The Case for Increasing CLIL in Japanese Universities

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Summary

　内容言語統合型学習（CLIL）は，1990 年代にヨーロッパで導入されて以来，第二言語習得へにむけての，高度に学習者中心のアプローチであるとして，世界的に人気を博している。学習者は，第二言語で，実生活で使われる真の題材を教材として使うことを通して内容を学ぶことをうながされる。本稿は，日本の大学の英語教育においてそのようなアプローチをさらに促進することにメリットがあると主張する。CLIL のアプローチは，日本の伝統的な教育で欠けがちである高次認知スキルに焦点を当てるだけでなく，学習者の異文化間コミュニケーション能力を向上させようとするものである。日本の大学が，国際的な場面でもっと英語を効果的に使える学生を育てることを求められている今，CLIL は現在の教授法にとって代わるべき，現実的な代替手法を提供していると言えよう。

Keywords : CLIL，authentic material，intercultural communicative competence

　　The approach to English language education known as Content and Language Integrated Learning（CLIL）has been gaining wider currency in recent years, particularly in European educational settings, as an effective and motivating way of combining language learning with real content. The term 'CLIL' dates back to the mid-1990s and this approach was launched in Europe at that time as a "dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for learning and teaching of both content and language"（Coyle, Hood, & Marsh, 2010, p. 1）. A European Commission white paper at that time had focused on the need for a '1 + 2' policy; in other words, students should aim for proficiency in two languages（from within the European Community）in addition to their mother tongue（Llinares, Morton, & Whittaker, 2012）. Over the past twenty years, CLIL has become "a well-established part of educational systems across Europe"（Wolff, 2007, from Bonnet, p. 66, 2012）. The introduction of CLIL seemed to provide an alternative to the more traditional grammar-translation models as well as the emerging communicative approaches. There are several reasons that have been put forward to explain why CLIL holds certain advantages over existing communicative approaches to language teaching. There is the argument that it is so much more than simply a language and content approach; indeed, it has been said that a CLIL approach can improve students' higher order cognitive skills as well as promote

intercultural understanding（Coyle et al., 2010）. Such lofty claims require support, and while research into the effectiveness of CLIL is still fairly limited, it is the argument of this paper that CLIL represents a significant qualitative departure from existing approaches to English language education in Japanese universities, particularly for those students at a higher-intermediate to advanced level of English language proficiency. It would also seem to fall into line with certain guidelines from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology – Japan （MEXT）that students should be able to "reason, make decisions or express oneself" in English as well as a desire to promote more global citizens amongst the populace（2014）. Although on the surface CLIL appears to be similar to other approaches such as Content Based Instruction（CBI）, or English Immersion, currently widely in use in tertiary language education, there are several key areas of difference. As stated by Ohmori（2014）, CBI "focuses more on language education"（p. 43）with a lesser emphasis on content, whereas immersion programs are quite the opposite. In Ohmori's words, "CLIL…is content-driven, but considers language learning equally important （Ohmori, 2014, p. 43）. By combining language education with content relevant to students' majors, the utility and immediacy of English are emphasized and likewise, the motivation of the students is enhanced. In addition to this, the ultimate goals of CLIL are more ambitious than simply the acquisition of language and knowledge of a content area.

It is the argument of this paper that CLIL could very well provide a realistic approach to the education of English in Japan that is both effective and motivating to students. Due to the traditional poor performance of Japanese speakers in international standardized tests such as the iBT TOEFL（ETS, 2015）, it is clear that alternative approaches to learning English need to be considered at all levels of the education system. Whilst radical reforms to the primary and secondary levels are unrealistic to contemplate for the foreseeable future, there is greater flexibility at the tertiary level for the piloting of the CLIL approach. This paper will break down the argument into four main areas: CLIL provides core principles; CLIL utilizes authentic, as opposed to contrived, material; CLIL can be implemented flexibly; and CLIL can nurture global human resources. By presenting current research, including the writer's own experiences at using this approach, this paper proposes that the widespread adoption of CLIL in Japan requires further encouragement, particularly at the tertiary level, and with those students with a high-intermediate to advanced proficiency in the language. The case for CLIL will be set out in the following four sections: CLIL provides a clear framework; CLIL emphasizes authentic language materials; CLIL provides a flexibility of implementation; and CLIL cultivates global human resources.

CLIL Provides a Clear Framework

According to Coyle et al（2010）, the framework for CLIL consists of the '4Cs': Communication; Content; Cognition; and Culture. The first two Cs cover the language and content which are the mainstay of any CLIL program. Of course, this is flexible and depending on the strengths and

weaknesses of the students, the emphasis on either can be adjusted. For example, Sasajima （2013）, writing about Japanese medical students, would see a greater emphasis on language at first because "the English language proficiency of most Japanese medical students falls short of that of medical students in those Asian countries where students are required to study medicine in English" （p. 57）. The emphasis on 'communication' rather than on 'language' is also a nod to the importance of "promoting genuine communication...if learning is to take place" in a CLIL context （Coyle et. al., 2010, p. 42）. In the CLIL classroom, language should be utilized for the purposes of tackling tasks that the students deem worthwhile. It is also important to emphasize that there should be a genuine focus on language and it should not simply be assumed that language will develop naturally through the study of content. This may, in contrast, lead to fossilization, particularly in the case where "exposure to the second language does not include instruction" （Lightbrown & Spada, p. 80, 2006）. Llinares et al, （2012） state that the focus on language "does not need to be specifically form but language in a broader sense （form + meaning + function）" （p. 190）. The crucial aspect of a genuinely CLIL approach is that language and content are not taught separately; instead, "students need to learn content through language, and language through content" （Llinares et al., 2012, p. 189）.

Let us now turn to the third aspect on the framework: that of 'cognition', or the nurturing of those cognitive skills required to marry the communicative and content strands together （Parsons and Walker, 2013）. Further to this, Coyle et al. （2010） argue that "CLIL not only promotes linguistic competence, it also serves to stimulate cognitive flexibility" （p. 10）. Ikeda （2016） goes so far as to claim that "cognition, thinking, is the most important element of CLIL" （Ikeda, from MacGregor, 2016, p. 19）. By engaging students with both lower-order and higher-order thinking tasks, students can engage with new knowledge in deeper ways, by applying these "knowledge and skills...through creative thinking, problem solving and cognitive challenge" （Coyle et al., 2010, p. 29）. Indeed, the ability to comprehend and evaluate complex concepts, often through the language of English, is becoming more and more essential in the world （Parsons and Walker, 2013）. The clue to realizing this lies in the acronym CLIL – it indicates 'learning' as opposed to 'teaching' and places the emphasis on a student-centered classroom. Sasajima also espouses the belief that teachers of CLIL classes need to alter their cognition of what it actually is to teach a language to EFL students, in the way in which they approach the preparation of materials. In his view, "CLIL can help change teachers' cognition to some extent: e.g., through creating a good classroom atmosphere;...helping create language use contexts; and helping students to think independently" （Sasajima, 2013, p. 65）. According to Yoshida （2013）, the three higher-order thinking skills are seldom included in the classroom and this represents "one critical area where the Japanese find themselves lacking, and therefore, need to emphasize" （p. 12）. The adoption of the three lower-order thinking skills is of course a necessary stage in the acquisition of language and students do need a thorough grounding in these skills. However, if these skills are all they develop, then their ability to function in the target language in more sophisticated situations will be quite limited. If it is

the case that we wish to nurture global citizens able to function in English in the world outside the classroom, it is essential that they develop the higher order skills: those described in Anderson and Krathwohl's revision of Bloom's Taxonomy as analysis, evaluation and creation（2001）. Yoshida （2013）feels that although these higher order cognitive skills are not the be all and end all of English language education, "this is one critical area where the Japanese find themselves lacking, and therefore need to emphasize"（p. 12）. Indeed, if the goal of MEXT is to be met, and speakers of English are going to be able to function at more than just the conversational level, such skills would seem crucial. The CLIL approach, with its intended focus on these higher order skills, therefore plays a very important role in satisfying the requirements laid down by MEXT. It probably also meets the demands of students who have endured years of the grammar-translation method with its sole emphasis on the lower-order skills. Indeed, as Pinner（2013）states, "Whilst this may increase the demands and difficulty of CLIL, it also leads to increased engagement and thus motivation"（p. 52）. In addition to these is the aspect of culture which requires some explanation. As previously mentioned, the use of authentic materials is one aspect of CLIL that sets it apart from many other EFL approaches. By reading authentic material in a second language that by its nature imbues the norms and values of the culture from which it is derived, the student is being exposed to other ways of viewing the world. For example, differing viewpoints on the merits of globalization, the role of religion in society, human rights, and ethics can be elicited through such materials, challenging the learner's assumptions and helping them to develop a more nuanced understanding of the world. This should then act as a means of developing an understanding and an appreciation of cultures which are quite different to that of the student's. Furthermore, by actively comparing and contrasting such cultures with their own, they nurture a "greater understanding and consciousness of themselves and their own culture"（Parsons & Walker, 2013, p. 71）. In fact, such is the importance of the cultural aspect in some linguists' eyes, that Sudhoff （2013）has called CLIL not a 'dual-focused approach' but rather "a triple-focused approach: simultaneously combining foreign language learning, content subject learning and intercultural learning"（p. 36）.

CLIL Emphasizes Authentic Language Materials

One of the most salient features of a CLIL course is its use of authentic material. This arises from the fact that it is not only a language class, but a content-rich approach which is often partially taught by a specialist in the content area. Therefore, by this definition it is inevitable that authentic content will provide a significant proportion of the materials used in the classroom. The use of authentic materials as a means of acquiring language has long been a controversial issue, and it is beyond the scope of this paper to cover the various pros and cons of using such material in too much detail. According to Gilmore, there has always been a gap between 'textbook' English and English used by native speakers that has resulted in certain biases within contrived texts and "is a

poor representation of the real thing" （2007, p. 98）. He further embellishes his point by adding that contemporary research into areas such as discourse and conversational analysis, pragmatics and sociolinguistics has added further impetus for a real change in how we teach language （2007）. Of course, there is also a controversy over what we actually mean by the term 'authentic' and what it means in terms of teaching a foreign language. Gilmore argues that "the concept of authenticity can be situated in either the text itself, in the participants, in the social or cultural situation and purposes of the communicative act, or some combination of these" （2007, p. 4）. In other words, there is some flexibility here depending on the particular learning environment. It is also important to separate the notion of authenticity with the use of only native-speaker language. Too often, the idea of presenting students with authentic materials translates into photocopies of American or British newspaper articles with all their inherent cultural idiosyncrasies and biases. In an increasingly globalized world, most English is now used as a primary means of communication between non-native speakers and this is the reality we are obliged to reflect in our classroom material. It would clearly be mistaken and arrogant to dismiss such communication as inauthentic when it is being used for 'real' communication in such spheres as business, tourism and academia. The new reality is that English is no longer the preserve of those nations who use it as a first language; its writ now runs globally, and it is therefore incumbent on language teachers to expose their students to as many varieties of English as is possible and get away from the usual British or North American models. Related to this point, Gilmore goes on to argue against the use of traditional 'contrived' language textbooks and more toward language produced by a real speaker/ writer for a real audience, conveying a real message （Gilmore, 2007）. I would also add the point that by eschewing conventional TEFL/TESL textbooks and utilizing more authentic resources, the teacher is empowered to include a richer source of English materials, embracing the many peoples and cultures it is now used by. Pinner （2013） feels that CLIL through 'an authenticity of purpose' is more engaging for students and "allows opportunities for language focus to arise organically in the classroom situation" （p. 53）. Hence, CLIL is a way of nudging us away from the old certainties of textbook-led courses with their orderly presentation of form and function, their contrived texts, and their artificial activities and to material which obviously reflects better the language in everyday use.

According to Pinner （2013）, there is also the added possibility that students find authentic material to be more motivating. Caution has to be employed here, as Gilmore points out that the empirical research is as yet insufficient to draw such a sweeping conclusion （2007）. Since his paper was published, however, evidence has built up to support the idea that authentic materials and authenticity of purpose are better at motivating students. As an example, Pinner （2013） carried out a mixed-method research project on students in five CLIL courses at Sophia University in Japan. The results of his questionnaire on authenticity were varied, but according to Pinner, "students generally expressed a desire for authentic materials to be incorporated more into language education" （p. 50）. He went on to include the finding that a lack of authenticity in their

previous English education had been detrimental to their satisfaction with their studies（Pinner, 2013）. As a final consideration in this section, it is probably necessary to point out that providing authentic material alone might be insufficient in improving students' language abilities. Authentic materials cannot simply be provided 'as is' but must be accompanied by activities designed to guide students through texts and help them become more aware of certain forms, many of which may not even be approached in conventional textbooks. This of course requires a lot of work on the part of the teacher; indeed, effective use of authentic material is a labor intensive activity and means that the CLIL teacher has a difficult task in preparing materials that are at once authentic and well-supported with awareness-raising activities. It is also important, where possible, for the language teacher to collaborate closely with the content teacher to ensure that errors do not creep into the subject matter in the making of such materials. To sum up, as Gilmore states, the most effective classrooms are those in which students "have both high challenge and high support"（Gilmore, 2007, p. 112）. If these conditions can be successfully met, they will provide students with the necessary motivation and material to progress.

CLIL Provides Flexibility of Implementation

In order to implement CLIL in so many different academic situations it has to be flexible and adaptable to new environments. Fortunately, CLIL is a broad church and as long as it includes both content and language, caters to the '4 Cs' mentioned previously, encourages learner-centered environments and endeavors to use authentic material, it can be adapted to suit a number of situations. As Ohmori points out, A CLIL theme "can be taught extending to multiple class hours or it can be a topic that is completed in one class lesson"（Ohmori, 2014, p. 41）. One area that might be a legitimate cause for concern is the emphasis on authentic material. This would suggest that CLIL is aimed only at the strongest students who can cope with the rigors of native-level material. Although CLIL classes should be challenging, this does not necessarily represent a failing. Brown （2015）on discussing CLIL classes offered as electives at his university in northern Japan mentioned this 'sense of challenge' as a factor that separates the CLIL approach from others. He argued that "students acknowledged that CLIL classes were demanding but chose to join a CLIL class in order to challenge themselves"（Brown, 2015, p. 1）. However, the aspiring CLIL teacher should not be dissuaded by the fear that the classes may be too challenging and thus discouraging for students. In fact, a study by Adamson and Coulson, found that lower-proficiency students seemed to develop greater self-confidence due to the fact that a CLIL approach "empowered less linguistically able student to engage positively with content materials"（Adamson & Coulson, p. 167, 2015）. Furthermore, Ikeda has outlined a number of variations of CLIL that can be adopted to suit the abilities and needs of the students and teachers alike. In terms of purpose, Ikeda introduces the concepts of 'Soft CLIL' and 'Hard CLIL' which bookend a continuum from an emphasis on English language education to a predominantly content-driven class.

Thus, students with lower language proficiency while still using authentic materials, can benefit from greater language support. In addition, there can be 'Partial CLIL' and 'Total CLIL' indicating the amount of class time that is dedicated to CLIL activities. Ikeda even suggests that the medium of instruction could be adjusted as necessary; in other words, use of the L1 by students could be permitted, and even the teacher may be able to inject a certain level of bilingualism into his or her teaching. The important fact to remind oneself is that CLIL is not a monolithic approach to teaching and should not be treated as such. Although it is mainly seen at the tertiary level in Japan, it is more frequently used at the primary and secondary levels in Europe （Brown, 2015）. At such young ages, it is clear that students require a 'Soft CLIL' approach, while their proficiency in the target language improves and eventually enables them to cope with more content-rich material. The important point is that through these various interpretations of CLIL, the emphasis remains clearly on the 'authenticity of purpose'; in other words, students have to see a point to using the language and not view it as some abstract code that may be of use to them sometime in the future. A potential problem with the implementation of CLIL is the idea that traditionally, it has required a team of content and language specialists working together. This presents challenges at the best of times. It is quite clear that language teachers with little experience with the content might find this aspect difficult, but content teachers "with non-native like language proficiency and little formal training in language teaching" find it equally challenging （Dale & Tanner, 2012, p. 19）.

Further to this is the problem recognized as faculty autonomy in Japanese universities, defined as "a general reluctance to collaborate on professional development, and differing views of education between language and content faculty" （Iyobe, Brown, & Coulson, 2011）. In other words, it may be problematic for two teachers （one a language teacher, the other a content teacher） to implement such a course due to logistical or philosophical differences. Thus, it may be the case that CLIL is largely directed by language teachers in the Japanese university context. As long as the content is related to students' majors, and within the grasp of language teachers willing to make an effort, then this problem does not appear to be insurmountable. Indeed, where this is managed well, it can be successful. Sasajima （2013） discusses the adoption of a CLIL approach at Saitama Medical University. The native English-speaking teachers with whom he worked were charged with preparing and delivering classes related to health sciences, subject matter certainly related to the students' majors, as well as within the grasp of the language teachers. This was more of a Soft-CLIL approach for two reasons: firstly, the teachers were not content specialists, and secondly, the first year students still had limited medical knowledge. As with any CLIL course, there was plenty of scope for teachers to introduce authentic materials as well as develop their own teaching materials. Sasajima found that this approach not only seemed to motivate students, it also increased the flexibility of the EFL teachers. In fact, he found that "teachers may begin to change the way they think about teaching and learning, and improve their practice" （Sasajima, 2013, p. 65）. He found that by encouraging a learner-centered environment and acting as facilitator, rather than traditional teacher, CLIL helped improve the classroom atmosphere and student

independence. Therefore, we can see CLIL as not a monolithic approach to teaching language and content, but a highly adaptable approach with a strong core. As Ohmori states, CLIL "permits diverse variations to meet various contexts of classrooms at different levels of education"（Ohmori, 2014, p. 44）. As long as teachers are committed to spending sufficient time finding authentic materials, adapting them to suit their classrooms, and formulating learner-centered activities to engender motivation, there is no reason why CLIL cannot be successfully implemented in the Japanese university context.

CLIL Cultivates Global Human Resources

In recent years in Japan, there has been a growing concern with the decline in students who opt to study overseas and thus lose an opportunity to broaden their global outlook. In FY2013, for example, only around 69,000 Japanese students studied abroad, most of them for a period of less than three months（MEXT, 2015）. MEXT has observed this 'inward-looking' trend and taken active steps to not only internationalize domestic universities, but also to encourage more Japanese young people to eschew this parochialism and embrace the challenges of the globalized age. The introduction of CLIL-based courses can have a positive effect on this situation and that is why it is slowly gaining a foothold in Japanese tertiary education. Of course, such levels are nowhere near those witnessed in Europe, but as a relatively new phenomenon, there are causes for optimism. Indeed, the growing popularity of CLIL is not merely due to its 'authenticity of purpose' and the added stimulation that can bring the students. Education does not exist in a political vacuum, and the greater levels of integration that we are seeing around the world, particularly in terms of the globalization of the media and economic systems, have played a role in intensifying the need for people to be able to communicate more effectively, preferably through mutual languages. It is no coincidence that the European Union was the cradle of CLIL, with its ever closer move toward integration and its concomitant need for linguistic and cultural cohesion. Currently in Asia we are seeing more trade and cultural cooperation between countries that also creates a need for deeper understanding. As Sudhoff（2013）states, "integrated competencies in foreign languages and intercultural communication are considered to be keys to successfully engaging and participating in modern life and society"（p. 30）.

This quote leads us to another important product of CLIL: by learning to use the second language as a tool, by having to think in this language and use it for real purposes, students are gaining a lot more than just a facility in a language and proficiency in an area of study. They are improving their cognitive skills and developing a global outlook, more adaptable and tolerant of others' worldviews. Hence CLIL is being seen as a more holistic approach to teaching a foreign language. These aims dovetail with those of MEXT which is seeking to encourage the development of Japanese students more able to survive both linguistically and culturally in an ever more globalized economy. Due to MEXT's Project for Global Human Resource Development in 2012, the

focus very much fell on the university sector as a means of "overcoming the Japanese younger generation's 'inward tendency' and to foster human resources who can positively meet the challenges and succeed in the global field"（MEXT, 2014）. Ohmori adds that CLIL "promotes cross-cultural understanding" and "will contribute in helping students broaden their horizons, knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary in our globalized world"（Ohmori, 2014, p. 48）. This is not only achieved by employing such activities as discussions, debates, exchanging ideas and so on in the classroom, but also by using authentic materials which have largely been produced outside Japan. Through such materials, be they journals, newspapers, websites, or audiovisual resources, the students have an opportunity to gain important exposure to others' cultural perspectives. This is different from the traditional EFL/ESL textbook approach that has largely focused on North American and British perspectives along with unauthentic, contrived texts. Instead, the ability to present global Englishes will stimulate greater cross-cultural understanding. As Sudhoff explains, such authentic materials whether they are print, digital or film media, "can be used to develop an understanding and reconstruction of a foreign perspective on a particular topic"（Sudhoff, 2013, p. 34）. They can be used effectively in class as tools for allowing students to reassess their own cultural assumptions and instilling a sense of empathy, a crucial aspect of intercultural communicative competence. Sudhoff thus sees CLIL as taking a triple-focused approach: in addition to language and content can be added the third focus of intercultural learning. Indeed, the more exposure that students get to alternative perspectives, the better equipped they will be in their futures. This is not to say that they disregard the values and norms of their upbringing, but that they nurture an appreciation for the cultural richness of the world and the confidence and knowledge to face such diversity.

To sum up, this paper has argued for the further implementation of CLIL in the Japanese tertiary education system. At a time when Japan needs to be nurturing students with a more outward-looking attitude, this approach can be viewed as a means of not only motivating students to improve their English proficiency, but also in developing their intercultural communication competence. The paper set out its argument in four areas, namely, that CLIL provides a clear framework; it utilizes authentic material; it can be implemented flexibly; and it nurtures global human resources. While CLIL has been set out in a very positive light, it must be emphasized that it relies on a lot of hard work on the part of the teacher. I have adopted an American Intercultural Communication textbook in one of my classes at university whose students are International Communication majors, and it has involved a great deal of effort to convert the textbook into a manageable resource. This has included developing activities for each section that not only engage students and help them learn about the content, but also draw their attention to aspects of language that would probably have passed their notice. This has included awareness-raising activities which have focused on grammatical form and function, academic vocabulary items, as well as formulaic sequences frequently encountered in academic English. Such activities have normally taken place after readings and listenings, when texts can be more usefully broken down and analyzed. The

feedback from students in the form of end of course questionnaires has been largely positive. In particular, the students have often mentioned the use of an authentic textbook as a motivating factor in their studies as it has given them a different perspective on the issues raised. Although it has been a lot of work for me, it has also been immensely rewarding and a welcome departure from the usual content-based EFL/ESL textbook genre. On the basis of my positive experiences, I would urge other teachers and program coordinators with heavy content-based classes to consider adopting the CLIL approach whether solely by language teachers, or by encouraging language and content teachers to work together and combine their efforts. The latter of course would be far more problematic in its implementation, but the rewards would undoubtedly outweigh any difficulties in combining courses. In addition, by using English to learn content related to their major, it would reinforce the relevance and utility of English among students who may have hitherto viewed it merely as an adjunct to their studies. The increasing amount of research is pointing to CLIL as a worthwhile approach to English education on multiple levels.

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