teaching. Interview items were designed based on a critical review of the CLIL literature as reviewed earlier that pertains to the goal of this study. Eleven questions were constructed originally in Mandarin Chinese and they were forwarded to three other scholars in CLIL for review to ensure readability and comprehensibility. After several meetings with them, nine questions remained at the end (see Appendix). All nine participants were interviewed at their universities by us and it took them 70–80 minutes on average to finish the interview session individually. A researcher journal was used during this time to record all the essential interactions in relation to the overarching goal of this study (Patton, 2005). This served as a means for us to ensure that more data could be collected with more depth and comprehensibility during the process. For instance, an important note was taken on June 23, 2017 in the researcher journal during the interview when Amy, one of the participants in this study, suddenly wanted to share her perspective on the English-only policy for the new faculty who planned to get a teaching job at her university by mentioning that:

Oh yeah, that's right ... it's indeed English-only or nothing because you know what? if you can't teach your content area in English well, you are less likely to land a job these days in Taiwan's academia ...

From the researcher journal kept during this time by us, it was noted that “Amy: Eng-only or nothing (sudden) 6/23/17 for new teachers.” This has helped us to record something unplanned that pertains to the overarching goal of this investigation for more depth to be reached.

All the data collected during the interview were recorded and transcribed after data collection. During this time, a phenomenology framework was used based on the identified themes and phenomena shown when the data were coded and labeled (Merriam, 2002). Phenomenology in social sciences refers to many conscious and unconscious facets of human awareness including an intention to act, sense of control, sense of mental effort, sense of activity along with the experiences of freedom, mental causation and purposefulness that occur within a social context (for a review, see Sharp, Green, & Lewis, 2017). From the phenomenological framework, various structures of consciousness are explored as they are experienced from the first person perspective for authenticity with regard to data analysis in education (Dall’Alba, 2009). An underlying assumption of phenomenological inquiry based on the qualitative paradigm denotes the constructivist view to approach reality; that is, all the biases and prejudices should be monitored through the process of data collection and analysis when a specific phenomenon is described in relation to the researched (for a review, see Friesen, Henriksson, & Saevi, 2012). In this study, we noted all the essential phenomena from the data as they appeared for more meaning to emerge. Extensive inquiries were also conducted from the participants to ensure that their data were not influenced by our subjectivities as qualitative researchers. We used analytic induction (Bryman, 2006) to ensure the trustworthiness of the transcribed data by revisiting them for more recurring themes to emerge before they were categorized and further analyzed. Constant reflections were also practiced by us at the same time based on the research instruments used in this study to maintain objectivity (Patton, 2005). Since the interviews were conducted in Chinese (the participants’ native language), data were translated into English by us and later forwarded to two translators for accuracy verification. Disagreements were resolved via discussion afterward. All participants were later contacted by phone for member check (Merriam, 2002) before the data were coded and analyzed for more credibility.

## **Results**

After data analysis, several salient phenomena emerge such as the unequivocal English elitism, limited creativity and spontaneity, lacking teacher preparation, and biased recruitment.



### ***Unequivocal English Elitism***

The first theme that appears is the concern of English elitism experienced by these practitioners. As English is arguably the most important international language these days, it is thus the norm for these practitioners to be adept in this language for CLIL to be implemented more successfully. However, the sole focus placed on English somehow denotes that other languages are less important, including Chinese, which is the official language in Taiwan. This phenomenon has been experienced by all the participants.

As Tu (commerce) illustrated:

I know English is important since it is a global language, but is it really more important than our native language? I am not sure about the English craze because students' native language has not been the focus for the past few years in Taiwan.

Another similar concern was raised when the participants complained about their students' weak Chinese language proficiency when learning content knowledge in English, which somehow defeats the purpose since CLIL should also focus on content knowledge for learning to occur.

Josh (humanities) pointed out that:

It's funny because many of my students can't even grasp what I teach in my History class in Chinese, especially for some terms and incidents ... let alone English, right?

Lai added from her engineering background that:

In Taiwan, English seems to dominate everything for CLIL ... I know we have to cater to those international students who don't speak Chinese to help them understand, but I really doubt those Taiwanese students can understand what I teach in class if English is mandated as the medium of instruction only ... and from my observation, many local students' Chinese proficiency is not good enough when they are required to learn their content in English ... I think it is really problematic.

The English elitism derived from CLIL also contributes to a curriculum change for these practitioners. That is, more classes are mandated to be taught in English including other general courses such as Physical Education and Chinese language.

As Wei said from his social sciences background:

My department has required all classes to be conducted in English like PE and Chinese language ... not just those CLIL ones ... a little bit strange because it sounds better to switch everything to English?

Both Wei and Josh added that the CLIL principle promoted by Taiwan's MOE contradicts with their teaching philosophy since students' understanding seems to be undermined when lectures are conducted in English only. The phenomenon of *Englishnization* has clearly made not only students but also teachers conform to the discourse in English that can take more time for learning to take shape in a content class. For Ning (engineering), students' comprehension does not deem the top priority for the CLIL curriculum that her school adopts, which also differs from her teaching philosophy where students' feedback and comprehension should top the list for content learning.

From the data collected, it is clear to see that these practitioners deem CLIL as the reason for the legitimization of English elitism even though they all agree that it is an important tool for communication these days. Because of the unequivocal nature for English to be used for CLIL, students' native language thus seems inferior that could result in their ineffective content learning.

### ***Limited Creativity and Spontaneity***

The second phenomenon that emerges is these practitioners' limited creativity and spontaneity when mandated to conduct their CLIL lessons in English at their institutions. As second language learners of English, these participants have to fit into the "language mode" to teach in English only as required by the MOE. This somehow gives them less space and room for creativity and spontaneity when it comes to curriculum design and implementation.

As Amy (humanities) shared:

I have to make sure that my lesson is understandable so my students won't feel confused after class. So I simply follow my lesson plans with all the points listed in class without needing to worry about teaching something different.

Hung also added from his commerce background:

I know some teachers like me have a template to teach, so we just need to follow it in class so we won't get distracted or "accidentally" talk about something that we don't know how to say in English.

Concurrently, six out of nine practitioners opined that the “template-style” teaching might make their lessons monotonous based on students’ feedback in class. As there seems to be little need to improvise in class, the participants regard their CLIL instruction as “dry,” “hard” and “fixed.”

As Chen (engineering) illustrated:

I sometimes think my class is too dry and hard for my students because of the mandated CLIL curriculum where I can only teach in English.

Lee (social sciences) also added that:

One of the comments I received from my teaching evaluation is that my lesson is too fixed ... but I am not sure how to make it less fixed if we need to follow the CLIL principle.

From the data analyzed, it can be noted that in order to adhere to the CLIL framework, practitioners need to pre-plan their lessons, which leads to their limited creativity and spontaneity in class. This vividly shows how CLIL is taught from the participants that paints a clear picture of their teaching practice in the context of Taiwan.

### ***Lacking Teacher Preparation***

The next theme that appears is these practitioners’ lack of teacher preparation before they started teaching in their CLIL programs. All of these practitioners pointed out that none of them received any instruction regarding CLIL neither as a student nor a teacher in school and how they should design their lessons. While they recognize the importance of CLIL for students’ competitive edge in the long run, these practitioners still express their feelings of isolation when they are pushed to the forefront for CLIL to be implemented without any proper training.

Ning (engineering) indicated that:

We were just told that our school is going to have CLIL instruction and my department is one of them ... I don’t think anyone of us are prepared to teach our content classes in English ... but we still need to try because it seems to be the trend in Taiwan.

Tu (commerce) also added that:

Personally, I didn't get any training about how to teach CLIL when I was doing my doctorate and I think it's the same for my colleagues in my department.

Josh (humanities) expressed his frustration by saying that:

Seems like we are on our own you know? No preparation whatsoever and we are expected to teach well ... or our school won't get the funding for the next school year.

In addition, the participants opined that CLIL is still a relatively new concept in Taiwan's higher education, and teacher preparation seems to be non-existent at this stage.

As Amy (humanities) indicated that:

I don't think there's any doctoral program in Taiwan that has any CLIL training for future teachers ... if we are required to do a good job, there should be some sort of preparation for us, right?

Lai (engineering) also maintained that:

The problem is that nobody learned how to teach CLIL when we were in school, and honestly, we don't have any course that aims to prepare future teachers in our school now ...

From the data collected, eight out of nine participants raised their concern at the same time while hoping a more comprehensive teacher preparation program that caters to students' need more appropriately. This will not merely enhance teachers' knowledge of theory and practice, but also resolve some foreseeable problems if CLIL is to be implemented more comprehensively in the future.

Hung (commerce) contended that:

I am not sure if students will learn better based on the current situation in Taiwan where CLIL is not fully implemented properly ... we as teachers don't even have the proper training ourselves. For example, whether to assess them in English or Chinese is a question and no one is sure in my school now ...

From the data, we can see the issues raised by these CLIL practitioners and how they might be resolved to make teaching and learning more holistic and comprehensive. The result points out these practitioners' need and why it is salient to provide them with more proper training.

### ***Biased Recruitment***

The last theme that emerges is school's biased recruitment as expressed by the participants. It is clear from the study that the unequivocal English elitism identified earlier has resulted in school's preference when it comes to hiring new faculty members. It was discovered that foreign teachers are preferred compared with the local ones due to their assumed higher English proficiency level. This phenomenon has created great pressure and heavy burden for the local teachers who need to catch up not just academically, but also linguistically.

As Chen (engineering) illustrated:

The misconception is that as long as you speak better English or from abroad, you will automatically be more popular ... our school definitely cares more about that than my research productivity.

Wei (social sciences) agreed by adding that:

My school will give more preference to foreigners who apply for the job because their spoken English is better than ours, so they should be better teachers? I don't think so ...

Lai (engineering) also concurred by saying that:

If you want to get your job in college now, you need to care more about how well you can teach in English because that's what they care these days. So we have to keep improving our English even though we have been teaching engineering students for more than 15 years.

Meanwhile, seven out of nine participants expressed their concern regarding this biased standard as language proficiency outweighs their professional content knowledge. CLIL thus seems to be language teaching as opposed to content learning as far as they are concerned.

Ning (engineering) opined that:

I don't agree with the trend that we should just focus on our language delivery at the expense of research and content teaching. Without our professional background, students cannot learn anything from us.

Six out of nine participants further indicated their concern in regard to funding allocation based on their CLIL teaching evaluation. As four of them pointed out, teachers

are evaluated not based on their professional knowledge, but their English delivery that only represents part of the CLIL framework.

Amy (humanities) added that:

Whether we are good CLIL teachers or not should be based on our professional knowledge, not just our English delivery ... but it's not the case in Taiwan for government funding.

## Discussion and Conclusion

This study explored CLIL practitioners' perspective on how CLIL is conceptualized and implemented in Taiwan that has not been researched at this point. A few issues have been identified from the data collected. That is, in order to implement CLIL more successfully, practitioners need to conform to the unequivocal English elitism at the expense of other languages that might have similar significance for students' future career prospect. It was also revealed that the CLIL framework seems to ignore students' first language development, causing their low language skills for their content knowledge to be acquired more effectively. As many practitioners have indicated, students are required to learn new content knowledge in another language before their mother tongue is solid enough for more complicated cognitive processing to transpire in a CLIL classroom. Further, students' comprehension and feedback do not seem to be the top priority based on the CLIL curriculum that their schools adopt, which differs from their teaching philosophy for learning to take shape more effectively. This concurs with Phillipson's (1992) *linguistic imperialism* that describes how internationalism has resulted in the prevalence and utilization of the English language in higher education nowadays at the expense of other salient variables both culturally and linguistically in the local context. As Nunan (2003) has discovered, this pro-English movement has an important impact on how educational policy and practice are enacted and implemented, especially in the Asia-Pacific region on which this study was based. It can be noted that the general impression from the MOE in Taiwan is that in order to implement CLIL more effectively, English is automatically the default language irrespective of students' first language development. This is also similar from several scholars' observation such as Yip et al. (2003) in Hong Kong, and Lin (2015) in Malaysia as well as Singapore that could hamper future educational innovations for students' multilingual and multicultural development. According to Mahboob (2011), this language ideology contributes to a more negative attitude toward students' local culture and language that is often seen in higher education in today's globalized world. This can also be confirmed by previous studies on

CLIL practitioners' perception that English is oftentimes the automatic default language at the expense of students' native language development that can contribute to several adverse effects such as low comprehensibility and poor understanding for both content and language learning (Lin, 2015; Lin & Lo, 2017). This study shows that for CLIL to be conceptualized more effectively in higher education, more research is needed and English should not be the only concern for teaching and learning to take shape.

Meanwhile, limited creativity and spontaneity were identified by these CLIL practitioners as a problem that could negatively influence their teaching. This phenomenon somehow makes them regard CLIL curriculum as something pre-planned that has little need for improvisation in class since they need to conform to the English mode. From the data collected, the participants are used to the "template-style" teaching that has been considered monotonous by their students when it comes to curriculum design and implementation. These practitioners thus deem the CLIL curriculum as "dry," "fixed" and "hard" that does little to motivate students' learning interest and attitude. This result corresponds to the research by Chang (2010), Lin (2013) and Nikula (2010) that CLIL curriculum sometimes lacks a coherent sequence both for content and language. As Bigelow (2010), Lin (2015) and Yang (2017) have vividly propounded from CLIL practitioners' reflection on their teaching practice, the CLIL curriculum adopted by their countries is not designed and evaluated systematically when an unbalanced focus between students' first and second languages still exists, which further limits their teaching quality regarding their creativity and spontaneity in class. This study has broadened the scope from previous studies by detailing the CLIL practitioners' outlook in Taiwan that has not been explored so far, and the result further calls for more planning and collaboration between policy makers and practitioners before CLIL can be implemented more effectively based on the strengths and weaknesses in a context where English is not a native language such as Taiwan.

Additionally, the wave of CLIL also reveals a lack of teacher preparation in Taiwan as these practitioners pointed out that it has negatively impacted how teaching and learning should take shape with effectiveness. While it is worth noting that these participants did not disagree with the salience of CLIL for students' future career prospect because it seems to be the trend for content and language to be integrated to facilitate their cognitive processing, the participants here still expressed their concern pertaining to their lack of professional knowledge. Further examination from them also revealed that CLIL training course is non-existent both in the undergraduate and postgraduate programs in Taiwan, which subsequently hampers them from implementing their CLIL lessons for content and language

to be integrated more holistically. This finding is in agreement with the studies by Alejo and Piquer-Piriz (2016) and Lasagabaster and Sierra (2009) that a lack of teacher training can produce unsatisfactory results and a backlash against the CLIL framework. Lin (2013) and Yang (2017), two CLIL practitioners in Hong Kong and Taiwan respectively, have clearly indicated that CLIL training courses should be incorporated into teacher training programs for pre-service teachers to address their need when meeting different content and language objectives. This will guide more CLIL stakeholders and policy makers in the right direction; hence, theory can be used to inform practice more seamlessly (Coyle, 2007; Hou et al., 2013). This finding also verifies Cammarata's (2010) study on CLIL practitioners' perspective that more teacher training is desperately needed based more on language functions, finding the appropriate teaching materials, and the capability to integrate content with language more seamlessly to make CLIL more effective. This study adds to the extant literature of CLIL based on practitioners' actual experience that can provide insight into how instruction and learning can be conceptualized with efficiency if more proper training can be provided in the future. In the case here, it is essential to note that although CLIL is necessary to make students more competitive in today's globalized world, meanwhile, a systematic curriculum needs to be in place through more discussion and collaboration among policy makers, scholars and practitioners to make this possible. This will make the curriculum more complete with an acute awareness that language (English) is not the only part of the CLIL equation for content learning and teaching. This clearly needs to be emphasized as CLIL is still a new learning approach in Taiwan that calls for more research.

The last issue identified is the biased recruitment process expressed by the participants: only valuing those foreign faculty members who are assumed to obtain a higher English proficiency compared with their local counterparts. Local teachers in Taiwan are thus found to be under great pressure not just to catch up with their professional content knowledge, but language proficiency that seems to be a burden to them. For these participants, CLIL somehow gives their schools the impression that language outweighs content learning that could have several ripple effects during the hiring process when favor is clearly given to foreigners according to Phillipson's (1992) *linguistic imperialism*. From the data of this study, faculty members are evaluated not based on their professional content knowledge, but their English delivery for funding application and allocation. This ideology found in Taiwan is identical to what Lin (2015) and Mahboob (2011) — two CLIL practitioners in Hong Kong and Australia — have observed that many stakeholders and policy makers in Asia still have the stereotype that language (English) still outweighs content for CLIL. However,



Coyle, Hood, and Marsh (2010) have illustrated that CLIL curriculum should entail four different yet integrated dimensions including content (subject matter), cognition (thinking process), communication (language), and culture (intercultural awareness) for learning to form with efficiency. As Bruton (2011), Coyle (2013) and Nunan (2003) have contended, pedagogy should be designed based on different educational, sociocultural and sociohistorical contexts for content and language to be integrated in a more comprehensive manner. The result here is also in agreement with the neoliberal discourse in education in which English is clearly valued as an asset that holds currencies in today's academia with great demand. This politics-infused language has not only influenced teaching immensely, but also recruitment and career development in various ways (Pennycook, 2017). This study further confirms this phenomenon that deserves our attention in Taiwan where little research has been conducted at this juncture.

To conclude, the results from this study should not be generalized due to the qualitative nature that unravels the intricacies of these Taiwanese CLIL practitioners' teaching trajectory and the issues that have informed their practice. It is important to note that this educational inquiry is exploratory based on the participants' perspective in regard to their own theory and practice that might or might not be identical compared with others (Bryman, 2006). As one reviewer pointed out that the statements from the participants should not necessarily be taken as the truth, we contend that while it is true, the aim and scope of this study do not allow us to seek generalization due to its design. Nonetheless, it has shed new light on the CLIL practice in Taiwan that should be taken as a reference for future policy making and implementation. The pedagogical implications and practical recommendations gleaned here regarding the teaching and learning of CLIL include the awareness of how CLIL should be designed and implemented, and knowing students' language limitation by perhaps allowing their first language to be used when uncertainty occurs during instruction for more complicated cognitive processing. This more balanced approach and attitude will give practitioners more room to design their CLIL lessons based on their strength and professionalism, thus encouraging creativity and spontaneity for learning to be more engaging in class. Teacher training programs should also be in place both at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels so that practitioners do not feel lonely and unprepared for CLIL to be implemented more effectively. Stakeholders and policy makers are advised to make judicious decisions regarding how funding should be allocated. Government officials (MOE) should pay more attention to how CLIL curriculum is designed and implemented along with how practitioners are trained instead of just focusing on the end

result of CLIL for more internationalization in today's globalized world. Maybe it is time for us to reevaluate the current practice based on the issues identified in this study not just in Taiwan, but also other international contexts in which CLIL has prevailed in higher education. Based on this study, future research can be aimed at the questions regarding how far we should localize CLIL or challenge its legitimacy in terms of teachers' professionalism as opposed to a passive implementation by the government found in this study. The specificities of CLIL pedagogy conducive to higher education should also be explored.

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**Appendix: Interview items**

1. How long have you been teaching CLIL?
2. What's your teaching philosophy of CLIL?
3. How's teaching CLIL like in your school?
4. How do you design your CLIL curriculum?
5. What problems have you faced teaching CLIL?
6. What's the policy for CLIL in your school?
7. How do you assess CLIL from students?
8. What strength does CLIL have?
9. What weakness does CLIL have?

## 高等教育中融合學科內容與語言學習教學法之政策與實行： 以教師的觀點為例

孔繁偉

### 摘要

隨着全球國際化的趨勢，學科內容與外語學習相結合（Content and Language Integrated Learning, CLIL）的課程在高等教育中已逐漸受到重視，以期能增進學生畢業後的競爭力。然而，CLIL 的研究至今仍以學生的學習效果為主，有關亞太地區教師教學的研究鮮為人知。因此，本研究探討台灣大專院校教師對於 CLIL 課程的教學方法和經驗。根據台灣教育部，CLIL 課程已逐漸成為大專院校的授課趨勢。本質性研究利用現象歸納法（phenomenology）探討台灣北部、中部、南部大學裏，人文、社會科學、理工和商管領域的教師對於 CLIL 課程政策和實行的觀點。研究結果顯示出許多問題，包括不對等的語言教學政策、缺乏創造力與空間的課程、不完備的教師培育，以及不公平的教師招募要求。即使教師對 CLIL 課程保持樂觀態度，他們同時亦認為此政策與實行使他們感受到不公平和雙倍的壓力。本研究最後探討當中的教育意涵。

關鍵詞：學科內容與外語學習結合；高等教育；語言政策