

Developing and Teaching a ‘Hospitality English’ Course

— A Case of Adopting a CLIL’s ‘4C’ Framework at a Junior College in Japan —

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Abstract

As Japan has recently seen a rapidly increasing number in inbound tourists, there is a growing need for staff in the hospitality industry to communicate effectively with foreign guests. This paper reports on the development and implementation of a ‘Hospitality English’ course at a Japanese junior college (lower years of university). Focusing on the integrated learning of language and content concerning the hospitality industry, the course is embedded in the theoretical framework of CLIL’s ‘4Cs’ (content, communication, cognition, and culture). This paper provides descriptions of the reflection points involved in each element, along with an analysis of learner needs and challenges associated with designing and teaching the course.

キーワード : CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) / Curriculum Design /
EFL (English as a Foreign Language)

Introduction

Japan’s recent increase in inbound tourists has prompted domestic hospitality industry sectors, such as food-and-beverage and lodging, to improve language services for foreign tourists; particularly so in the case of English and Chinese. Except major hotel chains which have accumulated their own know-how, many companies are engaging with this issue. They are making use of language training programs provided by inbound industry consultants or local government-affiliated associations and organisations. Even so, in reality most Japanese hospitality businesses remain stagnant with respect to improving language services. Among tertiary institutions in Japan, including universities, junior colleges, and professional training colleges, the number of schools that offer specific language courses particularly focusing on English for the hospitality industry—namely ‘Hospitality English’ or ‘English for Hospitality’—has been increasing in response to

societal fluctuations. However, English instructors at these kinds of institutions do not necessarily carry prior knowledge, experience, or expertise about the hospitality industry in general. For teachers, therefore, a framework for designing and teaching such ‘Hospitality English’ courses is necessary.

The author of this paper has developed and taught an English language course oriented toward the hospitality industry at his junior college. As the institution operates in accordance with Christianity, introducing the biblical perspective was required in designing the curriculum. Utilising this experience as a source, the author proposes a framework for designing a course on the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach. This paper will first present a definition of ‘Hospitality English’, in addition to validating the effectiveness of CLIL with respect to course design and delivery. It will then discuss specific challenges seen at Japan’s junior college level while developing and teaching the course. Lastly, the paper will report the author’s case of course development based on CLIL’s ‘4C’ framework for the appropriate lesson plans and teaching materials.

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I. Defining ‘Hospitality English’

Hospitality can be roughly categorised into two types: ‘traditional hospitality’ and ‘commercial hospitality’. Traditional or private hospitality refers to the act of kindness when receiving visiting relatives, friends, acquaintances, or when entertaining guests in one’s home. In those cases, payment for services rendered is not normally involved. On the other hand, commercial hospitality denotes the cluster of commercial activities pertaining to food and drink and/or accommodation with the intent of satisfying guests in exchange for payment.

Blue & Harun (2003) indicate that ‘hospitality language’ denotes all linguistic expressions related to concerns in social interaction. In the communication between host and guest, both verbal messages and non-verbal messages including eye contact and politeness are conveyed and exchanged (Blue & Harun, 2003). Blue & Harun furthermore point out that ‘[t]here is ample justification for hospitality language and intercultural communication in hospitality programmes’ (2003, p. 90) as issues in intercultural communication inevitably accompany hospitality language. Hence, ‘hospitality English’ in this paper primarily refers to English language activities or skills in the context of the hospitality industry. Secondly, ‘hospitality English’ also encompasses knowledge and understanding of the definition of hospitality, the industry’s structure, and

intercultural communication.

II. CLIL: Theoretical Basis for Designing a Course

In order to formulate a project specialising in the acquisition and understanding of linguistic skills and knowledge on hospitality, the author adopted the CLIL approach as a theoretical foundation. CLIL is ‘a dual-focused form of instruction where attention is given both to the language and the content’ (Coyle, Hood, & Marsh, 2010, p. 3). The following offers a more detailed description:

CLIL refers to situations where subjects, or parts of subjects, are taught through a foreign language with dual-focused aims, namely the learning of content, and the simultaneous learning of a foreign language.

(Marsh, 2002, p. 2)

CLIL has been adopted and increasingly implemented throughout the entire European Union (EU) since the mid 1990s under the former European Commission’s vision of ‘multilingual Europe,’ where all EU citizens were to become proficient in three European languages (Eurydice, 2006).

How does CLIL differ from other language teaching? In teaching theories regarding EFL/ESL, CLIL is categorised as a ‘communicative instruction’ approach, which is positioned between the ‘structure-based instruction’ and ‘natural acquisition’ approaches

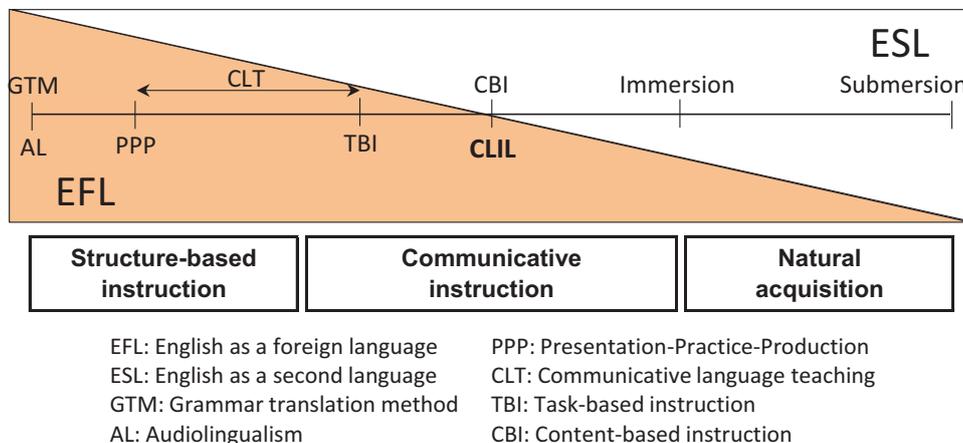


Figure 1 The Types of Language Teaching Approach
 (Adopted from Ikeda, 2011)

(see Figure 1). Similar to CLIL are the content-based instruction (CBI), developed in the United States, and Canadian immersion (English/French bilingual) programmes. CBI is the most similar approach to CLIL; both CBI and CLIL are content-based teaching, along with cross-curricular language teaching where common academic subjects are taught to non-native speakers in other languages. However, whilst CBI has been developed focusing on teaching a second language and gives content priority over linguistic aims, CLIL was developed for teaching a foreign language with intercultural context and divides attention between content and language equally. Thus, CLIL is an approach for using language to acquire the subject matter efficiently and at a deeper level. It also aims to develop learners' practical skills in using a foreign language (English) as a means of learning.

Derived in part from Mohan's (1986) knowledge framework, Coyle (1999) proposed what has come to be known as the '4C' framework; a robust methodology that links theories of learning, language learning, and intercultural understanding (see Figure 2). This framework forms an instrumental underpinning to CLIL teaching pedagogies. At its core, it focuses on the interplay between four constituent factors: *content*; *communication*; *cognition*; and *culture*. In doing so, it capitalises on the hitherto binary synergies that can be realised respectively from integrated learning (content and cognition), and

language learning (communication and culture) approaches.

Several authors have evidenced the strengths that the CLIL approach provides (Coyle, 2007; Ikeda, 2013; Koike, 2014). These include: promoting positive learning outlooks; developing target language acquisition; and general academic skill growth. The same authors have also noticed a marked improvement in reading proficiency and subject-matter mastery. Interestingly, students exposed to CLIL pedagogies also express a heightened interest to pursue further studies abroad or perhaps even career alternatives (Coleman, 2006).

Nevertheless, there is not necessarily a causal relationship between CLIL and successful learning outcomes by virtue of implementation alone. There is evidence to suggest that the approach can result in accuracy issues and is prone to develop receptive skills at the expense of productive skills (Dalton-Puffer, 2007). Further research has also identified in-class issues pertaining to both the reluctance to use the target language and reticence to engage in academic discussion on the part of students (Dalton-Puffer, 2007; Vollmer, 2008). To ensure maximum effectiveness, Coyle (2007) maintains that accountability must be emphasised and therefore faculty need to be provided with the appropriate tools to develop lesson plans that incorporate the necessary teaching materials.

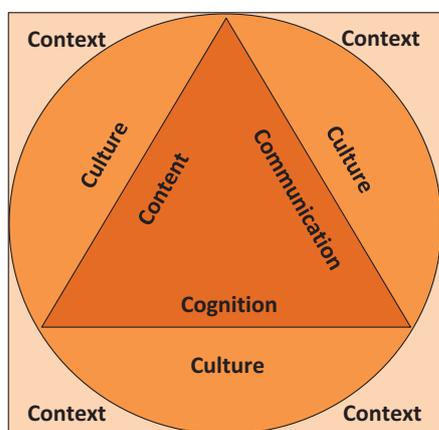


Figure 2 The '4C' Framework of CLIL (Coyle, Hood, & Marsh, 2010)

III. On Designing a Course: An Overview of the Context and Needs Analysis

1. Context of the Junior College and Author and Outline of the Course

The author belongs to the liberal arts department of a two-year university based on Christian education. 'Hospitality' is regarded as an integral concept, which is encapsulated by the university's diploma policy: 'Students can be thoughtful of others and respect their opinions to work together, utilising learning on *hospitality*'. The 'Hospitality English' course is designed for first year students' second semester, where students can build upon what they have learned

in the ‘Introduction to Christianity’ and ‘Christianity and Hospitality’ courses in the first semester. Many students simultaneously take the ‘Hotel and Bridal Services’ course with ‘Hospitality English’ so that they can deepen their knowledge and understanding of the hospitality industry. By virtue of the lecturers’ prior industry experience, students are able to take a field trip to a hotel and witness the inner workings of the hospitality industry first-hand.

Although the author of this paper does not have work experience in the hospitality industry, industry-specific books, articles, and professional connections with industry-insiders have been used to gain insight. In addition, valuable insights have been drawn from personal experience as a result of consuming these services.

The course outline to be designed and delivered was as follows:

- a) **Course:** The course would be for one semester (15 weeks). The class would meet once a week for 90 minutes. The students receive one credit hour upon the completion of the course and associated passing grade. The course would be intended mainly for first year students as an elective (non-general) course specialised for the ‘Foreign Languages and Intercultural Understanding’ major course that our ‘Community and Culture’ or Liberal Arts Department offers.
- b) **Course prerequisites:** There are no prerequisites to register for the course. However, students in the advanced English group (called ‘English

Course’, usually four to eight in number) must take this course.

- c) **Registered students:** The number of students who register for the course is expected to be approximately between eight and fifteen. Most of them would be either ‘Foreign Languages and Intercultural Understanding’ majors or ‘Tourism, Hotel, and Wedding Consultancy’ majors. There would be a few students from other majors (for example: Library Sciences; ‘Business Secretary Studies’; etcetera) and Hokuriku Gakuin University (four-year programme). Students can register for the course in their second year or above if they didn’t take in the first year. The students’ English level ranges from A1 to B1 from CEFR or 210-560 from TOEIC.

2. Learner and Local Hospitality Industry Needs Analysis

This course is designed for students who want to engage in the hospitality or tourism industry after graduating. After graduating, more than 90% of students find their jobs at companies including hotels in the local Hokuriku region (Ishikawa, Toyama, and Fukui prefectures). Additionally, the number of inbound tourists in Hokuriku region has been increasing. Ishikawa Prefecture, where the school is located, has seen foreign tourists (lodged in the city) grow to 293,956 in 2014, a 121.3% increase from the previous year. Since the Hokuriku Shinkansen (high-speed train system) opened in March 2015 with direct lines to Tokyo, the number of tourists including

Table 1 Three Learner Needs in ‘Hospitality English’

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- To have gained enough English proficiency to communicate in various settings with foreigners and conduct routine duties adequately in the field of commercial hospitality.
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- To have acquired enough knowledge on geography and cultural factors such as religions and food to communicate with guests and deal with intercultural issues.
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- To have acquired knowledge and a deepened understanding on the concept of hospitality and its associated operations; and to have acquired skills to access industry information sources and find information as required, which are often written in English.
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foreigners is expected to continue to increase greatly over the next few years. The local hospitality industry intends to expand employment rosters, seeking human resources with high English ability. Those who start working at local hotels right after graduating find themselves needing English skills daily, and the author has often heard them saying 'I wish I had studied English harder at school'.

Correspondingly, three learner needs are identified (see Table 1). The first refers to having gained enough English proficiency to communicate in various settings with foreign guests in the field of commercial hospitality. It is desirable that learners develop English proficiency sufficient to conduct routine duties adequately, memorising English terms commonly used in commercial hospitality.

The second requires that students should deepen their understanding of different cultures. Where Japanese employees speak English to guests it is presumably because the guests are foreigners and therefore the context becomes one of intercultural communication. As foreign tourists become more and more diversified, knowledge on various religions, food, and geography will be required. For the hospitality industry side, it is preferable that students have acquired it as preliminary knowledge prior to employment. Again, it should be kept in mind that English is used when the host communicates with guests on such cultural issues.

The third refers to the need for students to acquire knowledge and deepen the understanding on the concept of hospitality and its associated operations. Pre-existing knowledge and understanding of hospitality mentality and structure, as well as future industry developments, are necessary when they enter the job market. It is preferable to acquire skills to access industry information sources and find information as required, which are often written in English as it is rapidly becoming the world's second language in an increasingly globalised society. Some students the students may participate in various forms of professional development including seminars and conferences attended by industry employees,

managers, and administrators to provide the opportunity to exchange opinions or make speeches in the future. Understanding the language used in this specialised community will be essential in order to access such professional knowledge and information.

IV. Challenges of Course Design and Teaching 'Hospitality English'

1. Gap between Expected Target Students and Actual Students

The 'Community and Culture' or Liberal Arts Department of Hokuriku Gakuin Junior College adopts a 'cafeteria system', in which several kinds of major study fields are bound together and students are able to choose whatever courses interest them beyond their majors. This makes 'Hospitality English' only a recommended course, not a requirement to any students save those in the advanced English group. Consequently, even though the course targets students planning to engage in the hospitality industry or tourism industry, not all of the 'Tourism, Hotel, and Wedding Consultancy' majors take the course. Rather, a significant number of students avoid taking the course due to their poor English proficiency. The majority of registered students are those in the advanced English group, plus some who favour English. Those students are not necessarily interested in the hospitality industry, even though many of them hope to engage in English-related jobs. Thus, a gap exists between the expected target students and the actually-registered students.

This fact brings two major issues regarding programme design and delivery. Firstly is the weak motivation among the students: while the 'Hospitality English' course might fulfil the needs for students intending to enter the hospitality industry, some students find it difficult to perceive the value of the course beyond being a requirement. This appears to be particularly true of the students in the advanced English course. Attaining good grades could be a potential motivating factor for those who plan to transfer to the four-year university or learning different kinds of English may be internally motivating for

some. In reality, however, there are some students who perform poorly in class and do not appear to misunderstand the purpose of the course. Hence, the course designer needs to work on providing content interesting enough to motivate any kind of student.

The second issue pertains to differences in English ability: whereas the ‘Foreign Languages and Intercultural Understanding’ major students range from 310-560 in TOEIC, the ‘Tourism, Hotel, and Wedding Consultancy’ majors lay at the 210-430 level. Should the ‘Hospitality English’ course attach weight solely to English, the ‘Tourism, Hotel, and Wedding Consultancy’ majors would find the course less attractive. An even balance between language and content is therefore required when designing the course.

2. Pre-vocational Students

Students in junior colleges in Japan, normally ranging in ages from 18 to 20, are pre-vocational, and have limited knowledge and understanding of the hospitality industry unless they have part-time work experience at a hotel or restaurant. Although they usually have some experience from family or school trips, very few have taken proactive actions such as booking a hotel or a restaurant and finalising payment on their own. This means that students will learn about the commercial hospitality from the host side with limited guest experience. For example, the teacher needs to explain there are different kinds of cards—point cards, cash cards, debit cards, and credit cards—or different kinds of accommodations—hotel, inn, condominium, hostel, B&B and so on—in the class. Regarding restaurants or *ryotei* (high class Japanese restaurants), students need to learn basic meal etiquette, such as beginning with aperitifs and appetisers before progressing to mains and dessert. To address such lack of experience, an authentic environment with cooperation from the hospitality industry is needed; visiting a hotel or restaurant as foreign guests to experience the service in English for instance, as well as using video materials in class.

V. Adopting the ‘4C’ Framework: For Appropriate Lesson Plans and Teaching Materials

As Coleman (2006) indicates, implementing CLIL programs in tertiary institutions requires comprehensive resources, ranging from faculty to teaching resources. CLIL convenors require a range of flexible tools to apply CLIL techniques in class based on the ‘4C’ framework. Coyle (2007) states that the ‘4C’ framework potentially builds upon a number of key skills and cognitive development. These include greater content understanding and associated language usage, contextual interaction, and greater understanding of intercultural interactions. This is achieved by the effective use of language to promote learning whilst conveying how language itself can be appropriately utilised. Under this approach, students must engage in dialogue and debates while justifying and explaining themselves in language of increasing complexity as their mastery improves. It is important to note, however, that the language employed in these classes would differ from more ordinary language lessons. Table 2 shows the course aims and teaching objectives in ‘Hospitality English’ by category of the ‘4C’ framework.

1. Content

In the ‘4C’ framework, content is related to learning and thinking, i.e., *cognition*. Coyle sees content matter as one of the CLIL’s key principals:

Content matter is not only about acquiring knowledge and skills, it is about the learner creating their own knowledge and understanding and developing skills.

(Coyle, 2006, p.9)

Although CLIL focuses on personalised learning, acquiring knowledge and skills constitutes its ‘scaffold’. The ‘Hospitality English’ course is primarily composed from two major components. One is regarding the hospitality industry: knowledge and understanding what kind of jobs there are at a hotel or a restaurant and what they involve. The main textbook (*Everyday English for Hospitality Professionals* by

Table 2 Course Aims and Teaching Objectives for 'Hospitality English'

COURSE AIMS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To help learners understand the concept of <i>Hospitality</i> and its main features. • To help learners acquire the knowledge of the hospitality industry as well as the key vocabulary and phrases used there. 		
TEACHING OBJECTIVES (What I plan to teach)		
Content	Cognition	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What hospitality is. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Concept and features of hospitality: etymology, hospitality from the biblical perspective, the hospitality cycle, hospitality versus service ... • What the hospitality industry is. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Kinds of jobs and services • Hospitality language. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide learners with opportunities to remember, recall, and understand the key concepts and apply them. • Enable learners to explain ideas or concepts. • Encourage knowledge transfer about hospitality. • Vocabulary building, learning and use. • Independent research. 	
Communication		
Language of learning	Language for learning	Language through learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key vocabulary related to concepts of hospitality and commercial hospitality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answering teacher's and each other's questions: <i>I think ... is ...</i> • Classifying: <i>The difference between traditional and commercial hospitality is ...</i> • Comparing and contrasting: <i>Service is On the other hand, hospitality is ...</i> • Other: <i>How do you spell ...?</i> <i>What does ... mean?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinguish language needed to carry out activities. • Record, predict, and learn new words which arise from activities. • Incorporate new language patterns into learners' knowledge base.
Culture		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help learners become aware of and develop their own cultural knowledge. • Help learners become aware of the importance of respecting other cultures. • Have learners engaged in intercultural learning within the classroom and beyond. 		

Lawrence J. Zwier, 2007, Compass Publishing, Audio CD attached) describes various kinds of work in the commercial hospitality with illustrations, helping students understand by memorising the vocabularies and explanations in the textbook. The other refers to the whole concept of hospitality itself, including etymology, hospitality from the biblical perspective, the two forms of hospitality (traditional and commercial), the hospitality cycle, differences between hospitality and service, etcetera.

The course designer must analyse the learners' linguistic demands so that they can interpret the content by themselves. For this purpose, the author reviewed what students learned about hospitality in the previous semester in order to utilise it as a scaffold when asking questions in group discussion.

2. Cognition

Coyle (1999) also argues that thinking processes, or cognition, need to be analysed for learners' linguistic demands. The revised version of Bloom's Taxonomy (1956) by Anderson & Krathwohl (2001) shows six levels of intellectual behaviour important for learning: remembering; understanding; applying; analysing; evaluating; and creating (see Figure 3). In order for learners to move on to higher order thinking skills and be able to formulate new products or opinions of their own, the foundation needs to be developed. Thus, the author focused on the two lower order thinking skills: remembering and understanding.

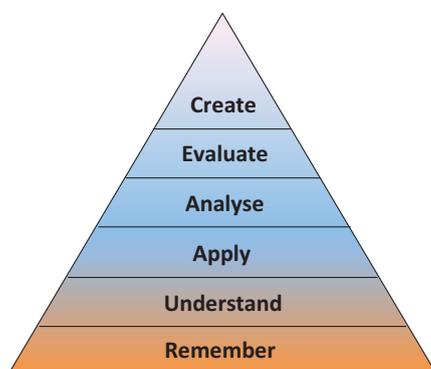


Figure 3 Bloom's Taxonomy (revised)
(Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001)

The remembering stage is where the student can recall or remember the information. The course designer needs to set some kinds of devices, such as quizzes or activities, for the learners. Tasks include: memorising; listing; recalling; repeating; defining concepts; and state reproduction. In class, the author normally reviews the key concepts and terms of hospitality over and over throughout the semester so that the students can gradually understand and explain ideas or concepts to move to the upper stage: understanding. Here, the teacher is required to utilise student language activities through discussion and Q&A, in order for them to classify, describe, identify, explain, paraphrase, translate, and discuss, using the knowledge of what they have learned.

3. Communication

In the '4C' framework, language and communication are used interchangeably. Figure 4 shows the Language Triptych, which interrelates three perspectives of language: language *of* learning, language *for* learning, and language *through* learning. This triumvirate has been developed to allow for language learning whilst simultaneously conveying cognitively challenging material (Coyle, 2000).

'Language of learning' refers to the terms and patterns students encounter whilst assimilating course content. This includes essential vocabulary and phrases used in the hospitality industry. For example, there is a cluster of language skills regarding staff dealing with

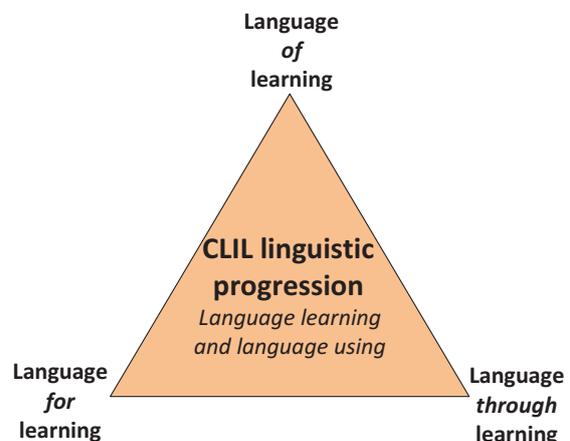


Figure 4 The Language Triptych
(Coyle, Hood, & Marsh, 2010)

hotel guests: how to address a person; how to elicit and give the necessary information; how to respond to questions/requests, how to use prompts, how to use gestures, and so on. Convenors also must remain conscious of the linguistic challenges presented by the subject or content; not only the grammatical demands but also functions and notions (e.g. the language of discussing, defining, explaining, hypothesizing, and analysing).

'Language for learning' refers to the type of language students need to acquire new knowledge when presented with material in a language not native to them. It is linked to the language students will need during class to carry out the planned activities, such as pair work, group discussion, writing a report, and project work. For example, the author often provides Q&A in the classes: what types of jobs are there in hotels?; Can you describe the difference between hotel, motel, and inn?; etcetera. In the first few classes, the author allows learners to use the mother tongue as a scaffold when answering questions, then has them translate into English using a sheet on which sample expressions are written. As students practise their new language and recycle familiar language, they become able to carry out their tasks without reading from a sheet by the end of the course.

'Language through learning' refers to new language which will emerge through learning. New learning cannot take place without active involvement of language and thinking. To facilitate this, the author assigns a variety of projects (e.g. making a video of original conversation between a hotel receptionist and a guest) during the course to promote the sharing of student understanding. This consequently leads to new learning. The greatest issue for teaching faculty refers to how the new language patterns can be incorporated into students' repertoire to the point where it becomes second nature.

4. Culture

Coyle, Hood, & Marsh (2010) argue that language, thinking, and culture are constructed through interaction. To facilitate greater understanding,

students must be exposed to a range of differing cultures in various contexts. Beginning with a greater awareness of one's own culture, intercultural dialogue is where students focus on knowledge about different cultures. However, in the context of CLIL, developing learners' cultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes in interactive settings should be embraced. The course designer needs to have the students engaged in interactive learning within the classroom and beyond. The author has invited foreign guests (internship students and volunteers) to the classroom a few times for roleplaying practice and discussion on the similarities and differences of traditional hospitality in different cultures. To deliver the CLIL approach effectively, the classroom must embrace an intercultural ideology.

Conclusion

This paper presented the case of developing the 'Hospitality English' course applying CLIL's '4C' framework, raising challenges of teaching at a Japanese Junior College. CLIL is effective for learners to develop academic knowledge and skills as well as language skills. Even when students are not interested in the content regarding the hospitality industry, CLIL can motivate them through development of appropriate language knowledge and skills or acquisition of a deepening intercultural awareness.

Matsumoto (2014) points out that successful CLIL should be developed as a curriculum system aiming at understanding the content and improving the language skills simultaneously in the context of Japan where English is not a second but a foreign language and seldom used in daily life. If not, neither would be achieved. To avoid this, establishment and evaluation of targets should be implemented into CLIL as a standardised process of language teaching. Therefore, the author plans to introduce an evaluation rubric to evaluate results for further research.

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