

What If Language Actually Mattered in ‘Global’ Higher Education? From LSP to CLIL: The Case of the APM Program in SILS

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Abstract

This short article addresses the issue of non-English linguistic education in higher education in English-mediated international programs in non-English speaking countries, and argue for the necessity of strengthening plurilingual education in the curricula of such programs. Against the backdrop of the spread of English Medium Instruction (EMI) in Japanese universities over the past 20 years, and the development of so-called ‘global education’ to nurture ‘global citizenship’, we argue that non-English language courses can benefit from the shift of interest from ‘globalization’ to ‘glocalization’, especially if Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is used as a key to shed light on the limits of ‘global’ English and the fallacy of ‘global’ translations. At the same time, we emphasize the importance for language educators of an awareness of the historical methodological continuity between the pedagogy of Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) and CLIL, and briefly explain how such an approach has been implemented in the Area studies and Plurilingual-Multicultural (APM) education program in the School of International Liberal Studies (SILS) in Waseda University (Tokyo, Japan), as part of its internationalization strategy on the educational level.

I. Introduction¹ : CLIL, marketing or innovation?

Looking at the Japanese pedagogical landscape in the field of language education in higher education, it is probably not an exaggeration to say that, apart from technology-driven innovation in the area of Computer-assisted (CALL) or Mobile-assisted (MALL) language learning (Stockwell 2022), Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is the only 'innovative' approach that has become increasingly popular over the past ten years across Japan, giving birth to dedicated associations such as the Japan CLIL Pedagogy Association (founded in 2017) (Coyle, Hood & Marsh 2010; Ball, Kelly & Clegg 2015; Nikula, Dafouz, Moore & Smit 2016; Llinares & Morton 2017; Hemmi & Banegas 2021). CLIL has become a trendy theme in language education-related conferences (e.g., "Change in Japanese Education: Implementing Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in Japan" was the theme of the 2019 *Asian Conference on Language Learning* (ACLL2019) held in Tokyo), and it is described as such by some of their Keynote Speakers (Ball 2019²):

"CLIL arose in the mid' 1990s as a support mechanism for subject teachers and their learners working in a language other than their mother tongues, a fact which immediately marked it as a movement independent of standard language teaching practice but nevertheless dependent on much of the methodological canon that ELT had developed up to that point. CLIL borrowed from the world of language education and yet its principal objective was not to teach language but rather to make use of it. [...] Language teachers, who in the past were often independent but isolated in their schools are now more interdependent in their roles as language consultants and helpers. In an interesting counterpoint to the 1990s, when subject teachers were exhorted to borrow from language-teaching practice, now language teachers are paying more attention to the very different world of subject teaching, with its own set of methods and its varied discourse fields."

¹ I would like to thank Professor Adrian Pinnington for his help with the final version of this manuscript.

² Online abstract of the Keynote presentation at ACLL2019: <https://acll.iafor.org/acll2019/#programme>

Over the past few years, online communities and websites dedicated to language teachers' training in CLIL have mushroomed on the internet, with catchphrases such as “Practical tips and tricks for every CLIL teacher” or “How to prepare your CLIL lesson in 15 minutes”. Rooted in the work of the Council of Europe (Marsh 2002), the CLIL concept has been strongly associated with European languages from the start: *Enseignement d'une Matière Intégré à une Langue Etrangère* or *EMILE* in French, *Aprendizaje Integrado de Contenidos y Lenguas Extranjeras* in Spanish, and four potential versions in German³ (*Fächerübergreifender Deutsch als Fremdsprache-Unterricht* (FüDaF), i.e., Interdisciplinary German as a Foreign Language teaching, *Bilingualer Sachfachunterricht auf Deutsch*, i.e., Bilingual subject teaching in German, *Deutschsprachige (Teil-)Immersionsprogramme*, i.e., German-language (partial) immersion programs, or *Sprachsensibler deutschsprachiger Fachunterricht* (DFU), i.e., Language-sensitive German-language subject teaching). In Japanese, the term 内容言語統合型学習 is used (*naiyō* (content) *gengo* (language) *tōgō-gata* (integrated) *gakushū* (learning)).

Looking at the definition put forward by Ball (2019, cited above) however, one cannot help wondering how truly innovative the CLIL approach is. Language educators and Second Language Acquisition (SLA) specialists well-versed in the history of teaching methodologies (Kelly 1969; McLelland & Smith 2018, 2020) – from the pioneering work of Jan Amos Comenius (1592-1670) to the Grammar-Translation method, the Direct method, the Audio-Oral (structural) method, the Audio-Visual method (especially the Audio-Visual Structuro-Global, or SGAV method), Communicative Approaches (CA) and the more recent Action-Oriented perspective in line with the recommendations of the CEFR (Council of Europe 2001, 2018; Piccardo & North 2019) – have learned to become weary of ‘innovation’ in language pedagogy, and those who were involved in other approaches that have been labeled as ‘innovative’ in the past, such as Community Language Learning, Suggestopedia, the Total Physical Response, Silent Way or the Natural Approach, will probably feel the same. In reality, the latest mainstream approach, i.e., the Action-Oriented perspective, is intrinsically linked to Task-based pedagogy (or Task-based language teaching (TBLT), Ellis 2003;

³ Many thanks to my colleague, Prof. Joachim Sharloth.

Nunan 2004), which itself is considered part of the CA, and relates to Problem-based learning, Content-based instruction (CBI) and, *ultimately*, CLIL. Some older teachers may remember that Project-oriented and Task-based pedagogy was already in place in certain classrooms in Europe some 20 years ago. More importantly, since Task-based pedagogy and CLIL seem to be strongly related, in the wake of the CA guiding principles (Tardieu & Doltisky 2012), both should rely on one of the key notions of the CA, namely learners' "needs' analysis", which, in turn, leads us to the history of the development of the pedagogy of Language for Specific Purposes (LSP).

II. LSP: a long history, including LAP

LSP pedagogy has often been described as the ultimate stage of CA development (learner-centered needs' analysis, data collection with authentic material, task-oriented ad hoc program, limited time constraints). LSP itself, which must not be confused with (domain-)Specific/Specialty Languages (SL), such as 'Business English', 'Legal English' or 'Medical English', embodies the most accomplished outcome of the history of language education for specific learners after the Second World War. In the case of French, for instance, four historical stages are usually mentioned in the development of LSP pedagogy: 1) *Instrumental French* in the 1960s (essentially in Latin America, designed to read technical and medical texts written in French); 2) *Functional French* in the 1970s, linked to the development of functional linguistics and pragmatics, with the key notion of the "speech act" and the publication of the *Threshold Level* in 1975 (somehow the ancestor of the CEFR) by van Ek, the adoption of notional-functional syllabi (Wilkins 1976), and the reliance on learners' needs (although the term "functional" itself was often criticized); 3) *French for Specific Purposes* in the 1980s-1990s (often for learners with a high level of professional qualification); 4) *Professional French* in the 2000s (often for learners with a lower level of professional qualification). This explains why Mangiante and Parpette (2004: 155-157) describe LSP as the ultimate development of CA, since: 1) its programs are based on explicit and specific learners' communicative needs (in professional or academic fields); 2) it aims at developing communicative competence beyond basic linguistic bricks (e.g., to

argue, or present a project, using socioculturally marked morphosyntax rather than simple lexical correspondences); 3) it includes cultural features (e.g., fields such as law, health or hospitality are heavily influenced by culture, as opposed to hard sciences); 4) it uses “authentic discourse” (since language teachers cannot “imagine” specialized texts or discourse, they must rely on authentic data); 5) it refers to language management in terms of linguistic skills (in relation to specific needs, purposes and time constraints); 6) it requires a high level of in-class peer interactions (since students are usually more knowledgeable than teachers in their fields and since time is limited). Therefore, it seems difficult to engage in CLIL education without a solid understanding of its roots in the history of LSP, especially its LAP (Language for *Academic Purposes*) branch, since CLIL usually has to do with *academic* content.

LAP has a rich history, with a strong focus on academic discourse analysis (rather than simple lists of technical words) and task-related problem-solving activities for arts and humanities, business and economics, law, education, or social sciences. In hard science and technologies (e.g., applied biology or applied physics), we can see that there was already a link between vocational, professional, and academic purposes in the 1960s, as is demonstrated in textbooks such as the “Preparatory Technical English” (Pittman, 1960: 7-8):

“This book is intended for the use of apprentices and students who are desirous of improving their comprehension of technical literature written in English and their expression in English of their ideas in technical matters. [...] The apprentice who is learning both his trade and the English language at the same time is confused by three levels of English: 1. The language he hears by day in the workshop (“Rev it up”, “Put it out”, “Set it down” type) with its everyday monosyllabic words. 2. The level represented by the technical terms themselves and his comprehension of them, e.g., “shaft”, “lubricant”, “valve”, “alternating current”, “rafter”. 3. The formal or “elevated” or “literary” language used in his textbooks, his notes of lectures, and sometimes by his instructor: “accelerate”, “extinguish”, “deposit”, “function”, “process”, “dimension”. [...] In this book an attempt is made to link the first and the third levels”

Looking at this textbook through the lens of modern-day pedagogy, it seems to contain descriptive discourse (“What are the uses of a tin-opener?”, p. 137), structural grammatical paradigms (“Your hand can hold things. Holding is a function of your hand. Your hand can twist things. Twisting is a function of your hand. [...]”, p. 138), direct method / total physical response type activities (“Hold your left hand out, palm downwards. Hold it horizontal”, p. 141), and, more importantly for us, exercises which seem to relate to both language and content acquisition (pp. 142-143): “2. What is the difference between these words, taken horizontally in groups of three (differences may be shown by sentences or actions): tap, knock, hammer [...]” and “5. What are the effects of: (a) over-winding a watch? (b) over-inflating tires? [...]”. When looking for similar content on *YouTube*, 60 years later in 2020, we discover several videos illustrating how a CLIL approach is used in primary schools and vocational colleges (e.g., to learn how to build electronic circuits and to use bipolar junction transistors in the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology)⁴ as part of the EU-funded Lifelong learning program CLIL4U project (CLIL implementation with pools of resources for teachers, students and pupils). We can wonder, then, what progress has actually been made between 1960 and 2020 apart from the medium (textbook vs multimedia presentation). Part of the answer lies in the development of professional knowledge and educational methodology in LSP, such as the creation of frameworks of reference for professional skills, which establish sets of standards, guidelines and required specifications for trades and skills. Three types of framework can be distinguished (Mangiante 2007): (i) Trade/activity-focused framework of reference (job description), (ii) Skill-focused framework of reference (all necessary skills for the job), and (iii) Training-focused framework of reference (all skills or meta-skills to be acquired to be ready to start the job). These, in turn, reveal the necessary linguistic skills which must be associated with each professional skill.

Should we assume that the learning issues are the same for university students in areas such as political economy or international relations? From the viewpoint of LAP pedagogy, the answer is “yes”, to a certain extent. However, LSP (single focus: content-related linguistic acquisition) and CLIL

⁴ Last accessed (17/10/2022): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dFuCrXRobh0>

(double focus: linguistic *and* content acquisition) must still be distinguished, given the impact that CLIL pedagogy may have on the relationship between linguistic educators and non-linguistic educators. As Morton and Llinares put it (2017: 13): “CLIL has already shown itself to be a catalyst in the ways in which it can bring content educators to a greater understanding of the roles of language and literacy in *all* learning and teaching”. In other words, while the impact of *content* on language learning, through CBI for example, has been well established (Brinton, Snow & Wesche 1989), CLIL has brought to light the possibility that *language* may have an impact on content learning, at least in some disciplines. To further examine this possibility, it is important to study it in a clearly contrastive context, for instance when it is embedded in an international, pluridisciplinary curriculum, beyond the now-classic monolingual LSP/LAP (often English) settings, not only for language acquisition (in a plurilingual dynamics), but also for content acquisition (e.g., in a Liberal Arts context).

III. Plurilingualism in higher education for linguistic acquisition

One of the remarkable features of the development of language policy and planning in educational institutions in Asia over the past 20 years (Miyazaki & Iino 2022) has been the unstoppable development of EMI and English-based programs. In Japan, this linguistic dimension has often been associated with a broader educational goal linked to globalization, i.e., nurturing ‘global citizens’ and ‘global leaders’, capable of steering the political and socioeconomic future of Japan through the ‘globalized world’ of the twenty-first century. The School of International Liberal Studies (SILS) in Waseda University is certainly one of its most advanced representatives in the archipelago in terms of linguistic governance (Detey 2022), since it quickly stepped up its “Global English” approach to a more advanced “Global English + Glocal Plurilingual-Multicultural” educational policy. Aiming at a higher degree of mutual understanding among students and familiarity with academic environments from different parts of the world, it has striven to set up and run dedicated programs such as AIMS (*ASEAN International Mobility for Students*) through partnerships for study-abroad and joint seminars using

English and local languages in Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines, and Brunei, and APM (*Area studies and Plurilingual-Multicultural education*) with four dedicated full-time CLIL teaching positions offering academic courses both in English and in another language, namely Chinese, French, Korean and Spanish (cf. articles by Zuo, Mellet, Bae and De Diego, in this volume, as well as Mellet & Detey 2021). By doing so, it put into institutional practice some of the principles of the Vienna Manifesto (Conference on the Cost of Multilingualism, under the patronage of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, 2001) for a sustainable plurilingual education in Europe:

“a) Only if Europe’s linguistic diversity is preserved and promoted will the project of European integration succeed. On the one hand, it is impossible to make foreign language skills a prerequisite for exercising democratic rights. On the other hand, mutual understanding is indispensable for living together. b) There is no contradiction between using a lingua franca (predominantly English) in some spheres of work and actively practising multilingualism in other areas. Very often the cost of multilingualism is overestimated. c) It is a sine qua non for building a European identity to assure citizens that their mother tongues will form part of it. In some cases understanding will not be possible without a lingua franca (e.g. English) but European communication processes should not rely exclusively on it. The introduction of a “leading” European language would mean to favour the native speakers of this “single language” politically and economically. This fact would result in political conflicts with unforeseeable consequences. Many cultural achievements of Europe are closely linked to the achievements of specific languages and intellectual traditions. If these languages and achievements are no longer used, this would mean a depletion and loss of Europe’s cultural diversity. To stop practising multilingualism would have serious consequences: necessary investments would no longer be made into these languages, important skills and knowledge (e.g., in the area of translation) would be lost and valuable intellectual heritage would become inaccessible.”

These principles are now highly valued in Europe, and Doiz, Lasagabaster and Sierra illustrate how they are executed in universities that value internationalization (2013: 96):

“As a result of the internationalization process, universities are more multilingual than ever before. This is especially so in bilingual universities such as the UBC [University of the Basque Country] in Spain, where, besides the presence of the two official languages (Basque and Spanish) in all the different degrees, the utilization of EMI is on the increase as a result of the implementation of the MP [Multilingualism Programme]. This situation at universities in a multilingual national context can be seen across Europe: Fribourg (Switzerland), where French, German and English are languages of instruction; Bolzano (Italy) with programmes in Italian, German and English; Luxemburg (German, French and English); Frankfurt an der Oder (German, Polish and English); or Helsinki (Finnish, Swedish and English).”

These programs reflect the capacity of universities as actors of linguistic governance and providers of linguistic education to overcome the sometimes exaggerated “cost of multilingualism” and adequately tackle the reality of global linguistic diversity. The social value of implementing some form of plurilingual education for a successful globalization and glocalization (Robertson 1994) in different areas of scholarly, political and entrepreneurial investment is now increasingly perceptible, including in Japan, and more particularly in Tokyo (Kim & Detey 2021).

As can be expected, some observers may contend that the emphasis set on the value of plurilingual education by its promoters remains biased and may seem pointless at times, especially in contexts where linguistic homogeneity seems to prevail, as in Japan. Yet, even if we overlook the underlying linguistic diversity of Japan (Maher 2022), and even if internationalization seems to be still overwhelmingly attached to English as a Lingua Franca, plurilingual education for global sociolinguistic education, as a prerequisite for mutual understanding (agreeing/disagreeing on the same object or *content*), has a strong educational function in itself that goes beyond the acquisition of a foreign language.

Plurilingual sociolinguistic education, in our perspective, can be envisaged in four ways: (i) within a general context, the acquisition of know-how regarding context-embedded sociocultural nuances or socio-historically-rooted notions that cannot be easily translated (e.g., “*otsukaresama*” in

Japanese, “*laïcité*” in French or “*Bildung*” in German); (ii) within the context of liberal arts programs, training to (a) properly understand and manipulate notions used in different disciplines and areas (e.g., business vs marketing vs psychology vs international relations vs history vs cultural studies) and (b) run comparative studies, in which sociolinguistic usage matters and English translation is not satisfactory; (iii) within the context of study-abroad, training to handle situations where different academic cultures encompass different linguistic uses, even within “the same language”; (iv) more specifically within the context of study-abroad in English-speaking programs in Asia for Asian students, training to handle not only different academic cultures with different academic usage and varieties of English, but also potential similarities within an Asian context (cf. the purpose of the AIMS program). As Barron & Schneider remind us (2009: 425):

“Speakers who share the same native language do not necessarily share the same culture. For instance, native speakers of English in Ireland and the United States use language in different ways [...]. Neither do Americans in the US all use English in the same way [...]. On the other hand, cultures may be shared by speakers with different native languages. Thus, as language use in interaction is shaped by cultural values, pragmatic similarities may occur across languages, while pragmatic differences may occur across varieties of the same language”.

In that sense, we can consider that third language (L3) sociolinguistic education in an Asian EMI Liberal Arts context sheds light on the connection between L3 education and CLIL via CBI, by drawing a meaningful chain of connections between languages, academic content and social reality. If educators are truly concerned about helping their students improve their capacity for mutual understanding and enhance their experience of ‘authenticity’, they should confront one of the key questions set forth in this article: can the acquisition of academic content be affected by the language in which it is taught?

IV. Plurilingualism in higher education for content acquisition

Although certain fundamental issues remain unsolved (How are language and thought interrelated? To what extent are linguistic relativism and the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis really relevant to our everyday life (McWhorter 2014)? Is knowledge really affected by the language in which it has been molded?), cognitive psychologists (e.g., Geipel, Hadjichristis & Surian 2016) have shown that judgment can be affected by the language in which they are made. As Hayakawa, Costa, Foucart and Keysar present it (2016: 791):

“A growing literature demonstrates that using a foreign language affects choice. This is surprising because if people understand their options, choice should be language independent. Here, we review the impact of using a foreign language on risk, inference, and morality, and discuss potential explanations, including reduced emotion, psychological distance, and increased deliberation”.

Since moral judgments and academic content acquisition are two different sets of cognitive operations, it would be hazardous to hastily extrapolate from one to the other. Furthermore, the impact of language on academic content acquisition may vary according to the discipline involved: ‘hard’ sciences, SHS and general cultural knowledge, including historical names and sociocultural references, cannot be treated in the exact same way. Nevertheless, most disciplines could potentially benefit from plurilingual education if it is used as a tool to develop critical thinking abilities through verbal work (e.g., looking at the same content through different phrasing, hence different viewpoints).

The potential benefits of bilingual education have been discussed at length in the relevant literature (Duverger 2009, Grosjean 2021), from cultural openness to employability. Yet, we also know that the plurilingual benefit is a complex (Grosjean 1989) and multifactorial phenomenon (e.g., Dahm & De Angelis 2018 about the connection between literacy in the mother tongue, socioeconomic status and the plurilingual benefit). The ‘plural’

can be 'better' than the 'singular' only when the 'singular' is not negatively affected by the 'plural', pointing to the necessity of balancing educational principles and contextual realities, and not ignoring individual differences, or more specifically, inter-individual *variation*.

V. Conclusion: a variationist perspective on students' linguistic repertoire

Since its emergence in the 1960s (e.g., Labov 1963), variationism, with the help of corpus linguistics (Durand 2009), has become, for certain linguists, a conceptual basis for examining the interplay between language and the social fabric of our linguistic systems, in an evolutionary perspective (Laks 2013: 49):

"Therefore, the main concept of Darwinism, that of the random generator of diversity, coupled with the tension between the uniqueness of a species, notably as measured by the faculty to combine two genomes in a non-sterile line of descendants (i.e. the species barrier) and the heterogeneity of the phenotypes, can be applied to the cultural and social systems which languages are: an extreme variability of forms and occurrences, nevertheless limited by the necessities of inter-comprehension and the marking of one's belonging to a same speech community".

In that sense, the importance of adding to one's linguistic repertoire to enable richer interactions with different sociolinguistic communities must not be disregarded. Despite the wonderful usefulness of 'global' lingua francas such as English, L3 education should remain an essential component of international higher education. Now, when it comes to combining the development of plurilingual skills with higher education in a CLIL perspective, the aim of educators should not only be about 'language' anymore. Instead, the goal of teachers should be to awaken students to the potential impact of 'language' on 'content', as well as the importance of being able to

handle uncertainty in international settings vis-à-vis specific tasks, objectives and informational material.

This can easily be supported by some famous instances when mistranslation led to serious diplomatic incidents or human disasters, whether it be the United Nations Security Council Resolution 242 (1967) about the “occupied territories” in the conflict between Israel and Palestine, or the interaction between the Japanese government and the Allied forces at the end of World War II (Torikai 2009). In reality, translation issues are probably the best – if not the only – way to properly assess the impact of language on all communication-related activities. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance that students confront themselves with such issues, beyond the psychological comfort – or discomfort – of ‘global’ English, in the same way as learning a completely new language is an essential component in any solid language teacher’s training program. Since nowadays words tend to be transposed carelessly from one sociolinguistic context to another, playing on lexical kinship and similarities (e.g., ‘race’ in English vs ‘*race*’ in French or ‘*Rasse*’ in German) with little regard for the non-linguistic sociohistorical context, linguistic education through CLIL plurilingual education seems to be more important than ever, for the sake of semantic accuracy and intellectual rigor. “A map is not the territory”, as A. Korzybski, a Polish engineer and founder of general semantics, put it in 1931⁵. A famous statement, the relevance of which is increasingly brought to light by the shortcomings of ‘global’ communication, decontextualized ‘global translations’, and, *in fine*, linguistic essentialization. In that sense, plurilingual-multicultural CLIL education in universities should be considered a necessary pathway to becoming ‘glocal’, i.e., being able to handle linguistic and content-related uncertainty in specific international contexts. Expanding one’s linguistic and epistemic repertoire while at the same time becoming aware of one’s weaknesses and limits in terms of international communication (and therefore education) seems to be a prerequisite in our contemporary ‘global’ world for students to avoid failing to grasp the nature

⁵ Korzybski, A. (1931/1933). Supplement III. A non-Aristotelian system and its necessity for rigor in mathematics and physics. Paper presented in 1931 at the American Mathematical Society at the New Orleans, Louisiana. Published in *Science and sanity: an introduction to non-Aristotelian systems and general semantics*. Lancaster: The international non-Aristotelian library publishing company, 747-761.

and cause of misunderstandings. The APM program in SILS was created with this rationale in mind: SILS students can study French-related and non-French-related academic content not only in English, but also in French, as is the case for the Chinese, Korean and Spanish components of the program. In doing so, the APM program offers its students a glimpse into the true meaning of the word “international”. *Et voilà*.

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