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EFFECTIVE PRACTICES IN SUPPLEMENTARY ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION: A RESEARCHBASED REVIEW

Abstract: *this article synthesizes effective practices in supplementary English education (2023–2026): CLIL, extracurriculars, gamification, AI, blended models. Case studies include Taiwan’s PaGamO (1,015 students, reduced anxiety), Hong Kong’s “My AI Buddy”, and Malaysia’s E4J (90 hours). Challenges: teacher training gaps (>40% untrained), digital divide, passive consumption. Recommendations: CLIL, active production, AI with human interaction, equitable access.*

Keywords: *supplementary English education, CLIL, gamification.*

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ЭФФЕКТИВНЫЕ ПРАКТИКИ ДОПОЛНИТЕЛЬНОГО ОБУЧЕНИЯ АНГЛИЙСКОМУ ЯЗЫКУ: ОБЗОР, ОСНОВАННЫЙ НА НАУЧНЫХ ИССЛЕДОВАНИЯХ

Аннотация: в статье обобщены эффективные практики дополнительного обучения английскому языку (2023–2026): CLIL, внеклассные мероприятия, геймификация, ИИ, смешанные модели. Приведены примеры: PaGamO в Тайване (1015 учащихся, снижение тревожности), «My AI Buddy» в Гонконге, E4J в Малайзии (90 часов). Выявлены проблемы: нехватка подготовки учителей (>40%), цифровое неравенство, пассивное потребление контента. Рекомендованы CLIL, активная продукция, геймификация с ИИ, доступность для малообеспеченных.

Ключевые слова: дополнительное обучение английскому, CLIL, геймификация.

1. Introduction.

Supplementary (or out-of-school) English language education refers to any organised language learning that takes place outside the formal school curriculum – after-school programmes, weekend courses, online tutoring, language clubs, summer camps, and self-access digital platforms. In many countries, such programmes have become an integral part of the educational landscape, often bridging gaps left by mainstream schooling and providing learners with additional exposure, practice, and motivation.

Unlike compulsory school English, supplementary education enjoys greater flexibility in content, pacing, and methodology. It can respond quickly to learners' interests, integrate technology, and create low-anxiety environments. However, not all supplementary programmes are equally effective. This article synthesises current empirical evidence (2023–2026) on practices that consistently lead to improved English proficiency, learner engagement, and long-term motivation. Key areas examined include Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), extracurricular activities (ECAs),

digital gamification, AI-mediated informal learning, and blended models. Challenges such as teacher training, quality assurance, and equity of access are also discussed.

2. Defining Supplementary Language Education.

Supplementary English education covers a wide spectrum.

1. *Structured after-school programmes* (e.g., E4J in Malaysia, EmpowerED globally).
2. *Online tutoring and AI-based apps* (e.g., Novakid, My AI Buddy).
3. *Extracurricular activities* (debate clubs, drama, sports-based English).
4. *Self-directed digital learning* (gamified platforms, virtual worlds).
5. *Summer/winter immersion camps.*

A key feature is that attendance is usually voluntary, and learners often have higher intrinsic motivation than in compulsory classes. However, this motivation must be sustained through appropriate pedagogical design.

3. Core Effective Practices.

3.1. Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in Supplementary Settings.

CLIL – teaching non-language subjects (science, art, social studies) through English – has proven highly effective in supplementary programmes, especially for young learners. By embedding language learning in meaningful content, CLIL reduces the artificiality of «language lessons» and increases cognitive engagement.

Example from Taiwan (2026).

National Chung Hsing University partnered with six primary schools to offer after-school CLIL classes focusing on natural sciences (botany, zoology). Over one semester, students not only improved their English vocabulary and reading comprehension but also showed higher performance in science tests compared to peers who did not attend the programme. Teachers reported that students began using English spontaneously to ask questions about animals and plants.

Global innovation – EmpowerED (HundrED, 2025).

This programme combines CLIL with social-emotional learning (SEL) and growth mindset training. Each session starts with a short reflection ritual (e.g., «Today

I will try...”), followed by content-rich tasks (e.g., designing a poster about local ecosystems) using English as the medium. Evaluations show increased student confidence, willingness to speak, and classroom participation.

3.2. *Extracurricular Activities (ECAs).*

Traditional extracurricular activities – drama clubs, English corners, story-telling circles, sports – are powerful vehicles for language acquisition because they provide authentic communicative purposes.

Research evidence (Zenodo, 2025).

A study on ECA-based foreign language teaching concluded that activities such as role-plays, debates, and cultural projects significantly improve speaking fluency and cultural awareness. Even physical education taught in English was found to enhance vocabulary retention in primary school children (similar to TPR effects).

Turkish university context (Literacy Trek, 2025).

A large-scale study among high-achieving Turkish students examined the relationship between «extramural English» (outside school) and proficiency. Listening to English audio, watching videos, and conversational practice showed positive correlations with overall proficiency. However, merely spending time on English-medium games (without active language use) did not correlate with improvement – highlighting the importance of purposeful, structured activity over passive entertainment.

3.3. *Digital Gamification and Game-Based Learning.*

Gamification (points, badges, leaderboards) and game-based learning (immersive educational games) have become staples of effective supplementary programmes, especially for children and teenagers.

Case study – PaGamO in rural Taiwan (2026).

The Red Cross of Taiwan partnered with the PaGamO platform to provide after-school English reading practice for 1,015 students in remote Hualien. Students completed nearly 7,000 «reading + test» modules over several months. Teachers observed that instant feedback and positive reinforcement significantly reduced English learning anxiety. Many students who had previously refused to speak English began to enjoy the game format and developed a daily learning habit.

Novakid game world (2025).

An online English platform for children aged 4–12 uses a persistent game world where completing language missions unlocks rewards, new areas, and storylines. Internal data shows that students who engage with the game world for at least 30 minutes per week have higher vocabulary retention and request more speaking practice. The gamified environment effectively supports the immersion method without causing boredom.

3.4. *AI-Mediated Informal Language Learning (AI-ILL).*

Artificial intelligence – chatbots, voice recognition, adaptive learning systems – is transforming supplementary education by offering personalised, on-demand practice.

Hong Kong's «My AI Buddy» (2026).

As part of an e-learning scheme, primary schools adopted an AI platform that allows students to practice conversational English with a chatbot that corrects pronunciation and grammar in real time. After six months, schools reported that students became more proactive in asking cultural questions (e.g., «Why do people say «bless you'?»») and that teachers could redirect their attention to higher-order thinking tasks.

Scoping review (Pascual Pérez-Paredes, ReCALL, 2026).

A comprehensive review of 65 empirical studies on AI-mediated informal language learning identified major benefits: improved speaking skills, reduced communication anxiety, increased enjoyment, and better self-regulation. However, the review noted that 55 of the 65 studies were published between 2023 and 2025, indicating a very young field. Most research comes from East Asia and focuses on university students – more studies are needed on younger learners and diverse geographical contexts.

4. *Empirical Evidence of Impact.*

4.1. *The E4J Programme (Malaysia, 2026).*

The «English for Juniors» (E4J) after-school programme targeted 60 primary school students and provided 90 hours of instruction over 23 Saturdays. The pedagogy emphasised student-centred activities: role-plays, storytelling, project work, and peer

feedback. Results: significant improvement in school English grades; five students advanced to national level public speaking competitions. The authors attribute success to three factors: highly motivated and well-trained teachers, consistent extended contact time, and activities that linked English to real-life interests.

4.2. *Virtual Literacy Instruction (USA, 2025).*

Gómez de la Torre-Cerfontaine & Smith (Reading Psychology, 2025) studied a virtual after-school literacy programme for Grades 3-5 English learners. Thirty-minute sessions twice a week over two months led to measurable gains in reading fluency and comprehension for the majority of participants, with zero regression. The study emphasises that structured virtual instruction can be as effective as in-person supplementary education when it includes explicit phonics, guided reading, and comprehension checks.

4.3. *Blended College-Student Assisted Model (Korea, 2025).*

A Korean study developed a blended after-school English programme where university student volunteers provided online conversation practice, while professional teachers delivered grammar and writing components. The model proved cost-effective and scalable, and younger learners showed increased confidence in speaking. The study recommends that such models include clear training for university helpers and alignment with school curricula.

5. *Challenges and Critical Considerations.*

Despite the successes, supplementary English education faces several challenges that must be addressed for widespread effectiveness.

5.1. *Teacher Training and Quality Assurance.*

Many after-school programmes rely on part-time or untrained teachers. A 2025 survey in Southeast Asia found that over 40% of supplementary English teachers had no formal training in teaching young learners or using communicative methods. Quality assurance mechanisms (regular observations, standardised materials, teacher portfolios) are often lacking.

5.2. *Digital Divide and Equity.*

Access to high-quality digital supplementary programmes is uneven. Rural areas and low-income families may lack reliable internet, devices, or parental support for AI-based learning. The PaGamO case in Taiwan specifically targeted remote areas, but such initiatives remain rare. Without conscious policy, supplementary education can widen achievement gaps.

5.3. *Alignment with Formal Education.*

Some supplementary programmes operate in isolation from school curricula, leading to duplication or confusion. Effective practices involve coordination – for example, after-school clubs that reinforce topics recently taught in school English classes, or using school assessment data to personalise supplementary content.

5.4. *Over-reliance on Passive or Entertainment-Oriented Activities.*

As noted in the Turkish study, not all extramural English is beneficial. Unstructured gameplay, passive video watching, or repetitive app exercises without production (speaking/writing) show little correlation with proficiency gains. Supplementary programmes must ensure active, purposeful language use.

6. *Future Directions.*

Research and practice in supplementary English education are moving towards:

1. *Personalised AI-human hybrid models* – where AI handles routine practice (pronunciation, basic grammar) and teachers focus on creative communication, critical thinking, and emotional support.

2. *Micro-credentialing for supplementary teachers* – short, practical certifications for after-school educators.

3. *Community-based CLIL* – using local history, environment, and culture as content for English learning, making programmes relevant and sustainable.

4. *Longitudinal impact studies* – most current evidence is short-term; we need studies tracking learners over years to see whether supplementary programmes produce lasting proficiency and motivation.

7. *Practical Recommendations for Educators and Policymakers.*

Based on the evidence reviewed, the following practices are recommended for effective supplementary English education.

Table 1

Area	Recommendation
Content	Use CLIL or theme-based learning (science, arts, sports) to give language a genuine purpose
Activities	Prioritise active production (speaking, writing, projects) over passive consumption (watching, listening without response)
Technology	Integrate gamification and AI for personalised practice, but ensure human interaction remains central
Teacher support	Provide ongoing, low-cost training for supplementary teachers (e.g., online modules, peer observation)
Equity	Subsidise digital access for low-income families; develop offline supplementary materials for areas with poor connectivity
Assessment	Use formative, low-stakes assessment (e.g., portfolios, self-reflections) rather than high-pressure tests

8. Conclusion.

Supplementary English language education has moved from being a peripheral «extra» to a vital component of many learners' language development. Effective programmes are not simply more of the same school instruction; they are characterised by flexibility, meaningful content (CLIL), active and gamified engagement, and increasingly, intelligent personalisation through AI. The evidence shows that when well designed, supplementary programmes can significantly raise proficiency, reduce anxiety, and foster intrinsic motivation.

However, effectiveness is not automatic. Poorly trained teachers, passive content, and lack of alignment with formal education can render supplementary programmes ineffective or even counterproductive. The challenge for the coming years is to scale up proven practices – such as CLIL after-school clubs, gamified reading platforms, and AI conversation buddies – while ensuring equity, teacher quality, and a continued focus on authentic communication. When these conditions are met, supplementary English education becomes not just an addition, but a powerful transformation.

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