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## 【報 告】

# The Sharing of Practical Ideas for the Implementation of Integrated Education called CLIL:

A report on the 'The First J-CLIL Tohoku Chapter Conference'

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This report gives a brief introduction to CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) in Japan and the work of J-CLIL (The Japan CLIL Pedagogy Association) that aims to promote the sharing of practical ideas for CLIL implementation within the foreign language classroom. This is followed by a detailed account of the 'The First J-CLIL Tohoku Chapter Conference' that was held at Tohoku University's Kawauchi campus on June 16th, 2018. The paper concludes with suggestions in how the innovative approach of CLIL can play both an important role in teacher development and our students' foreign language acquisition at Tohoku University.

## 1. Introduction

Coyle et al. (2010) simply describe CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) as a dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language" (p.1). CLIL originated in Europe in 1994 and has now become an important part of the language education pedagogy landscape within that region and in recent years Japan is slowly embracing the CLIL methodology within its educational curriculum and language classrooms throughout the country from elementary to university level. This paper gives a brief introduction to CLIL and the work done by the academic association J-CLIL. The main focus of this report however, is on the work of the J-CLIL Tohoku chapter, an affiliate of J-CLIL, and will give an account of 'The First J-CLIL Tohoku Chapter Conference' that it organized and held at Tohoku University's Kawauchi campus on June 16<sup>th</sup> 2018.

## 2. A brief introduction to CLIL

CLIL is not a new but a recycled and rethought approach to language teaching and learning borrowing from sociocultural theory. Ball (2016) suggests that if you teach EMI (English as a Medium of Instruction), CBI (Content-based Instruction) or CBLT (Content-based Language Teaching), then you probably work within the realm of Content and Language Integrated Learning. CLIL also retains many of the classroom techniques found within Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and task based language teaching (TBLT). This can make defining CLIL and CLIL practice very tricky. However it sets out its own set of parameters and philosophy that differentiate it from its predecessors and other language teaching approaches such as CBLT, EMI and Immersion (Ikeda, 2012). It is not within the scope of this report to review the differences but to give an example between what differentiates ESP from CLIL is that CLIL has a dual focus, i.e. both language and content, but EMI places emphasis on providing learners with sufficient language skills to master content knowledge.

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Coyle et al. suggest CLIL places an emphasis on the importance of cognitive engagement that facilitates effective learning. Activities such as group work, collaboration, problem solving and questioning help students learn the process of “constructing knowledge which is built on their interaction with the world” (p.29).

The essential framework of the CLIL approach is based on the four C’s of content, communication, culture and cognition. Coyle et al (2010) suggest that this approach begins with content (the subject being taught) and focuses on the interrelationship between the content, communication (language), cognition (critical thinking) and culture (awareness of self and ‘otherness’) to build on the synergies of integrating learning (content and cognition) and language learning (communication and cultures).

CLIL can be implemented as a soft or hard version. A version of Hard CLIL is applicable to a situation whereby content, such as a school subject like science, is taught in the medium of a foreign language such as English, but the focus is not on language learning. The teacher is also not a language teacher but a subject teacher. In contrast, and what language teachers are mostly concerned with, soft CLIL focuses on both the content and the foreign language in equal measure.

Ikeda (2013) suggests that although CLIL is a young adult in Europe it is still merely a baby in Japan and only recently have educational institutions begun to realize the full potential of CLIL. For a fuller discussion of CLIL I would recommend reading Coyle et al (2010) or Kavanagh (2018a) who gives an introduction to the theory and practice of CLIL within the Japanese context.

### 3. The Japan CLIL Pedagogy Association (J-CLIL)

Professor Shigeru Sasajima of Toyo Eiwa University founded the Japan CLIL Pedagogy Association (J-CLIL) in April 2017 and the basic aim of the association is to ‘study and promote the practice and implementation of integrated education called CLIL’. Based on this mission statement, the academic society holds CLIL research meetings, seminars and conferences, as well as developing its own CLIL materials. It has also recently started a J-CLIL journal which will publish its first issue in the spring of 2019.

Like CLIL in Japan, J-CLIL is still in its infancy but has already amassed over 300 members and has attracted the attention of CLIL scholars all over the world. Only recently for example, J-CLIL held a week long seminar in Scotland in August of 2018 with renowned scholars of CLIL, such as Professor Do Coyle.

The J-CLIL association has also established chapters in various parts of Japan. So far we have chapters in Kyushu, Tohoku, Hokuriku, as well as the headquarters in Tokyo. Through the Tokyo branch there are monthly J-CLIL research meetings held at Waseda University. Professor Sasajima leads these meetings and speakers throughout Japan are invited to give talks based on their latest research and classroom practice. I gave a talk there myself in April 2018. As CLIL is not bound to just CLIL at University level we also have a J-CLIL Primary & Junior (小中学校CLIL研究) and J-CLIL Secondary (中高CLIL研究) chapters that are based in the Greater Tokyo area that focus on CLIL practice at tertiary education level. As the association grows we have also expanded overseas and have a J-CLIL Taiwan branch.

The J-CLIL founder has authored a number of books and textbooks on the subject including CLIL 新しい発想の授業 (*Atarashii hassou no jyugyou*). The J-CLIL vice president Professor Makoto Ikeda of

Sophia University has co-authored a number of books such as the three volumes (Principles and methodologies of CLIL, Practices and applications of CLIL and CLIL lessons and materials) published by Sophia University Press which detail the innovations regarding CLIL that are being implemented at Sophia University. Together these two professors can be described as the two main pioneering figures for the establishment, practice and promotion of CLIL within Japan and I'm very happy to be collaborating with them. A list of CLIL books including the ones mentioned above, and a full description of J-CLIL activities, reports and newsletters can be found at the J-CLIL website at [j-clil.com](http://j-clil.com).

#### 4. The founding of J-CLIL Tohoku and the creation of 'The First J-CLIL Tohoku Chapter Conference'

I founded the J-CLIL Tohoku Chapter in October 2017 upon the invitation of the J-CLIL president, Professor Sasajima. I had previously worked together with Professor Sasajima and we gave a workshop together at Tohoku University on the theory and practice of CLIL within Japan (Sasajima & Kavanagh, 2017). After discussions we decided that a J-CLIL Tohoku chapter could be created with the aim of disseminating information on CLIL throughout the Tohoku area.

It was an honor to establish the chapter and after appointing J-CLIL Tohoku committee members our first aim, and in line with the mission statement of J-CLIL, was to get many people interested in CLIL pedagogy and how it can be implemented and practiced within the foreign language classroom from elementary to university level. Initially I had thought about just doing an afternoon workshop but as interest spread and people became keen to attend and share ideas about what they are doing within

their classroom we thought that a full day conference would be achievable. A J-CLIL conference organizing committee was established and the call for papers was sent out. The conference took place on June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2018.

Paralleling the policies of J-CLIL, J-CLIL Tohoku is for open to all language educators and is not merely limited just to English language teachers. Teachers of other languages such as Chinese, Spanish and French are most welcome and it is an area that we would like to develop further. It is also not an English language only association and all documentation, including the call for papers and the conference program for our first conference was bilingual, written in both Japanese and English. Presenters can also chose whether to present in Japanese or English.

CLIL is not only a methodology adopted by university teachers but also for language teachers from pre-school level upwards as reflected in its implementation in Europe. In Japan too CLIL is gaining popularity as a language learning methodology within the younger age group as reflected in the private sector within language schools such as EC Junior and also on a local level here in Sendai at Shirayuri Gakuen Elementary School. I was delighted that a teacher from the Shirayuri Elementary School gave a presentation on how they utilize CLIL within their English language curriculum. This therefore covered one of our objectives, which was to give opportunities on a local level to teachers who are not necessarily university researchers with a research budget, but practitioners of CLIL who want to exchange their ideas and learn more about what others are doing in the community. The J-CLIL Tohoku chapter conference therefore aimed to give a voice to local educators as well as to those from the Tohoku area. The conference was jointly sponsored by J-CLIL and the Language, Culture and Education center at IEHE. I would like

to take the opportunity here to thank Professor Masahiro Yamaguchi, the president of our Language, Culture and Education center for all his support in making the conference possible.

#### 4.1 The Plenary speakers

We were delighted that both the President and vice president of J-CLIL, Professor Sasajima and Professor Ikeda respectively, could attend and give their support for the conference. Professor Sasajima gave the first keynote talk entitled ‘CLILを楽しむ Enjoy teaching CLIL’ which was a bilingual presentation that opened the conference. Professor Sasajima gave an informative overview of CLIL within Japan, the work of J-CLIL and a general introduction to CLIL methodology and practice. It was a fitting way to open the conference.

Our second keynote speaker was very special indeed and a real treat to those familiar with CLIL at an international level. Ana Llinares from the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid traveled from Spain to present at our conference. She is known internationally for her work in CLIL and has published numerous papers in esteemed journals such as the ‘Journal of Immersion and Content-Based Language Education’, the ‘Journal of Pragmatics’, the ‘International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism’, and the journal ‘Language, Culture and Curriculum’ as well as contributing chapters to many book volumes and co-authoring a book titled ‘The Role of Language in CLIL’. It was therefore an honor to have someone as prestigious as her to present at our first chapter conference. Professor Llinares gave her keynote on the ‘Opportunities and challenges in CLIL: Students’ performance, classroom participation and participants’ perspectives’ and talked about how after more than two decades of CLIL implementation and research in Europe and beyond, it seems clear to both the research and education communities that its

objectives and challenges go beyond the improvement of learners’ competence in an additional language. She specifically talked about the concept of content and language integration from three perspectives: a) students’ academic spoken and written production; b) their content and language engagement in different types of classroom interactional activities; and c) students’ motivation and beliefs about learning their school subjects in English. She addressed these issues in the context of the transition from primary to secondary school and in relation to different degrees of exposure to CLIL. Her research was very informative and she received a lot questions after her talk from a very interested and captivated audience.

#### 4.2 Summary of information about the presenters

Including the plenary speakers we had a total of 21 oral presentations and the fact that these speakers originally came from countries such as Spain, Argentina, England, America, Canada, Ireland as well as Japan helped to give this conference a true international feel. Along with the two plenary speakers, there were six sessions spread across the day consisting of 19 speakers. There were 3 talks per session with one session having 4 presenters. The sessions were divided into themes according to the content of the talks and we had a collection of presentations that we think catered towards the interest of all the conference attendees. Table 1 illustrates the sessions that were held.

Of the 19 presenters, 2 were from elementary schools, 1 from a local high school and the rest from universities in Japan of which 12 were from the Tohoku area. This gave us a total of 14 out of 19 presenters that were based in the Tohoku area which is pleasing as our aim is to spread the philosophy of CLIL throughout the Tohoku area. 5 of the 19 presentations were in Japanese with a total of

Table 1 A summary of the conference sessions

Session	Theme	Summary
1	CLIL within schools	This session looked at how CLIL is implemented at Elementary and High School level with two of the presentations from local schools in Sendai.
2	Reflecting on CLIL Practice	This session examined topics of concern within the practice of CLIL such as classroom assessment and student feedback.
3	CLIL Materials	This session included presentations on the creation of CLIL materials for University classes.
4	Subject Based CLIL	This session looked at the teaching of subjects such as literature and applied linguistics and theme based engineering and mathematics English classes.
5	Non-English Language CLIL	This session focused on non-English with two sessions on Japanese as a foreign language and one on Spanish.
6	'C' Focused CLIL	This session specifically looked at the 'C's' for culture and cognition and how they can be applied within the CLIL classroom.

Table 2 A summary of what attendees found to be useful from the conference presentations

Learned and improved my knowledge about CLIL	Discovered CLIL's applicability to 'real teaching'	The presentations were an excellent source of information / references and teaching ideas
The 4 'C's' of CLIL and its relevance to classroom practice	Learned about CLIL usage and methods in a variety of classroom contexts from elementary to university level	I could exchange ideas with teachers from differing backgrounds on CLIL

7 presentations conducted by Japanese CLIL practitioners (2 were conducted in English). In accordance with our bilingual policy we hope to increase the number of presentations in Japanese at future J-CLIL Tohoku conferences, seminars and workshops that we will be holding. We feel it will be a comfort to those not comfortable presenting in English and also encourage a bilingual research environment in the spirit of CLIL. In order to get an impression of what both presenters and attendees thought of the conference and its content we distributed bilingual questionnaires to audience members and presenters and fortunately for us many people filled them in. The next section gives a brief summary of the questionnaire findings.

## 5. Summary of the conference questionnaire data

The questionnaire was deliberately kept short and consisted of two likert scale questions on a

scale of 'Excellent', 'Good', 'Average', 'Not really good' and 'Not good at all' and two open ended questions. Below is a breakdown of the responses given to the likert questions

### 1. How would you rate today's conference?

The majority of attendees (67%) rated the conference as good and 33% as excellent. There were no negative responses.

### 2. How would you rate the conference presentations?

84% of attendees rated the presentations as 'good', with the remainder evaluating the presentations as 'Excellent'. Again, there were no negative responses.

These results are pleasing, especially as it was our first conference. These results were reinforced by attendees and presenters personally congratulating me on a successful conference and expressed interest in contributing to future conferences and activities within the J-CLIL Tohoku chapter. The J-CLIL president also congratulated us





Figure 1 A photo from the day of the conference

From left to right:

Barry Kavanagh (Tohoku University, J-CLIL Tohoku President) , Professor Shigeru Sasajima (Toyo Eiwa University, J-CLIL President) , Ana Llinares (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, special guest speaker) , Professor Makoto Ikeda (Sophia University, J-CLIL Vice President)

on a successful conference and the fact that the conference helped to attract more J-CLIL members from the Tohoku region.

The two open-ended questions are shown below.

1. What did you find useful regarding the presentations you saw today?
2. Please write down any other opinions / comments you may have regarding the conference itself.

The responses from the questionnaires were coded into categories or areas that attendees addressed the most frequently in their responses. Table 2 illustrates the areas that responses fell under.

As outlined in table 2 we feel that we achieved our goals in helping teachers learn about and share their practical ideas within their classes from elementary to university level. The conference also gave participants a firm grounding in the theoretical framework of CLIL with many participants suggesting that the conference was a good source of information in going forward with their own adoption of CLIL for their particular student needs. The second open-ended question

asked for further opinions and comments. Some of the comments suggested we do a poster session next time, which is something we would like to do. Most of the comments were of a congratulatory nature and praised the organization of the conference with the hope that we continue to do more conferences in the future. So overall, we were all pleased with all the work we did in organizing, implementing and safely executing the conference with no hiccups. The after conference party was also a wonderful opportunity for presenters and attendees to further their conversations.

## 6 . A CLIL role at Tohoku University

There are few opportunities for foreign language teachers at the Language, Culture and Education Center at IEHE to work together as invariably we teach different languages, at differing levels and with different goals. However this conference enabled the language teachers at our center to collaborate and work together for the common goal of improving language education. This I believe is unprecedented and has not happened in

my time here at Tohoku University. Six presentations were given by Tohoku University teachers, which included five from our Language Culture and Education Center. The discussions this generated between these teachers about their teaching practice, their pedagogy and their views on how language education can be improved for our students was immense. I feel this helped greatly in the communicating and sharing of ideas between teachers of differing languages with the prospect of future collaboration on further projects and research a distinct possibility.

My colleague Ryan Spring and I have both created innovative CLIL based courses (See Kavanagh, 2018b, Spring, 2017) and this was one of the reasons why we both received the Tohoku University "general education contribution award," Ryan Spring in 2017 and myself the following year. The classes we have made are both elective and combine Japanese advanced English level students with foreign exchange students from the International Liberal Arts program (IPLA) that is administered by the Global Learning center. Ryan Spring teaches a project based learning course whereby students learn about the film making process and create a film at the end of the course. My class focuses on Karate and Japanese culture and students learn about Karate in relation to Japanese culture through the medium of film and media. The Japanese and foreign exchange students have to collaborate and work together on reports and presentations and the class has received wonderful feedback from students (Kavanagh, 2018b).

Although not everyone is qualified to teach Karate or film making in their language classes I would suggest that a soft CLIL approach can be incorporated into our English classes at Tohoku University as we look to reform our language curriculum.

Potential 'soft CLIL' classes whereby

content and foreign language are equally focused on can include departmental themed classes as in English classes for engineers or scientists whereby classes are taught that look specifically at topics within their field. Professor Sasajima has co-authored a number of CLIL books that take this approach such as CLIL-Human Biology, CLIL-Health Sciences and CLIL-Global Issues. These textbooks utilize CLIL classroom techniques that we are all familiar with such as group and pair work but with an emphasis on the four C's of CLIL which were outlined earlier in this report. In addition of course, academic reading and writing, which is based on the students major can also be incorporated into these classes. For our engineering and science students, who make up the majority of our students, academic reading and writing are two fundamental skills they need, especially as the majority of them move on to graduate school where the need to be able to produce academic papers and presentations becomes an essential part of their studies.

I currently teach CLIL themed classes, an Eigo B class on 'Intercultural communication' and an Eigo C class on 'Global Issues and current events', to 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> years respectively. These classes are not department specific and both of them focus on their respective themes as well as including a focus on academic writing based on the themes of the class (See Kavanagh, 2017). In these classes I help my students learn the language, grammar and vocabulary which reflect a 'language triptych' that consists of 1). The language of learning, 2). Language for learning and; 3). Language through learning which are the fundamental building blocks of language development and acquisition within the CLIL framework (Coyle et al. 2010). Through this process my students are able to display a series of cognitive discourse functions such as the ability to classify, define, describe, evaluate, explain, explore and report as outlined by Dalton- Puffer (2013). This



form of language learning that CLIL students acquire parallels what Cummins (1984) labels CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency). These are a set of higher order critical thinking skills (as in analysis, synthesis and evaluation) that are linked to more academic, cognitively challenging tasks within the classroom. I would suggest that we need to challenge our students to make the transition from what Cummins labels as BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills), the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing at a basic or 'social' language level, to CALP and the CLIL methodology can provide us with the tools to do this. The respected and distinguished scholar and director of foreign languages Dr. Kensaku Yoshida at Sophia University talks extensively about the merits of CLIL in his paper titled 'Innovations in English Language Education: Looking Beyond Skills and Culture' (2017) that is published in our IEHE bulletin. With such backing and a growing literature on CLIL practice and implementation in Japan it is an exciting time to be involved with CLIL.

## 7. Conclusion

J-CLIL Tohoku has just begun but we are very excited about what we have achieved and what we will continue to do over the coming years. At present, a J-CLIL Tohoku website is currently being constructed. This will be a bilingual website detailing the activities of the society both past and present with links to conference and workshop documentation along with a teacher forum whereby teachers can exchange their ideas online. Currently we are developing faculty development workshops and seminars on CLIL and we will soon send out a call for papers for our second J-CLIL Tohoku chapter conference. The conference will include a poster session that will be aimed at young researchers and those not familiar with presenting at academic

conferences.

We would also like to give our presenters an opportunity to get published in a selected conference proceedings volume. The proceedings would be online giving readers and teachers immediate access to the latest research conducted by our members. I would like to invite fellow language educators at Tohoku University and beyond to join us in our endeavors to improve both foreign language education and teacher development which will be a huge benefit to our students. We hope to see you at future J-CLIL Tohoku events.

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