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## Teaching and Learning Beyond Language: Using TED Talks for CLIL

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### 要約

今日、外国語としての英語（EFL）教育を行う大学の教員の多くが、学生の言語学習のニーズだけでなく、彼らの興味に訴える授業を行うことへの関心を深めている。しかし、言語の形（フォーム）中心、あるいは内容理解中心であっても、訳を重視した言語中心の授業が多く存在する。これとは対照的に、多くのEFL研究が、内容中心学習と言語の統合の実践を支持している。このような言語教育と学習法のアプローチは、CLIL（内容言語統合型学習）として知られるようになった。

内容を活用するための優れたプラットフォームがテッドトークである。テッドトークは、様々な国際的、及び文化的背景を持つスピーカーに、彼らにとって問題となっている事柄やきわめて重要なアイデアについてプレゼンテーションする機会を提供している非営利団体である。これは、文化、語用論、生の言語を学ぶ手段を提供しているので、英語のネイティブスピーカーにとってだけでなく、言語学習者にとっても適切なメディアプラットフォームである。この論文は、駒沢女子大学の留学フォローアップクラスで、授業内容の1つとしてテッドトークというメディアプラットフォームを使用した、新しいCLILのシラバスの実施について論じたものである。この調査研究は、この建設的な言語学習アプローチの成果を、学生たちからの質的なフィードバックから明らかにする。

### Introduction

As a language teacher and an educator, I often contemplate how to make it possible to not only help our learners develop their language skills, but how to go beyond language and facilitate the exploration of knowledge from various disciplines in our diverse and rapidly changing world. If students could cooperatively learn about life through language, this I believe would be more meaningful than learning language in isolation. By becoming aware of various perspectives of world, and through subsequently developing critical thinking, this will help students to acquire more knowledge, and can also help in developing human relationships on both local and global levels. It is often the case that many EFL classes are language-centered, where the focus is often on grammar and form, or on content but still mainly with an emphasis on translation. However, much research in the EFL field supports the idea of bypassing the traditional dichotomy of language and content, and instead embraces the practice of integrating content-based learning with language-based learning. This approach has become known

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as Content Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), a term created by Malijers and Marsh in 1994, is somewhat similar in nature to previous concepts about content-based language instruction developed by Brinton, Snow, & Wesche (1989). Furthermore, it is believed to have similarities to some language immersion teaching methods. According to Marsh & Langé (2000), CLIL is the integration of learning a language mixed in with other subjects, for example; art, science, or history. Content is also available in multiple-media formats, books, magazines, and social networks sites and the Internet.

An excellent platform from which to utilize content is from TED Talks ([www.ted.com](http://www.ted.com)), a media platform suitable for speakers of English. Despite the fact that the content matter is, in many cases, suitable mainly for advanced speakers, in this study the learners were of low to high intermediate levels and were able to engage successfully with the content. This was also made possible through using the subtitles function on the TED Talks website. The aims of this paper are to discuss the advantages of CLIL, namely that there is a dual-focus on a content area, as well as a language focus. The paper also gives some food for thought about using TED Talks as a media platform for course content which offers authentic, cultural, and social stimulation for students. Students had the chance to could chose the presentations which appealed to them. They then became a kind of 'expert' on their subject matter and could choose which new vocabulary they wanted to study from the speaker's transcript. This, to some degree, contributed to the students' being less passive and instead more actively autonomous in their way of learning. This paper will reveal the reflections of this course from the student's perspectives in a qualitative form.

### **About Content Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)**

There is no doubt that CLIL is a concurrent process and there are several reasons why it is becoming recognized as a valuable approach to language teaching and learning. The first of three is that CLIL can be seen as a motivational tool especially for students who have spent a number of years at junior and senior high school focusing on grammatical explanations. Therefore, it can be ascertained that students, especially when they come to university, are ready for new challenges in more meaningful contexts. Moreover, content that complements learners' interests and needs provides an intrinsic incentive for learning. Secondly, CLIL is contextualized learning where language is embedded in discourse while avoiding extremes of either language or content, rather both become integrated. This in turn creates many opportunities for students to engage in content-based materials using various language-learning strategies, which can lead to more proficient and purposeful language acquisition. Thirdly, it naturally becomes a motivational tool because it lends to a more communicative approach to language learning. There are increased opportunities for discussion, debate, and the application of higher order thinking in comparison to what a language-focused class can provide. Therefore, there is a higher chance that students will gain more confidence in their abilities to engage in these communicative skills that require more autonomous levels of learning.

### Background to Exploratory Research

Six third year students from Komazawa Women's University, who had just returned from studying abroad for six months, participated in this exploratory study. On their return, highly motivated, collectively their main goals were to avoid losing the language they had learned, in addition to acquiring new skills on this course. In order to address their new language learning needs, a syllabus was created that would integrate authentic discourse, provide compelling content, and teach new skills in relation to speaking (in the form of presentations) and writing (academic essay writing). During this process, the challenges they faced had to be adjusted so that they were achievable. This new syllabus required the students to be creative, think critically, voice their opinions, and write academic essays. Therefore, in order to empower them to take responsibility for their own learning, the students could choose whatever content that appealed to them in alignment with their personal interests, needs, abilities, and goals. If students perceive that they have some control over their learning, they may have more self-confidence, and a greater sense of agency (Pressley, 1987).

### About TED Talks

TED is a nonprofit organization devoted to spreading ideas, on an international scale, from many great speakers from all walks of life. It began in the 1980's as a conference gathering many people from three globally recognized worlds: Technology, Entertainment, and Design. Now these live presentations are organized world-wide from a wide range of disciplines. The talks are then uploaded to the main TED website and viewed on a global scale. It can be best thought of as a global community from every discipline and culture with a common goal which is to seek a deeper understanding of the universe. Integrating language learning through authentic content-based instruction stretching across multi-dimensions of life (for example, philosophy, mathematics, business) provides an experiential exploration of teaching and learning that is worth investing students' interest in. To follow is a quote from a section of the main TED Talks website that describe their mission:

Our mission: Spreading ideas. We believe passionately in the power of ideas to change attitudes, lives and, ultimately, the world. So we're building a clearinghouse of free knowledge from the world's most inspired thinkers, and also a community of curious souls to engage with ideas and each other. (<http://www.ted.com/pages/about>)

For educators and teacher's of language, these presentations provide an opportunity to go beyond language and open up students' hearts and minds with the captivating content presented by many excellent speakers on TED.

A useful feature of TED Talks for language learners is the subtitles function available in many languages, including Japanese, thus making it possible for anyone to watch the talks, not only speakers of English. Moreover, TED Talks are conceivably an ideal platform from which to integrate content, which has educational value, and can expose students to authentic and new language. furthermore, students become exposed to many varieties of English spoken by people from around the world. Considering the

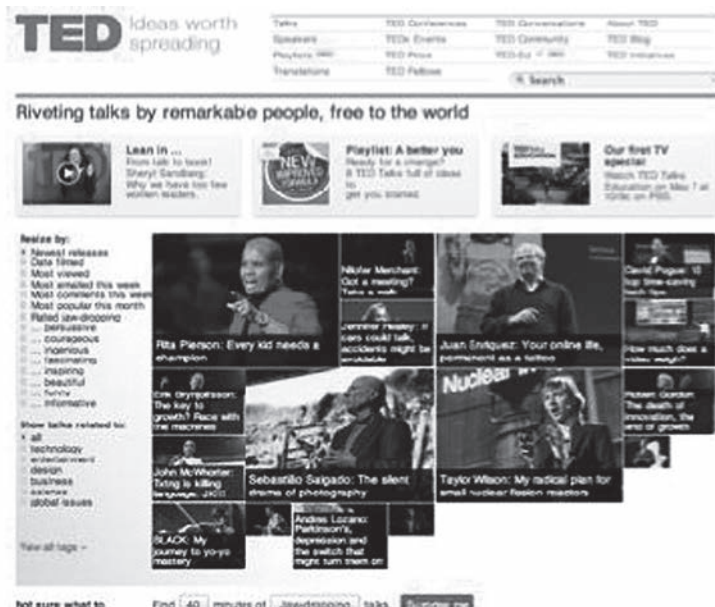
fact that non-native English speakers hugely exceed native speakers in number, provides an excellent opportunity to listen to World Englishes from a diverse spectrum of speakers. By moving beyond any tendencies to discriminate between accents, we can gain much knowledge, inspiration, and insight from the depth of their messages.

In addition to using TED Talks, students were also given some opportunities to practice speaking for the IELTS test. IELTS stands for International English Language Testing System which assesses the proficiency of people who want to study or work abroad or where English is used to communicate. It is a popular test for students wanting to go to Australia, New Zealand, the U.K, Ireland, and also America. This test has a face-to-face speaking component which provides a realistic means to assess a learners speaking ability. The objectives for integrating IELTS into the syllabus was so that the students could talk about themselves and on more topical issues in both general and specific terms.

One of the assignments of watching a TED Talk was for the students to re-tell the speakers story to their peers, and include some questions to ask everyone. Following this they had to include some of the after-talk comments on the TED website, followed by their own opinions and questions for further discussion. To follow is a step-by-step procedural outline given to the students for this part of the course.

### Ted Talks Presentation Project Procedure

Step 1: Go to the TED site ([www.ted.com](http://www.ted.com)) and explore it.



Step 2: Choose 12 talks that interest you

Your teacher will demonstrate how to choose talks by different categories. You can choose talks by categories, (e.g. example newest releases, inspiring) . Or, you can choose a topic, (e.g. language,

chemistry, philosophy) by clicking on the 'view all topics' link at the bottom of the page. There are many talks to choose from but please narrow down your choice to 12. You can use the language function (subtitles) if necessary.

### **Step 3: Decide on 8 Talks**

From the 12 talks, decide on 8 that you like most. Introduce the 8 talks of your choice, and say why you choose them. Do this during a Skype meeting with your classmates to discuss which ones you will speak about. If some of you have chosen the same talk, negotiate with your classmates which one of you will present it.

**Step 4: Five paragraph essay** - Email the essay by \_\_\_\_\_ each week.

Your essay will be read, edited, and then it will be returned to you for further development. Each of your essays will be individually graded based on the following elements:

- Introductory paragraph - What the TED talk is about.  
1-2 body paragraphs, minimum of 6 sentences for each body paragraph.
- Clear conclusion re-stating what the talk was about and your opinion.  
*Also*
- Add some quotes directly from the speaker.
- At the end of your essay add three questions. One should be a critical thinking question for your peers. Ask your teacher about this.

**Step 5. Update your Language Learning Notebook weekly**

- List the new and useful phrases or language chunks from your talk and try to make your own words/phrases from them (minimum 10) . See 'Vocabulary Strategies' sheet for other ideas. Share them with your classmates and review them often.

**Step 6. Present your TED Talk**

- Your presentation should be about 10 minutes — including showing video clips.
- Include some of your favourite quotations/comments from the talk.
- 5-7 minutes at the end will be for questions and answers from your peers and teacher.

See evaluation sheet for more in-depth guidelines.

**Step 7: "What Matters To Me" (Final presentation)**

At the end of the semester you will make a presentation about something that has really influenced,

fascinated or inspired you through watching TED Talks and listening to your peers. **Please do the following:**

- Incorporate the new language you have learned through out the semester from your language learning notebooks.
- Time your presentation to be 15 minutes with 5 minutes for Q & A or comments.
- Anticipate questions from your peers and prepare some answers in advance.
- Use PowerPoint Presentation (or you could try doing a pecha kucha presentation)
- Video footage of your TED Talk may be used on the school web or you may be asked to present at various events like the school festival (Lindosai) or at Open Campus (with your permission).

**If you need any help at any stage along the way, please do not hesitate to ask.**

### **Course Feedback**

A triangulation of student assessment and reflection on the course can be seen below.

1. Informal interview
2. TED Talks evaluation sheet
3. TED Talks feedback form

### **Feedback 1 – Informal interview**

As it was a small class informal face-to-face interviews with each student were arranged during lunchtime. Most of the students commented that it was very interesting and they enjoyed studying the subject matter. A few remarked that presenting the talks was a little difficult, but it was a good challenge for them. To follow is a short transcript from a conversation between a teacher and one of the six participant's responses:

**Teacher:** What did you most like learning through the TED Talks?

**Student:** I learned that the most important thing is that I have my opinion. So everyone has their opinion about each topic. So, whenever I was a junior high school student, I always had the same opinion as my friends. But in this class, I tried to have my opinion. Although sometimes I couldn't say because I was a little bit nervous, and I thought I might be wrong. But my friends were also a little bit nervous. But we tried to say each other's opinions in front of each other. This part I loved it.

**Teacher:** Did you learn something from your peers?

**Student:** Yes, because everyone has a different opinion. I thought that this is the right opinion. But then my friends would disagree and I could listen to another opinion, so then I could change my ideas.

**Teacher:** Which was your favourite TED Talk?

**Student:** 'English mania', because the speaker said it is very important to speak English. But in China, people concentrate too much time on trying to speak perfect English, and they lose their own language. He said that of course, English is useful and it's a good way to communicate between countries, but our own language is also important.

**Teacher:** So, most of the course was based on TED Talks. How do you think this course could be improved next year?

**Student:** I think that in junior high and high school students do not have a chance to speak English. So, that's why in this class I had a chance to really improve my speaking skills.

**Teacher:** How about other skills, do you think there should be more focus on writing?

**Student:** Before I took this class, I didn't know about how to write an essay or a report with an introduction and conclusion. So this was very useful for us.

**Teacher:** One last question. What did you think about the level of the content? Do you think any level of learner can use TED to learn English?

**Student:** For low level, I think it is a little bit difficult, although the content is very interesting. I think it is better for intermediate or higher level students.

#### Feedback 2 – TED Talk Evaluation sheet

Every week the students were given an evaluation sheet (see appendix 1) . First the students evaluated their performance and subsequently the teacher graded them. Unfortunately, this data was not a reliable means of analysis due to the fact that some sheets went missing or were not completed in a timely manner after the presentation. This is something that can be taken into consideration for future reference. However, one thing that was evident was that every student's feedback was different. The students' academic writing skills are not discussed in this report, however, everyone's presentation skills and language ability improved overall. Two of the student's scores steadily increased, albeit at different rates. Three other scores fluctuated in the beginning, and eventually progressed upwards. Thus, although not completely reliable, it can be surmised that all of the students speaking and presenting abilities positively improved at varying rates over time.

#### Feedback 3 - TED Talks feedback form

At the end of the 15-week course the students were asked to anonymously write what they thought about the class. Below is a summary of each of the six student's feedback to follow:

**1. What did you like most about this class?**

1. Listening to everyone's TED Talks
2. Giving a presentation for TED Talks
3. Sharing our story which we found on TED Talks
4. TED talks. It was a good opportunity for me to improve speaking.
5. TED Talks and IELTS
6. TED talks speech (making presentation) , discussion.

**2. What did you like least?**

1. Sometimes hard, but this is [was] good for us!
2. Nothing.
3. It was hard to talk my story but it helped my English skills.
4. I have no idea.
5. Nothing.
6. I like[d] every class.

**3. What did you think of the content?**

1. It was good to improve our English Skills. Especially speaking.
2. I learned many new vocabularies, this was nice. Very useful.
3. I think it's good!
4. It's enough. Also, IELTS was very useful for us.
5. There was much fun and interesting content.
6. It was great. Especially [the] saying my opinion.

**4. What other content would you like to study in this class?**

1. Some grammar. This will help with writing too.
2. I want to study English conversation more.
3. I'd like to read some article and write my opinion or summary about it.
4. Debates. I wanna [want to] know how to debate some topics in English.
5. I would like to try more IELTS
6. I can't imagine the new one, but I want to do more TED talks.

**5. What did you think about the teacher's explanations?**

1. Perfect - I got many words from you!
2. It was great.
3. It's very easy to understand. Thank you!
4. Great!



5. Teacher always gave me good advice about new words and how to study.
6. It's very easy to understand.

**6. Can you think of any other ways to make this class better for next year?**

1. I think more group work with this class would be better.
2. If we checked other TED talks that we are going to do with my friend we can answer or discuss about one more thing, I think.
3. The same way is OK for next year!
4. It's better to keep doing TED talks.
5. I don't think so.
6. I want more time for your class.

**Findings and reflections from the feedback**

At first glance, most of the feedback, which was anonymous, revealed that the course was successful and was beneficial to their language learning progress. It must also be acknowledged that not all feedback is reliable as some students may have exaggerated their feelings in an aim to please the teacher. However, although there are certainly ways to improve the course, it appeared that the students did find the course stimulating and useful for their learning. One reason for this may be due to the fact that they selected content which was appealing to them and therefore they enjoyed talking about it.

Other useful feedback came from questions 4 and 6. In question 4, one student mentioned that she would like to study grammar. While this would indeed be beneficial, it might not be realistic to try to add grammar in on top of a time demanding class. This could be added as an extra assignment for self-study at home. Finally, in question 6, which asked: Can you think of any other ways to make this course better? One student asking for more group work was particularly welcome, as was the request for further discussions relating to individual talks. Although, both the students and myself felt that a 90-minute class was not long enough. It might be more desirable to create space for more in-depth discussion on some of the most controversial topics and also in a more collaborative manner. This will be explored further in the next section to follow.

**Final reflections for future courses**

In hindsight, although it was interesting having all students present their talks and verbalize what they had prepared in writing, it was felt that due to time constraints this did not allow for as much depth of discussion concerning some deep and complicated global issues. It might have been more advantageous for the six participants in this study to split into two, whereby each group could give their talks in alternating weeks. Therefore, the time element given for discussing TED talks should be reconsidered for future courses.

This class was small, however in the context of larger classes, students could be arranged in groups of 3-4 and in a similar fashion, engage in a group discussion about their respective talks. Students could give their talks, exchange notes, and share new language ideas, making not only the individual members, but also the group as a whole more autonomous. The challenge is for the teacher to manage the groups so that they are performing well, and also to make the students accountable for their work. This could be achieved by giving each group a voice recorder to record all of their presentations and discussions. Students could also be encouraged to record their own presentations on a smart phone, or another type of recording device. This is also a useful tool for teachers to reflect on the students' performances and address any language content or personal needs that might have been missed during the simultaneous discussion session. Furthermore, it is useful for grading purposes too.

Notwithstanding that there are many ways to utilize TED Talks or any other content-based material, one final consideration that could be valuable for future classes is incorporating more collaborative group work into the equation. This could be facilitated in the form of debates, and peer project work. Have the students create questionnaires based on a topic of interest or a controversial issue. The survey questions could be canvassed to some university teachers, other students, people on the internet. This or any collaborative project could be presented at a university event, filmed and put on the school website, or uploaded to Youtube. In the case of group work, roleplays, powerpoint presentations and interviews, these could be included and used interchangeably as a means to deepen students' familiarity with the language.

### **Conclusion**

In this exploratory project, the integration of language and content through many TED Talks proved to be engaging, and stimulated some thought-provoking presentations from each of the six third year university students. All students had just returned from studying abroad and most of them seized every opportunity to convey the message of the content of each talk using their current language skills in addition to testing some new language they learned along the way. In general, it can be said that this course had a positive impact on the expansion of vocabulary and development of proficiency. In particular, students acquired much knowledge, were able to think critically about it and at the same time learn new language in the form of words and language chunks. Nevertheless, some considerations for future classes are needed. From the student reflections, apart from managing the time element of the student presentations, involving more collaborative group work would be welcomed. This could also address the need for more in-depth discussions on the sometimes controversial subject matter.

Despite the many advantages of CLIL, there are some reservations that some teachers might have in incorporating such a syllabus into their curriculum. Concerns about student levels, their motivation or fear of failure might be among them. These are valid points for deliberation before undertaking such a venture. It might be worthwhile to consider how language teachers and content-based teachers could collaborate in unison to facilitate working on content blended with language in parallel classes. In an

integrated approach, both language and content objectives could be planned cooperatively. Through experiencing similar language and content in a variety of contexts, this would inarguably help to increase the rate of acquisition.

The facilitation of CLIL using TED Talks has proven that we can go beyond language through discovering what people in the world are thinking and doing, caring and sharing. This has the potential to be a catalyst for a paradigm shift in a student's thinking, benefiting not only themselves, but also others and becoming much more than language learning, but learning about life through language.

**Appendix 1**

**Student assessment & reflection on course**

**Study Abroad - Student Evaluation Sheet - TED Talk \_\_\_\_\_**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Score: \_\_\_\_\_

5 - Outstanding    4 - Strong    3 - Good    2 - Fair    1 - Poor    0 - Missing

Overall Assessment	S	T
TED topic was interesting and audience appropriate		
Presentation TED talk was structured with introduction, body and conclusion		
Quotes from the talk were included		
Student gave an in-depth opinion		
Answered student questions effectively		

Physical delivery	S	T
Showed enthusiasm for the topic		
Made eye contact with everyone in the audience		
Had confident and communicative body language		
Used appropriate vocabulary		
Used gestures		

Vocal delivery	S	T
Appropriate volume		
Not too fast/slow		
Clear pronunciation		
Appropriate tone		
Pronounced word endings		

*Reproduced based on Eric Roth Compelling Conversation*

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