

Feasibility of CLIL in the elementary school in Japan

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English Started in Japan

- In Japan, English education is given a very high level of importance, as demonstrated by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science & Technology (MEXT)'s decision to implement English education from primary school level as of 2011.

Movements

- Implementation of *English activities* in grades 5 & 6 in 2011 (once a week)
- Implementation of *English as a subject* in grades 5 & 6 in 2020 (twice a week)
- Implementation of *English activities* in grades 3 & 4 in 2020

The overall objective of the current *English activities* and CLIL

- “To form the foundation of pupils’ communication ability through foreign language” (MEXT)
- CLIL application in English activities fostered a positive attitude in class, motivating study of the target language (Gonzalez, 2011)

CLIL is prevalent, but differs from CBI

- CLIL became popular in Europe in the context of EC white paper (1995).
- ‘1+2 policy’, that is for EU citizens to have competence in their mother tongue plus two Community foreign languages.
- “ ... but it may be a second language or some form of heritage or community language’ (Coyle, 2010)

Two types of CLIL

- *Strong version*: a whole subject from the curriculum be taught and assessed in the FL (English). English as a lingua franca (Graddol, 2006)
- *Weak version*: a relatively small part of a subject is taught in the FL, often in collaboration with a language teacher. (Baker, 2006)

Strong version

- With “Booklet” includes the necessary math vocabs, “Language support” (grammar book), and “Worksheet” which includes activities, Neus Gau (Spain) grade 5 students have been very positive in learning geometry. According to Pitarch (2014:66), “This implies that affection with students is a feature to consider CLIL... not influence negatively in the process of learning math wherears it is very positive in the acquisition of foreign langauge.”

An experiment

- Background
- Pupils (4th graders) haven't started English language learning yet, but the homeroom teacher(my co-researcher) thought it a nice opportunity to let pupils experience different language and culture. He convinced that they do welcome English native speaker's class.

How do pupils respond?

- 2015 12.11 (Fri) 3rd and 4th period.
- At S elementary school in Osaka.
- Class: “Life and people in the US” (30 min) plus Q&A (15 min) at two classes of Grade 4 by Prof. Hubert, my colleague.
- With appropriate assistance through Japanese whenever we think necessary, which might facilitate their understanding of the ideas.

Questionnaires

- Consisted of 15 items. The homeroom teacher and I made them, after extensive literature review.
- Answers: yes/no
- Post test administered within a week.

Objectives of an elementary CLIL class

- To provide the pupils with opportunities to become familiar with the aforementioned vocabulary by learning the content within their age-appropriate intellectual interest.
- To foster the pupil's positive attitude toward communication by providing them with opportunities to use English as a medium of learning.

Objectives of an elementary CLIL class

- To encourage pupils' experiential learning using cognitive skills, not only to comprehend and memorize the target vocabulary, but also to apply these skills to produce several products.
- To encourage the pupils to understand language and culture by learning about international matters in English.

Introducing CLIL at elementary schools

- *Yamano* (2013) conducted three 45 minutes trial lessons for the 5th graders, dealing with Science and Arts and crafts focusing on animals (1st; individual work to make animals, 2nd; group work to make the class zoo, 3rd; a class discussion about the ideas to help animals).
- She incorporated 4Cs (content, communication, cognition, and community) in her lessons, though the cognition contained only LOTS; memorizing, understanding, and applying.
- Elementary school teachers has a variety of subject knowledge. They can “teach” what they like in English to make it more fun for the learners. (*Yamano, 2013*)

Introducing CLIL at elementary schools

- *Nigo* (2013) conducted three 45 minutes trial lessons for the 6th graders, dealing with Math (1st; adding and subtracting numbers, 2nd; numbers up to 100, 3rd; employing multiplication table), using various cards, songs, and quizzes. He reported nearly 100% of pupils could catch and tell the sound of 1-100 in English, and more than 90% of them could deal with multiplication in English. That greatly helped those who “used to hate” math.

Introducing CLIL at elementary schools

- By teaching some portion of social studies such as asking pupils, “Which is higher, Mt. Fuji or Mt. Aso,” they think, check, getting to the answer. (Yoshida, 2015)

Feasibility at elementary school

- CLIL can foster mainly lower order thinking skills (i.e. remembering, understanding...) if teachers have a good command of English, enough knowledge in the target subject (content) , and have time to prepare.
- The class can be fun. The employment of CLIL may facilitate learning. Teacher can encourage pupils to search relating knowledge using Internet, ask quizzes, make stories (with pictures) in English.

Feasibility in middle school or higher

- Lack of proper English language skill for subject teacher (Why not in L1?)
- Lack of sufficient English language skills for English teacher to communicate with students (This causes the conventional grammar-translation methodology to survive)
- Lack of enough prep-time for teachers to offer CIIL classes.

Challenges

- MEXT (2016.3) announced that securing two English classes in grades 5 & 6 turned out to be difficult.
- Educational budget hit the lowest. (3.5 % per GDP) in 2015. (Norway, 6.5%, U.S., South Korea, 4.7%)

Conclusion

- Educators should understand that CLIL can be incorporated into elementary English education if it facilitates learning (music, art, PE other than core subjects).
- Policy makers should understand the importance of the role of education and make more efforts for funding education.
- MEXT should review the pre-service and the in-service teacher training for English teachers based on a wide spectrum of discussions and research.

I need your perspectives!

- Is the introduction of CLIL effective in secondary, college level to foster HOTS?
(analyzing, evaluating, creating)
- Has early English education successful in your country? Why / why not?

Thank you for your attention!

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