Exploring the Potential of CLIL in
English Language Teaching in Japanese Universities:
An Innovation for the Development of
Effective Teaching and Global Awareness

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Abstract: An educational approach called Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) has been gaining acknowledgement in Europe for the last 10 years. It is now gradually being introduced into Japanese education. This paper seeks to clarify the increasingly acknowledged approach CLIL, while its definition has become more difficult to grasp as the variety of its application has proliferated. The paper then deals with recent practices implementing CLIL in Japanese universities. Significance and concerns of introducing CLIL into Japanese universities will be stated. The article concludes by identifying measures in order to bring about successful implementation of the approach which will contribute to the improvement of language teaching in Japanese universities.

Keywords: *CLIL, English language teaching, Japanese universities, innovation, global awareness*

1. Introduction

In recent years in Europe, an approach called Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) has become a well-known term amongst teachers and researchers involved in foreign language teaching (Georgiou 2012). Furthermore, the approach born in Europe "is gaining momentum and extending as an educational approach across continents" (Coyle, Hood, and Marsh 2010: 2). Since the emergence of the term 'CLIL' and concept in mid-1990s, "its usage has soared and it appears to continue accelerating as a 'growth industry'" (Pérez-Cañado 2012: 315). At the same time, due to a wide range of varieties of CLIL generated to meet diverse contexts, voices of concern are heard (Georgiou 2012, Pérez-Cañado 2012, Ting 2010): "Unfortunately, it seems that the CLIL umbrella might be stretching too much and that CLIL might be on the verge of becoming a victim of its own success" (Georgiou 2012: 497). In this way, the originally conceived approach and concept of CLIL are expanding as well as its structure is becoming less clear.

The present paper, therefore, seeks to define CLIL by first providing an overview of the approach and its practice in European contexts. By comparing similarities and differences between CLIL and Content-Based Instruction (CBI), a unique feature of CLIL will be highlighted. Variation of CLIL will be explained to show 'transferability' of

the approach at a wide range of contexts. The paper then introduces recent practices of CLIL in Japanese education, focusing on tertiary level. After stating the significance and concerns of introducing CLIL in Japanese universities, the article concludes by identifying measures in order to bring about successful implementation of the approach which will contribute to the improvement of language teaching in Japanese education.

2. What is CLIL?

First, an overview of the approach CLIL will be given starting with a definition, its origin, and how it has been expanding. Then, the concepts of CLIL will be explained in detail based on the 4Cs Framework, followed by highlighting the features and variation of CLIL.

2.1. A Definition, Origin and Expansion of CLIL

CLIL is a term coined in 1994 and launched in 1996 in Europe indicating "a dual-focused educational approach in which an **additional language** is used for the learning and teaching of both content *and* language (emphases original)" (Coyle, Hood, and Marsh 2010: 1). According to Coyle, Hood, and Marsh (2010), the additional language is often times a foreign language to the learners', but it can also be other languages such as their second language. In reality, English has been the dominant language for CLIL reflecting its important status in the world (Dalton-Puffer 2011). In CLIL classrooms, more emphasis may be put on either content or language at times, but teaching and learning in the CLIL classrooms aim to always include both content and language. It is due to this "innovative fusion of both" (Coyle, Hood, and Marsh 2010: 1) that distinguishes CLIL from other approaches.

The term CLIL was put together to refer to an approach that integrates diverse methodologies that were already existent in foreign language teaching. The term was coined aiming to identify and gather educational success that developed in different contexts, and "further design good practice" (Coyle, Hood, and Marsh 2010: 3). Thus, individual approaches and concepts that construct CLIL are neither a new form of language education nor a new form of subject education. Furthermore, CLIL stems from communicative methodologies (Graddol 2006, Lorenzo 2007) and said to be "the most recent developmental stage of the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach" (Georgiou 2012: 495).

Since its establishment in mid-1990s, there are several driving forces that promoted the widespread of CLIL in Europe. The first strong factor is the support of European Union (EU) policymakers. As the EU recognized the value of CLIL, the approach was consistently included in important policy documents (Georgiou 2012), and it was suggested "in the 2005 European Council recommendations that CLIL should be adopted throughout the entire European Union" (Coyle, Hood and Marsh 2010: 8). Another factor is the increased support from families. Parents started to support more for their children to learn at least one foreign language. It could be said that it is now an interest of both governments' and families' to expand children's language potential by adopting CLIL to increase socio-

economic advantage at the individual and/or country (Coyle, Hood, and Marsh 2010, Georgiou 2012). A third factor is a potential breakthrough of the CLIL approach. Especially having dissatisfaction with the current state of language teaching, teachers and experts view CLIL as a different way to improve language education (Georgiou 2012).

The idea to teach using another language existed before the appearance of CLIL, but the development of CLIL allowed people to hold a clearer idea of what is possible by putting together multiple approaches that already existed. With different driving forces in Europe, its application expanded and now spreading beyond Europe.

2.2. The 4Cs Framework of CLIL

In this section, elements that construct CLIL are described following Coyle, Hood, and Marsh's basis of the 4Cs Framework (Coyle, Hood, and Marsh 2010: 53–65). As shown in Figure 1, four categories that construct CLIL are Content, Communication, Cognition, and Community, and each will be explained.
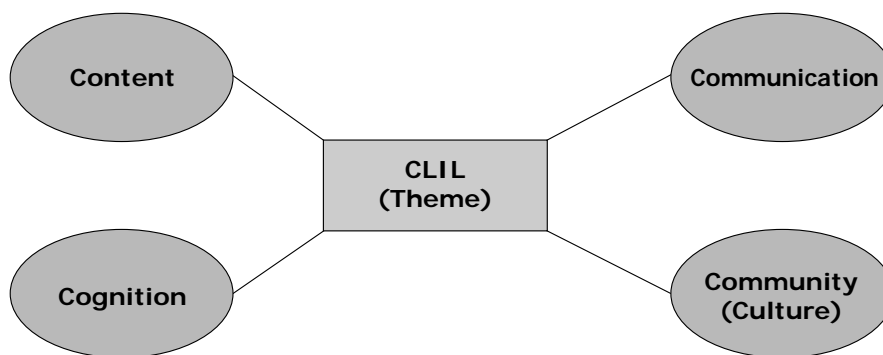

Figure 1　The 4Cs Framework of CLIL (adopted and revised from Coyle, Hood, and Marsh 2010: 56 and Ikeda 2011: 5)

In CLIL, Content refers to a subject or a theme, and it is "the knowledge, skills and understanding" that teachers wish students to access and learn (Coyle, Hood, and Marsh 2010: 53). As one of distinguished features of CLIL, authentic materials are used rather than using materials created for learning a new language. The content does not have to be a discrete subject such as mathematics or history, and it can also be content structured for integrated studies. A theme can be taught extending to multiple number of class hours or it can be a topic that is completed in one class lesson. Since content needs to be taught, instructors for CLIL "implies that teachers will normally be non-native speakers of the target language, but instead content experts, because what is taught are content subjects in specific fields and professions" (Dalton-Puffer 2011: 183). Furthermore, it makes sense that "CLIL is usually implemented once learners have already acquired literacy skills in their first language (L1), which is more often at the secondary than the primary level" ((Dalton-Puffer 2011: 184).

In the Communication category, the role of language is viewed as "*learning to use language and using language to learn* (italics original)" (Coyle, Hood, and Marsh 2010:

54). In CLIL classrooms, therefore, "students use the language as they learn it rather than spending years 'rehearsing' in a language class for a possible opportunity to use the language some time in the future" (Georgiou 2012: 496). With the CLIL approach, students inevitably have more exposure to the language they are learning. Furthermore, "using language to learn" means that an emphasis is put on using language to communicate with others as well as utilizing language as a tool to learn various matters. In short, both content and language learning are considered important in CLIL classrooms, and thus are integrated into lessons (Coyle, Hood, and Marsh 2010).

In CLIL, Cognition is not simply about acquiring knowledge itself. Instead, CLIL demands learners "to create new knowledge and develop new skills through reflection and engagement in higher-order as well as lower-order thinking" (Coyle, Hood, and Marsh 2010: 54). As a result, CLIL "offers opportunities [for learners to] become engaged in more active learning" through task-based activities "such as creating a map of their school (geography) or carrying out an experiment (science) and use language with a focus on the task rather than the language itself" (Georgiou 2012: 495–6). CLIL has been referred to as "education through *construction*, rather than *instruction*" (ECML 2005: 6). Thus, pair or group work is often incorporated in CLIL lessons.

For the final category, the term Culture is used in CLIL documents reflecting the situation of Europe being multi-ethnic, multicultural and multilingual (Coyle, Hood, and Marsh 2010). However, "Community" is substituted for "Culture" to better fit the description of contexts outside of Europe such as Japan (Ikeda 2011). The idea is that by providing various levels of community such as from classroom, school to country, region, and world, CLIL allows learners to share one's experience and opinion in a smaller community to a broader context where they view themselves as world citizens and discuss issues such as global warming. Through the idea of "Community" or "Culture," "CLIL offers rich potential for developing notions of pluricultural citizenship and global understanding" within learners (Coyle, Hood, and Marsh 2010: 55).

The 4Cs Framework summarizes the elements that construct CLIL. In fact, CLIL and other approaches especially Content-Based Instruction (CBI) share most of the principles and methodologies just mentioned. In the next section, by examining commonalities and differences of the two approaches of language teaching, CLIL and CBI, the present paper aims to highlight the dual focus nature of CLIL.

2.3. Commonalities and differences between CLIL and CBI

Figure 2 indicates the position of CLIL when it is placed in the continuum of English language teaching methodology. CLIL is a communicative instruction approach and it is placed around middle in the continuum, in between structure-based instruction and natural acquisition. What needs to be noted is that both CLIL and CBI are placed exactly at the same place on the continuum.
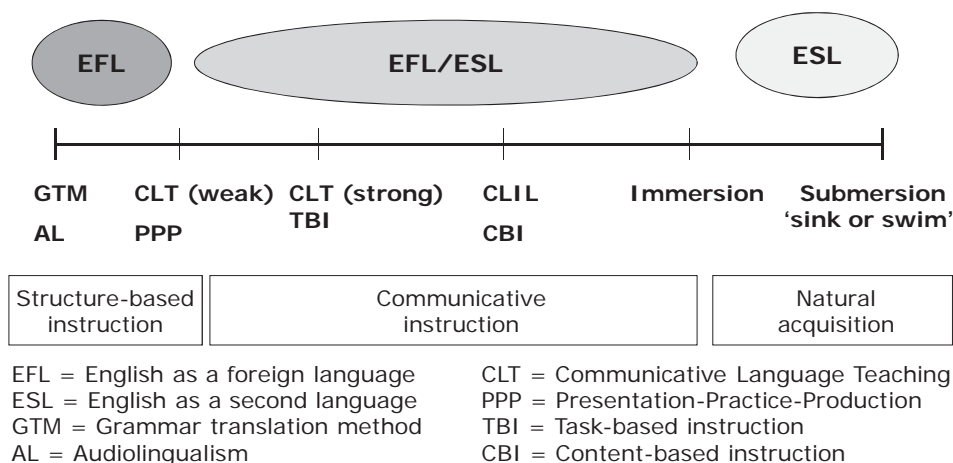
EFL = English as a foreign language   CLT = Communicative Language Teaching
ESL = English as a second language   PPP = Presentation-Practice-Production
GTM = Grammar translation method   TBI = Task-based instruction
AL = Audiolingualism   CBI = Content-based instruction

Figure 2 The position of CLIL in language teaching methodology (Ikeda 2012: 2)

Although it is repetitive to some extent, let me list the summary of Ikeda's comparative analysis of the principles and methodologies of CLIL and CBI (2011: 2). There are five points listed as common:

1. Content: contents from a subject or from various topics are placed as the main focus of learning.
2. Language: an additional language (English) is used as a tool to learn a subject or particular topics rather than to study the language itself that is being used as a medium of instruction.
3. Activities: authentic materials are used for learning and four skills of language learning are incorporated. Authentic materials indicate materials such as newspapers, magazines and on-line materials that are not prepared for language learning.
4. Academic achievement: both CLIL and CBI approaches aim to boost students' knowledge, language skills and cognitive skills.
5. Learning theory: both approaches are based on theories that learning is facilitated by giving appropriate input that learners' can comprehend, and interactive communication with teachers and peers is conducted.

Then, how are they different? Despite the fact that CLIL and CBI share most of their principles and techniques, Ikeda (2011) argues that CLIL is much easier to implement and innovative. Table 1 shows differences of CBI, CLIL, and immersion education on four items. As the table shows, compared to CLIL in the middle row, CBI focuses more on language education. On contrary, immersion education focuses more on content. It is said that CLIL classrooms may not look any different from other language education classrooms on the surface. However, as Table 1 illustrates, a unique feature of CLIL is that it is content-driven, but considers language learning equally important, thus integrates both into lessons.

Table 1　Differences between Content-Based Instruction, Content and Language Integrated Learning and Immersion (Ikeda 2012: 4; translation from Cope 2014: 5)

More language ←---------------------------------→ More content

	CBI	CLIL	Immersion
What is the learning target?	Language	Language & Subject matter	Subject matter
Who teaches?	Language teacher	Language & Subject teacher	Subject teacher
What kind of contents are to be used?	Mainly topics	Topics & Curricular subject matter	Curricular subject matter
Assessment and marking	Language	Language & Content	Content

2.4. Variations of CLIL

One of the features of CLIL is in its "flexibility" (Ikeda 2011: 9) or "transferability." In other words, as far as quality is secured keeping the 4Cs of the approach, it permits diverse variations to meet various contexts of classrooms at different levels of education. It has been pointed out that CLIL approaches in European countries are highly variegated (Colye 2007, Wolff 2002, Pérez-Cañado 2012). Figure 3 is an illustration of CLIL showing its possible variations in its purpose, frequency, ratio, and the medium of instruction.

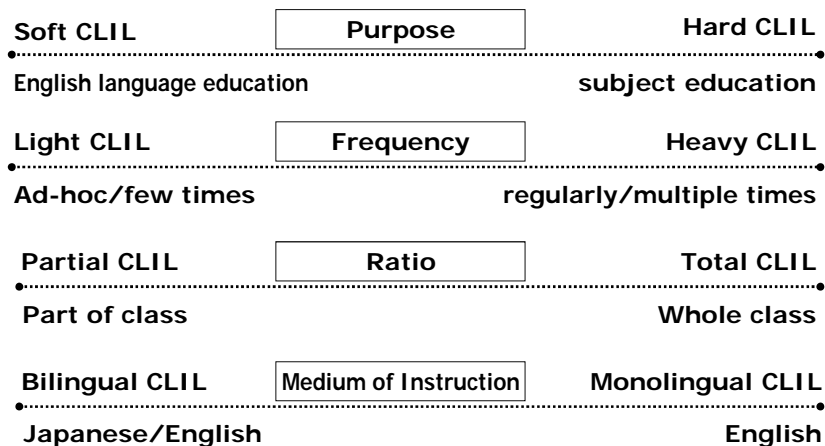| Soft CLIL	**Purpose**	Hard CLIL
English language education		subject education
Light CLIL	**Frequency**	Heavy CLIL
Ad-hoc/few times		regularly/multiple times
Partial CLIL	**Ratio**	Total CLIL
Part of class		Whole class
Bilingual CLIL	Medium of Instruction	Monolingual CLIL
Japanese/English		English

Figure 3　Variations of CLIL (Ikeda 2011, translated by the writer)

In CLIL, its purpose is ranged from learning a language to acquiring content and knowledge (Bentley 2010 as quoted in Ikeda 2011). In language learning classrooms or in Soft CLIL, various topics can be used to achieve its goals. In Hard CLIL, on the other hand, a particular content will be taught just as it would be in their other subject classes, except the content will be taught using another language other than their first language or mother tongue.

Frequency indicates whether CLIL classes will be held a few times in a particular

period (Light CLIL), or create a full curriculum based on CLIL (Heavy CLIL). Furthermore, ratio indicates how much CLIL will be applied within a lesson. In Partial CLIL, activities and tasks based on the CLIL approach are incorporated partially in lessons, whereas Total CLIL is that the approach is adopted to conduct a whole lesson.

Variation in the medium of instruction allows teachers to conduct lessons using two languages, often times in the targeted language and the students' mother tongue, or only in the targeted language. Although in principle, CLIL is taught using only the targeted language, it is permissible to use students' first language when necessary. However, whenever using their first language, its use should be limited to minimum such as confirming important information (Ikeda 2011).

Ikeda (2011) suggests it is possible to introduce CLIL to Japanese junior and senior high schools in order to teach the English language (Soft CLIL) a few times during a term (Light CLIL) or partially within lessons (Partial CLIL), using both English and Japanese (Bilingual CLIL). In short, Weak CLIL can be adopted immediately. For higher education, Ikeda suggests more Strong CLIL as a possibility. In such cases, lessons are conducted to teach content (Hard CLIL) using a structured syllabus for the course (Heavy CLIL) taking the whole lesson (Total CLIL), taught only in a foreign language which is most likely English (Monolingual CLIL).

3. The implementation of CLIL in Japanese universities

We will now move onto a Japanese context. In this section, practices of CLIL conducted in two universities will be introduced. As it is expressed in the editorial for the International CLIL Research Journal, "if CLIL in Europe is a toddler, CLIL in Japan is a new-born baby" (Ikeda 2013: 3), the approach is still new to many teachers in Japan. Two institutions to be introduced are Saitama Medical University and Sophia University. The latter is considered to be a leading institution in introducing CLIL to Japanese education. The institution offers English language education incorporating the CLIL approach since 2010. It provides annual conferences and conducts training workshops to provide information about CLIL. In addition, there are two volumes written by the teaching staff of Sophia University about CLIL's principles, methods, and practices for Japanese teachers. At Saitama Medical University, Faculty of Medicine, the coordinator of the CLIL curriculum and its implementation often collaborates with teachers at Sophia University especially when conducting workshops and writing publications about CLIL. In this way, though the approach is new, CLIL "is slowly and steadily crawling forward in Japanese education" (Ikeda 2013: 3).

3.1 Saitama Medical University, Faculty of Medicine
Since April 2010, CLIL classes have been conducted as a pilot project at Saitama Medical University, Faculty of Medicine. At the school, English classes are offered to freshman students aiming to enhance students' overall English communication skills; in the same way as other mandatory English courses such as Communication, Reading, and Writing

classes. For the CLIL classes, each instructor chooses topics related to health sciences that he or she can teach, and the courses aim to make students review science knowledge that they acquired before entering university using English (Sasajima 2011).

According to Sasajima (2011), who plays a role as a coordinator of the CLIL pilot project and prepared the framework for the curriculum, five native speakers of English were chosen to conduct the CLIL classes. Based on the topics of instructors' choice, they prepared a syllabus for their classes individually. Examples of specific aims of the classes are to understand biology or general science at the level of British General Certificate of Secondary Education, comprehend knowledge related to the human body, and gain confidence communicating with others using English. It was also explained in the instructors' practices that students learned medical terms and checked the pronunciation, and students read aloud texts and were asked questions based on what they read. It was mentioned in the description that four out of five instructors adopted group work as an approach to facilitate student learning and boost students' communication skills in English. The instructors had different backgrounds related to teaching, such as some had experience in teaching the English language in general whereas one had knowledge in medicine in addition to experience teaching the English language. The coordinator took part in class activities when necessary, and supported the instructors' implementation of classes using CLIL approaches as much as possible.

Since the intention of introducing CLIL into a language program was to integrate content and language learning, the instructors were reminded to keep a dual-focus and not slant towards language learning only. Because teaching content was encouraged, the use of the Japanese language was allowed in classes especially when students were working or discussing amongst themselves. Also, the instructors could give a lecture teaching content in CLIL classrooms.

3.2 Sophia University

At Sophia University, an idea to include the CLIL approach into the formal curriculum was introduced as part of an educational innovative program project of the university in 2008. The aim of the project was to enhance the quality of education of the university. When it was decided that an innovative action will take place in foreign language education, a project team was formed. Furthermore, in order to plan and organize the new innovative program effectively, questionnaires were collected from a wide scale of undergraduate students to better understand the needs and beliefs of students regarding English language learning (Izumi 2012: Foreword).

The actual classes adopting the CLIL approach began from April 2010, and continue till present under a course titled "Academic English (AE)." The course has level 1 and 2, extending to two semesters. Each is a once a week course which continues for fourteen weeks per semester (Heavy CLIL). Students are required to take separate mandatory English courses, and AE courses are provided as elective. The course is open to all the students regardless of their major. Providing the opportunity for every student to receive good English language education in line with students' course preferences was one of the basic goals of the adoption of CLIL at Sophia University.

In Academic English 1 (AE1), the aim of the course is to help students acquire basic skills necessary to pursue their study in their field of interest using English. Basic skills in English include skills such as how to construct academic essays, how to give effective presentation, and how to conduct productive debates. It is explicitly stated that teaching content of a specific field using English as soon as students entered university was considered. However, it was decided that it is better to first equip first-year students with academic English skills (Izumi 2012: Foreword).

It is in Academic English 2 (AE2) in the second semester that several courses with different content are offered. The types of content covered are in the field of literature, anthropology, natural science, and intercultural communication or linguistics. Using skills that students acquired in AE1, the course aims to make students acquire knowledge of a specific field and enhance their English language skills at the same time.

3.3 Review of the recent implementation of CLIL in Japanese universities

Let us review the implementation of CLIL of the two universities. First of all, based on the possible variation of CLIL as illustrated in Figure 4, the purpose of CLIL in Japanese universities is positioned towards Soft CLIL rather than Hard CLIL. In other words, CLIL is adopted within English language education curricula, and not within the framework of teaching subjects. The instructors are also basically language teachers and not content specialists like in European countries. As the title of the two volumes about CLIL published by Sophia teaching staff shows, "CLIL: New Challenges in Foreign Language Education at Sophia University," CLIL approaches are adopted within English language education.

What about the achievement of CLIL in the two institutions? Examining the practices of CLIL of two universities, it seems fair to say that the programs help to improve students' English skills by including content into learning. This is because including content that is closer to students' interests increases their motivation to learn. The programs also provide an environment that enables students to express verbally or write in a practical way about particular subjects or fields using English. This owes to authentic materials being used and various opportunities provided for students to speak up through pair-work and group discussions. Changes in students were also detected from students' feedback. For instance, an example commenting about feeling lack of vocabulary at the beginning of the course was introduced, whereas towards the end of the course more comments related to what was dealt in class as well as the improvement in skills using English were observed (Horiguchi 2012).

On the other hand, is the students' understanding of content acceptable? In explaining what CLIL is to Japanese readers, Ikeda summarizes CLIL as the following:

> CLIL is an educational method that helps learners to acquire subject matter efficiently and *at a deep level* using methods of language education. Furthermore, CLIL is a method that helps to enhance practical skills by using the English language as a means of learning, and it aims to improve learners' study skills. It is a sophisticated educational method that realizes high-quality lessons by organically integrating various educational principles and methods (Ikeda 2011: 12, translated by

the writer, italics added).

Following this explanation, it seems difficult to be convinced whether students have acquired knowledge of a particular field in depth through CLIL lessons. In Saitama Medical University, for instance, as mentioned before, though topics related to health and medicine were attempted to be incorporated into lessons, class practices were such as teaching knowledge and terms related to health and medicine. As the authors acknowledge, the CLIL classes tended to focus on teaching terms and activities to enhance language skills instead of teaching content (Sasajima 2011). This was mainly because the instructors knew the concept of CLIL but putting them into action to create a successful class was another thing. Moreover, instructors lacked enough knowledge to teach content in depth.

At Sophia University, though content was integrated into lessons for AE2 classes, and it is probably true that students learned specific English terms to discuss or write about particular topics using English, it is not clear how much content students have acquired. In AE2, though some course syllabi treat both content and language learning equally in its explanation, some other gives impression that language learning is emphasized more, such as the skills learned in the first semester will be build on by studying a particular topic. In reflecting a course taught, an instructor also stated, "[m]y aims and assessment were usually language driven" (Pinner 2012: 116).

4. Significance and concerns of implementing CLIL at Japanese universities

One reason that CLIL is worth spreading is because it is an approach that is the aggregation of ideas from various approaches in bilingual education. In other words, CLIL is a holistic approach of bilingual education. By providing this holistic approach, it creates a shift in people's minds that, for instance, both content and language can be dealt in one class or one course; both can be pursued and be assessed. This shift, in my view, contributes to the improvement of the future language teaching. What is important in Japan at this stage then is to spread the ideas and practices through lectures, workshops, and writing.

Furthermore, CLIL incorporates learning that promotes cross-cultural understanding. The approach helps learners to hold a wider perspective by making them keep a sense of community, and foster in them willingness to share their opinions and experiences with others. This will contribute in helping students broaden their horizons, knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary in our globalized world. Such an education will certainly function as the basis for the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology's policy to foster human resources who would in the future contribute in "improving Japan's global competitiveness and enhancing the ties between nations" (MEXT 2014: online).

However, such potential is realized only when CLIL is conducted successfully. What needs to be secured is the ability of instructors to teach CLIL classes. In the case of Japanese universities where language teachers are usually the instructors as described in the previous section, more content is necessary. This concern of lack in content specialists

has been raised overseas as well (Georgiou 2012). Especially when CLIL is to be conducted at tertiary level, content cannot be merely teaching terms of specific areas in an additional language nor can we equate teaching content with students simply exchanging opinions of a particular topic. If language teachers are not suitable enough to teach content, will content specialists be a solution to the problem? In the case of content specialists, different issues are raised in conducting CLIL lessons, such as unclear pronunciation and unfamiliar vocabulary (Pérez-Cañado 2012). These problems are likely to occur because content specialists are trained to teach knowledge of specific fields but lack in skills to conduct lessons effectively using another language. Thus, whoever may become the instructors, the training of instructors will be a crucial factor for the success of CLIL in Japanese universities.

Finally, as it is the case in the European context, quantitative empirical studies need to be conducted. This is critical for the development of CLIL. It can be concluded that there has not been concrete, nor enough findings, to conclude that CLIL brings better results compared to other methodologies in learning outcomes (Dalton-Puffer 2011, Ikeda 2012). At the same time, however, there has not been crucial study to conclude that CLIL is ineffective in motivating student learning and therefore learning outcomes. In the case of Japanese education, publications of CLIL implementation are all descriptive up to this date. Not only publicizing the potential of CLIL for the enhancement of language education but also the accumulation of quantitative study that compares outcomes of CLIL classes with non-CLIL classes is important. Moreover, the development of measuring effects of CLIL compared to classrooms not adopting CLIL approach is necessary.

5. Conclusion

In recent years, CLIL that has become one of the most important developments in language teaching and learning mainly in Europe has spread far beyond Europe, now reaching Japan. The implementation of the approach is newborn in the country and is still in the stage of an innovation. Especially at tertiary level, content learning needs to be improved and developed. With its potential for the enhancement of language learning and promotion of globalized awareness in learners, what is important is to keep striving for the improvement of the approach (Georgiou 2012). Starting with the spread of the idea and its practice in Japanese education, accumulating empirical data is a must for CLIL to be academically meaningful in the future.

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