National Appraisal and Stakeholder Perceptions of a Tertiary CLIL Programme in Taiwan

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Abstract

In a global society, politics, culture and economics are closely interdependent and higher education has a responsibility to cultivate and equip professionals with the skills to meet the international competitive environment. Taiwan’s higher education institutions are cognisant of this challenge. To meet the competition in the international arena the Ministry of Education (MoE) is encouraging institutions of higher education to establish CLIL programmes. In 2011, the MoE conducted a national scale appraisal of all 92 CLIL programmes. This study focuses on one of those programmes classed as highly recommended by the MoE, namely, International Tourism Management. The study outlines what made it successful from the perspective of the MoE and secondly investigates multiple stakeholders’ perceptions and attitudes towards CLIL education. The research offers four observations: firstly, CLIL teacher development is an urgent issue in Taiwan. Next, further consideration is warranted on whether all students in EFL settings can equally learn or thrive in a CLIL programme. Thirdly, accommodation should be made for language support. Lastly, an internal systematic and comprehensive evaluation of CLIL is highly desirable to encourage better learner outcomes and programme effectiveness.

Keywords: CLIL, programme appraisal, stakeholders’ perspectives, Taiwan education

1. Introduction

CLIL is popular in Europe (Smit, 2007), where the use of a foreign language as a medium of instruction in teaching content courses is consistent with the need for multilingual citizens (European Commission, 2010) and CLIL is believed to be an effective way to equip learners with needed foreign language skills (Dalton-Puffer, 2008; Lasagabaster and Sierra, 2009). This apparent success has attracted attention in Asian contexts where higher education institutions among others are seeking to respond to the needs of a globalised community characterised by high mobility and the interdependence of commerce, culture, people and education. In Taiwanese contexts CLIL is also seen as a way to prepare global citizens equipped with foreign language skills. With this goal in mind, tertiary institutions in Taiwan have introduced CLIL using English as a medium of instruction to teach a number of disciplines. With the government’s active encouragement and the provision of handsome incentives it is expected that the number of CLIL programmes will increase dramatically in the next few years.

CLIL has a rapidly growing research base (Dalton-Puffer and Nikula, 2006; Dalton-Puffer and Smit, 2007; Lasagabaster and Zarobe, 2010). This has attracted interest in Asia where a few CLIL studies have been conducted and learner outcomes in the Chinese-speaking world require considerably more research. Several studies contend that CLIL in Asian contexts has motivational advantages (Lee and Chang, 2008), develops multiple intelligences (Mackenzie, 2008) and acts as an enabler for Asian EFL learners to develop positive attitudes towards English (Marsh and Hood, 2008). They also highlight that CLIL teacher preparation appears to be insufficient, and that there are concerns regarding the supply of qualified CLIL teachers (Luo, 2006; Hou, 2007; Lo, 2007), a concern noted by Estonian CLIL programme managers (Mehisto and Asser, 2007). In addition, remarking on European research Dalton-Puffer (2007, 2011) suggests there is insufficient research investigating students’ perceptions of how they view their
CLIL teachers’ (including content teachers and EFL teachers) language problems and use of corrections in instruction. These concerns suggest that the supply, training and perceptions of CLIL teachers would also need to be researched in Asian contexts.

Seikkula-Leino (2007), who researched CLIL learners’ affective performance and attitudes, noted that though pupils in CLIL programmes were more motivated to study and to use a foreign language (FL), they sometimes feel incompetent and inadequate in learning, brought about by the complexities and difficulties of learning conceptually difficult content through an FL. Hence, Seikkula-Leino (2007: 338) claimed that ‘learning CLIL can be so challenging that the maximal outcome of content learning is not always reached’, suggesting there is a need to consider student attitudes toward CLIL programmes.

There are various stakeholders in a CLIL programme: programme managers, teachers and students and in Taiwan a further stakeholder is the MoE. The government policies promoting CLIL indicate that there is a top down programme of implementation and decision making for CLIL in Taiwan. In 2011 the MoE, recognising that quality control is a major concern, conducted the first island-wide appraisal of all current CLIL programmes.

In summary the outcomes of research in CLIL education have mostly revealed positive consequences, but the literature hints at the need for more research in the burgeoning Asian context and a need to investigate not only student responses but also teacher responses and other stakeholder opinions. In particular there is a need to consider the supply of and the attitude toward CLIL teachers. In response, this research combines multiple methods and a holistic approach to investigate the programme director's, teachers’ and learners’ perceptions and attitudes and does so in the light of a commendation of a programme from the instigating stakeholder, the MoE. The study does this in a less explored context, namely, Taiwan, to address a gap in CLIL research. Specifically this study focuses on a programme considered to be highly recommended from the top-level stakeholder’s (i.e. the MoE’s) perspective in the national appraisal.

2. Focus of the study

This research analyses the stakeholder opinions of a CLIL programme regarded as successful and highly recommended by an official appraisal in Taiwan. The research focuses on the following questions:

1. What makes a CLIL programme successful in the Taiwanese context from the perspective of the evaluation body?
2. What are other stakeholders’ attitudes toward the CLIL programme, in particular with regard to the MoE’s assessment areas?
3. In what areas do the various stakeholders differ in opinion?

3. Background to the study

3.1 CLIL programmes in Taiwan
The Taiwan MoE has encouraged institutions in higher education to set up programmes to use English as a medium of instruction for disciplinary knowledge with several goals in mind. These include increasing the standards of tertiary education, solidifying the competitiveness of universities, broadening college students’ global vision and language proficiency, facilitating cultural exchanges, publicising the features of Taiwanese higher education, and also recruiting foreign students to study in Taiwan.
Currently there are 92 CLIL degree programmes, where English is used as the only medium of instruction with the goals of teaching content and advancing English language skills, in 29 universities, conferring bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees. The earliest programmes were established in 1979 and the latest ones were set up in 2010. All of the programmes are expected to use English as the only language of instruction in the classroom. The MoE serves as the initiator and evaluator, providing incentives of up to 10 million NT dollars (about EUR 250,000) per university to encourage the establishment of more CLIL programmes. In addition, the MoE conducts national-scale appraisals among all the programmes to ensure their quality. Programmes that have been evaluated and accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) and the Institute of Engineering Education Taiwan (IEET) can be waived from the appraisal. In 2011, working with the Higher Education Evaluation and Accreditation Council of Taiwan (HEEACT), the MoE started its first appraisal of CLIL programmes.

3.2 CLIL programme appraisal
HEEACT was commissioned by the MoE to conduct a national appraisal. All CLIL programmes underwent appraisal from May to July 2011, save those exempt due to external accreditation. The appraisal was conducted by internal self-evaluation and field visits. Programme staff first evaluated their own programmes based on indicators provided by the MoE. External appraisers were provided with self-evaluation reports.

Then each programme scheduled a full day field visit by two external appraisers who had reviewed the report. Their main duty was to check the authenticity of the report and to assess the CLIL programme. The appraisers first listened to a presentation from the programme director and then visited the learning environments and facilities, and reviewed the evidence or profiles. They also conducted classroom observations and interviewed students, teaching staff and non-academic staff in the programme. By the end of the day, they drafted an initial evaluation report. In October 2011, the appraisal results were officially announced and the 92 programmes were classified into three different rankings: highly recommended, recommended, and not recommended. Over 90% of the CLIL programmes were regarded as highly recommended or recommended and were eligible to apply for an additional MoE subsidy of 3 million NT dollars (EUR 75,000) and 1.5 million NT dollars (EUR 37,500) respectively.

4. Research methods

4.1 Case study
This study follows a four-year bachelor’s degree programme in International Tourism Management established in the fall of 2010 at a national polytechnic university in Taiwan. As the programme had only one-year preparation time before its commencement there was a need to adapt existing curricula from similar well-known universities worldwide to fit the Taiwanese context.

Students enrolled in the programme are mainly English or tourism majors in vocational schools and they are expected to take a one-year industry placement in their third year. They are encouraged to undertake their placement in tourism-related industries either in Taiwan or overseas. The aims of the curriculum are to equip the students with professional knowledge and skills in managing and marketing tourism industries with international clients; hence, communicative skills in English are important for the students. All courses except the Chinese language and general education courses are conducted in English, with some 70% of the curriculum delivered through CLIL. In addition, unlike other Taiwanese tertiary programmes, there is no additional supplementary English language course provided for the students to enhance their English proficiency. Another purpose of English as the medium of instruction is to attract foreign students to study in the programme, a feature perhaps peculiar to some Asian contexts such as Taiwan and Japan (Sasajima et al., 2011).
Teaching faculty who lecture in this programme are either second language (L2) speakers of English who are also content teachers with doctorates obtained in English-speaking countries, or L1 speakers of English with expertise in tourism. The programme was designated by the MoE as one of the 28 highly recommended CLIL programmes.

4.2 Stakeholders
In order to obtain a holistic view, reports from multiple stakeholders were considered. Firstly, the top-level stakeholder, the MoE, was represented through its report on the polytechnic university's CLIL programme. The research also included the university's former programme director, two teachers teaching through their L1 and two teachers teaching through their L2. Finally, the students studying in the programme were also included. As the programme is in its second year (2012) there is a total of 54 first and second year students (48 females and 6 males) (see Table 1 for the background of the questionnaire respondents). At the time of the appraisal and this study the first-year students had studied in the programme for half a year and the second-year students for one and half years.

Table 1. Background information of the questionnaire respondents (n=54)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Female: 88.9%</th>
<th>Male: 11.1%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>1st: 55.6%</td>
<td>2nd: 44.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationality</td>
<td>Local: 94.4%</td>
<td>International: 5.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school major</td>
<td>Tourism: 55.6%</td>
<td>Languages: 20.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English proficiency</td>
<td>HI: 25.9%</td>
<td>I: 25.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of learning</td>
<td>1-6 yrs: 35.2%</td>
<td>7-12 yrs: 48.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*HI: high-intermediate (CEFR B2), I: Intermediate (CEFR B1), B: basic (CEFR A2); the rest 25.9% do not have any English proficiency certificates

4.3 Methodology and data collection
This study's focus lends itself to a mixed methods research design which uses qualitative and quantitative approaches in combination and draws upon advantages of both. This method can serve to provide a better understanding than either approach alone (Creswell and Plano, 2007). Using the notation proposed by Morse (1991, 2003), this is a QUAN→QUAL explanatory mixed-methods design. The results will be discussed by using the quantitative results in combination with the qualitative data to enhance the analysis and further illuminate some of the findings. This methodology allows the integration of data and responses from the various stakeholders, from the MoE, through the programme director to the teaching staff and students as outlined below.

A quantitative approach was employed with the students who were given a Chinese close-ended questionnaire (see Appendix 1 for English version) with a Likert scale five-point response designed for the purpose of the study. The question items in the questionnaire can be divided into five categories: i) linguistic improvement, ii) content knowledge learning, iii) classroom practices, iv) supports and strategies, and v) affective attitudes.

Before the students completed the questionnaire, it was piloted by one teacher teaching through his/her L2 and two students in the programme to ensure comprehensibility and readability. All the 54 questionnaire sheets were returned (including from three international students from Japan, Hong Kong and Macau), reaching a 100% response rate. Table 1 shows the background information for the respondents.

The qualitative data came from several sources in addition to an analysis of the MoE appraisal report. Each teacher and programme director was individually interviewed for about half an hour in their respective first languages. Chinese interviews were transcribed into English and checked by an independent translator. In addition, the students also responded to open-ended questions on the given questionnaire.

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5. Results and discussion

A discussion of the appraisal report can identify several dimensions that the MoE feels are significant. These dimensions can then be discussed drawing on the quantitative and qualitative responses of other stakeholders. Following on from this, other dimensions identified by other stakeholders, but absent from the appraisal, are introduced to illuminate differences in various stakeholder positions.

5.1 MoE appraisal report

HEEACT (2011) appraised the CLIL programme from three different dimensions: curriculum, teaching and resources. The report (MoE, 2011) includes both positive features of the programme and areas needing to be improved. In the curriculum dimension, it noted that the CLIL programme closely connects its curriculum design with the educational aims and the cultivation of internationalised professionals of tourism management. The instruction using English can increase students’ linguistic competence, and the internship undertaken in the third year offers them chances to expand their global vision during job placements which also enhances their competitiveness in international job markets. Furthermore, the CLIL design can attract foreign students to study in Taiwan without the language barrier posed by Mandarin Chinese and so promotes the governmental policy of ‘exporting higher education’.

The report advises that the CLIL programme has to be periodically evaluated internally due to the different requirements between Taiwanese students and non-Taiwanese students and that their learning outcomes should be distinguished according to initial English proficiency. Further, that the means of assessing students’ learning progress in the CLIL programme should be different from those in Chinese-medium courses (CM). Though CLIL is content-driven, learners’ linguistic competence is still a major concern for the educational authorities since it may greatly affect their intake and output.

The report praises the programme for its inclusion of teachers coming from various disciplines, their expertise in both knowledge and practice and their strong connection with tourism industries. The University also offers incentives such as extra pay for teachers teaching through their L2 to encourage them to deliver content courses in English. However, the report also highlights the worry of having insufficiently qualified CLIL teachers in the future as the number of students grows.

Finally, with respect to resources and support, the report approves of efforts to provide sufficient non-academic faculty to assist students’ learning, and the provision of Chinese language courses for international students. It also advised creating a more complete bilingual environment to meet international students’ needs in the University. This concern is a reflection of the Asian context where one of the factors in establishing CLIL programmes is to attract international students and thus the quality of support for international students becomes a criterion for programme evaluation.

Since this was the first evaluation of CLIL programmes in Taiwan it was too early to achieve a deeper evaluation of learning outcomes. The MoE emphasises curriculum design, teacher quality and learning support, but stakeholders’ perspectives such as programme directors’, students’ and teachers’ perceptions and attitudes toward CLIL are overlooked despite some researchers arguing that stakeholder perceptions have an effect on student learning (Mehisto and Asser, 2007).

In summary the MoE report identified several factors:

1. A belief that the programme will increase the student’s English proficiency and enhance their subsequent competitiveness in the global job market.
2. A concern that the students’ content understanding will be vitiated by the instruction in English.
3. A suggestion to accommodate students’ diverse language abilities.
4. The use of teachers from/with differing disciplines and expertise.
5. A close connection between the programme and the university’s goals.
6. The programme’s potential to attract foreign students.
7. The sufficient provision of non-academic facility to aid the students.

These points are discussed in combination with other research data collected in this study.

5.1.1 Increase in student’s English proficiency
The results of the items (see Appendix 2.1) about linguistic skills improvement suggest that most students feel that there is some improvement resulting from CLIL education with the exception of writing skills. This result is similar to previous studies (Dalton-Puffer, 2008). Linguistic skills are not explicitly taught in this programme, and English writing is not commonly required in the CLIL classroom whereas speaking, listening and reading are relatively connected to the teaching conditions. The quantitative data was clearly supported by student’s comments that their listening skills were markedly improved but writing skills were not favourably affected.

At the same time there were indications of differences amongst the students. When the study was conducted, the first year students had only studied in the programme for a semester with about half of their teachers speaking English as an L1 (L1 teachers) and half as an L2 (L2 teachers). This contrasted to the second year students who had studied for three semesters only through their L2. The freshmen perceived relatively less improvement in linguistic skills, probably attributable to the short time period. English majors also held more negative attitudes towards the improvement of linguistic skills, perhaps a reflection that it is rather easier for non-English majors with lower English competence to observe progress. Further students’ comments indicated that the higher exposure to English caused stress and anxiety which made them less confident in receiving and producing content knowledge in English.

5.1.2 Content language learning
In contrast to the favourable gains in linguistic competence the students perceive that they are less confident of gains in content knowledge (see Appendix 2.2). Apparently they have difficulties in reading content materials and writing or expressing content knowledge using English. This effect appeared to be compounded for English majors who were presumably starting from a lower knowledge base. Teachers commented that the learners were always very quiet in class, with less interaction than when learning through the mother tongue, and commented that this could have been due to the need to use English.

Students reported differences for learning professional vocabulary required in CLIL and in understanding lexical choices, constraints and conventions particularly for those used in their discourse communities (i.e. tourism management field). In CLIL classrooms, teachers did not explicitly instruct students in what technical lexis or linguistic structures they had to know which may have impacted on the ability to follow lessons.

This also brings up the issue of how to assess what students have learnt in CLIL lessons. They may display content knowledge better by using their mother tongue but this is not what CLIL education aims for (Coyle, 2010). Hence, additional language help should be supplied if learners’ linguistic competence is fairly diverse and the FL is merely used in classrooms without allowing learners to immerse themselves in an English environment outside of class.

An interesting divergence of opinion between L1 and L2 teachers was that L2 teachers showed more satisfaction with CLIL whereas L1 teachers held a more reserved attitude. L2 teachers believed CLIL is a new learning method and so they were more sympathetic toward the students but L1 teachers expressed the opinion that it was too early to judge learning outcomes due to the short exposure to CLIL.
5.1.3 Supplementary English courses
The variance in student responses on the necessity of additional language support (see Appendix 2.3) suggests that students had divided attitudes towards the need for supplementary English courses to enhance their English proficiency. Over half of the students (59.3%) expressed a strong desire that Mandarin Chinese be used more frequently to explain difficult content. The students’ diverse English proficiency and previous studies in high schools could explain this. This concern was also raised by the teachers and the programme director confirmed that this has already led the programme to increase its requirements in English proficiency for prospective students, and that the second intake had higher English proficiency. The implication is that this university’s CLIL programme is more suitable for high-achievers in English.

5.1.4 Diverse teacher backgrounds
When the students were asked about actual teaching practices in the CLIL classroom (see Appendix 2.4), the results confirm that the present CLIL programme has a high exposure to the TL (over 50%) and teachers would adapt or adopt teaching styles and strategies for their CLIL lessons as indicated in other studies (Novotna and Hofmannova, 2000; Graff et al., 2007; Serra, 2007).

The director was convinced that an important feature of the programme was the diverse teaching faculty (e.g. the mixing of L1, L2 and use of exchange teachers), and expressed the opinion that this would broaden students’ global visions and enhance their job competitiveness. However, as expressed in the survey results and comments, the students held a contrary and more cautious attitude. Interestingly students appeared to show a preference for native English-speaking teachers to instruct on CLIL courses. Presumably, L1 teachers’ command of English and CLIL teaching strategies were influential factors affecting the students’ perceptions. This tendency also corresponds to the underlying worry that CLIL programmes have been emerging rapidly at a rate greater than the education of teachers in CLIL. In Taiwan and other Chinese-speaking areas in Asia, recruiting and preparation of CLIL teachers is still a significant problem.

In addition, cultural factors may influence the students’ learning in CLIL education. Firstly, learners show a preference for frontal classroom instruction and group discussions; individual oral presentation and teacher interaction is seen as challenging and inviting the risk of losing face in public. Secondly, the students prefer immediate feedback on their linguistic errors in CLIL classrooms, which indicates that language performance in correct forms is still a prior concern for Taiwanese EFL learners in CLIL classrooms as it is in EFL classrooms. Surprisingly, 89% of the students felt that content subjects should be better taught in Chinese instead of English. Perhaps the short history of the present programme and the students’ lack of familiarity with CLIL could account for this incongruity.

5.1.5 Connection between programme and university goals
Similarly, the students also had divided opinions on affective attitudes generated by the high exposure to CLIL (see Appendix 2.5). Apparently, language was not a crucial factor influencing their decision to select a study programme though most of them still agreed, as in previous studies, that CLIL education can positively increase their motivation of learning content knowledge and the FL (Lee and Chang, 2008; Mackenzie, 2008; Marsh and Hood, 2008). In addition, a majority of the students also agreed that CLIL education can increase their competitiveness in the future job markets, which corresponds to one aim of establishing CLIL programmes in Taiwan (HEEACT, 2011). Hence, the students believe the dual-emphasis on both content and language in CLIL (Coyle et al., 2010) brings about the dual benefits, that is, acquiring content knowledge and increasing international competitiveness and fit the needs to compete as professionals in a globalised and mobile society. However, these results were tempered by the indication that the majority of respondents (61.1%) would not recommend the present programme to others even though it is highly recommended by the Taiwan MoE.
5.1.6 Foreign students
The MoE also identified the desire to attract foreign students and the need to provide them with adequate support. The programme in the study was still in its infancy, but had attracted one overseas non-Chinese speaking and two overseas Cantonese-speaking Chinese students. The three non-Mandarin Chinese speaking students had a low to zero proficiency in Mandarin Chinese, and preferred that teachers not use Mandarin Chinese. It is unclear to what extent these students influenced the classroom dynamics.

5.2 Dimensions raised by other stakeholders

5.2.1 Student’s reaction to English in classroom
In addition to the commonly agreed benefits of CLIL, namely, motivational learning in both language and content, CLIL may also concurrently cause negative sentiments among learners. Around a quarter of the students reported that CLIL created stress because they did not understand content in English, anxiety about falling behind the teacher's teaching pace, and even regret at choosing the programme. For Asian EFL learners such as Taiwanese, learning content in English can be a novel experience. Negative affect towards learning English can appear in CLIL classrooms which may lead to negative transference and de-motivation for the students’ learning of the professional disciplines. Thus, it is important for the educational authorities and universities to know how to decrease any negative interference. There is a danger that the push to develop competitive students in a globalised society may result in certain types of negative consequences for students.

5.2.2 L1 and L2 teachers
Whilst there is commentary in the literature regarding teacher strategies for the teaching of CLIL, there is little research differentiating L1 and L2 practitioners. Within the European context there is a greater pool of L1 teachers or local teachers with fluency in the target FL and a better provision of CLIL teacher education; thus, any differences in how the teachers are perceived by the students could be less apparent. Within the Taiwanese context there is a reduced pool of suitable CLIL teachers and there were notable differences in responses by L1 or L2 teachers in this study. Many students expressed their wish that L1 teachers and L2 teachers use their mother tongues to teach CLIL lessons, namely, English or Mandarin Chinese. These students suggested teachers use the language they are more comfortable with to teach, and in this way students will better understand content knowledge from L2 teachers. The students’ concerns over the teachers’ use of English appear to arise from a lack of understanding why they have to learn content knowledge in a CLIL framework, or as one student expressed, why they learn content ‘indirectly’ through English.

5.2.3 Teacher strategies
L1 and L2 teachers had different opinions about language errors, learning outcomes, content assessments, students’ satisfaction and personal difficulties. Both L1 and L2 teachers expressed various difficulties encountered in teaching CLIL lessons. L1 teachers commented that CLIL took more time for preparation and that the need to accommodate students’ diverse levels of English competency impacted and attenuated the delivery of content. For L2 teachers the major difficulty they had was with their own English proficiency. They stated that they were unable to use English as fluently as they wished and at times the hesitation interrupted the course delivery which made them anxious, stressed and depressed. Teaching content through English was a source of stress for L2 teachers.

L1 teachers also expressed concern about the apparent social distance to students stemming from an inability to converse with them in their native language. Taiwanese culture has Confucian underpinnings and the teacher-student relationship has an effect on the efficacy of the classroom environment and in this way the teacher competency in English, or in the students’ mother tongues, may be a factor affecting the CLIL lessons.

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Within the classroom, although language errors were tolerated, L1 teachers would adopt the strategies of rephrasing, repeating or clarifying to treat students’ problems while L2 teachers tended to ignore most of these or switch to Mandarin Chinese to deal with learners’ difficulties. In addition, L2 teachers used different methods to assess student content learning but not English competence.

This suggests that there may be a difference in strategies employed by L1 or L2 teachers and a difference in how they are perceived or received by the students (Lasagabaster and Sierra, 2002; Llurda and Huguet, 2003).

6. Discussion and conclusions

Since this is the first MoE-led appraisal of CLIL in Taiwan, the study raises several areas of interest and issues for possible future research. Firstly, there is a strong implication that CLIL teachers need further professional development. This is identical to concerns by Hou (2007), Luo (2006) and Sasajima et al. (2011) that one potential problem that may significantly impede the implementation of CLIL education in some Asian EFL contexts is the shortage of well-qualified CLIL teachers who are expected to have a good command of both subject knowledge and language skills (i.e. learners’ mother tongue and target language). Possibly examples of successful CLIL teacher professional development in Europe (see European Commission, 2006; Coyle, 2009; Lasagabaster and Zarobe, 2010) could offer some degree of guidance for CLIL practitioners in Asian contexts.

An interesting finding of this research was the belief by the majority (70.4%) of students that L1 teachers were better suited to teach CLIL lessons. Owing to the difficulty in finding teachers in Taiwan with experience in CLIL, or otherwise prepared to teach through CLIL, there may be a greater likelihood that L2 teachers have a significantly lower proficiency in English than L1 teachers. This, coupled with student expectations of L1 and L2 teachers, affects student perceptions toward the L1 and L2 teachers and this in turn may impact on student learning. Programme directors may wish to consider multiple strategies such as professional development for teachers, assessing the language skills of teaching staff, and teaching students learning skills for addressing this student concern.

The issue of whether all students in EFL settings can learn equally well in CLIL lessons also needs to be considered. Within the Taiwanese system students in high schools may specialise in different tracks, in this case English or Tourism. Requiring prospective students to have a higher level of proficiency in English may help all concerned to achieve successful teaching and learning outcomes in CLIL programmes. At the same time, it is important to ensure that students are motivated to learn both content and language. This study suggests students with a previous major in English may have a more negative attitude to the CLIL programme. In contrast, those who are highly motivated in both may be hindered from entering the programmes because of insufficient language competence. This suggests that English proficiency should not be the sole standard for selecting potential students. It also suggests teachers may need additional training in scaffolding both content and language learning, and in helping students to better understand and manage their own attitude toward learning through English.

In overseas institutions learners with lower English proficiency are often required to undertake foundation or bridging courses prior to their university programme. However, it is not immediately clear whether this measure could be adopted within the Taiwan education system. Perhaps English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses could be run concurrently with CLIL courses, and although ESP courses are focussed on teaching English, the two could supplement each other. Thus, students would learn English specific to the target discipline, and with this linguistic knowledge they can approach CLIL lessons more confidently and with less anxiety.
An alternative is to adopt a module-based CLIL programme which might be more suitable for contexts adopting CLIL. Unlike the four-year compulsory CLIL degree-programme where students have no other choice, an elective module-based programme could attract the most motivated students and perhaps the likely increased success of the programme would eventually attract more students to the programme.

Finally, although a systematic and comprehensive evaluation of CLIL is important to ensure better outcomes and effectiveness it appears that different stakeholders may approach the programme from different perspectives. Consideration of stakeholder perspectives from the MoE through to the university’s programme director to teachers and finally to the students may reveal different goals. This is perhaps to be expected, but this lack of coherence can create tensions within the programmes and this needs to be recognised and addressed.

The MoE’s appraisal examined the outcomes of the CLIL programme from preparatory and management dimensions like curriculum design, teacher quality, and resource provision, instead of analysing learning outcomes and teaching performance. Considering that external appraisers usually have their own interests and operate under time restrictions inhibiting a full examination of all details of a programme, a CLIL programme should have its own evaluation system. For assessing learning outcomes, content knowledge needs to be measured but language competency should not be overlooked since CLIL emphasises both. A decision should be made based on the relative priority within the objectives. As assessment in a FL is challenging for many learners and additional support should be provided to encourage learners to be aware of intended learning outcomes and what and how they will be assessed (Bentley, 2010). This means learners should not merely be test-takers but instead they need to be involved with assessment. Peer-assessment, collaborative assessment, whole-class presentations and self-assessment are all possible alternatives to traditional paper-and-pencil tests (Coyle, 2010).

Evaluating the programme should include opinions from as many stakeholders as possible, such as programme managers, academic and non-academic staff, students, students’ parents, and in the future from prospective employers. Their involvement is regarded as essential for an organisation to do a ‘good job’ (Mehisto and Asser, 2007). This holistic cooperation should be conducted systematically and periodically to provide managers with guidance on how to hone CLIL programmes. Although the present programme was highly recognised officially, it is argued that future appraisals should evaluate it from a longitudinal and holistic perspective rather than checking data through a one-day visit.

Although CLIL can foster greater inter- and intra- collaboration (Lorenzo et al., 2010), any educational change like CLIL education can cause stress, uncertainty, avoidance or even resistance. Hence, the successful implementation of CLIL programmes and the sustainability of CLIL policies depends greatly on the support of programme managers (Yassin et al., 2009) and communication among various stakeholders is indispensable.

In summary, this study reported on the official appraisal of a CLIL tourism management programme in a Taiwanese polytechnic university. It analysed the students’, the programme director’s and the teaching staff’s opinions of CLIL. Although the programme is ranked as by the MoE as highly-recommended, different participants expressed diverse degrees of satisfaction with the CLIL programme. This has implications for the future management of the programme and raises several points of interest for further research. Firstly, if the data of other successful CLIL programmes can be publicly accessed and studied, it will be easier to identify what dimensions the educational authorities emphasise in terms of managing successful CLIL programmes and whether these are the most appropriate dimensions to be measured. Next, further interviews with students can provide thorough and interesting information about how they have benefited from CLIL and what difficulties they have confronted. These inquiries can facilitate teachers’ critical reflection on their teaching and support managers in providing teachers access to needed professional development. Finally, a longitudinal study examining
CLIL programme outcomes is suggested. CLIL in Taiwan is still in its infancy, and it is too early to make generalisations about programme outcomes or effectiveness.

Notes

1 The report was sent to the appraised programme only and is not publicly available.

References


Ministry of Education: 2011, *The Results and Reports of Appraising the CLIL Programmes in National Kaohsiung University of Hospitality and Tourism*. [Document No.: 1000143344A].


**Appendix 1: Questionnaire for the students**

**Students’ Perceptions and Attitudes towards Content and Language Integrated Learning in Hospitality & Tourism Curriculum**

**A. Background information**

1. Gender □ Female □ Male
2. CLIL programme □ Tourism management □ Culinary Arts
3. Nationality □ Taiwanese □ Foreigner
4. Grade □ 1st year □ 2nd year
5. Previous major □ Related □ Languages □ Other
6. English proficiency □ H- □ Intermediate □ Basic Intermediate
7. Duration of learning English □ 1-6 yrs □ 7-12 yrs □ 13 yrs

**B. After entering this CLIL programme, to what extent do you agree with the following statements? (5: strongly agree ➔ 1: strongly disagree)**

1. My writing proficiency is increased. □ 5 □ 4 □ 3 □ 2 □ 1
2. My reading proficiency is increased. □ 5 □ 4 □ 3 □ 2 □ 1
3. My speaking proficiency is increased. □ 5 □ 4 □ 3 □ 2 □ 1
4. My listening proficiency is increased. □ 5 □ 4 □ 3 □ 2 □ 1
5. Overall English proficiency is increased. □ 5 □ 4 □ 3 □ 2 □ 1
6. I have no difficulty in reading articles. □ 5 □ 4 □ 3 □ 2 □ 1
7. I have no difficulty in writing my content knowledge. □ 5 □ 4 □ 3 □ 2 □ 1
8. I have no difficulty in orally expressing my content knowledge. □ 5 □ 4 □ 3 □ 2 □ 1
9. Generally, I can understand most CLIL courses. □ 5 □ 4 □ 3 □ 2 □ 1
10. Teachers use different methods in instructing CLIL courses. □ 5 □ 4 □ 3 □ 2 □ 1
11. I prefer native English-speaking teachers to teach CLIL courses. □ 5 □ 4 □ 3 □ 2 □ 1
12. I prefer Taiwanese teachers to teach CLIL courses. □ 5 □ 4 □ 3 □ 2 □ 1
13. I chose this programme because I am interested in CLIL. □ 5 □ 4 □ 3 □ 2 □ 1
14. My parents persuaded me to study CLIL programme. □ 5 □ 4 □ 3 □ 2 □ 1
15. English is used more than 50% in CLIL courses. □ 5 □ 4 □ 3 □ 2 □ 1
16. I am satisfied with teachers’ assessment in CLIL courses. □ 5 □ 4 □ 3 □ 2 □ 1
17. I prefer teachers’ lectures in CLIL courses. □ 5 □ 4 □ 3 □ 2 □ 1

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1 This questionnaire was used by two different CLIL programmes but only the results of the highly-recommended tourism programme were discussed in the present study.
18. I prefer students’ group discussion in CLIL courses. □ 5, □ 4, □ 3, □ 2, □ 1
19. I prefer students’ individual oral presentation in CLIL courses. □ 5, □ 4, □ 3, □ 2, □ 1
20. I perceive native English-speaking teachers to be more capable of teaching CLIL courses. □ 5, □ 4, □ 3, □ 2, □ 1
21. I perceive Taiwanese teachers to be more capable of teaching CLIL courses. □ 5, □ 4, □ 3, □ 2, □ 1
22. I show high involvements in CLIL courses. □ 5, □ 4, □ 3, □ 2, □ 1
23. I need no extra English courses to increase my English ability. □ 5, □ 4, □ 3, □ 2, □ 1
24. I need extra English courses to increase my English ability. □ 5, □ 4, □ 3, □ 2, □ 1
25. CLIL programme increases my motivation of learning English. □ 5, □ 4, □ 3, □ 2, □ 1
26. I prefer teachers to use Chinese in teaching CLIL courses. □ 5, □ 4, □ 3, □ 2, □ 1
27. Taiwanese teachers have difficulty in teaching CLIL. □ 5, □ 4, □ 3, □ 2, □ 1
28. CLIL gives me strategies to approach content subjects in English. □ 5, □ 4, □ 3, □ 2, □ 1
29. I tend to convert Chinese into English in CLIL courses. □ 5, □ 4, □ 3, □ 2, □ 1
30. Teachers obviously use different methods in teaching content courses between using English and Chinese. □ 5, □ 4, □ 3, □ 2, □ 1
31. This CLIL programme can increase my motivation of learning content subjects. □ 5, □ 4, □ 3, □ 2, □ 1
32. Teachers need to use Chinese timely to teach CLIL courses whenever needed. □ 5, □ 4, □ 3, □ 2, □ 1
33. This CLIL programme is beneficial to increasing employability. □ 5, □ 4, □ 3, □ 2, □ 1
34. I prefer teachers to provide me with immediate linguistic feedback on my language errors. □ 5, □ 4, □ 3, □ 2, □ 1
35. Teachers intentionally use simplified English to teach CLIL courses. □ 5, □ 4, □ 3, □ 2, □ 1
36. My family believe this CLIL programme is beneficial to my future job. □ 5, □ 4, □ 3, □ 2, □ 1
37. Generally, I like this CLIL programme. □ 5, □ 4, □ 3, □ 2, □ 1
38. I would recommend this CLIL programme to others. □ 5, □ 4, □ 3, □ 2, □ 1
39. Please write down what you have gained or lost in studying this CLIL programme.
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

40. Please write down any comments about this CLIL programme.
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

Thank you for your precious time and generous contribution!

http://www.icrj.eu/21/article6.html
### Appendix 2: Descriptive results (means and SD) of the question items

#### 2.1: Linguistic skills improvement

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#### 2.4: CLIL classroom practices

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#### 2.5: Affective attitudes

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