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## Taiwan lagging in English education, NTNU study shows

By Dennis Xie / Staff writer, with CNA



Taiwan lags behind Japan, South Korea and China when it comes to teaching English vocabulary and total class hours, a study released yesterday by National Taiwan Normal University (NTNU) showed.

The study on English education in Taiwan and neighboring countries was conducted following the government's announcement in 2018 of a policy to turn Taiwan into a bilingual nation by 2030, NTNU Department of English professor Chen Hao-jan (陳浩然) told a news conference in Taipei yesterday.

English classes start in the third grade in Taiwan, China and South Korea, with South Korea leading in terms of total number of class hours in elementary school at 200, followed by 190 in China, 150 in Taiwan and 100 in Japan, Chen said.



Researchers from National Taiwan Normal University, including Department of English professor Chen Hao-jan, fourth right, pose for a photograph yesterday at a news conference in Taipei.

Photo courtesy of National Taiwan Normal University via CNA

For junior-high schools, Japan had the highest number of class hours at 350, followed by 340 in South Korea, 315 in China and 250 in Taiwan, Chen said.

Japan and China led in English vocabulary taught in elementary school, ranging from 600 to 700 words, followed by 500 in South Korea and 300 in Taiwan, Chen said.

For junior-high schools, Japan had the largest vocabulary taught, ranging from 2,200 to 2,500 words, followed by 1,500 to 1,600 in China, 1,300 in South Korea and 1,200 in Taiwan, he said.

Taiwan had the smallest vocabulary taught in elementary school and the fewest class hours in junior-high school, but the vocabulary required in the high-school curriculum is 4,500 words, Chen said.

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The study load in elementary and junior-high schools could be increased slightly for a more balanced distribution across different stages, he said.

To bridge the education gap, the government should utilize technology and online platforms to provide more English-learning resources to the public, Chen said.

For example, Taiwan can follow South Korea, which used artificial intelligence to develop a platform for students to practice English speaking after class and to upload a English courses on e-learning sites.

NTNU vice president Sung Yao-ting (宋曜廷) said the university had also conducted a study to see if the study load in the elementary-school curriculum — which specifies that graduates should have a vocabulary of 300 words for listening, speaking and reading — is sufficient.

The study, conducted from 2016 to 2017, tested 1,903 graduates of elementary schools in Taipei and New Taipei City on their English vocabulary and reading comprehension skills and found that 75 percent of participants met the requirement, and that 57 percent had a vocabulary of more than 400 words, Sung said.

Most participants tested above the threshold set by the curriculum, but to fully comprehend a 300-word article, which is also a proficiency requirement in the curriculum, a student would need a vocabulary of at least 450 words, Sung said, adding that vocabulary taught in elementary school should be enhanced.

To bridge the education gap between rural and urban areas, supplementary measures, such as deploying more learning resources and teachers for underprivileged students, should be rolled out, he added.

讚 分享

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