

# **Integrated English in China – An Effective CLIL Model of Foreign Languages and Cultures Learning**

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**Abstract** – Integrated English (hereafter IE) is an effective and fruitful 16-year-long experimental bilingual teaching program of CLIL for teaching English as a foreign language in China. IE is an international program conducted collaboratively by educators of mainland China, the United States, Finland and Hong Kong. IE abides by three rationales: the rationale of children’s development of cognition, the logic of children’s development of language competence, and the principle of foreign language teaching. IE proposes seven teaching principles: the principle of theme and activity-based learning, the principle of listening and speaking first, supplemented by reading and writing, the principle of operant reinforcement, the principle of direct learning and spontaneous acquisition, the principle of interest orientation and active participation, the principle of focusing on practical use of English and the principle of quick pace and high intensity in classroom teaching. IE is characterized by six beliefs in bilingual teaching. They are integrating content with language, learning English at an early age, using English as the medium of instruction throughout classroom teaching, focusing on listening and speaking first, learning English subconsciously and developing fully the abilities of English learners. IE proposes five shifts from shallow teaching to deep teaching: the language of instruction shifts from native language into the target language, the teaching model shifts from reading new words first into doing activity first, the teaching unit shifts from single words into full sentences, the teaching priority shifts from knowledge into ability, the learning system shifts from separated learning into integrated learning. IE aims to accelerate the developments of children’s intelligence, thinking ability, and language competence. IE takes the target language (English) as a language medium to learn knowledge, and stresses the integration of various teaching approaches. Over the past 16 years, IE has been adopted in more than fifty experimental schools (including kindergartens) in different provinces of China and it has proved very effective and popular.

**Keywords** – Integrated English (IE), CLIL Model, Integration, Bilingual Teaching, Interdisciplinary.

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

On account of rapid globalization and internationalization, bilingual or multilingual human resources are in great demand. This is the most important reason why bilingual education is booming in many countries nowadays.

As Tucker and Richard (1999) point out, there are many more bilingual or multilingual individuals today in the world than there are monolinguals, and there are many more children who have been and continue to be educated

through a second or a later-acquired language, at least for some portion of their formal education, than there are children educated exclusively via the first language. In many places, English is widely chosen as the additional language.

Asia has the largest number of English speakers in the world. The sustainability of bilingual education in this region, where in most cases English is the ‘additional language’, may shed light on the development of this potentially ‘very effective’ ELT approach (Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2010: 374) (cf. Baetens Beardsmore, 2009) in EFL context. China is among many places in which the development of bilingual or multiple language proficiency is regarded as favorable and desirable by policy makers, educators, and parents. While mainly focusing on China as a case study example in this article, we suggest that analogous processes may be observed in other countries where a foreign language serves as an additional language.

Prior to the reform and opening-up policy, bilingual education in China mainly referred to helping minority people master both Chinese and their minority languages. However, primary English education in China has developed rapidly and achieved a qualitative leap since the issue of China’s foreign language policy on primary English education in 2001 and bilingual education has nowadays extended to refer to using a foreign language (often English) as a target language for the teaching of content subjects in feature schools. Within fundamental education, especially within the area of compulsory education, this kind of bilingual education experiments are mainly being made available in Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin, Dalian, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, and Qingdao. Most of these experiments take the teaching of content subjects in English as their ultimate aim (Liu, 2002). For instance, the Education Department in Liaoning Province proposed to make bilingual experiments in such content subjects as math, science, arts, and selective objects in elementary schools (Wang, 2003: 393). Up till now, People’s Education Press have published some bilingual textbooks such as physics, chemistry, geometry, and algebra for junior high schools, and physics, chemistry, history, and biology for senior high schools (Wang, 2003: 400). Of course, bilingual education varies in China. There are different models. In Tianjin, Zhang Qian (2002) advocates to take “bilingual, bicultural, and bi-competence” as the Tianjin model, but in Shanghai things are quite different. According to Wang Liying (2003), in Shanghai “immersion program” is adopted at lower grades in elementary schools, and then “additive bilingualism” will

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be adopted at higher grades. In Guangdong province there are a few different bilingual models, one of which is Integrated English (IE). Taking the advancement of international bilingual education and the advent of China's reform and opening-up policies as the background, combining international experiences of bilingual education with the context of China's foreign language teaching, IE has been developing as a very effective bilingual education model in China.

## II. IE AND BILINGUAL EDUCATION IN CHINA

Although disagreement still exists about what bilingual education is, many people agree to a working definition given in *Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics* (Richards, et al., 1985). It takes bilingual education as the use of a second or foreign language in school for the teaching of content subjects. There are also different ideas about what bilingualism is. At one extreme end of the definition, Bloomfield (1933) specifies "native-like control of two languages" as the criterion for bilingualism, while Haugen (1953) draws attention to the other extreme end, when he observes that bilingualism begins when the speaker of one language can produce complete meaningful utterances in the other language (cited by Romaine, 1995: 11). Therefore, any person may be bilingual to some degree, and bilingualism is a continuum. In China, as Zhu Pu (2004) says that "for Chinese learners bilingualism refers to the ability to use English to satisfy the basic need of English for future study, work and life."

Different ideas about bilingual education result in different bilingual education models such as immersion program, maintenance bilingual education, transitional bilingual education, and etc. According to Tucker (1999), the use of multiple languages in education may be attributed to numerous factors, such as the linguistic heterogeneity of a country or region, specific social or religious attitudes, the desire to promote national identity, or innovative language education programs implemented to promote proficiency in international language(s) of wider communication together with proficiency in national and regional languages. Take immersion program, which originated in Canada, as an example. Around 1975 Canada's first French immersion programs arose, because Canadians realized English-speaking learners were not acquiring enough French to attain satisfactory grades in school and to find jobs in French speaking parts of Canada (Martineau, 2002). However, in Finland, languages involved in bilingual education include French, German, and Swedish besides Finnish and English because of its favorable bilingual environment and government's encouragement (Feng, 2003: 64).

China has witnessed some new development in bilingual education since 1990s. Some local governments encourage high schools, elementary schools, and kindergartens to make bilingual education experiments, which take English as the instruction language to teach content subjects. There seem to be three main driving forces behind this. First, it results from the aspiration of internationalization of education. All learners in the experimental schools are

majority language (Mandarin) speakers, who do not need to "cross the bridge that helps them be proficient in their native language and in English" (José, 2004) in order to succeed in academic skills. That's to say, English is just a foreign language in China. However, it is the most widely used language in the world. In China no one doubts English is a world language and is a bridge to the world. Second, the ultimate target of bilingual education in China is to improve the effect of English learning. Many people complain about the deficiency of EFL teaching. They want to find an alternative which is more effective to substitute for EFL. Third, bilingual education in China is believed to be a kind of additive bilingual education, because it aims "to develop first and foreign language proficiency fully" (Andrew, 1998), not to thwart in any way the development of the first language.

As mentioned above, many people in China accept the definition of bilingual education given by Richards & et al. (1985) and therefore Canada's French Immersion Program is usually taken as the most effective model (Wang, 2003: 82; Lu, 2005:190). Yang Sigen (cited in Huang, 2004:5) concludes that international tendency of bilingual education is to teach math, physics, chemistry, biology, and computer first in foreign language, and bilingual education should co-exist with EFL teaching. However, does this model suit the context of China? To answer this question, the status quo of China's education, especially that of China's foreign language teaching must be investigated. First, it is clear that the National College Entrance Examination is the supreme target of China's basic education. Examination-oriented education and testing have been the main characteristic of China's compulsory education. Bilingual education in China must take this factor into consideration while trying to improve the learners' English levels. Second, much more importance is attached to EFL in China. English is one of the core subjects whether in elementary schools, high schools, or universities. However, many university learners who have learned English over ten years cannot speak English fluently. This kind of phenomenon declares itself as the failure of traditional EFL teaching in China. Third, China is a developing country which lacks educational resources, including financial support and qualified teachers. Furthermore, China is a developing country which runs the largest-scale education in the world. Therefore, bilingual education in China must take cost-effectiveness into consideration. Fourth, China is a developing country with a vast territory. A deep gap exists between China's eastern areas and the western areas. Immersion programs mean a high requirement for financial and human resources such as equipment, authentic textbooks, and qualified teachers (Wang, 2003: 87) and a breakaway from an examination-oriented curriculum. It is obvious that the traditional EFL or immersion programs cannot solve these problems and therefore cannot suit the context of China. Hence, a new model to teach English must be established in China to address the contextual factor listed above. Under this condition, IE was established on the basis of careful studies and has enjoyed experimental experiences of

sixteen years. It absorbed the successful experiences of a wide range of bilingual education, and abandoned traditional EFL teaching methods such as learning by rote and grammar translation approach.

IE stresses taking English as a communication tool, and integrating the target language with content and culture. It integrates English learning with subject learning and it is a new development model of European Content and Language Integrated Learning (hereafter CLIL) in China. As a typical language-driven program, IE advocates teaching contents in English to enrich or reinforce instruction in the learner's native language, but not substituting for it. In fact, the responsibility for content learning also lies with other content subject teachers. English teachers may, but unnecessarily, consult with colleagues in other disciplines to determine which, when and how content will be integrated with language. Topics and tasks for language practice may be drawn from many disciplines in a single lesson or unit. IE belongs to theme-based courses, which are language-driven: the goal of these courses is to help learners develop English skills and proficiency and cross-cultural understanding as well. Themes are selected based on their potential to contribute to the learner's language growth in specific topical or functional domains. What is taught in English classes is not only the language itself. It includes all kinds of knowledge, such as knowledge of language, math, geography, history, literary, civic virtues, music, art, science, society, culture, and etc.

CLIL integrates content with language, but IE integrates more. Integration of IE consists of five aspects. First, it is an integration of content with language. IE aims to enable learners to gain more knowledge and to improve language competence. It gives prominence to the practice of language through learning knowledge of content subjects. The goal of English learning is not to be grammarians but to communicate freely in English. Second, it stresses integration of interdisciplinary theories. IE intends to incorporate contemporary psychological and pedagogical developments or achievements into bilingual education. For this reason, as Feng (2003) points out that IE concerns about the development of such theories as Lozanov's Suggestopedia, Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences, etc. A group of experts from different research fields often work together to analyze characteristics of language learning, and psychological and cognitive characteristics of learners. Fourth, it incorporates contents into language teaching. Knowledge about history, geography, physics, chemistry, math, literature, PE, music, art, civil virtues, etc., are all integrated and taught in English in IE classes, but these classes will never be substituted for the above content subjects, which will continue to be taught in Chinese, the learners' first language.

There are some similarities between IE and European CLIL, which has an important role to play in ensuring the attainment of EU objectives in the area of language learning. Both integrate content with language. Nevertheless, there is a big difference. CLIL enables learners to study a non-language related subject in a foreign language, while in IE there is no specific content

subject taught in English. Only a small part of the non-language related subjects will be taught in English, often through the cooperation of bilingual teachers and non-language teachers. For example, an English teacher may cooperate with a PE teacher to give a PE class in English, but such bilingual classes only occupy a small part of PE classes.

The main purpose of IE is to develop learners' communicative competence in their foreign language in addition to their native language. It fosters bilingualism, sensitivity to other cultures and an opening to the perception of being a world citizen. Additional goals are the cognitive advantages to bilingualism and increased sensitivity to and understanding of other cultures.

### III. THEORY OF INTEGRATED ENGLISH

#### A. Three Rationales of IE

IE emphasizes that bilingual education must abide by three rationales: the rationale of children's development of cognition, the logic of children's development of language competence, and the principle of foreign language teaching. Bilingual education involves not only linguistics, but also psychology and pedagogy. For this reason, IE stresses interdisciplinary insights from pedagogy, psychology, and linguistics. When making a decision, IE experts will consider from at least three aspects: linguistics, cognition, and intelligence. For example, when allotting unit topics to textbooks for different grades, the cognitive ability of learners in each grade must be considered. Such topics as *Body Parts*, *Family Members*, can be taught in grade one, but such topics as *States of Matter* must be taught after grade three (Xiao, 2013). Another example is whether phonetic symbols should be taught at the beginning period. The teaching of them will enhance the learning of English, especially be useful to look up new words in dictionary. However, learners are very young, and they are not good at abstract thinking. The phonetic symbols might prove too heavy on the cognitive load, and may make them lose interest in English learning. Therefore, IE doesn't encourage teachers to teach learners phonetic symbols at the beginning period.

IE stresses the role of acquisition in language learning, and never takes bilingual education as a castle in the air. Bilingual education should be based on children's mother language, cognitive ability, and comprehension ability. According to Vygotsky (1978), there exists a "zone of proximal development" (ZPD) between what a child can do with help and what he or she can do without guidance. Therefore, in bilingual education, the research team must consider what children have already learned, and expand what they have known. For instance, learners in grade one (about six years old) have known such simple shapes as triangle, circle, and rectangle, but they know little about the features of them and find it difficult to differ square and rectangle from trapezoid. Then the unit about shapes in IE textbook begins with familiar shapes like circle and triangle, and expands children's knowledge to some new shapes such as oval and trapezoid, and helps them to distinguish one kind of shape from another.

IE does not exclude any useful teaching approaches. It stresses the integration of various teaching approaches. It advocates abiding by principles of foreign language teaching in bilingual education. Therefore, role playing, project-based learning, learner-centered learning activities are often found in IE classes. At the same time, IE stresses that English is preferred to be taught early in order to develop children's language ability and thinking ability, because "the development of children's intelligence mainly exists in the development of language" (Feng, 2003). Therefore, the learning of a foreign language at an early age will not impede the acquisition of first language. Instead, it will enhance the development of first language and intelligence.

### B. Seven Teaching Principles in IE

There are seven teaching principles in IE: the principle of theme and activity-based learning, the principle of listening and speaking first, supplemented by reading and writing, the principle of operant reinforcement, the principle of direct learning and spontaneous acquisition, the principle of interest orientation and active participation, the principle of focusing on practical use of English and the principle of quick pace and high intensity in classroom teaching (Yuan, 2005).

### C. Six Beliefs in IE

There are six beliefs in IE. They are integrating content with language, learning English at an early age; using English as the medium of instruction; focusing on listening and speaking first; learning English subconsciously and developing fully the abilities of English learners.

#### 1) Integrating Content with Language

As Met (1999) points out, the integration of language and content has been a growing phenomenon in language teaching since the early 1980s and continues to be a tendency of bilingual education in the world. As a new development model of CLIL in China, how does IE integrate content with language? Very importantly, in IE emphasis is laid on both native language learning and foreign language learning. IE opposes to postponing any specific content subject taught in native language. As Flood (1996) states that the "failure to realize the potential benefits of native language instruction has kept us from focusing on the most effective ways to teach children". Cummins (1987), Krashen and Biber (1988) also insist that instruction in the learners' native language simultaneously promotes the development of literacy skills in both the native language and a foreign language. The use of the native language to develop the academic skills of learners acquiring English appears beneficial for helping learners avoid cognitive confusion and achievement lags in their school performance (Hakuta & Diaz, 1984; Krashen & Biber, 1988). Researches found that postponing the teaching of academics until learners develop the academic proficiency in English they need to learn subject content does not appear educationally worthwhile. It takes learners longer to acquire English when there is less native language support. Individuals most easily develop cognitive skills and master content material when they are taught in a familiar language.

Cognitive or academic language skills, once developed and content subject material, once acquired, transfer readily from one language to another (Tucker, 1999). Therefore, in IE experimental schools, the integration of content and language is limited in English classes. The English classes do not substitute for any content subjects. However, these English classes are quite different from traditional EFL classes. First, topics in IE textbooks come from content subjects. For example, there is a topic, *Good Habits*, which comes from the subject of social virtues; a topic titled *Math in Daily Life* from math; and a unit *Seeds* which is about biology (Xiao, 2013). Second, only a small part of such content subjects as arts, music, PE, math, and social virtues will be taught in English. Third, English is taken as a medium of instruction in classes. Learners learn English through the process of learning knowledge in English. In the integration of contents, IE does not stress constructing new knowledge of a discipline but requires learners to know the general knowledge in the discipline and know how to express this knowledge in English.

The ultimate goal of IE is to speak English freely like native speakers and to talk about non-language topics freely. However, many English learners in China cannot achieve this target. The most important reasons may not be due to poor pronunciation or lack of grammatical knowledge but to lack of basic words and expressions used in content subjects. On the contrary to EFL teaching, IE provides many chances in English classes to cover math, physics, chemistry, arts, geography, music, PE, and so on (Xiao, 2013). Learners are expected to communicate freely about the general matters related to these subjects. Thus, in IE experimental textbooks, there are many topics from different content subjects, and even under a topic there is much knowledge concerned. For example, there is a unit entitled *Wood and Iron*, a topic from physics about matters in the world. But in this unit some knowledge about chemistry (e.g., corrosion) can also be learned besides some physical knowledge such as properties of wood and iron. At the same time, learners learn how to protect our environment, why it is important to build world peace, and so on. Consequently, learners in IE experimental schools can freely talk in English about knowledge in both humanities and science.

#### 2) Learning English at an Early Age

According to popular belief young children are faster and better foreign language learners than adults, children seem to acquire a foreign language with little effort and they generally attain high levels of proficiency. It is therefore often recommended that children start learning a foreign language as early as the "critical period" starts. As they grow older they will gradually lose this unique capability. Then the concept of "critical period" was proposed by Lenneberg (1967) for first and foreign language acquisition. Lenneberg assumed that there is a lateralization of the brain, completed around puberty. Although there are a variety of theories with regard to the critical period, many people believe that there is a sensitive or optimal period for the acquisition of certain foreign language skills, especially pronunciation, and the social and psychological distance between the learner and

the target community may be shorter for younger learners (Appel & Muysken, 1987: 94-95). For the above reasons, IE advocates starting to learn English in one's critical period.

### 3) *Using English as the Medium of Instruction*

Mackey (1978) mentions in his classic work *Language teaching analysis* that the estimated time in school for foreign language teaching is about 250 hours per year, while the total time for a baby to learn his or her first language during the first five years at home is about 25,000 hours. This indicates that a certain amount of time is the prerequisite to mastering a language. In China, it's hard to find a favorable bilingual environment for learners to learn English. If an English teacher taught English in Chinese, his or her learners would have less time to contact with English. For this reason, an IE teacher is required to teach his or her learners totally in English in class and even talks with the learners in English after class. Sometimes when it is quite difficult to explain something in English but quite easy to explain it in Chinese, an IE teacher is not suggested to explain it in Chinese but to explain it in English with the help of body language, pictures, or material objects. For instance, learners in grade one may find it hard to understand the meaning of "same" and "different". Then an IE teacher may draw two pictures of ducks and two pictures of rabbits. Then he/she will classify them into two groups, and help learners understand that one duck is the SAME with the other and one rabbit is the same with the other, but the two ducks are DIFFERENT from the two rabbits. At last the teacher may draw a quite different rabbit (e.g. with very long ears) to contrast with another rabbit (e.g. with short ears), and tells his learners that the two rabbits are the same animal but they are quite different. This will help learners understand the meaning of "same" and "different". What the learners learn in the process of explanation is much more than the meaning of the two words. This provides more opportunities for learners to have contact with English, especially the English out of textbooks and develop a habit of thinking in English.

IE objects to teaching grammatical rules directly. It stresses the internalization of language rules and regards it as an effective way to get language sense and form a habit to think in English. It is known to all that a man cannot really master what he is taught without internalization. Only through internalization can the newly learned knowledge be converted from explicit knowledge into tacit or implicit knowledge. This requires that explicit knowledge be embodied in action and practice through simulations or experiments to trigger learning by doing processes. Therefore, in IE there is a well-known saying "language cannot be mastered through teaching but learning". To master a language, the learners must immerse themselves into English practice to obtain more chances to interact with and in English. According to traditional grammatical approach, teachers may teach learners English grammatical rules in Chinese. This may cause a nonsensical result in explaining grammatical rules of English clearly in Chinese but not being able to speak English freely.

### 4) *Focusing on Listening and Speaking First*

The acquisition of one's first language implies that listening and speaking are earlier to happen than reading and writing. One's oral vocabulary is usually larger than his or her reading vocabulary. Thus, IE regards listening and speaking as the first step in bilingual education. It takes listening and speaking as manifest instruction and takes reading and writing as hidden instruction at lower grades, and gradually takes reading and writing as manifest instruction in higher grades.

Then how should we focus on listening and speaking first? Several studies on first language learning have found that how often and how well parents communicate with their children are strong predictors of how rapidly children expand their language learning. Parental speech to young children is so redundant in context that a person with no knowledge of the order in which parents' words are spoken, only the words themselves, can infer from transcripts, with high accuracy, what was being said. For this reason, the researchers encourage teachers to speak as much English as possible in their classes and even after class, though the learners cannot understand them completely at first. Learners may not understand everything teachers say but gradually they will understand more and more with the help of gestures and language context. But keeping on talking does not only mean repetition. Besides some necessary repetitions, a bilingual teacher in IE experimental schools is expected to speak English centering on a topic rather than on a few words or sentence models. For instance, a teacher can talk about spring, the trees, flowers, water, sky, kite, dressing, food, weather, activities, animals, the color of a flower, the width of a river, the price of a skirt, or even the number of swallows when he is teaching a unit about *spring*. He should never limit his teaching to a few words (e.g. season, spring, rain, swallow) and expressions (e.g. "Spring is coming") about spring. In addition, IE encourages teachers to talk about episodes or incidents in classes in English. For example, if it happened that a butterfly flew into the classroom when a teacher was giving her lesson, which attracted the attention of all learners, the teacher would be encouraged to take the opportunity and say to her learners, "Look, boys and girls! My lesson is so interesting. It attracted the attention of a butterfly! Who can tell me the color of this butterfly?" In this way, she/he kept on speaking English and made good use of the opportunity to teach learners the authentic language. Learners thus acquired English rather than learned English. This helps them speak English naturally in their daily life.

### 5) *Learning English Subconsciously*

You may feel confused when you find learners in IE classes making a kite after the bilingual teacher tells them the steps to do it in English. Is this a bilingual class or a hands-on activity class? You can often find such cases in IE classes. Learners are more interested in hands-on activities than in learning English words, sentences, and grammatical rules by doing linguistic exercises. What the research team advocate is not to teach English directly but to teach English subconsciously through some activities or

tasks. This is why IE stresses language acquisition and task oriented or project-based learning.

Language learning and language acquisition are different. The learning of one's first language is a kind of acquisition. It's something every child does successfully as long as the child has exposure, in a matter of a few years and without the need for formal lessons. Nevertheless, the learning of one's foreign language is so hard even with the help of textbooks and teachers. Language is a tool and is different from other content subjects like math or history. A man cannot master a language through learning the language itself but through using a language to do something. For instance, when teaching something about *poster*, the traditional grammatical approach will ask learners to learn by heart a few words about *poster* and some so called typical sentence patterns in the textbook. What the learners can learn are only a few words and sentences. However, in IE classes, learners will be encouraged to make some English posters. In the process of making them, learners can learn much more than a few words and sentences about poster.

Hidden curriculum is an important part of a school's curricula today. It is also called implicit curriculum, and "is taught by the school, not by any teacher...something is coming across to the learners which may never be spoken in the English lesson or prayed about in assembly. They are picking-up an approach to living and an attitude to learning" (Meighan, 1981). IE stresses the mutual complement of manifest curriculum and hidden curriculum in order to increase the effect of English learning. On the campus of an IE experimental school, you can find many English posters, slogans, and signs. Learners and teachers including the headmaster like to greet each other in English and speak some daily English. There are many kinds of English activities including English salons, drama parties, English corners and festivals. All these can help the learners feel like learning in a favorable environment of English, and exert a subtle influence on learners' acquisition of English.

#### *6) Developing Fully the Abilities of English Learners*

IE opposes teaching English in learners' native language or dissecting English into pieces and then feeding it to learners. It focuses on the full development of a learner's language abilities, and stresses language teaching satisfying the requirements of children's language development. It advocates taking English as an entire system instead of a collection of vocabulary and grammar that can be dissected and then individually taught. This can liberate foreign language teaching from the teaching method of rote learning, and then teach more for meaning and less for forms. This is the essence of the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach. IE stresses the full development of language skills, especially the communicative competence of learners.

IE highlights thematic activities (teaching activities must center on a topic), the interest of learners, and the characteristics of life. Teachers adopting the IE approach must try their best to create an authentic setting for learners to contact English. To create a vivid and natural

environment of English learning, such teaching methods as Total Physical Response (TPR), Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) Approach, Community Language Learning, Natural Approach and CLIL are often used in IE classes. For example, IE advocates the use of Natural Approach in classes, and admits a "silent period" which could last a few months, because learners are overwhelmed and scared when introduced to a foreign language. During this silent period, output of language is not required. Therefore, learners "absorb language without the stress of audio-lingual-type listening and repeating drills" (Oebel, 2001). For TPR approach, it combines information and skills through the use of the kinesthetic sensory system. This combination of skills allows the learner to assimilate information and skills at a rapid rate. As a result, this success leads to a high degree of motivation. In short, different teaching methods are integrated in IE classes. The purpose of such integration is to achieve the best teaching effect, and develop fully the language competence of English learners.

#### *D. Five Shifts in IE, from Shallow Teaching to Deep Teaching*

IE encourages deep teaching and has five shifts: the language of instruction shifts from the learners' native language into their target language, the teaching model shifts from reading new words first into doing activity first; the teaching unit shifts from single words into full sentences; the teaching priority shifts from knowledge into ability; the learning system shifts from separated learning into integrated learning.

### **IV. THREE ASPECTS OF DEVELOPMENT ACCELERATIONS**

According to IE, bilingual education must meet the requirements of both bilingual education and developmental psychology. Most researchers believe that knowing two languages and perspectives gives bilingual children a more diversified and flexible basis for cognition than their monolingual peers have, and provide an "excellent tool" that can help learners of all language backgrounds fulfill their academic and intellectual potential (Appel & Muysken, 1987:28). This was confirmed in IE experiments. As mentioned above, the development of learners' intelligence mainly exists in the development of language, and a learner in an IE experiment can talk freely in English to a level analogous to his native language (Chinese) because he can express everything in his life in English, and IE applies theories of ZPD and i+1 into bilingual education experiment. For these reasons, learners in IE experimental schools can accelerate their intelligence, thinking ability and language competence. For example, a common learner in grade one may only know the names of a few kinds of flowers, but an IE learner in grade one can not only tell you the names of many flowers in English but also tell you the flower meanings and even how to raise a flower in English.

## V. EFFECTIVENESS OF IE

### A. Achievements by Learners

Krashen & Biber (1988) reported that children who participate in properly designed bilingual programs reach satisfactory levels of competence in all academic areas. Genesee, Saunders, and Christian (2003) found that learners in bilingual programs can develop academic skills on a par with, or superior to, the skills of comparison groups of their peers educated in English-only classrooms. August & Hakuta (1997) have also found that highly bilingual learners reach higher levels of academic and cognitive functioning than do monolingual learners or learners with poor bilingual skills. How about IE? Can IE enhance learners' learning of English? Does it have negative effects on the learning of content subjects? Ma Cuiwei, an IE bilingual teacher, made a statistical research on the effect of IE on the development of academic skills (2003). Analyses of collected data show that IE can greatly improve English levels of learners, and enhance the development of learner's academic skills simultaneously (See Table 1 and Table 2). Bilingual teachers from Huiyang Experimental Primary School report (Feng, 2003:257) that "evaluation indicates that learners have improved their English levels greatly and become more active and creative...some learners even became the interpreters when their parents communicate with foreigners." In April 2006, the improvisational performances of learners from Boluo Experimental Primary School were broadcast live by local municipal TV station in Huizhou city. In the municipal park, these primary school pupils debated with some English native speakers in English, and did their oral compositions as soon as they got the topics from the audiences. More than ten thousand audiences in the park watched the performance and felt so surprised by the amazing performance of the learners.

Table 1. Assessment on Grade 2 pupils' Oral English Proficiency Level (2003.5)

	Sum	Accuracy	Fluency
<b>Experimental</b>	138	96.7%	93.4%
<b>Control</b>	128	88.6%	77.5%
<b>Z</b>		2.54*	2.72**
<b>P</b>		P<0.05	P<0.01

Table 2. Excellence rate of Grade 3 pupils' Subject Learning (2004.5)

	Sum	Chinese	Math	Science
<b>Experimental</b>	138	92.6%	94.5%	95.6%
<b>Control</b>	128	85.8%	89.4%	91.2%
<b>Z</b>		3.28**	2.45*	2.13*
<b>P</b>		P<0.01	P<0.05	P<0.05

### B. Popularity of Experimental Schools

Guangdong is one of the most developed provinces in China. Now in Guangdong there are many foreign-funded enterprises and Sino-foreign cooperative enterprises. In recent decades, learning English as a foreign language in Guangdong is of great importance for many parents. They

think that their children can benefit a lot from learning English as early as possible. Parents in Guangdong could not agree more with Barratt-Pugh and Rohl (2001:664) that learning two languages seems to be most beneficial to anyone's future. Many parents therefore send their children to bilingual schools. A famous bilingual school can always attract a crowd of parents and learners. The number of experimental schools has increased rapidly in recent decades, because IE is widely seen as an model based on educational theories, coordinates bilingual education with full development of experimental schools, and meets the needs of schools. Almost every IE experimental school or kindergarten becomes famous and popular in their respective communities. For instance, Jiangmen Second Education Kindergarten in Jiangmen City has become one of the most famous kindergartens in China, and now it is planning to run a chain of kindergartens. Media School in Foshan City has become one of the top-class schools in Guangdong province because of practice of IE for more than 14 years. Guancheng English Experimental School in Dongguan City enrolled more than 1,700 learners only one year after it was built and half a year after it participated in IE experiment. Jiamei School in Zhaoqing city was about to close down before it decided to join in an IE experiment. However, only one year after it had joined in the IE experiment, it became a very popular school in Zhaoqing city. There are also experimental schools or kindergartens in other provinces beyond Guangdong, such as Anhui, Hunan, Guizhou and Qinghai (Xiao, 2011).

### C. Raised Quality of Teaching Resources

IE has a one-week teacher training program every year, which aims at changing IE teachers' philosophy of language education and improving their teaching skills. In the past 16 years, more than 1,500 bilingual teachers took this training and became qualified IE teachers. This has accelerated the professional development of English teachers. Their qualities are obviously improved in a relatively short period, and most of them could voluntarily lay more emphasis on the development of learners' language abilities while teaching for examination and improving their theoretical levels through reading books about pedagogy and linguistics. Many of them applied IE experimental theories to their teaching activities. Some have become outstanding IE teachers, and received many prizes in various English teaching competitions.

IE experiments have not only improved the quality of English teaching of experimental schools, but also pushed forward the English teaching levels of non-experimental elementary schools. Almost every experimental school has held some large scale English teaching symposia in the city or county where it is located. For instance, in 2002 Boluo Experimental School held an English teaching forum in Boluo county. In 2003 and 2010, the 3rd and 10th International Symposia of IE were also held in this school. Jianghua Primary School held an English teaching forum in Jiangmen city every year. The other experimental schools such as Jiabin School in Foshan city, Huiyang Experimental School in Huizhou city, Longmen Primary School in Longmen County, Media Experimental Primary

School in Foshan city, and Jiamei school in Zhaoqing city introduced and extended the IE experiment to local societies. Over 16 years, 15 symposia on bilingual instruction or English education reform have been held. All these helped IE experiments exert great influence on local societies and also enhanced the English teaching levels of local schools and kindergartens.

## VI. CONCLUSION

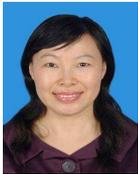
IE moves holistically towards language integration into world or life-related thematic projects and requires contextualized, holistic experiences in which the personal identity narrative can expand with new life meanings. The focus is on the process rather than the outcomes and emphasizes quality, relevance, and purposefulness rather than rote learning. Learning a new language is understood as a process of cultural accommodation and abstraction, which is tied to a variety of subtle pragmatic meanings and situational elements that need to be related to perceive the whole (Xiao, 2015). IE is an effective and fruitful 16-year-long experimental bilingual education program for teaching English as a foreign language in China. IE is an international program conducted collaboratively by educators from different countries and it abides by three rationales, proposes seven teaching principles and is characterized by six beliefs in bilingual teaching. IE has five changes from shallow teaching to deep teaching, aiming to accelerate the developments of learners' intelligence, thinking ability, and language competence. Over the past 16 years, it has been proved effective in learners' achievements and development, in fostering learners' communicative competence or language proficiency in their English (L2) in addition to their native language (L1) and increase their sensitivity to and understanding of other cultures and teacher development as well.

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