

Adapting a Grammar-focused Textbook from a CLIL Perspective

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Abstract

This paper aims to provide suggestions on how to adapt *Vision Quest*, a grammar-focused textbook used in many Japanese senior high schools (Nomura et al., 2016). The textbook was adapted based on the principles of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), which is a teaching approach that aims at enhancing learners' content/language knowledge through an integration of content, communication, cognition, and culture. The paper provides a detailed description of the lesson procedures as well as the rationale for developing the materials. The lessons aimed at establishing a learning environment where students acquire content/language knowledge and communication skills in a meaningful and contextualized way.

Introduction

Due to the globalizing society, there is an extensive need for students to communicate effectively in English to become “thinkers, problem solvers, collaborators, wise consumers of information, and confident producers of knowledge” (Tomlinson, 2015, p.203). Despite the governmental policies that aim at nurturing students' communication skills, many Japanese schools use textbooks that mainly focus on explicit grammar explanation and exercises (Yoshida, 2013). Taking such issues into consideration, the paper seeks to adapt a frequently used textbook titled *Vision Quest* (Nomura et al., 2016) from a CLIL perspective.

Literature Review

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)

CLIL is a teaching approach that integrates the 4Cs: “content (subject matter), communication (language learning and using), cognition (learning and thinking processes), and culture (developing intercultural and global citizenship)” (Coyle, Hood, & Marsh, 2010, p.41). It enhances “authenticity of purpose” so that learners acquire necessary knowledge and skills and to use their cognitive skills in a meaningful and motivating context (p.5). The CLIL lesson framework (see Figure 1) designed by Ikeda (2016) can be used to plan CLIL lessons. It consists of two components for each of the 4Cs: Content (declarative and procedural knowledge); Communication (language knowledge and language skills); Cognition (lower-order thinking skills and higher-order thinking skills); and Culture (cooperative learning and global awareness).

Content (内容)	Communication (言語)	Cognition (思考)	Culture (協学)
Declarative knowledge (宣言的知識)	Language knowledge (言語知識)	Lower-order thinking skills (低次思考力)	Cooperative learning (協同学習)
Procedural knowledge (手続的知識)	Language skills (言語技能)	Higher-order thinking skills (高次思考力)	Global awareness (国際意識)

Figure 1. The CLIL lesson framework (Ikeda, 2016, p.17)

Background and Motivation

The grammar-focused textbook adapted in this paper is *Revised Vision Quest English Expression I Advanced* (Nomura et al., 2016). It is a MEXT-authorized textbook for English Expression that has the highest share (31.1%) in Tokyo (Tokyo Metropolitan, 2017). Although there are some output tasks, it mainly consists of grammar rules and mechanical exercises. Drawing upon my personal experience of having difficulty in using *Vision Quest* in a communicative way, I became motivated to provide suggestions on how to adapt the textbook.

Lesson Plan

Five 45-minute lessons were designed to teach Lesson 11, the eleventh unit in the textbook. It focuses on teaching comparatives, superlatives, and positive degrees. The target students are first year senior high school students. The language objective is to introduce and use the target forms in a meaningful context. The content objective is to introduce and think about topics related to movies, the Bechdel test (i.e. a criteria used to investigate gender portrayal in films), and social issues. It also aims to incorporate cooperative learning and global awareness for real-life communication.

CLIL Lesson Framework

Content	Communication	Cognition	Culture
Declarative knowledge -Info. about movies -Quotes in movies -The Bechdel Test	Language knowledge -Comparatives -Superlatives -Positive Degrees	LOTS -Remembering -Understanding -Applying	Cooperative learning -Pair/group work -Class Discussion -Scaffolding

Procedural knowledge	Language skills	HOTS	Global awareness
-Expressing opinions -Creating original quotes -Comparing graphs	-Reading -Writing -Listening -Speaking	-Analyzing -Evaluating -Creating	-Social issues in films -Comparing different films worldwide

Lesson 1

Procedure	Description
1. Brainstorming Activity [group work/5 min.]	The teacher (T hereafter): “Last week, I saw 8 movies! I like watching movies very much. Do you like movies, too? I want to find the next one to watch. Can you help me? Please brainstorm titles of as many movies as possible.” Students (Ss hereafter) brainstorm in groups, sharing with the whole class afterwards.
2. Pair conversation [pair work/8 min.]	Ss talk in pairs for 5 min. about the topic: “OK, we came up with different movies, but what is <u>the best movie</u> that you have ever seen? Why?”
3. Oral Introduction [whole-class/5 min.]	T: “There are many stories that have both the book and movie versions. For example, “Harry Potter.” Who read the book AND watched the movie? Is the movie <u>as good as</u> the book? Is the movie <u>better than</u> the book? Is the book <u>better than</u> the movie? I have another question. Did the Harry Potter series get <u>better and better</u> ? Is the last movie <u>better than</u> the first one?”
4. Contextualized example sentences (Lesson 11-1) [whole-class/22 min.]	T modifies the example sentences in the textbook to introduce them in a context (see Appendix A). T asks Ss to guess the meaning of the sentences from the context.
5. Form-focused instruction [whole-class/5 min.]	T gives a form-focused instruction with sentences in the oral introduction: 1. The book version of Harry Potter is <u>as good as</u> the movie version. 2. What is <u>the best</u> movie that you have ever seen?
Homework [individual]	Ss write a 100-200 word English composition about the topic: “What is the best movie that you have ever seen? Why?”

Lesson 2

Procedure	Description
1. Brainstorming Activity [group work/3 min.]	T: “In movies, there are many actors. Today, let’s brainstorm as many actors as possible.” Ss in groups, sharing with the class afterwards.
2. Pair conversation [pair work/5 min.]	Ss talk in pairs about the topic: “Which do you like, Japanese movies or foreign movies? Why?”

3. Practice 1 [group work/20 min.]	Ss work in groups to answer grammar exercises in Practice 1. T provides support whenever necessary.
4. Famous quotes [whole-class/17 min.]	T introduces famous quotes, which employ comparatives/positive degrees. Quote #1: We are only as <u>strong</u> as we are <u>united</u> , as <u>weak</u> as we are <u>divided</u> . -Albus Dumbledore in Harry Potter (J.K. Rowling) Quote #2: Everything is better when <u>we stick together</u> . (The Lego movie) Quote #3: There's nothing <u>stronger</u> than the heart of a <u>volunteer</u> . (Pearl Harbor) Ss change the underlined words to create their original quotes.
Homework [individual]	Ss complete their original quotes to share with the class in the following lesson.

Lesson 3

Procedure	Description
1. Sharing original quotes [group work/5 min.]	Ss share their original quotes that they have created for homework in groups. T asks some Ss to share with the whole class afterwards.
2. Mini-debate [group work/8 min.]	Ss do a mini-debate on the topic: "Which is better, watching a movie at home or at the theater?" Ss cannot decide which side they will be on.
3. Oral-introduction [whole-class/5 min.]	T: "Since I was little, I have watched Harry Potter many times. I think it is <u>one of the best movies</u> in the world. <u>The more</u> I watched, <u>the better</u> I understood the story. I was also inspired by Hermione. I think she is <u>the most intelligent characters</u> in the movie. <u>No other character is as intelligent as</u> Hermione. I wanted to study hard and become <u>as intelligent as</u> her to help people in times of trouble."
4. Contextualized example sentences (Lesson 11-2) [whole-class/22 min.]	T introduces the contextualized example sentences (see Appendix B) in the textbook in a dialogue, T asks students to guess the meaning of the sentences.
5. Form-focused instruction [whole-class/5 min.]	T gives a form-focused instruction using key sentences in the interaction: 1. Harry Potter is <u>one of the best movies</u> in the world. 2. <u>The more</u> I watched, <u>the better</u> I understood the story. 3. <u>No other character is as intelligent as</u> Hermione.
Homework [individual]	Ss write a 100-200 word English composition about the topic: "Who is <u>the greatest</u> movie character for you? Describe the person and mention why he/she is <u>the greatest</u> ."

Lesson 4

Procedure	Description
1. Pair conversation [whole-class/5 min.]	Ss talk in pairs for 5 min. about what they want to do <u>the most</u> of all the options: (1) Do magic in the wizarding world (2) Visit Willy Wonka's Chocolate Factory; (3) Use superpowers to save the world
2. Practice 2 [group work/20 min.]	Ss work with their group members to answer the grammar exercises in Practice 2. T provides Ss with vocabulary/phrases whenever necessary.
3. About Bechdel Test [whole-class/8 min.]	T distributes the worksheet (see Appendix C). Ss first watch a video about the criteria in the Bechdel test: (1) it has to have at least two [named] women in it; (2) who talk to each other; (3) about something besides a man.
4. Graph Activity [group work/12 min.]	Ss analyze different graphs regarding gender portrayal: Graph #1: The Bechdel Test Over Time Graph #2: Female Representation Graph #3: Modern Princess Movies, Words Spoken by Characters Ss are given useful phrases to analyze and compare the graphs: The percentage of _____ is higher/lower than that of _____. The percentage of _____ is the highest/lowest in the graph. The percentage of _____ is as high/low as _____.
Homework [thinking/individual]	Ss write a brief summary and description of the characters for two movies: one that passes the Bechdel test, and one that does not.

Lesson 5

Procedure	Description
1. Presentation [group work/15 min.]	Ss give a presentation to their group members about the two movies that they have researched for homework.
2. Social issues in movies [whole-class/10 min.]	T introduces some of the social issues in the following movies: Hidden Figures (racism); Bend It Like Beckham (intercultural communication); Super Size Me (obesity and nutrition)
3. Discussion [group work/20 min.]	T asks Ss to share a social issue that is <u>one of the most crucial issues</u> to solve. Ss discuss in smaller groups first before they have a whole-class discussion.
Homework [thinking/individual]	Ss write a 150-250-word essay about a social issue that was not discussed during class.

Rationale

The lessons aimed at creating a cognitively engaging and meaningful learning environment for language learners. In this section, I will reflect upon the lesson plan and materials in relation to the 4Cs of CLIL (Content, Communication, Cognition, Culture). Firstly, for content, as the original textbook placed more emphasis on language knowledge, topics related to movies were incorporated to make the content more interesting and relevant to students' daily lives. Additional activities such as brainstorming (e.g. titles of movies), pair conversation (e.g. favorite movies), discussion topics (e.g. social issues), and background knowledge of other subject matters such as social studies and mathematics (e.g. thinking about social issues, analyzing graph) were included to make the lesson more flexible and dynamic. In addition, as there were not enough visual aids in the original textbook, the lesson materials included additional photos and graphs so that students could more easily visualize the content.

Secondly, for communication, different types of language skills were incorporated in the class: reading skills (e.g. contextualized example sentences), listening (e.g. oral-introduction, videos), speaking skills (e.g. pair conversations and discussions), and writing (e.g. English compositions). In addition, as the example sentences and exercises in the textbook were isolated from context, they were contextualized through the use of a dialogue with real-life characters. Furthermore, the target forms were taught through a form-focused instruction after the students had been exposed to them in a meaningful context.

Thirdly, for cognition, the tasks/activities required different types of cognitive skills. For instance, the oral-introduction and form-focused instruction required lower-order thinking skills such as remembering, understanding, and applying. There were also tasks/activities that required higher-order thinking skills such as the graph activity (analyzing), discussion (evaluating and creating) and English composition (creating). In this way, instead of simply receiving grammar explanations, students were required to use different types of cognitive skills throughout the lessons.

Lastly, for culture, different groupings of students in the tasks/activities (individual/pair/group/whole-class) were used so that students have opportunities to interact and learn from each other. In addition, instead of asking individual students to work on the grammar exercises (Practices 1 and 2), students worked together so that they could consolidate their understanding with their peers. There were also elements of global awareness and intercultural understanding, where learners became aware of social issues that were portrayed in different movies such as race and gender issues.

Conclusion

The paper suggested ways to adapt a grammar-focused textbook from a CLIL perspective to enable students to acquire both language and content knowledge in a more meaningful and contextualized context. It suggests that, instead of simply using the textbook as it is, it may well be essential for teachers to nurture a critical eye and adapt language materials whenever necessary so that they become more suitable for the learners' wide-ranging interests and needs. Teachers should thus have the courage to get out of their comfort zones to establish a more meaningful and cognitively engaging learning environment, which ultimately lead to nurturing students who can thrive in the globalizing era.


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Appendix A
Contextualized Example Sentences (Lesson 11: Build up 1)


A-1

Violet's friend: How tall is Tony Rydinger? I heard you two went to the movies together.
Violet: **Tony is as tall as you (are)**. He's not that tall.




A-2

Mika: Did you know Mao Asada can play tennis?
Emi: Really? How about her sister, Mai?
Maki: **She plays tennis as well as her sister (does)**.




A-3

Shohei Ohtani: Do you know how tall John Francis Daley is?
Shohei's friend: **John isn't as tall as you (are)**. He's 182 cm tall.




A-4

Kei: Did you know Ai Sugiyama has a sister? Her name is Mai.
Shuzo: Really? Does she play tennis too?
Kei: I think she just plays for fun. **She doesn't play tennis as well as her sister (does)**.



A-5

Bookstore clerk: Wow! You have so many books! You must love reading!
Bookworm: Yes, it's in the blood.
I have as many books as my brother (does).




A-6

Brazilian child: How big is Russia? Is it big?
Brazilian teacher: **Russia is twice as large as Brazil**.
Brazilian child: Wow!




A-7

Teacher: Which is bigger, Brazil or Argentina?
Child: I don't know....Argentina?
Teacher: Actually, it's Brazil. **Brazil is three times as large as Argentina**.




B-8

Interviewer: Thank you so much for your time, Shohei. By the way, you are so tall!
You are taller than John (is).
He is the tallest person in our staff.




B-9

Friend: Who drives more carefully, your father or your mother?
Violet: **My mother drives more carefully than my father (does)**.




B-10

Violet: How tall is your boyfriend, John?
Violet's friend: **John isn't taller than Tony**. We are about the same height.




B-11

Child A: Which is taller, Tony the tiger or John Darling?
Child B: **Tony is much [far] taller than John**.




B-12

Emi: Who is singing this song? Her voice is beautiful.
Mika: It's Ms. Moka Kamishiraishi.
Emi: Is she related to Mone Kamishiraishi?
Mika: Yes. She is actually her sister. **She is two years older than her sister**.



B-13

Father: Which computer did you buy, a Mac or a Windows model?
Son: They were both great. I had difficulty making up my mind.
I chose the cheaper of the two new models.




Appendix B

Contextualized Example Sentences (Lesson 11: Build up 2)

A-1

Olaf: **It's getting hotter and hotter.**


Elsa: I know. I am glad you're not melting.



A-2

Minnie Mouse: The view from here is majestic. No wonder Mt. Fuji is a World Heritage.

Mickey Mouse: **The higher you go, the more beautiful the view becomes.**




B-3

(In 1770s)
John is the smartest in his family.

He has great potential. I hope he becomes the President of the United States in the future.

John Quincy Adams




B-4

Mika: Do you know Kenzo Shirai? He has two older brothers.

He can run (the) fastest of the three boys.

Emi: Wow. I heard they are all good at gymnastics.




B-5

Ron: Hermione knows everything.

She is the most intelligent woman (that) I know.

Harry: Yes. I can't believe her parents are muggles.




B-6


MC: **Canada is the second largest country in the world.** Which country is the second smallest country in the world?

Hikaru Suzuki: Monaco.

MC: Correct.



B-7



Cinderella: Where do you plan to go in February?

Snow White: I'm going to Niseko, which is in Hokkaido.

Cinderella: Wow! **Niseko is by far the most popular ski resort.** I envy you.

B-8

Teacher: Who is this person? He was born in Spain on October 25, 1881. His full name has 23 words. His first word was 'pencil.' **He is one of the most famous artists in the world.** One of his works is "Guernica." Who is he?


Student: Picasso. (Pablo Diego José Francisco de Paula Juan Nepomuceno María de los Remedios Cipriano de la Santísima Trinidad Mártir Patricio Clito Ruiz y Picasso)

C-9

MC: **Russia is the largest country in the world.** Which country is the smallest?

Hikaru Suzuki: Vatican City.

MC: Correct.



Russia is the largest country in the world.

9. **No (other) country in the world is as large as Russia.**

10. **No (other) country in the world is larger than Russia.**

11. **Russia is larger than any other country in the world.**



Appendix C

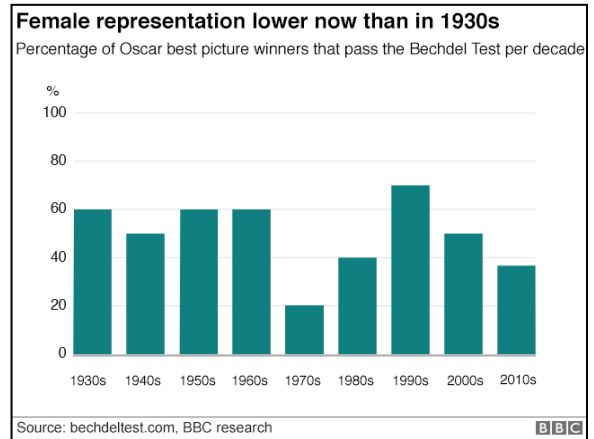
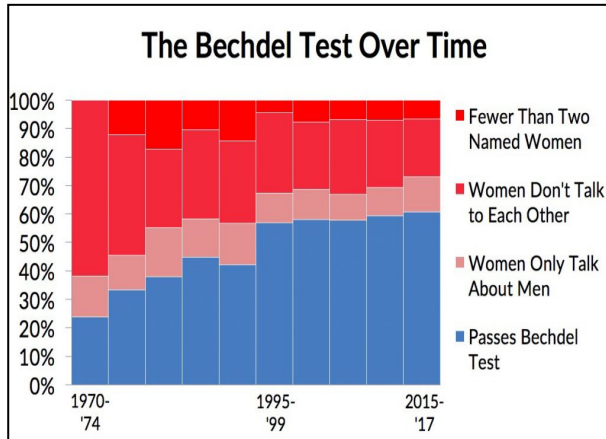
Worksheet for Lessons 4 and 5

Criteria to pass the Bechdel Test

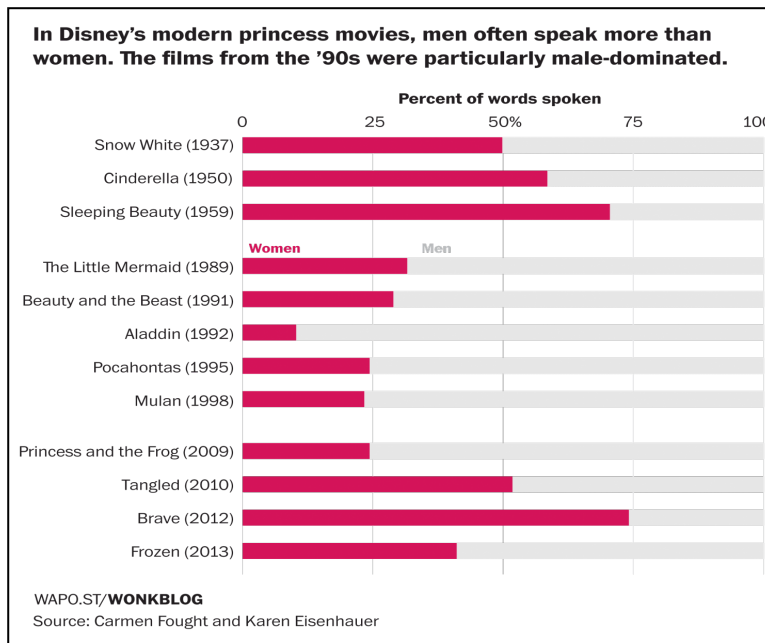
- (1) It has to have at least two [named] _____ in it
- (2) who _____ to each other
- (3) about something besides a _____



Graph Activity



Source: <https://researchblog.duke.edu/?s=bechdel+test>



Useful Phrases

- The percentage of _____ is higher/lower than that of _____.
- The percentage of _____ is the highest/lowest in _____.
- The percentage of _____ is as high as _____.
- The earlier/later the age, the higher/lower the _____.

Discussion on social issues

Memo: