

Surrealists in the Classroom: Developing CALP in the classroom through Plurilingualism and English as a Lingua Franca.

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概要

大学生は高い認識に関する学術的言語能力 (CALP) を持たなければいけない。それは学生が学ぶ抽象的概念を理解するのに必要なものである。しかし多くの学生は高校から基礎的な対人間のコミュニケーション技術 (BICS) のみを習得して大学に来る。それも英語においてのみでなく、学生自身の言語においてもおそらくいえることである。(吉田 2009、2013、2014) 2009 年度 MEXT 研究コースを通して、そしてそのことは 2013 年日本の高校において実行されたのであるが、日本の大学はやがてこれまで出会った以上の CALP 能力を持つ学生を知ることになる。大学は資料に取り組める手段を持つ学生に内容を教える用意はあるのだろうか。「教室における超現実主義者」とは内容を中心にしたコースのことであり、それにはまず BICS を通し資料と取り組ませ、次に学生の CALP を発達させ、さらに利用させるようにする。世界共通言語としての英語の概念と多言語主義を使いながら、学生は社会文化、歴史、哲学、文化といった側面から 20 世紀に起きた 5 つの芸術運動について探究、議論できることになる。そして認識的に刺激的な資料をうまく使うことで、学生に達成感、本来あるべき姿、また個人としての成長といった感覚をもたらすことになるのである。

I. Introduction:

In 2009, Professor Kensaku Yoshida asked of University Instructors in Japan whether they will be able to “provide the kind of education which utilizes the English proficiency high school students will assumedly come equipped with”, after the students had gone through the Ministry of Culture, Education, Sports, Science and Technology’s (MEXT) new course of study (2009), implemented in high schools in 2013 (explained in more detail below) (2009, p. 10). University teachers of content-based courses taught in English are already answering this question, despite our students not yet having come through the course of study. The study, among other things, hopes to “. . . improve the academic level of senior high school education; thereby, enabling more content-based courses to be taught through English at the university level” (Yoshida, 2009a as paraphrased by Underwood, 2012). It is keen to develop cognitive academic language

proficiency (CALP) in all subjects in its compulsory and secondary schooling, not just in English. That definition and those aspects will be more thoroughly explained in section II (Yoshida, 2009, p.10).

Many of our current students have been schooled in the more traditional “grammar-translation” system of English (Yoshida, 2013), and the course of study, which is encouraging communicative competence in language through the use of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) (Yoshida, 2014a; as implied by Kosaka, 2014), as opposed to struggling to match a native speaker ideal, is meeting considerable resistance for a variety of reasons, including perception of university examination requirements, teacher text book preferences and teaching styles (Underwood, 2012, Yoshida, 2013, 2014a). Therefore, instructors teaching content in English at university often find themselves in a situation where students might have developed basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS), but not their CALP, or have a passive understanding of CALP, but not the ability to produce it or to communicate their ideas. Because of their age, and the other subjects they are studying in their native tongue, our students should be dealing with cognitively demanding subjects as befits university. However, they do not necessarily have the academic skills in their L2 or OL, or possibly even in their L1 (touched upon in section II), though they do possess some of them.

The university teacher’s challenge then, is to graduate from the BICS to the CALP, within an ELF situation as much as possible. This does not mean that form is not used. Scaffolding is of the utmost importance. The students are not without some CALP, but whether there are opportunities for them to use and develop this in a meaningful way depends upon many variables, including the instructor and classes they take.

This paper will initially outline some of the key terminology and philosophies influencing the current course of study in relation to teaching languages, and then show how an Aichi University course, of this writer’s design, exploring the very concrete methods of the very abstract art movements of the last century, can be used to develop students’ CALP and encourage the confidence that is crucial to lead to plurilingual competency in English (Yoshida, 2013, p. 4). Yoshida writes that MEXT wishes for high school students to be able to “. . . think, make judgments and express opinions logically” across all subjects, and that within language education there is a wish to develop “. . . the ability to use language to deepen one’s capacity for thinking and communicating with others, on the basis of knowledge and experience, reasoning ability, and sensitivity and affection towards others” (Committee to Discuss Development of Language Ability as cited and translated in Yoshida, 2009, p. 3). Through the course I conduct, feedback shows that pupils feel they have learnt something of importance and matured when they are

dealing with content that is relevant to them, no matter which language it is in. This acquiring of new knowledge brings with it confidence, and students are motivated to express opinions and explain ideas logically if they are engaged with the subject. This is contingent with MEXT's aims, and possibly counters some of the more passive forms of language education they have thus far experienced. The above will also be discussed in the body of the paper. Studying cognitively challenging topics in a non-native tongue is viable and beneficial, particularly if the topic is presented in such a way that students combine their BICS and CALP, eventually developing more CALP as they progress, and if the instructor concentrates on a form of communicative competence along ELF lines as opposed to the concept of the native speaker as the ideal.

II. An explanation of BICS, CALP and a brief overview of aspects of the 2009 Course of Study pertaining to English Language Learning

When being instructed in English, learners often deal with language that is grouped, accessed or developed with BICS or CALP. CALP is less easy to acquire. These terms were defined by Jim Cummins in 1976 (cited in Cummins, 1980, 2000a, 2000b). He also uses the terms "conversational" and academic", respectively, in place of BICS and CALP (Cummins, 1999, p. 1).

Within an immigrant bilingual situation in Canada, particularly if students do not yet have a strong grounding in their L1 pertaining to academic matters (reading, writing, discussing abstract ideas, the ability to give opinions and to argue logically, etcetera), it is believed there is a gap of about five years before students can catch up with what is considered the district's educational norms (Cummins, 1999, p. 2). On the other hand, they can gain conversational fluency, or BICS within about 2 years (1999). If the students have a strong grounding in their own first language including CALP, there is a better chance of them acquiring it in an L2 (1999).

Kensaku Yoshida, who is frequently cited in this paper, was part of the Central Education Committee which developed the 2009 MEXT course of study. The study has been implemented in high schools from 2013 (Yoshida, 2014a; Underwood, 2013, p. 118) and MEXT has heavily used the communicative competence research of Cummins and others as a basis for implementing a more communicative approach towards language teaching and learning within Japanese high schools, with CALP as the epitome (MEXT, 2008-2009; Yoshida, 2009, p. 10, 2013, 2014b). In fact, MEXT is keen to develop academic language proficiency in all subjects in its compulsory and secondary schooling, not just in English, and through this, though not an immigrant or immersion situation, students should in theory be able to develop a plurilingualism whereby their knowledge and understanding in their first language can help the second, and whereby they have

enough confidence to be able to communicate, not perfectly, but with intent (Yoshida, 2009, p. 9, 2013, 2014b). The concept of plurilingualism is based on the Common European Framework of References for Languages (CEFR, 2001).

Yoshida (2013, p.5) states that in 2011 MEXT released a paper which promotes the use of English for International Communication as opposed to just “English”, and that in 2012 the cabinet office released a document whereby a government committee placed importance on the need to encourage internationally minded citizens as an important Japanese resource in a globalized world (2013, pp. 1-3). Therefore, as teachers creating courses and tasks where students can actively engage and express themselves in English, albeit not perfectly by inner circle native speaker guidelines, we are aligning ourselves with national, and in many ways global, educational goals for a more internationally integrated Japanese population, confident in using English as a *Lingua Franca* (2013, 2014b).

Traditionally in Japan when studying English, students acquire BICS and CALP concurrently due to compulsory English being introduced at junior high school level (Yoshida, 2009, p. 3). This results in a very heavy workload for the teachers, both junior high and upper secondary, as firstly those teaching lower secondary “. . . have the unenviable job of getting their students to acquire not only the ability to ‘perform communicatively’ in English at the everyday conversational level (BICS), but also to acquire enough ‘knowledge’ of the grammar of English necessary to read and write (CALP) at the higher levels, where the pursuit of academic topics is more important,” (2009, p. 3). It also results in a lot of confusion and disengagement from the content at hand for the students, an inability to complete the work required of students at the senior high school level, and a high rate of failure for final year junior high school students (Yoshida, 2009, p. 3; 2013). A lack of teaching hours definitely contributes to this unbalanced grounding, but so can methods of instruction (Yoshida, 2013, 2014a & b). This confusion brings with it an apparent dislike of English and a lack of individual confidence in using it, even into adulthood (2013).

The workloads for teachers, and cognitive undertakings for students, should gradually change as English as a compulsory subject was introduced formally into primary schools in 2011 (though some elementary schools had initiated it before this), and the class hours for teaching English (and other subjects) has increased (McCurry, 2011; Yoshida, 2009). Even so, as touched on above, a large percentage of English classes are taught in Japanese, and higher cognitive tasks of “analysis, creativity and evaluation” of content (defined by Bloom’s taxonomy of “cognitive educational objectives”, modified by Anderson and Krathwohl, 2001, cited in Yoshida, 2013) are often never successfully executed, because to be properly expressed in English, they need to be

conducted and understood in English, even if that English is of a plurilingual variety. For the successful attainment of MEXT's and government aims to have a sizeable proportion of the population able to communicate ideas, opinions, to hold discussions and make decisions, and to relate interculturally (among other desired characteristics) in English, and otherwise, analysis, creativity (or synthesis) and evaluation are indeed needed (Yoshida, 2009, 2013).

A lot of secondary classroom instruction can stop short at the first three stages of the taxonomy: "Remember", "Understand", and "Apply", all of which can be taught in Japanese fairly easily (Yoshida, 2013, pp. 12-13). Striving to meet native-speaker competency as the ultimate language outcome means that L1 is often overused (Yoshida, 2013), because the goal is unrealistic, especially when tied into exam expectation and teaching habit (Selinker, 1972; Yoshida, 2013). The pre-existing knowledge of the students' first language, including content, and encouraging students to express themselves in their "own English" (Yoshida, 2013, pp. 13-14), which might encourage sought-after confidence, is not utilised and is in fact sacrificed to nonviable expectations.

By promoting an idea of plurilingualism, and by not gauging student expression strictly by native speaker ideals, students can develop a ". . . body of resources and values (or assets) a capital and a portfolio, which . . . [they] . . . can learn to manage, develop and balance or unbalance in pursuit of [their] aims, if [they possess] it" (Coste, Moore & Zarate, 2009, p. 34). Students can use the knowledge they have, and the language they can produce, to demonstrate understanding of content and to cognitively interact with it. They can use their "own English" to communicate their knowledge of content, rather than knowledge of the language of communication itself, thereby "covering both bases" to varying degrees (Yoshida, 2013, p. 14). This can encourage CALP, which enables the possibility of international and cognitively challenging communication. Coste, Moore and Zarate, writing on plurilingualism, also state that "multiple competence is always individualized, evolving, heterogeneous and unbalanced" (p. 34, also cited in Yoshida, 2013, 2014b). That is, English can be used "imperfectly" to express ideas in accordance with MEXT's aims of encouraging logical discussion, debate and expression, across the strata of education, (and therefore society), but educators also need to be aware that students' communicative strengths and weaknesses will fluctuate and vary. However, communication has a better chance of being meaningful if students have the ways and means to be invested.

Professor Yoshida, mainly addressing the tendency to teach even the more concrete language concepts at the secondary level solely in Japanese (2013) asks, "Is the purpose of language education to teach the language itself, or to make it possible for learners to process meaning and communicate?" (2014b, slide 8). I would argue, especially at the tertiary level, that the latter is of

utmost importance, as aiming to have our students successfully communicate ideas will fortify them linguistically as a matter of course, and hold them in stronger social stead ultimately (2014b, slide 7). That is, attempts to communicate, and providing students with the ways and means to do so, is a more practical alternative of global language use than knowing how to parse a sentence.

In SLL or FLL circumstances, students might be highly operational using BICS, but not have parallel competence in more academic and abstract tasks and undertakings. That is, fluency in being able to communicate competently in the day to day using BICS, does not mean that a student has CALP, though 'conversational' fluency might initially 'mask' this fact. BICS includes language and concepts that can be easily explained in a non-native tongue, for example by visuals or actions. Yoshida (2014b) terms this as being "concrete" or "transparent" language use, which is relatively easy to acquire. For example, to demonstrate the word "dog" we can easily show a picture of a dog to get the concept across and it is generally understood. BICS are mostly "context embedded and cognitively undemanding" (Cummins, 1981b as cited in Cummins, 2000; Yoshida, 2014b). Giving directions, planning a party and other common language classroom activities might fall into this category. Students who have a high conversational fluency on a limited series of topics, both within and separate from the classroom, could be said to have high functioning BICS (Cummins, 2000). However, they may not yet have developed CALP, which it is "context-reduced and cognitively demanding" (Cummins, 1981b as cited in Cummins, 2000; Yoshida, 2014b), yet necessary for a deeper understanding of a language, and necessary for interpersonal and global communication, particularly at a professional level.

As stated in paragraph two of this section, Cummins was and is using these terms to refer to immigrant children within the Canadian school system, and the ideas are grounded in bilingual/immigrant/immersion situations, as stated above. This paper deals with Japanese university-aged students in an EFL/EMI situation, and will not overtly be dealing with how a student's first language is a great tool to support his or her L2, though it agrees, in keeping with the ideas of plurilingualism, that linguistic and socio-cultural cross-pollination of ideas and knowledge happens as a matter of course between the native language and others, and is a resource that will contribute to student processing, regardless of a teacher's, individual's or the curriculum's intent (CEFR, 2001, pp. 4-5). Rather, the paper will consider the connected idea that when students study cognitively appropriate material, in keeping with their maturity levels and expected aptitude, their communicative competence is galvanized as they engage with the content. To return to Professor Yoshida's question of whether university instructors will be able to run courses which further develop the newly acquired and developing CALP of high school graduates, the

answer is yes (2009, p. 10). Naturally, it depends upon the instructor, and as stated in the introduction, our current students have not gone through the MEXT course of study, but in my experience students have the cognitive aptitude and the motivation to use English as a communicative tool to express abstract ideas.

A course I teach encourages students to interact with sophisticated material, which challenges but does not overwhelm their cognitive abilities. The course attempts to ease students into more abstract (and cognitively demanding) areas with concrete materials. This is a form of BICS being used to foster CALP. Even if their L2 remains passive, possibly due to lack of confidence, not enough prerequisite knowledge (linguistically or otherwise), or time-constraints which can hinder scaffolding, by the end of the course students have generally acquired new information about a topic which can contribute to their overall “knowledge bank” and “Common Underlying Proficiency” which is interchangeable between L1 and L2. (Cummins, 1984 as cited in Yoshida, 2009, pp. 4-5; see also, related, CEFR, 2001).

III. Laying down the background of the semester’s course

Our students are teenagers and young adults. They are curious about the world, and there are many concepts and philosophies they have not encountered. As with anyone, there are maybe many philosophies they will never encounter. So much depends on their own curiosity and the opportunities before them. Yoshida states that even though our students might have a lower level in a second language, their intellectual capacity, awareness, thirst for knowledge and experience is almost certainly higher (2014a). His words were addressing the situation of students in secondary education, but the concept can be applied to all older learners. One of the key aspects of motivation is interest in a topic (Dörnyei, 1998).

Therefore, topics which challenge students and engage them at a higher cognitive level are more likely to result in the dissemination of fresh ideas and the nurturing of a variety of viewpoints, even if they are discovered in a second or other language (Yoshida, 2009, 2013, 2014b). If the content is meaningful to the students, they are more likely to have a more positive attitude towards English and feel an engagement with it and therefore an ownership of it, and are far more likely to want to use it as a Lingua Franca within the classroom and in other aspects of their life (Yoshida, 2014a; Littlewood, 2011). They are more likely to feel that they learnt aspects of language as well as new information (Yoshida, 2014a). The example that Yoshida gave at a presentation in Hamamatsu, 2014, was of students who studied a course on endangered animals in English compared to students who studied English in a more traditional way (text book,

language for language's sake). On a survey given at the end of the courses, the children who had studied English through content, or content through English, had a more positive attitude towards the language and their own abilities (K. Yoshida, 2014, personal communication).

Ways of encouraging and defining certain aspects of competence as outlined by Canale (1990) and Littlewood (2011), among others, can range from linguistic, discourse, pragmatic, sociolinguistic and sociocultural. There are many classroom techniques or philosophies designed to encourage or hopefully foster competence, from Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) to Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), to content-based courses (CBT), and many others. All three of these complement one another to some extent. MEXT encourages CLIL (Yoshida, 2014b).

Within a semester-length course, which was preceded by a related course (though not a pre-requisite), students use BICS skills to develop CALP in certain aspects. That is, they use the seemingly abstract, but actually quite concrete poetry or writing methods of some of the twentieth century art movements as a gateway to the more cognitively engaging skills of creation, explanation, research and exploration/presentation of many sociocultural, creative, philosophical, political and analytical aspects of these movements. By the end of the course, students have learnt to express their opinions as logically as they can, and endeavoured to communicate to the best of their ability. Most importantly, they have felt that they matured through completing the course, and their understanding of the world and themselves has widened (personal communication, 2012-2013). The course feeds and is fed by their common underlying proficiency.

1. How to make the abstract relevant – introduction to the semester's course

Procedure:

(1) Making of a “Words in Freedom Poem”

One might think that art movements of the twentieth century is a precious subject and far removed from language learning, general cultural learning, and a topic that will only appeal to the few. However, the movements such as the Futurists, Cubists, Dadaists, Surrealists and Gutttai/Fluxus (the latter four are discussed later in the essay) grew from a period of great change. Classes of second year students initially study the Italian Futurists. The Futurists, under Marinetti, wrote of the great “impact of “the great discoveries of science,” such as motorized transportation and the printing press, upon the human psyche” (MoMa, 2009). Of the new century they wrote in their manifesto: “We affirm that the world's magnificence has been enriched by a new beauty: the beauty of speed” (Marinetti, 1909, as cited in MoMa, 2009, ¶ 6). Through “industry, war and the machine” the Futurists saw a very different, interesting in many ways, and

bleak in many others, new world (2009, ¶ 1). One of my reasons for focusing on a small part of the Futurist manifesto is the burgeoning knowledge of new industry and the quickening tempo of the time. New inventions from the 1860s to the 1920s, including the machine gun and the car, changed people's lives across the globe forever. Additionally, and initially most importantly, they developed a writing method that can be easily emulated by anyone. The Fascist politics of the Italian Futurists are also touched upon as a reflection of the times, as are the politics of the other groups mentioned above, but they are in no way condoned. Our students are young adults, and being able to draw their own conclusions on topics is an important skill to foster.

It cannot be denied that we now live in a fast information age, a fast travel age, and an ever-connected age. Much of the technology that we take for granted nowadays was born from military origins (the internet and drones, for example). There are parallels between the two times as people peer back into the century before and are sent hurtling into the century ahead. These parallels can be used to make the students aware of current times, and the eras that came before them. They can be used to foster a connection of relevance with material that students might think has nothing to do with them. It can introduce them to the idea that innovation fosters change and change fosters innovation.

With the students' schemata perhaps opened to the idea of new ideas and concepts, belonging both to this century and the ones prior, it is time to engage them with one of the most tangible and universal things to most humans, and particularly to Japanese, and that is onomatopoeia, or sound. The Futurists believed in both "Words in Freedom" and sound poems which were onomatopoeia-based and grammar and syntax free. Basically they were made up of neologisms. Students make sound poems in pairs, usually a visual "Words in Freedom". You can see an example in figure 1. One might think that to use neologisms in a language class is counter-productive, but creating and discussing the neologisms, and making the poems that include them requires them to use both their L1 and L2. This develops and depends upon their plurilingualism and competence.

Of course scaffolding is needed. No-one can be even be close to competent without some form of support, but perfectionism is not necessary. There is a danger with activities based only on communicative exercises and frequent changing of conversational partners that a very shallow use and understanding of the target language develops. Students gain some level of automaticity, which is important to proficiency, but if they are never called upon to discuss and explain cognitively challenging topics in another language, then it is unlikely that they will develop the skill. Some student responses in the study, "Exploring Pair Work in a Communicative Classroom", indicate a little concern about not tackling subjects in greater depth (Maher,

appendix, 2011). With activities that only concentrate on the acquisition and use of BICS, no real deeper discussion or parting of information occurs, so it can be argued that deeper language ability and understanding are not given the opportunity to develop. The counter can also and does also occur, where the students have sophisticated ideas that they are unable to develop due to too little BICS and CALP.

Within the Art movements class, students develop their own “Words in Freedom” poem, which is basically a typographical, onomatopoeic, neological, poem. An example can be seen in figure 1.



Figure 1. Words in Freedom poem: “Jungle”. S. Yamamori, S. Yamauchi & S. Takeuchi, personal communication, 2012

The meaning is conveyed in the size of the font, the angle of the words on the page, the colours used, the sounds of the words, etcetera. This is actually tangible. Nearly everyone has the ability to hear sound and make sound. To personally transliterate it and place it on the paper means that the pressure of understanding and interacting between L1 and L2 is lessened for a while, because this is an new aural language that the students themselves have made. Even so, they are cognitively engaged. Through this basic experience, students have completed one of the highest levels of language accomplishment – the making of a poem. They have created words that represent something in our life, a very abstract concept – through the most tangible of means (creativity, level 6 in Bloom’s taxonomy). They have created the representation of sounds through languages they personally made. Their BICS are feeding their CALP.

(2) The Essay.

This assignment is completed in pairs, and the couple writes an essay explaining the concepts behind the poem, and describing the poem so that one could draw it without the image in front of one if so wished.

The creation of the poem and essay takes two ninety-minute lessons and homework. The essay supports the students' thought processes, and helps present them in a logical manner, one of MEXT's aims for students in all subjects (2008-2009, Yoshida, 2009). They use meta-language learnt to describe their poem. A lot of new expressions are involved in describing the placement of words on a page, such as "parallel to", "perpendicular to", "represents", "symbolizes" and so on. These are useful concepts and terms to know, and can transfer across all courses in English, and the knowledge can transfer into other areas (Cummins, 1984, as cited in Yoshida, 2009; CEFR, 2001). In the future, as students come through the MEXT course of study, possibly these terms will be something they will have already encountered. Students do not use the essay for the main peer discussion, however, which also lasts two weeks. It is submitted to the teacher to help her with understanding the poems (they are very abstract!), and to help the students focus on their meaning and communication. However, within this writer's experience, there is a tendency to read straight from the paper in a discussion situation, so the students write some key words, and are left to use these and the skills they have to produce comprehensible output.

(3) The discussion:

Classroom discussion lasts for two lessons after the completion of the poem and essay. One of the pair is a "teacher", and the other is a "student". From a class of 15, the "students" visit 5-7 other "teachers" and then change roles. The "student" predicts the meaning of another group's poem, asks questions, and makes comments. The "teacher" explains the poem. This is repeated seven times, so there is a great chance for deepening automaticity and for development of cognitive skills. Critical analysis skills are brought into play with prediction, and explaining clearly and responding appropriately are forms of communicative competence. Negotiation skills are also at play. BICS are utilised in the repetitious structure of the exercise, which enables the students to refine their conversation, and to grow more confident in expressing themselves in English through practice. Interaction with their peers will also feed their knowledge base.

(4) Expansion activities

The class of the second week repeats the procedure of the first if there had not been enough time for all members to have participated in a student/teacher role. Once that is completed, if there is time, students read the essays from another class in pairs and draw the "Words in freedom" poem from it. The original poems, initially hidden, are placed on the wall. Once students have finished "drawing" the poem, they then match their understanding of it with the

actual poem, which is now revealed, clipped to a white board, or on the wall. Following that, they stand in front of the poem belonging to the essay they read, and explain the poem to a revolving group of students. They do not use the essay that was written for the poem. Rather, they call on their own memory and comprehension, and apply it to the visual in front of them. If there are seven poems, there there is one “teacher” for each, and seven “students” who move to the next “teacher” when a certain number of minutes pass. The visiting student needs to ask questions. The roles are then reversed.

This is a quick and fun activity, which consolidates the many new concepts, learnt, and provides students with the opportunity to cement their communicative skills with repetition, and the non-threatening pressure of speed. Non-threatening, because the students have a fairly thorough knowledge of the poem by the time they come to explain it, and multiple students conversing simultaneously means there is less chance for self-consciousness to develop. All of these skills can be transferred to other aspects of language learning, common underlying proficiency and future use.

(5) Summary and Benefits

There are many “macro-strategies” (as defined by Kumaravadivelu, 2003, 2006, cited in Littlewood, 2011, pp. 549-550) that come into play in this course in terms of communicative language teaching. For example, as stated above, when explaining or discussing their work with new partners, students have many chances to develop automaticity; to integrate language skills; to become aware of aspects of language. The activity “activates intuitive heuristics”, students develop learner autonomy (it is their language, and their concept), and negotiated interaction is generated as they need to make the poem with a partner and explain it to a series of new partners. Even social relevance and cultural consciousness are developed as students often depict “slices of life” from their own world, or even from the wider world of war, travel and industry.

Scaffolding is obviously given. Expounding upon an abstract idea is an important skill. Mathematicians need to explain their ideas, as do students studying computer sciences and engineering among other topics. The ability to explain abstract concepts is highly sought after in human interaction. MEXT and other government departments give it high priority (cited in Yoshida, 2009, 2013). Students need to be taught meta-language in order to express themselves clearly. This is keeping within the ideas of CLIL. The class ultimately produces cognitively challenging pieces. The creation itself was challenging, the understanding of the piece is challenging, and now students need the language to express their ideas clearly and with meaning.

Students are really invested in these works because they are solely their creations. Communication becomes very meaningful. They may not be sophisticated in their language use,

but they are able to convey sophisticated ideas, which means that communicative competence is achieved. Students leave these five weeks (including the first weeks of introduction) with a broader point of view, and with a new sense of what is involved at the core of our survival: Creativity (innovation and new ideas) (Lemonick, 2013). It can be argued that innovation is of little use to the rest of society without explanation. This course enables students to create, develop, expand and explain, elements contained in the last three of Bloom's taxonomy of cognitive educational objectives: analysis, synthesis (creativity) and evaluation (as cited in Yoshida, 2009, p.7; 2013). It is also in keeping with MEXT's desire that there is an "emphasis on balancing the attainment of knowledge and skill with thinking capacity, decisiveness [and] expressiveness" (2008-2009, slide 5).

2. "Expansionism": Poster Sessions

(1) The development of poster sessions exploring Cubism, Futurism, Dadaism, Surrealism, Guttai/Fluxus

Once students have competently executed an abstract project through their own creativity and skills, as outlined in sections 1(1) – (5), the class undertakes a more complex assignment. The second half of the semester involves research and poster presentations on the art movements detailed in the heading above. Especially important are the literature aspects of these art movements. Once again, despite dealing with very abstract subjects, the methods of these movements are tangible. Therefore they can be a "gateway" to understanding cognitively challenging material more deeply, and to producing it. Exposure to reading and writing in English is also optimised.

The students work in groups of three or four, and each group has one of the topics. Within that area, they research a number of themes including: the writing method, a well-known poet/writer of the movement and a piece of his or her writing, a Japanese connection, history, philosophy, influences and politics. They also create their own piece of writing in the fashion of the movement. This is a physical, tangible project. It is not done on the computer due to the students' tendency to "cut and paste".

Preparation and research takes about 3-4 weeks, and then another two weeks are allocated to the poster presentation, to which people from outside the class can attend.

(2) Students teaching students the writing methods of the movements

The first half of the class is generally used for the poster presentation, and in the second half, students teach other students the method of their art movement. That is, the students are teachers

and learners of making poems using the methodologies of the movements. All of the methods can be relayed easily in a limited time frame. Again, this appeals to students' BICS and lessens the burden of comprehension and performance. The language of instruction, explanation and discussion should be in English, and students have been forewarned about this aspect. Teaching consolidates all the research and production the students have done, as they become the experts instructing other students in the writing method of the art movement they have studied. This is not passive. An avant-garde poem of whichever movement is produced, four or five times over. As with the discussion aspect of the "Words in Freedom" assignment, due to repetition, teacher-students' automaticity and confidence has a chance to develop. The roles are then reversed. All of this once again promotes Kumaravadivelu's "macro-strategies", in particular, autonomy, negotiation and noticing (2003, 2006, cited in Littlewood, 2011, p. 549; see also Swain, 1995, 2005; Schmidt, 1990, 1995).

(3) Student Feedback

Although initially confused, students really enjoy this assignment. Following are some of the quotes of the students. They are not particularly accurate, as they were given for the purpose of feedback, but they are definitely expressive and communicative, and for this instructor, illustrate the overall value of the course. Students are using their "own English" to convey meaning (Yoshida, 2013), though I have slightly corrected them for clarity. M. Yamamoto said of the Dada philosophy:

We could think about [how] DaDa related to the History. And also comparing with other poem[s]. For example, surrealism and futurism was so interesting for me. I think if I learn about poem[s], I could understand not only poem[s] but also background of history. It was so interesting for me.

People who lived during war had a huge trouble to live. So our situation recently [is] different from those serious times. It is difficult for us (youth) to understand about people who lived under the war. But we should think and understand history, then we should also think our future. One of the tools that we use to understand is [the] poem!" (M. Yamamoto, 2012, personal communication).

As Yoshida asks, "What is the purpose of our teaching?" Surely at a university level it is to "communicate and learn new ideas" (2014b), and Yamamoto's comment definitely addresses Kumaradevilu's and MEXT's checklist in terms of raising cultural and social consciousness and

relevance, and activating intuitive heuristics. It also shows that language was used to “deepen one’s . . . sensitivity and affection towards others”, in that Yamamoto expresses empathy towards those who lived in more afflicted times than she perceives herself as living in, and she can see a correlation between the eras (Central Education Committee, as cited in Yoshida, 2009).

J. H. Lee stated:

“. . . I learnt [about] “Dadaism”. It's really difficult. Because, I didn't know “Dadaism” and, I [did] not understand [why] I studied it. But, I know that, now. I think, Dadaism is “Insubordination”. So, Dadaism breaks format. And, it pursues the freedom. So, I like Dadaism. I hate the format, too. Because, format . . . disturb[s] . . . our thinking. So, a good idea does not come out. I learnt to break format in this class. And, my thinking has been broadened” (personal communication, 2012).

Indeed. If Steve Jobs had not “broken format” our twenty-first century world would probably be very different. Another student stated that she was “amazed” by the idea that “art was not correct”, and that she would be seeking out art galleries on her vacation (C. Kuroda, 2012, personal communication), and finally, M. Matsuzawa stated:

After sound poem[s], I learnt about futurism history and philosophy and so on. I had a great time to learn about it. My eyesight might [have] gotten wide because of them. Especially philosophy was really interesting for me. I [was]suppose[d] to search about futurism philosophy. In this topic, I learnt so much. It is mostly same between Italian and Russian. But there is one differen[ce]. That is politics. Italian supported violence, but Russian was not. Another is the Russians were a more literary movement rather than visual. Another, Futurists produced some war inspired works, but soon Cubism became the impetus of the avant-garde. War to end all wars ended futurism (2012, personal communication).

Matsuzawa’s feedback shows an awareness of the events of the world. Her analysis of self in relation to the material, and extrapolation of the connection of her identity with the outside world and the influences that have shaped it, illustrate that her cognitive skills were indeed engaged, and that she enjoyed the challenge and the new information it brought into her world. It would seem she enjoyed the chance to interact with the topic and to express her understanding in a cogent way.

(4) Students become art movement protagonists

Often, students' creative representation shows a cognitive understanding far deeper than they were sometimes able to express in everyday classroom English, or academic English, as seen in figure 2 below of a group's Cubist poem. This assignment allows the development and showcasing of a great many learning styles and strengths. Each participant can bring his or her strength to the project. Seen in figure 2 is a shape poem. A shape poem (i) (one of the writing methods of the Cubists) represents a figure, and that figure represents an idea. Another Cubist characteristic reflected in literature is the idea of continuum (ii) – no beginning or end. Moreover, wordplay (iii) is popular, and art, whether visual or literary, was seen from multiple perspectives (iv) (MacLean, n.d.). Figure 2 addresses all of these stipulations:

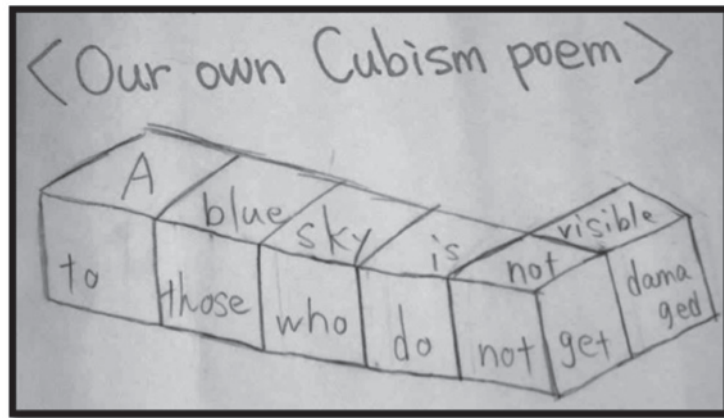


Figure 2: "A blue sky is not visible . . ." (M. Y. Hee, C. Niimi & R. Mizuno, 2013, personal communication).

Here the students have addressed word play (iii). Where does the poem begin or end? It can make sense if it is read, "A blue sky is not visible to those who do not get damaged," and it can also be read, "to those who do not get damaged, a blue sky is not visible". This also ties into the idea of continuum (ii), and multiple perspectives (iv), as the reader assesses and reassesses the starting point of the poem. Is the protagonist addressing the damaged people, or making an observation? In keeping with word play, perspectives and deeper meaning, the reader also wonders if those who are never damaged can see a blue sky (optimism, hope), or is it only those who have suffered that can attain this? Maybe those who are never damaged are not in need of optimism or possibility because they have already attained it. The thought of the blue sky also connects to the sense of cycles (ii) (night and day, seasons, vastness, opposites). After speaking with the students, they agreed with my observation that the blocks represented a school building

or jail, or something similar, and this was intentional (i). The physical confinements of the words of the poem thereby represent that which can damage, but also that which cannot stop the blue sky from being observed, no matter how restrictive, and also that which actually causes the blue sky (optimism) to appear, as it will not be observed if the protagonist has not suffered. The sophistication of these notions shows the high cognitive capability of our students, and, in this case, their very real interaction with the philosophies and methodologies of the literary aspects of the Cubist movement.

This deeper creative understanding was applied to the other art movements studied also. By basing themselves in a philosophy and a particular way of expression, and then themselves becoming a proponent of that philosophy, students' understanding and experience grew and expanded in ways that it seemed were unique to them, and which they were also happy to include as part of their evolving perception of self (see feedback, 2 (3)).

(5) Summary of benefits of Assignment 2

Is our purpose in teaching to expose students to new ideas, and to encourage independent thought and critical thinking skills (analysis, synthesis, evaluation, questioning)? Within comparative culture classes, I feel the answer is yes, and most teachers of English will argue that being able to illustrate the ability to think critically, is a reflection of being able to use language at a deeper level of competency and purpose. The success of this class can be gauged as uneven if verbal and written performance and student feedback is measured against native-like proficiency, but the knowledge gained by the students, through both Japanese and English research (and other, in the case of non-Japanese students, of whom there were a few), and Japanese, English and other schemata, as reflected in their output, means that the L2/OL has been used and is being used for a meaningful purpose. Even though the final work is not the English of some hypothetical ideal learner and user, the concepts that the students studied will stay with them and might serve them later in life. They achieved a great many aspects of the higher "can do" goals, as outlined by MEXT, such as being able to communicate with people who have different thoughts, feelings and experiences to them (which can hopefully expand to being able to communicate with many people from diverse cultures and countries, the overall MEXT aim of that can-do statement outline), and a burgeoning ability to "provide logical and reasoned explanation of their own views" (MEXT, cited in Yoshida, 2013, p. 13).

As an aside, students undertaking this course might have learnt new concepts more deeply, because they had to work harder to understand them in another language. They came away knowing that Japan has a strong avant-garde movement (one student, studying the Gutai/Fluxus

movement, reported she was not aware Japan had contributed anything like that to the world, [C. Kuroda, personal communication, 2012]), and that knowledge strengthens their self-perception, both as Japanese, and as participants in global progression. They learnt that the wars in Europe and ultimately, across the world, impacted greatly upon the modern western world, and to varying degrees, the world as a whole. Considering the exposure many students have to other nations through study is often Euro and North American-centric, especially within English-based courses, connecting students to movements that mostly opposed and were directly influenced by the events mentioned above, could result in a deeper understanding of the cultures the movements stemmed from, including their inhabitants' present day attitudes and actions. This again ties into MEXT's hope that students will be able to understand the "thoughts and intentions" of cultures separate from themselves (cited in Yoshida, 2013, p. 11). In the case of the Gutai/Fluxus movements, the former originated in Japan and was directly influenced by the post-war recovery after 1945. It went on to influence the North American movement, Fluxus, which included within it opposition to the Vietnam war and interest in social change generally. The students can see that their country and people have been and are integrated and involved with global social change. Even for the art movements that stemmed from Europe, as stated previously, the students research a famous Japanese proponent of the movement, so similarities and relevance between cultures is reiterated. Maybe most importantly, pupils learnt there are philosophers, writers and artists who do think differently to the subscribed notion of what it means to be a particular individual in a particular society. This might be naive ultimately, or potentially subversive for a collective society, but if one of the aims of the nation's education is for students to understand the groundings of other societies (MEXT, 2011, as cited in Yoshida, 2013, p. 6) then they need to work with material that allows them to so. The influence of these movements, though alternative, did and does have a global effect, especially on independent culture, which continues to appeal to younger generations. Though these popular art movements might be explored at surface level – given time and language constraints – studying them is exciting initially, and the students can use what they have learnt for any further philosophical stepping stones into a variety of subjects, including psychology, gender studies, modernism, post-modernism and so on. They can use the new knowledge to completely discredit the ideas of the movements if they so wish, but the broader their perspective of the world, the broader their experience will be, and the greater chance they have of understanding and therefore interacting with it at a global level.

III Conclusion

Within CLIL and CLT, tasks and content of this course ranged from a more 'analytic dimension' to the 'harder version' (as opposed to soft) of pure experiential learning (Littlewood,

2011, p. 548). It engaged students meaningfully with content, and through this they were able to use and develop their CALP in ways that illustrated that Japanese students are capable of connecting with, discussing, creating and elaborating upon abstract concepts using a non-native language. Though the results of their interaction would not be deemed proficient by native-speaker guidelines, it has long been regarded that those not born into a language or surrounded by it rarely reach this level (Selinker, 1972; Yoshida, 2009). On the other hand, through using plurilingual concepts, the students definitely engaged with the material and were able to explain and “. . . persuade in English” and went through “the processes of Analysis, Evaluation, or Creation” in their learning (Yoshida, 2013, p. 12). Naturally their output was uneven, but they reflected a new sense of maturity and accomplishment through completion of the tasks. There were multiple chances to communicate with their classmates, and to receive peer assessment in addition to teacher input, which was important to them (A. Yamashita, 2013, personal communication). In 2009, Yoshida wrote “If the MEXT directive is followed, and teachers of all subjects at all levels of education train their students to use language for cognitively demanding purposes (CALP), then the possibility of Japanese high school students to use English for higher levels of cognitive functioning is not an unrealizable goal” (2009, p. 34). Considering that university students are able to do this with the right guidance now, (though results indicate that some focus on form is still needed), despite not having gone through the course of study, and that they have enjoyed the approach and style of learning and teaching, indicates that when the universities start receiving high school graduates who have been through courses designed to nurture their academic proficiency, the latter should have no trouble delving even deeper into topics which engage and stimulate the human condition. The human condition, even though it varies from person to person, culture to culture, is universal, and if teachers can interest students in universal themes, this will add to their overall cognitive proficiency. The fact that the course is successfully conducted in English, and the students are non-native speakers of that language, indicates the great ability that all students, including Japanese, have within them. Teachers should be trying their best to boost and cultivate this potential. The ultimate result of such aspiration could be a confident generation of English users fully capable of intercultural communication and sensitivity, thereby satisfying not only government directives, but also global, local and individual ambitions and goals.

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