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## Examining Potentials of CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) for English Language Education in Japan

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# Examining Potentials of CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) for English Language Education in Japan\*

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## Abstract

CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) is a way of teaching and learning subjects in a language other than learners' mother tongue. It originated in Europe in mid 1990s as a measure to rectify inefficient foreign language education. Supported by the EU's policy of plurilingualism, CLIL has spread very fast throughout Europe. Today many countries in the world are trying to implement CLIL, especially English CLIL, into their education, from primary to tertiary, recognising its great potentials for fostering a high-level proficiency of English, a most powerful global language. Japan is following suit.

It is a little annoying, however, to see language programmes or lessons labeled as "CLIL" simply because some kind of content, not necessarily subject content, is dealt with in their teaching. Still more annoying is the fact that CLIL is now used as a fashionable catchy copy to sell pedagogical services.

If CLIL continues to be an educational fashion, it may as well be thrown away and forgotten before its real potentials are fully realised. To avoid such an unhappy scenario, it is imperative to understand what CLIL is, what CLIL says, how CLIL is related to other similar educational approaches, and what CLIL promises to those of us who are struggling to improve our students' English communication skills. This is exactly what we aim at in this article, hoping for a sustainable development of CLIL as an innovative but promising approach.

**Keywords:** CLIL, Content and Language Integrated Learning, background, potentials, globalisation

## 1. Introduction

CLIL stands for Content and Language Integrated Learning and is a way of teaching and learning subjects in a language other than learners' mother tongue. It is a newcomer to English language education in Japan. However, the idea of teaching contents or subject matters in a language which is not the first language of learners is not new at all (Coyle, Hood, & Marsh,

2010, p.2). It “dates back some 5,000 years” (Pérez-Cañado, 2012, p.315).

If we look back to the ancient times of Japan, Buddhist monks in the Nara Period used to learn Buddhism, the latest science in a way at that time imported from China, in Chinese from famous Chinese monks who came over to Japan. Presumably, those Chinese monks could not speak Japanese at all. Therefore, those young Japanese monks had to learn the teachings of Buddhism in a foreign language, Chinese.

Then soon after the Meiji Restoration of imperial power in 1868, the newly established government tried to modernise and empower the country by adopting the Western civilisation. Naturally, educating young people was one of the top priorities. However, the government realised that Japan did not have teachers who would teach academic courses at newly established universities, and then decided to import mainly from the United States and Great Britain those teachers who could teach academic subjects to young Japanese elites at university. Those American and British teachers taught the fields of their academic expertise in their own language, namely, English. The textbooks themselves had to be imported from the United States and Great Britain. As a result, young Japanese elites at that time studied academic subjects from native speakers of English, using textbooks originally written for English-speaking people.

Then after we witnessed the success of French immersion programmes in Canada, we imported immersion education from Canada in 1990s. A number of schools, mainly private schools, started offering English immersion programmes in which normal school subjects were taught in English to majority Japanese children (Ito, 1997). Then after the turn of the century, CLIL arrived from Europe along with CEFR, i.e., Common European Framework of Reference (Council of Europe, 2001) as an increasing number of researchers became interested in the EU language policy.

At the moment, primary school teachers are most enthusiastic about CLIL, and have been trying to incorporate CLIL into their English lessons. A fairly large number of books and research articles have also been published (Watanabe, Ikeda, & Izumi, 2011; Sasajima, 2011; Izumi, 2016). However, very little reference has been made to the foregoing experiences with immersion education in this growth of interest in CLIL. This is rather surprising since CLIL is considered to be “a descendent of French immersion programs and North American bilingual teaching models” (Pérez-Cañado, 2012, p.316). It is also annoying to see more and more educators label their language programmes or language lessons “CLIL” simply because content is dealt with in their teaching. Still more annoying is the fact that CLIL is now used as a

fashionable catchy copy to sell pedagogical services, that is, as “a brand-name, complete with the symbolic capital of positive ascriptions: innovative, modern, effective, efficient and forward-looking” (Dalton-Puffer, Nikula, & Smit, 2010, p.3). In short, CLIL is regarded as “growth industry” (Marsh, 2002, p.59) in Japan as well as in other countries which have adopted CLIL.

If CLIL continues to be an educational fashion, it may as well be thrown away and forgotten before its real potentials are fully realised through careful assessment of its effectiveness as an innovative educational approach. To avoid such an unhappy scenario, it is imperative to understand what CLIL is, what CLIL says, how CLIL is related to other similar educational approaches, and most importantly what CLIL promises to those of us who are struggling to improve our students’ English communication skills. This understanding is essential for “success-prone implementation of CLIL programs” (Pérez-Cañado, 2012, p.316). This is exactly what we aim at in this article, hoping that CLIL “continues to thrive on theoretically and empirically sound foundations” (Dalton-Puffer, Nikula, & Smit, 2010, p.3).

## 2. What is CLIL?

### 2.1 Defining CLIL

It can be said that there exist as many definitions of CLIL as researchers of CLIL. Among those definitions, the following is the most frequently cited definition.

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is a dual-focused educational approach in which an **additional language** is used for the learning and teaching of both content *and* language. (Coyle, Hood, & Marsh, 2010, p.1, boldface and italics in the original)

This definition clearly indicates that equal focus is placed on content and language but does not specifically indicate what content refers to. Let us look at the following definition.

Content and language integrated learning (CLIL) can be described as an educational approach where subjects such as geography or biology are taught through the medium of a foreign language, typically to students participating in some form of mainstream education at primary, secondary but also tertiary level. (Dalton-Puffer, Nikula, & Smit, 2010, p.1)

It is clear from this definition that content dealt with in CLIL is content in school subjects. Furthermore, CLIL is basically meant for learners who belong to the majority of the nation, not for those who belong to the minority such as immigrants. This definition also implies that “an additional language” in Coyle, Hood, & Marsh (2010)’s definition is a foreign language, not a second language<sup>1)</sup>.

## 2.2 When and how was CLIL born?

According to Coyle, Hood, & Marsh (2010, p.3), the term “Content and Language Integrated Learning” (CLIL) was first adopted along with its French version, EMILE (enseignement d’une matière intégré à une langue étrangère) in 1994 by a working committee for the promotion of multilingualism and multiculturalism within the European Union, but it was in 1995 that it first appeared in one of the official documents issued by the European Council, i.e., *the 1995 Resolution of the Council* (Eurydice, 2006, p.8). CLIL was proposed with two main objectives: enhancing multilingualism and multicultural citizenship and improving foreign language learning and teaching methodologies (Morton & Linares, 2017, p.1). The first objective is considered to be proactive in a sense that CLIL was proposed to promote plurilingualism and enhance the value of European linguistic and cultural diversity while the second objective is considered to be reactive in a sense that CLIL was proposed as a way to remedy ineffective foreign language education within the EU (Pérez-Cañado, 2012, p.315).

Since it was first proposed in 1994, CLIL kept steadily expanding as an alternative approach to foreign language education throughout Europe. Eurydice (2006) reported that about 30 countries in Europe had adopted CLIL in their mainstream education in some form or others. This widespread adoption of CLIL was triggered by two factors. First, as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) became a predominant approach for teaching a foreign language, researchers and teachers came to show a greater interest in what a foreign language was to be used for than in how a foreign language was to be learned. Accordingly, authentic communicative situations, like ordering meals at a restaurant or teaching friends how to use a washing machine at a laundromat, were utilised in order to promote communication in classrooms. However, teachers came to suspect that the information transacted in a restaurant or at a laundromat might be useful for ESL learners or adult EFL learners, but definitely not for young EFL learners. This renewed interest in the content of communication led CLIL proponents to believe that the content of school subjects should be the most significant and meaningful information for EFL learners studying in the mainstream education system.

Secondly, by the time CLIL was proposed as a measure to rectify inefficient foreign language education in Europe, the success of French immersion education in Canada in which regular school subjects were taught in French to the majority Anglophone children had widely been reported in Europe. Naturally, CLIL proponents believed that much higher levels of foreign language competence would be achieved if the exposure to a foreign language in classrooms was increased by teaching school subjects in the foreign language. Interestingly enough, the term of *immersion* was not adopted to capture this new idea of teaching content through a foreign language. It was not widely favoured due to “its close association with Canadian models” (Coyle, 2007, p.544). In this sense, CLIL is “a specifically European approach to bilingual education” (Nikula, 2017, p.113) and “is European in the sense that it has been energized by European language policy and ideology” (Dalton-Puffer *et al.*, 2014, p.214).

### 2.3 CLIL as an umbrella term

CLIL is now present in over 30 countries throughout Europe alone. It includes “many variants and/or a wide range of different approaches” (Cenoz, Genesee, & Gorter, 2014, p.246) since there is “neither one CLIL approach nor one theory of CLIL” (Coyle, 2008, p.101). Grin (2005, cited in Coyle, 2008, p.100) lists up 216 types of CLIL programmes in terms of compulsory status, intensity, starting age, starting linguistic level and duration.

Taking this diversity into consideration, a number of researchers tried to group different CLIL programmes into a dichotomy of two major types. The most well-known among them are Ball, Kelly, & Clegg (2015, pp.1-2), who divide CLIL into Hard CLIL and Soft CLIL. The former refers to a programme which is “taught by subject teachers with a strong emphasis on the acquisition of subject knowledge, occupying all the available hours for the subject for a year or more and sometimes culminating in a public examination,” while the latter is “normally a shorter programme, taking up only part of the curriculum time allocated to the subject, valued for its language benefits and often involving language teachers.” Content-driven vs. Language-driven (Stoller, 2004) and High-intensity vs. Low-intensity (Dalton-Puffer, Nikula, & Smit, 2010) are on the same track.

It is true that this kind of typology of CLIL helps us to understand the versatile nature of CLIL to a certain degree, but it may be misleading in a way because CLIL by definition “integrates language and content along a continuum, in a flexible and dynamic way, without an implied preference for either” (Pérez-Cañado, 2012, p.318). This exactly explains why so many different types of CLIL programmes exist in Europe and the world, reflecting linguistic,

cultural, social and educational situations behind them.

## 2.4 Distinctive features of CLIL

Although CLIL exists in many different forms, a number of common distinctive features can be identified. These distinctive features will also help us to understand the relationship between CLIL and other similar content-based approaches such as CBI (Content-based Instruction), immersion education, and EMI (English-medium Instruction). The following seven distinctive features of CLIL have been identified, based upon Dalton-Puffer (2011), Dalton-Puffer, Nikula, & Smit (2010), Dalton-Puffer *et al.* (2014), and others.

- CLIL is targeted for learners who belong to the majority group of a nation and are studying at mainstream schools.
- The vehicular language of CLIL is a foreign language, not a second language.
- CLIL does not happen instead of foreign language teaching but alongside it. Accordingly, CLIL is timetabled as content lessons in school or university curricula.
- In CLIL typically less than 50% of the curriculum is taught in a foreign language. This is in sharp contrast to French immersion education in Canada since “generally speaking, at least 50 percent of instruction during a given academic year must be provided through the second language for the program to be regarded as immersion” (Genesee, 1987, p.1).
- Teachers in CLIL are normally non-native speakers of a foreign language, and are usually content experts, not foreign language experts.
- CLIL is usually implemented after learners have acquired literacy skills in their mother tongue. This means that “students rarely learn to read and write through a foreign language but can transfer already existing literacy skills to the foreign language” (Dalton-Puffer, Nikula, & Smit, 2010, p.1).
- The vehicular language of CLIL is mostly a major or minor international language, but the dominant language is English (Dalton-Puffer, 2011).

## 2.5 Relationships with similar approaches

One of the recent approaches which emphasise the importance of content in foreign language education is CBI (Content-based Instruction). Brinton, Snow, & Wesche (2003, p.2) define CBI as “the integration of particular content with language-teaching aims.” Although it exists in many different shapes and sizes just like CLIL, CBI was originally developed for ESL courses in North America in which international students received intensive English courses

so that they would acquire the sufficient English proficiency which would enable them to follow academic courses in the fields of their choice. CBI proponents believed that developing a required level of English proficiency was not enough; they realised the importance of teaching study skills needed for university students as well as developing subject-specific literacy through integrating into their skill-based teaching the content which was relevant to the academic courses their students would follow when they were registered as regular degree-pursuing undergraduate or postgraduate students.

In this way, the content dealt with in CBI (at least for university-bound ESL students) is not the authentic academic content, but the content which is related and relevant to academic content students will be expected to study in undergraduate or postgraduate programmes of their choice. Therefore, CBI should be clearly distinguished from CLIL, in which the content learners are supposed to learn through a foreign language is the authentic subject content, and learning such content is a legitimate goal of CLIL at respective levels of schooling. Naturally, the level of scholastic achievement to be attained by CLIL learners in school subjects should be the same as the level to be attained by non-CLIL learners in the same subjects taught in their first language.

Another approach similar to CLIL is immersion education which is very popular in North America. CLIL proponents were greatly influenced by the success of French immersion programmes in Canada (Ito, 1997; Ito, 2005). As a result, the relation between CLIL and immersion education was sometimes unclear, which caused some confusion among researchers and practitioners. For example, the following characterisation of immersion education by Cammarata & Tedick (2012, p.251) makes it difficult to distinguish CLIL from immersion education.

Fundamental to the curriculum of immersion programs is the integration of content and language. That is, language is used as the vehicle for teaching the subject matter content that comprises the school curriculum of the local district.

CLIL researchers such as Mehisto, Marsh, & Frigols (2008) and Cenoz, Genesee, & Gorter (2014) see no or very few differences between CLIL and immersion education. Dalton-Puffer *et al.* (2014, p.214) regard CLIL and immersion education as lexical variants. Dalton-Puffer (2011, p.183) even declares that “whether a concrete program is referred to as immersion or CLIL often depends as much on its cultural and political frame of reference as on the actual



characteristics of the program.”

It is true that CLIL and immersion education are similar in many respects as a content-based approach, but there should also be some differences which should not be disregarded if we hope for a sound development of CLIL in future as an innovative promising educational approach. It is also believed that a comparison between CLIL and immersion education should help us to understand CLIL itself more accurately. Let us look at similarities between CLIL and immersion education (particularly French immersion education in Canada) first. We can detect the following similarities although they are not exclusive.

#### Similarities

- Both CLIL and immersion education were proposed as a measure to rectify inefficient L2 education. Just as French immersion education is expected to help Anglophone children to acquire a high-level French proficiency which will enable them to function in English-French or French Canada, CLIL is expected to help European children to acquire a high-level foreign language proficiency which will enable them to move freely within the EU and find a job of their choice.
- Both CLIL and immersion education have received strong support from authorities in question. Just as French immersion education in Canada has been supported by the federal government’s official languages policy of English-French bilingualism, CLIL in Europe has been supported by the EU’s multilingual and multicultural policies, especially its L1+2 policy which stipulates that children in the EU should learn at least two foreign languages in compulsory education.
- Both CLIL and immersion education have a dual focus of content learning and language learning. Learners in CLIL classes are expected not only to improve their foreign language proficiency to a much higher level than non-CLIL learners who learn the foreign language as a subject but also to attain the same level of understanding of the content of subjects as non-CLIL learners who learn the same subjects in their mother tongue. Likewise, learners in French immersion classes are expected not only to improve their French proficiency to a much higher level than Core French learners who learn French as a subject but also to attain the same level of understanding of the content of subjects as Core French learners who learn the same subjects in their mother tongue.
- Both CLIL and immersion education include a variety of programmes which are offered to different types of learners in different educational contexts. Just as CLIL is divided into Hard CLIL vs. Soft CLIL (Ball, Kelly, & Clegg, 2015) or into language-driven CLIL vs. content-

driven CLIL (Stoller, 2004), French immersion education is offered in several different frameworks; early, middle, & late or total & partial (Lapkin, 1998; Swain, 2000).

- Both CLIL lessons and immersion lessons are taught by subject specialist teachers, not by language specialist teachers. Since both CLIL lessons and immersion lessons are normally timetabled as content lessons in school curricula, they are taught either by subject specialist teachers such as science teachers and mathematics teachers at secondary school, or by class teachers at primary school in countries where class teachers are supposed to teach almost all the subjects on a primary school curriculum as in Japan. Because of this similarity, both in CLIL and in immersion education, it is a big challenge for principals or programme coordinators to find appropriate teachers who can teach subjects in the vehicular language.

#### Differences

- French immersion education was started as a grassroot movement by parents who were quite dissatisfied with the results of conventional French language education and were seriously worried about the future of their children. CLIL, on the other hand, was inaugurated mostly by educators and teachers who wished to improve their foreign language education in response to the EU's plurilingual policy of mother tongue plus two.
- The vehicular language of French immersion education is a second language, not a foreign language, for immersion learners. Although French is the official language of the federal government of Canada along with English, its status as a global language is not so strong as English, the most favoured vehicular language of CLIL. Therefore, it is a big challenge for immersion learners to maintain a high-level motivation to learn French, especially in Anglophone Canada, where French hardly exists in their daily lives. English, however, is truly a global language, and it is not so difficult for learners to maintain their motivation to improve their English.
- It is imperative for French immersion education to provide 50% of the instruction in French (Genesee, 1987, p.1) while in CLIL the ratio of the instruction in the vehicular language can be less than 50% (Dalton-Puffer, 2011, p.184).
- French immersion education is basically an approach adopted in North America while CLIL has spread not only throughout Europe but also outside Europe into the world. This is mainly because the most favoured vehicular language of CLIL is English, a truly global language of today, and partly because information about CLIL has been easy to access from the start due to the spread of the Internet, which was not available when French immersion education was born and developed.

- There exists a wide difference in the volume of efforts to assess the effectiveness of the proposed programmes. It was imperative for stakeholders of immersion education to assess and verify the effectiveness of their programmes for the federal government who offered substantial financial support. This led to a huge number of research articles which tried to verify the effectiveness of French immersion education. On the other hand, since English, the most favoured vehicular language of CLIL, is a global language used all over the world today, the need to foster a high-level English proficiency has more or less drowned the need to verify the effectiveness of CLIL.

### 3. What does CLIL Say?

#### 3.1 Theoretical justification and instructional framework of CLIL

Today, CLIL is no longer an experimental approach, nor “the prerogative of the academic elite.” It is “an established teaching approach” which “has embedded itself in mainstream education from preschool to vocational education” (Pérez-Cañado, 2012, p.316). According to Marsh (2012, p.135), CLIL is theoretically justified because:

- Traditional methods for teaching second languages often disassociate learning from cognitive or academic development
- Language is learned most effectively for communication in meaningful, purposeful, social and academic contexts
- Integration of language and content provides a substantive basis for language teaching and learning: content can provide a motivational and cognitive basis for language learning since it is interesting and of some value to the learner
- The language of different subject areas is characterized by specific genres or registers which may be a prerequisite of specific content or to academic development in general

Coyle (2008) has turned this theoretical justification into his well-known instructional principles of CLIL, called the 4Cs Framework. It integrates four contextualised building blocks of CLIL: content (subject matter), communication (language learning and using), cognition (learning and thinking processes), and culture (developing intercultural understanding and global citizenship). This framework is shown schematically by Figure 1 bellow. Coyle explains that this 4Cs

Framework takes account of integrating content learning and language learning within specific contexts and acknowledges the symbiotic relationship that exists between these elements, arguing that it is “a tool for mapping out CLIL activities and for maximizing potential in any model, at any level and any age” (Coyle, 2008, p.104).

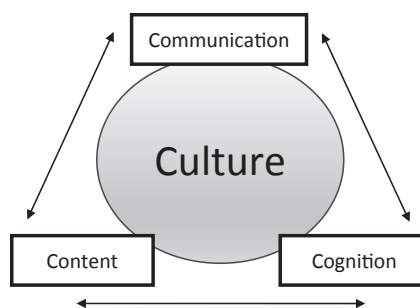


Figure 1: Simplified 4Cs Framework of CLIL

### 3.2 Proposed benefits of CLIL

Based upon the 4Cs Framework of CLIL and currently available research results, Coyle (2008, pp.104-105) proposes the following benefits of CLIL.

CLIL can for example:

- Raise learner linguistic competence and confidence;
- Raise teacher and learner expectations;
- Develop risk-taking and problem-solving skills in the learners;
- Increase vocabulary learning skills and grammatical awareness;
- Motivate and encourage student independence;
- Take students beyond 'reductive' foreign language topics;
- Improve L1 literacy;
- Encourage linguistic spontaneity (talk) if students are enabled to learn through the language rather than in the language;
- Develop study skills, concentration—learning how to learn through the foreign language is fundamental to CLIL;
- Generate positive attitudes and address gender issues in motivation;
- Embed cultural awareness and intercultural understanding into the curriculum.

Of course, all these proposed benefits should not be solely attributed to CLIL. Some of them, or most of them to be more specific, can also be obtained to a greater or lesser degree by foreign language education in general or by the teaching of subject content in learners' mother tongue. Keeping this in mind, Vazquez (2013, p.11) recognises the benefits of CLIL in the following three main domains: the development of linguistic skills, the acquisition of subject

knowledge, and the impact on the mind, brain and thinking processes. Based upon these arguments, we summarise the benefits to be expected of CLIL as follows:

Without hampering the sound development of L1 literacy, CLIL can

- Foster a high-level L2 proficiency;
- Guarantee the same level of understanding of subject content as among non-CLIL learners who learn subject content through L1;
- Cultivate stronger interest in foreign languages and cultures;
- Develop high-level cognitive skills.

The first three benefits are the benefits which are shared by immersion education (e.g. Pérez-Cañado, 2012, p.317), but the fourth benefit is considered as a unique benefit of CLIL, which emphasises the value of integration between language and content more than immersion education. Referring to this added benefit of CLIL, Marsh (2000, p.8) proclaims as follows:

CLIL doesn't only promote linguistic competence. Because of the different 'thinking horizons' which result from working in another language CLIL can also have an impact on conceptualization, literally *how we think*. Being able to think about something in different languages can enrich our understanding of concepts, and help broaden our conceptual mapping resources. This allows better association of different concepts and helps the learner go towards a more sophisticated level of learning in general. (italics in the original)

### 3.3 Verifying benefits of CLIL

French immersion education has produced an enormous number of researches which have tried to verify the assumed benefits of immersion education in terms of the level of French proficiency attained by immersion learners, the influence of immersion on the development of L1 literacy, the level of understanding of subject content among immersion learners, and positive influences on learners' affective domains. This is in sharp contrast to the situation surrounding CLIL. Researchers of CLIL have been occupied in describing different types of CLIL programmes and their expected benefits. It seems that the rapid growth of CLIL outpaced the efforts to measure its promised benefits, at least in the beginning stages of CLIL development.

The situation of the CLIL research, however, is changing with an increasing number of evaluative studies concerning the benefits of CLIL being conducted not only in Europe but also

outside Europe. International journals dedicated to CLIL such as *Journal of Immersion and Content-Based Language Education* and *International CLIL Research Journal*, have also been launched. Pérez-Cañado (2012) reports on a substantial number of researches in Northern, Central, Eastern, and Southern Europe which have been conducted in order to verify the benefits of CLIL.

However, it cannot be denied that the majority of the researches conducted to verify the effectiveness of CLIL have centred on the linguistic benefits, especially the higher level of English proficiency attained by CLIL learners. Few researches have been conducted to verify the beneficial impacts of CLIL on learners' affective and cognitive domains. Dalton-Puffer, Nikula, & Smit (2010, p.6) sound a little critical or masochistic about this when they state:

This is surprising insofar as general gains such as intercultural awareness or deeper cognitive processing on subject matter are an integral part in expert-designed CLIL concepts.

CLIL researchers are not to blame for this lack of empirical studies to verify the proposed impacts of CLIL on learners' affective and cognitive domains because those impacts are by nature extremely difficult to verify. We also have to take into consideration the fact that CLIL researches in Europe have traditionally tended to be qualitative and descriptive, focusing more on what is taking place in CLIL classrooms than on what has been achieved as a result of CLIL. Furthermore, the undeniable importance of English as a global language may have overshadowed the necessity of verifying the effectiveness of CLIL in which subject content is taught in English. That being said, there is still some truth in Coyle, Hood, and Marsh (2010, p.149)' verdict that "despite the recent surge in evaluative reports, there is much, much more still to investigate."

#### 4. How should CLIL be Approached in Japan?

##### 4.1 Guidelines for implementing CLIL

Mainly because of the promised (but not well verified) benefits of CLIL and partly because of the increasing interest in the language policy of the EU symbolically represented by the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference), CLIL (or to be more specific, the term of CLIL) is spreading rather swiftly in Japan. A number of academic books have also been

published, and academic societies and research groups dedicated to the research of CLIL have been established. An increasing number of schools and universities are setting up “CLIL” programmes. Even a private educational institution is offering a “CLIL” course for young children. However, an overall strategy for implementing CLIL into education in Japan is not made clear by any studies nor by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT). Some kind of guidelines are seriously needed for implementing CLIL effectively and systematically. The following four guidelines are proposed for that purpose:

- CLIL need not be implemented into all the schools in Japan. It should be an educational option for children and parents, hopefully not only within private sectors but also within public sectors. CLIL should not be restricted to wealthy families who can afford expensive tuitions.
- The content in CLIL should be regarded as the content of regular subjects such as mathematics and science. A pedagogical focus on content in foreign (English) language education does not guarantee a programme to be called CLIL. CBI may be a more suitable term to use in such situations. For a programme to be designated as CLIL, regular school subjects such as mathematics and science should be taught in the vehicular language, English being the most popular.
- We need to make a distinction between CLIL as curriculum and CLIL as methodology. CLIL as curriculum may be equated with Hard CLIL (Ball, Kelly, & Clegg, 2015), in which regular school subjects are taught in the vehicular language. CLIL as methodology, on the other hand, may be equated with Soft CLIL, in which only part of the curriculum time is allocated to the teaching of subject content, or the content is not necessarily the content of regular subjects, but the content to be treated in foreign language education, such as the way of life in the country where the language is spoken. In other words, CLIL as methodology can be “construed as a foreign language teaching *method*, especially in primary education contexts” (Dalton-Puffer, Nikula, & Smit, 2010, p.2).
- The articulation between CLIL programmes at different levels of schooling should be maintained in order to guarantee the sound development of CLIL within the education system in Japan, hopefully not only within the private sector but also within the public sector. Whether as curriculum or as methodology, CLIL programmes should not be an isolated practice by individual conscientious teachers nor by individual experimental schools. They should be systematically pursued and developed across different levels of schooling from primary education to tertiary education. In order to establish a good articulation

between CLIL programmes at different levels of schooling. Moate (2017)'s proposal of the English CLIL pathway is quite illuminating. The pathway consists of the following four phases.

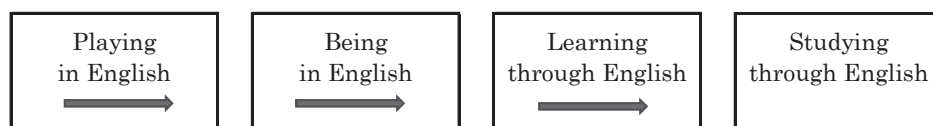


Figure 2: A simplified model of English CLIL pathway (cf. Moate, 2017)

The model reflects “the notion of a transitional dynamic in that during the different phases pupils’ language abilities are intentionally moved forward towards the next phase, but the pathway also concretises the foundation of language learning” (Moate, 2017, p.2). In our context, Phase 1 (playing in English) may correspond to CLIL at primary school, Phase 2 (being in English) to CLIL at lower secondary school, Phase 3 (learning through English) to CLIL at upper secondary school, and Phase 4 (studying through English) to CLIL at university.

#### 4.2 Concrete proposal: Starting the pathway from the top

Ideally, the CLIL pathway suggested above should start from Phase 1 (playing in English) at primary school in a cumulative manner, but the present author believes that Phase 4 (studying through English) at university should be appropriate as a starting point for the CLIL pathway in a Japanese context for the following four reasons.

- It is extremely difficult to establish the sound articulation between CLIL programmes at different levels of schooling, especially within the public sector. Both children enrolled in early French immersion at kindergarten in Canada and children enrolled in English CLIL programmes at primary school in Finland, for example, can expect to continue studying in French or English until they graduate from university. In Japan, the CLIL pathway is established only in several private institutions from primary school to upper secondary school. Such being the case, it is more realistic to start the CLIL pathway at university since the articulation matter need not be considered for the time being. The task for English teachers from primary to upper secondary school is to help students to acquire English proficiency high enough to enable them to be enrolled in English CLIL programmes at university.
- Great freedom is endorsed with individual universities in deciding the content of the courses



they provide for students. The content of teaching from primary school to upper secondary school, on the other hand, is very much specified by the Course of Study issued by the MEXT. Sometimes it is very difficult to teach the content of regular subjects in English simply because textbooks written in English are not available on the market. In Canada and Finland, the content of teaching is hardly specified by the official curriculum. Only the goals of education are clearly indicated, and teachers are expected to achieve those goals, using whatever methods and materials they choose.

- It is relatively easy to find teachers to teach English CLIL programmes at university simply because university teachers are not required to obtain the teaching licence which is mandatory for those who wish to teach at primary and secondary school in Japan. At the moment, thanks to the MEXT's policy which requires English lessons to be taught in English, there are a large number of subject teachers of English who can teach English lessons in English at secondary school. However, the number of subject teachers who can teach subjects such as mathematics and science in English is quite limited. At university, on the other hand, there are already a fairly large number of teachers who can teach academic courses in English. It is also possible for universities to hire native speakers of English who will teach those academic courses.
- Universities in Japan are free from the pressure for entrance examinations. For many of the students learning English in Japan, getting high scores in English entrance examinations for upper secondary schools and universities is a top priority. Although only about half of the graduates from upper secondary school continue their education at university, success at university entrance examinations has a very significant meaning pedagogically and socially. This explains why it is so difficult to set up English CLIL programmes at lower and upper secondary school. Students, teachers and parents are worried that learning subject matter in English may hamper proper understanding of the content of the subjects included in university entrance examinations. Currently, a number of English CLIL programmes are offered by upper secondary schools, but almost all of them are private schools which have IB programmes which will enable students to apply for universities outside Japan, thus relieving students from the pressure for tough entrance examinations for Japanese universities. Students who study in English CLIL programmes at university are not only free from such pressure but also in advantageous positions if they wish to carry on their education in English at universities abroad.

For these reasons, the present author believes that English CLIL can be most efficiently

started at university level and be spread downward to upper secondary, lower secondary and primary school as conditions for implementation become favourable. The backwash effects of starting English CLIL at university should not be underestimated either.

## 5. Conclusion

CLIL is an innovative but promising approach to foster high-level communication skills in English while guaranteeing the sound development of the scholastic knowledge in English-taught subjects. Whether CLIL can be instrumental in fostering high-level cognitive skills is still to be verified, but CLIL is certainly worth trying. That is why CLIL has been adopted widely not only throughout Europe but also outside Europe. It is fast spreading in Japan as well. It is true, however, that such attempts to implement CLIL in Japan are still limited to individual institutions, no matter how effective they may be, with little proper articulation between CLIL programmes at different levels of schooling. This is because a comprehensive strategy or a grand plan to implement CLIL into our education system is still missing. In this paper the guidelines and a concrete proposal for CLIL implementation have been presented, but establishing such a comprehensive strategy for implementation is a significant task to be tackled in the near future.

By way of conclusion, let us consider two innovative programmes at Kansai Gaidai University—the Super IES Programmes for domestic students and the Asian Studies Programme for international students—from the perspective of English CLIL. The main purpose of the Super IES Programmes is to foster high-level English proficiency which will enable outbound students to pursue academic English-taught courses of their choice at universities abroad. In a way, they are preparatory courses for studying abroad, similar in nature to ESL programmes offered for international students at universities in the United States. In this sense, they may not be considered English CLIL programmes, since language and content are not well integrated within the programmes. If students who have completed one of the Super IES Programmes and apply for the scholarship for studying abroad for two years, they may be able to obtain a degree in an academic field of their choice from the university where they will study. However, the courses those students will have taken by the time they obtain a degree from a university abroad are not systematically amalgamated into single comprehensive degree programmes for specific academic fields such as international relations or international business. It is high time Kansai Gaidai University would consider the

possibility of setting up English CLIL programmes which will encompass the Super IES Programmes.

Secondly, the Asian Studies Programme for international students is a well-established programme. It has been one of the cornerstones of Kansai Gaidai University with its long history of operation since 1972. This programme “annually welcomes over 600 competitively selected students who represent about 40 countries and regions.” The curriculum consists of “the rigorous Japanese language studies and courses in the Social Sciences, Humanities, and Business/Economics pertinent to Japan and Asia.” All the courses, aside from those focusing on the Japanese language, are conducted in English<sup>2)</sup>. Therefore, this programme is considered an English CLIL programme as it is. However, the purpose of this programme is not to foster high-level English proficiency, but help students to “pursue an in-depth study of Japan and Asia” through English, which is not a native language for those students from non-English-speaking countries. This programme may be further enriched by making it possible for international students to obtain some kind of degree (either a diploma or an MA) in Asian Studies, either through accumulating a sufficient number of credits to be obtained from the courses offered at Kansai Gaidai University alone or through combining the credits obtained at Kansai Gaidai University and at their home institutions. In the future, this English-taught degree programme may be opened to Japanese students and international students in general as a way to further globalise Kansai Gaidai University.

At the moment, English-taught programmes are getting popular at universities in Japan in response to the MEXT’s request to globalise higher education. However, those English-taught programmes tend to be offered as a token of globalisation, not as part of the degree programmes taught through English. Europe is far ahead in implementing English-taught degree programmes or English CLIL programmes (EAIE, 2017). Those English-taught programmes are offered not only to raise the level of English proficiency of domestic students but also to increase the intake of international students and build an appealing international profile. It is high time universities in Japan started a serious proactive attempt to implement English CLIL into their curriculum to substantiate the globalisation of their education for domestic and international students.

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## Notes

- 1) A foreign language and a second language are clearly distinguished in this article; the former refers to a language which is usually studied at school as a subject while the latter is used as a means of communication in a society as an official language.
- 2) This information is from the website of Kansai Gaidai University ([https://www.kansaigaidai.ac.jp/asp/01\\_about/01.html](https://www.kansaigaidai.ac.jp/asp/01_about/01.html)) and from personal communication with Professor Yoshiko Shikaura, director of the Asian Studies Programme of Kansai Gaidai University.

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