【Research Article】

Action-Oriented Approach to Curriculum Development in CLIL Courses: A theoretical and methodological framework

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Abstract

In a contemporary society characterized by complexity, it is vital to develop students' competences with action. Using the action-oriented approach as the underlining basis, we designed an English Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) curriculum at Rikkyo University to develop students' competences throughout their four-year period of study. The paper introduces the ongoing development process of the courses in this curriculum from theoretical and methodological perspectives using an action-oriented approach. From the theoretical perspective, students' competences and actions need to be closely connected and mediated by action-oriented tasks. From the methodological perspective, we adopted the backward design approach. In designing the overall curriculum, we followed the three stages proposed by Wiggins and McTighes (2005)—identifying the desired results, determining acceptable evidence of learning, and planning learning experiences and instruction. We believe our curriculum development process will be valuable information for language-teaching professionals aiming to adopt the backward design approach for their curriculum development and those who wish to design their syllabuses in accordance with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages standards.

Keywords: *Competence-based education, CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning), Action-oriented approach, Backward design, CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages)*

Introduction

This paper presents our ongoing development process of the courses in the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) curriculum at Rikkyo university from both theoretical—on what theoretical grounds and concepts the curriculum is designed—and methodological—how the curriculum has been developed within our context—perspectives. As indicated by Richards (2017), there are two parallel sources of influence on curriculum change. The first comes from within the field of language teaching where "Scholars, pedagogues, and applied linguists have generated a body of assumptions and principles that serve as one source for reviewing approaches to language curriculum design and implementation" (p. 4). Such internal sources of influence are motivated by a focus on 'means', aiming to improve teaching-practice quality. The other sources of influence are more pragmatic, reflecting the demand from governments, educational and institutional authorities, and students. These external sources of influence are concerned with 'ends', seeking to achieve better outcomes. Our challenge as language-teaching professionals is to satisfy both necessities— making an English language curriculum informed by cutting-edge research and theory and, at the same time, reasonably responding to the pragmatic demands from students and various stakeholders.

For this challenge, we adopt an *action-oriented approach* to developing our English language curriculum. The term was first introduced in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). It views "users and learners of a language primarily as 'social agents,' i.e., members of society who have tasks (not exclusively language-related) to accomplish in a given set of circumstances, in a specific environment and within a particular field of action" (Council of Europe,

2001, p. 9). What is indicated in adopting this approach for curriculum development is planning back from real-world action involving language. It is of particular significance for language educators to consider, in the initial stage of curriculum development, what our students as social agents need to develop through learning English. This development direction is called 'backward design,' starting with a description of learning outcomes as the basis for curriculum planning; decisions on methodology and syllabus are developed from the outcomes (Wiggins & McTighe, 2006; Richards, 2013).

The action-oriented approach also emphasizes the significance of active participation in a classroom as a learning community, suggesting that language learning cannot be achieved only through knowledge construction but necessarily through engaging in situated experience. In this view to language learning, the action is always situated, taking place in a context within which activities take place—students are not containers to be filled with particular knowledge and skills but agents willingly participating in certain activities (Sfad, 1998).

We first look at the external sources of influence on curriculum development by reviewing broad educational perspectives. We then consider how education's external demands can be organically linked to the internally motivated curriculum focusing on participation by taking the action-oriented approach. On the basis of the theoretical perspectives, we present methodological perspectives— how we have developed our English language curriculum in our context and how the theoretical and pedagogical principles are applied in our CLIL courses.

Theoretical Rationale

Toward Competence-Based Education

In search of the desired learning outcomes reflecting external sources of influence, what the society hopes students to ultimately attain, we first looked at broad educational perspectives to understand objectives of English language teaching "in light of larger movements within the domain of education" (Crookes, 2016, p. 64).

According to Cummins (2004), there are three distinct pedagogical perspectives: traditional, social constructivist, and transformative. Traditional pedagogy is primarily concerned with the transmission of knowledge and skills, and social constructivist pedagogy aims to develop higher-order thinking skills through being engaged in tasks and projects. Social constructivist pedagogy has been extended to a transformative pedagogy involving common characteristics but with different orientations. That is, the first two perspectives are primarily instructional-oriented, but transformative pedagogy focuses on social and identity-investment dimensions, enabling students to analyze and understand the social realities of their lives and their communities through collaborative critical inquiry (Cummins, 2004).

Transformative pedagogy has been applied in various forms worldwide, most notably "Key Competencies," involving three categories of 'using tools interactively,' 'interacting in heterogeneous groups', and 'acting autonomously' (OECD, 2005). What is particularly significant in this pedagogy is its focus on developing competences as a vital capacity in today's globalized society confronted with volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity. The world is entering a state of 'super complexity' (Barnett, 2000), where various systems of the environment and our society grow increasingly complex through continuous change. As a result, there is a move in education from a paradigm of linearity and simplification of focus on knowledge to a paradigm of complexity focusing on

competence (Piccard & North, 2019). In this reality, the critical question is no longer what skills or knowledge should be taught but an attempt to bring about changes in students' competences (Pikkarainen, 2014).

Developing competence is key to understanding contemporary education, but how competence is defined is not so simple. In a general sense, competence is defined as the ability to do something well (e.g., Cambridge Dictionary), but it has a more specific meaning from an educational objective. As stated by OECD (2005), "A competency is more than just knowledge and skills. It involves the ability to meet complex demands, by drawing on and mobilising psychosocial resources (including skills and attitudes) in a particular context" (p. 4). In a similar vein, the CEFR defines competence as "the sum of knowledge, skills, and characteristics that allow a person to perform actions" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 9). Summarizing these definitions, competence is conceived as a multidimensional and holistic concept consisting of knowledge, skills and attitudes (Piccard & North, 2019), and a capacity to apply these various resources to perform a specific action in an integrative manner.

Action-Oriented Approach

As reflected in this conceptualization, competence is inseparable from the action, being inextricably linked to the action-oriented approach. Because competence is a wholly invisible internal condition of the visible action (Piccard & North, 2019), the relationship between competence and action is interdependent—actions are performed by using competences, while competences develop as a consequence of dynamic interaction between "the object of study (language), the subject learning it (language user), the action (language use) and the reflection (metacognitive/metalinguistic phase)" (Bourguignon, 2006, cited in Piccard & North, 2019, p. 52).

Understanding the significance of developing students' competences through action, how can this be achieved in the English language curriculum? Growing demand for competence-based education makes us aware of the perspective of curriculum-as-product; "that is, the curriculum as a document that contains a framework for teaching, materials development, and assessment and that serves to direct and manage the enterprise of language teaching" (Richards, 2017, p. 13). The action-oriented approach encourages us to regard perspective of curriculum-as-process, reflecting the classroom as a learning community; "Learning is not viewed as the mastery of pre-determined content but as constructing new knowledge through participating in specific learning and social contexts and through engaging in particular types of activities and processes" (Richards, 2017, p. 17). Through engaging in communicative and cognitively demanding activities, they are likely to develop their competences—a capacity to think in critical and reflective manners.

From the perspective of curriculum-as-process, the use of tasks, more specifically, action-oriented tasks, is prioritized to organize individual lessons or the syllabus of the entire curriculum. In the CEFR, "[a] task is defined as any purposeful action considered by an individual as necessary to achieve a given result in the context of a problem to be solved, an obligation to fulfill or an objective to be achieved" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 10). A task offers opportunities to be engaged in "concrete experiences" (Piccard & North, 2019 p. 54) —making learners "carry out a set of purposeful actions in a particular domain with a clearly-defined goal and a specific outcome" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 157).

Referring back to the definition of the action-oriented approach in the CEFR, task functions as central and mediating roles—a competence is likely to develop by engaging in and acting on a task. Through completing such tasks, students can develop their competences further in interactive and

co-adaptive manners—they use their competences to achieve a required outcome in the action-oriented task by "tak[ing] into account the cognitive, emotional and volitional resources and the full range of abilities specific to and applied by the individual as a social agent." (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 9). In other words, student engagement and collaborative participation in tasks elicit certain actions, which then require the functioning of relevant competences. By repeatedly performing a task, students are likely to develop their competences further in tandem with their development of language proficiency.

Designing the Overall Framework

On the basis of the internal and external sources of influence, we have developed a university-wide English curriculum at Rikkyo University, within which students in various majors (e.g., literature, economics, law, science) are required to study. Approaches of curriculum development can be broadly categorized as forward design (moving from content to methodology to assessment), central design (focused on classroom processes) and backward design (starting from outcomes and working back to content) (Richards, 2013).

As we started by considering the outcomes or competences, we adopted backward design as a framework for the entire process, implementing content and tasks derived from the expected outcomes. In this way, we can better clarify our courses' goals and objectives, set appropriate assessments, and construct meaningful, coherent lessons geared toward specific outcomes. It will also lead to better student performance as they know what the expected goals are. As Richards (2013) stated, in the backward design, "the planning process begins with a clear understanding of the ends in mind" (p. 22), so each activity or task is designed to lead to the end product.

Following Wiggins and McTighe's framework (2005), we adopted three stages in designing our curriculum: 1) identifying desired results (i.e., identifying the needs, formulating the goals and objectives), 2) determining acceptable evidence of learning (i.e., determining what and how to evaluate), and 3) planning learning experiences and instruction (i.e., defining the teaching approach and organizing the lesson plan). In the following sections, we explain how we conducted our curriculum development in accordance with these three stages.

Stage 1: Identifying Desired Results

Understanding the socio-educational context. There was a strong need for curriculum reform both in and outside the university to actualize competence-based education in 'our' local context. In 2020, English became an official subject for fifth and sixth-grade students to introduce the new *Course of Study Guidelines* by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, and Technology (MEXT). Due to the changes in early education, students are likely to spend more time on communicative skills in classrooms, which means that cognitively demanding and communicative tasks are required at the university level (Nitta & Yamamoto, 2020). To provide continuity with the former English language curriculum taught in primary and secondary education, we decided to make a drastic curriculum reform at the university.

In line with this decision, Rikkyo University was selected for government funding from the Top Global University Project (Type B: Global Traction Type) in 2014. Part of this curriculum reform provides students an environment to develop their global perspectives within and outside Japan via attending short study-abroad programs and internship programs (Rikkyo, n.d.). Along with sending

students overseas and accepting more international students, each department is developing or planning to create English Mediated Instruction (EMI) courses. Because English plays a crucial role in the entire education at Rikkyo, there is a need for the English language curriculum to be more closely integrated with education across the university. With this necessity, one of our pedagogical goals is to prepare students to take their EMI courses offered by each department.

CLIL as a Pedagogical Framework. To bridge the gap between their first-year English mandatory courses and their EMI courses offered by each department, we decided to provide CLIL courses for second to fourth-year students as electives within our English Language Program. Figure 1 shows the vision of the overall English framework.
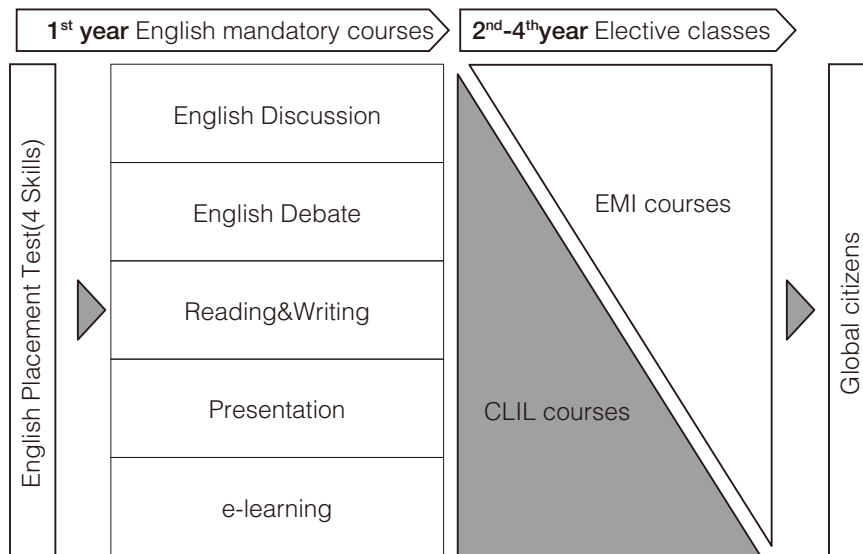

Figure 1. Four-year curriculum framework (Adapted from Rikkyo Website)

CLIL is adopted as a pedagogical framework for our courses because it can usefully function as a bridge from the English language courses to the EMI courses. The approach can also be linked to the competence-based teaching framework. We discussed in detail elsewhere (Nitta & Yamamoto, 2020) in what ways CLIL principles can be applied to our courses in the curriculum; thus, we only touch upon what is particularly relevant to the present discussion in this paper.

CLIL, defined as a dual-focused educational approach for the learning and teaching of both content and language, involves four components: Content (subject matter), Communication (language learning and using), Cognition (learning and thinking processes), and Culture/Community (developing intercultural understanding and global citizenship; Coyle, Hood, & Marsh, 2010). First and foremost, CLIL is content-driven, so the linguistic needs "will be generated from the specific needs of the particular subjects taught" (Georgiou, 2012, p. 499).

Second, CLIL has an explicit focus on students' cognitive development by using Bloom's (1956) taxonomy (revised by Anderson and Krathwohl, 2001). This model, consisting of six cognitive (i.e., remember, understanding, apply, analyze, evaluate, and create) and four knowledge (i.e., factual, conceptual, procedural, and metacognitive knowledge) dimensions, helps teachers consider which cognitive processes and knowledge to focus on in their teaching.

Finally, cultural dimensions are emphasized in CLIL—not only restricted to "the four Fs" (food, fairs, folklore, and statistical facts) (Kramsch, 1991, p. 218) but also involving identity construction

because "culture determines the way we interpret the world and … we use language to express this interpretation" (Coyle et al., 2020, p. 390). Each of the four components is closely associated with competence-based education, in that students are expected to develop communicative (Communication), general and metacognitive (Cognition), and intercultural (Culture) competences through CLIL courses.

Concerning our pedagogical goal—bridging to the EMI courses, it is helpful to refer to the 'Scale of Language and Content' proposed by van Lier in which learners can develop their second language in a stepwise manner over years of university study in accordance with the progress of their English proficiency (Figure 2). With this scale, students' opportunities to receive academic content matter are "systematically 'phased in' over time, with the number of hours of L2 [second language] content instruction increasing with grade level" (Brinton & Snow, 2017, p. 11). The CLIL courses are positioned between the mandatory courses and EMI courses. Following the steps from more language-led (Point A) to more content-led (Point B) courses, or the mandatory through CLIL to the EMI courses, content and language aspects are increasingly integrated as a whole within individual students.
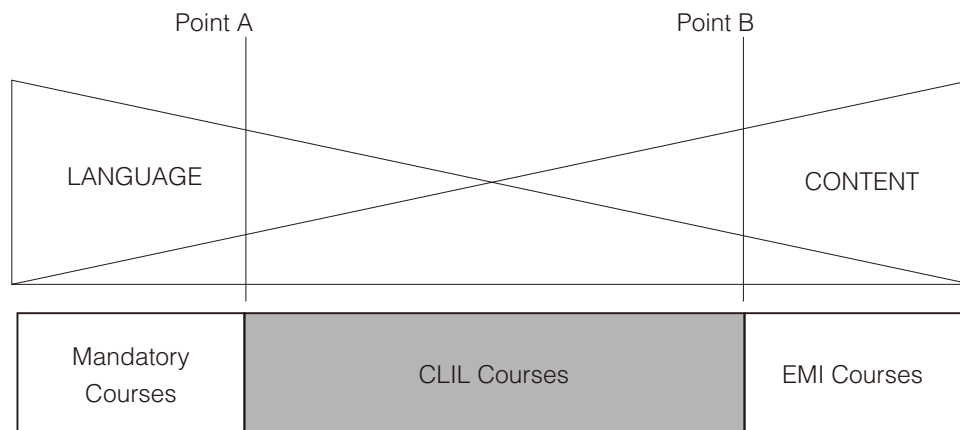

Figure 2. Bluprint of Rikkyo curriculum based on van Lier's Scale of Language and Content (Brinton & Snow, 2017, p. 8)

Identifying Needs from Faculty. Further specifying the desired learning outcomes, or competences, through the English language curriculum, we conducted interviews with faculty professors from all ten academic departments and one degree program as one of the key stakeholders. The primary purpose was to identify what outcomes (i.e., what competences) are expected through the English language curriculum and explore collaboration methods. The interviews revealed a wide range of opinions and requests from each department, but the main findings can be summarized in the following four respects:

1) Students' academic language proficiency needs to be enhanced for taking the EMI courses. However, highly specialized content areas are not required; instead, more general content courses (such as Literature, Psychology, Business) are preferred;

2) Students are expected not only to learn English but also to broaden their perspectives through learning global issues (e.g., international relations, environmental issues, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)) and liberal arts content;

3) There are varying levels of students' English proficiency—not only between departments (e.g., English-related majors vs. other majors) but also within each department; and

4) There are varying purposes of students' learning English—such as to achieve high English proficiency in all communication modes, focusing on developing English communication skills and preparing for study abroad or job hunting.

The first finding confirmed the necessity to develop students' academic language proficiency and skills to prepare for more advanced EMI courses. For our curriculum development, however, it was necessary to recognize to what extent content areas need to be specialized. With this respect, there was no requirement from any departments for highly specialized CLIL courses closely linked to their EMI programs. Instead, many interviewees suggested that courses involving less specialized and more fundamental ideas and topics in academic fields were more beneficial, considering that the English curriculum is open to any major.

The second finding concerns our primary aim of the interviews—identifying expected competences through our curriculum. To broaden students' perspectives, various key terms were reported in the interviews such as "diversity," 'tolerance to other cultures,' 'identity construction,' and 'plurilungualism.' These terms are associated with our teaching philosophy based on transformative pedagogy, CLIL (in particular, Culture/Community of the 4Cs), and the CEFR. These also seem to suggest many faculty professors regard English (or more generally foreign language) education as opportunities to develop general and communicative competences. Also, many interviewees emphasized the significance of developing a capacity to collaborate with others with diverse backgrounds in various contexts. Findings 1 and 2 were used in deciding what content areas should be covered in the CLIL courses.

Findings 3 and 4 suggest the necessity to offer courses for various types of students in terms of their proficiency levels and interests and those preparing for EMI courses. In response to varying students' English proficiencies, we decided to offer 'developmental' CLIL courses in which students improve their English in a stepwise manner. Regarding varying students' purposes of learning English, we decided to include areas of skill-focused and career-oriented courses and academic studies.

Creating a Framework of CLIL Courses. On the basis of the interview results and communicating with other professors from the English Language Program, the CLIL courses were categorized into three broad areas: Global Communication, Global Studies, and Global Career (Figure 3).

Global Communication was designed to further develop the academic language skills acquired in their mandatory first-year courses using content areas such as 'Advanced Presentation,' 'Advanced Writing,' and 'Advanced Discussion and Debate.' Other skill-based courses include 'Self-directed and Reflective Language Learning' and 'Multimodal Communication in English.' We also decided to offer the 'Pleasure Reading' class to further enhance their reading skills and 'Current News through English Media' class to make them aware of the world's current issues. Another major decision was to add a study abroad preparation program, including 'Intercultural Studies.' It also includes exam-preparation courses, 'TOEFL,' 'IELTS,' and 'Exam Speaking Preparation.' The Global Communication courses are regarded as a step in preparing to take more advanced courses in the following Global Studies.

To further enhance students' general and communicative competences, *Global Studies* was designed so that there would be a gradual shift from language-driven to a more content-driven CLIL curriculum. It is divided into two levels: 'Introduction to Global Studies' (i.e., soft CLIL programs) and 'CLIL Seminars' (i.e., hard CLIL programs). While the former outlines three broad main areas from Humanities, Social Science, and Natural Science, the latter focuses on a specific academic field
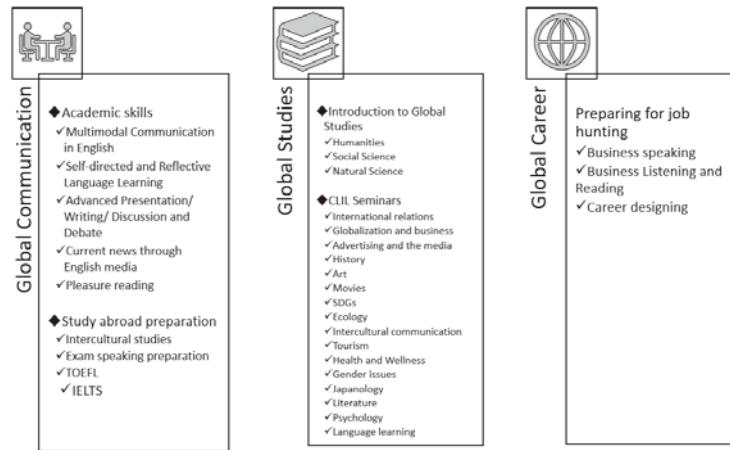
Figure 3. Framework for elective courses

or content areas such as 'SDGs,' 'Globalization and Business,' 'Tourism,' 'Japanology,' 'International Relations and Politics,' 'Advertising and the Media,' 'Ecology,' and 'Language Learning.' We tried to create a wide range of loose titles related to their learning in EMI courses in their academic departments to make it appealing to students from all departments instead of a particular department.

Finally, *Global Career* was designed for students preparing for job hunting and planning to use English in a business context. This includes 'Business Speaking,' 'Business Listening and Reading,' and 'Career Designing.' We decided to keep the test-taking preparation programs due to students' practical needs to prepare for the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) in 'Business Listening and Reading.'

Figure 4 illustrates the revised blueprint of our curriculum based on the Scale of Language and Content. It involves sub-categories within the CLIL courses. Students are expected to develop their linguistic and non-linguistic competences in stepwise manners by taking Global Communication courses through 'Introduction to Global Studies' and 'CLIL Seminars' in Global Studies to EMI
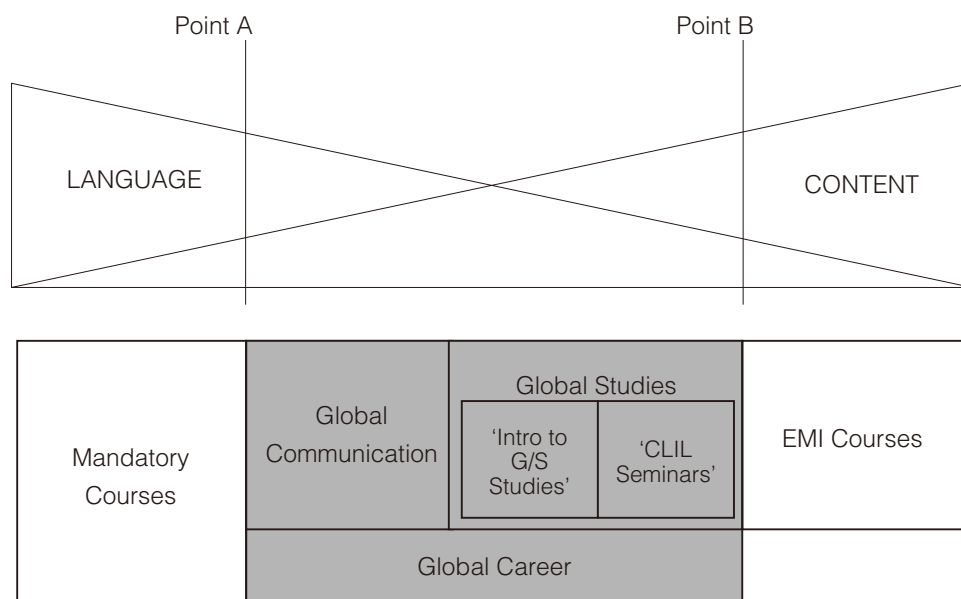

Figure 4. Revised blueprint of Rikkyo curriculum based on van Lier's Scale of Language and Content (Brinton & Snow, 2017, p. 8)

courses. Along with these courses, students can take Global Career courses whenever they find it necessary to prepare for their future job.

Stage 2: Determining Acceptable Evidence of Learning

To construct a competence-based curriculum, we adopted the updated version of CEFR (Council of Europe, 2018). The CEFR helps students understand each course's goals and objectives clearly so that the "descriptions of the outcomes or targets students should be able to reach in different domains of curriculum content, including language learning, and are generally specified in very general terms" (Richards, 2013, p. 25). The CEFR perfectly matches our underlying belief that our students are seen as social agents who can "mobilise their competences, including both communicative language competences [i.e., linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic competence] and more general competences [i.e., declarative knowledge and sociocultural and intercultural competences; skills and know-how; existential competence, demonstrating openness; learning to learn], and adopt strategies" (North, Angelova, Jarosz, & Rossner, 2018, p. 31).

The use of the CEFR is also beneficial for constructive alignment in which teaching methods and assessment tasks are closely aligned to the learning activities assumed in the intended outcomes. In a constructively aligned curriculum, teachers set up a learning environment that supports the activities appropriate to achieving the desired outcomes, which students *construct* meaning through relevant activities (Biggs, 2014). The CEFR could be usefully implemented as "a source of guidance and benchmarks for language teaching, language learning, and language assessment" (North et al., 2018, p. 67).

To make the whole curriculum coherent and integrated, we set the target CEFR level in each course. In so doing, all persons involved—students, instructors, and faculty staff—refer to commonly defined levels of proficiency, which facilitate the transfer from one class to another (North et al., 2018, p. 6) and from CLIL courses to EMI courses in the university's entire program. The use of the CEFR is advantageous as a 'common pedagogic metalanguage' to help solve teachers' isolation in different courses and different departments.

To explain how we create a constructively aligned syllabus, let us take 'Introduction to Global Studies A (Humanities)' as an example. The target level of this course is geared toward CEFR lower B2 level. This course was designed as a mediated course bridging from more language-led (i.e., Mandatory and Global Communication) courses to more content-led (CLIL Seminars and EMI) courses (Figure 4).

The course aims to develop academic language proficiency through learning academic content in English. It also aims for students to acquire essential language skills to comprehend academic lectures. More specifically, the objectives of the course are for students to 1) understand a structured lecture and take notes on major points; 2) understand and use most of the target specialist vocabulary and academic vocabulary necessary to understand each lecture; 3) present their ideas, pose questions, further develop other people's views and opinions in discussions and presentations; 4) compare and contrast various sources, classify information into different categories, and create timelines/tables; 5) apply knowledge of the target academic field and make connections to their own and other cultures in discussions and presentations; 6) show cooperative teamwork in discussion and presentation.

Using the CEFR descriptors as a guide, the assessment's shared framework, a rubric, was created for assessing the learners' presentation skills (Figure 5). Rubrics are used as an assessment

tool to evaluate student's learning performance and explains whether their performance matches the description in the rubric. Simultaneously, the criteria indicate students' intended learning outcomes by the end of the course. Knowing their intended outcomes make it easier for students to set clear goals and objectives and support student self-evaluation. Graves (2008) reported that "[f]or assessment to be integrated into classroom practice, it needs to be part of the learning experience in ways that enable learners to see their progress and achievement" (p. 174).

The framework of the 4Cs (Content, Communication, Cognition, and Culture/Community) is reflected within the rubric for each criterion. To assess 'content,' students need to show they have learned a particular topic within the target academic field. 'Communication' demonstrates students' communicative competence via the means of presentation. 'Critical thinking' shows their higher-order critical thinking skills (i.e., general and metacognitive competence) to analyze and evaluate the main issues presented. 'Connections' states their intercultural competence to connect with their own experience or situations in their home country and other countries. 'Teamwork' work shows cooperative teamwork during poster presentations.

	None 0	Poor 1	Fair 2	Good 3	Superior 4
Content	Showed no understanding of the major points in the target academic field.	Showed minimum understanding of the major points in the target academic field.	Somewhat showed they have learned and understood the major points in the target academic field.	Mostly showed they have learned and understood the major points in the target academic field.	Showed they have learned and understood the major points in the target academic field.
Communication	No demonstration of their ideas using effective vocabulary and presentation techniques.	Minimum demonstration of their ideas using effective vocabulary and presentation techniques.	Somewhat demonstrated their ideas using effective vocabulary and presentation techniques.	Demonstrated their ideas clearly in most parts using effective vocabulary and presentation techniques.	Fully demonstrated their ideas clearly using effective vocabulary and presentation techniques.
Critical thinking (analyzed and evaluated the main issues)	Didn't demonstrate any critical thinking.	Demonstrated minimum critical thinking.	Somewhat demonstrated critical thinking.	Demonstrated critical thinking in most parts.	Demonstrated outstanding critical thinking.
Connections (associated issues or situations in students' home country and/or other country)	Didn't demonstrate any connections.	Rarely demonstrated connections.	Demonstrated some connections.	Demonstrated connections in most issues.	Demonstrated connections to all issues.
Teamwork	Showed no teamwork.	Showed minimum teamwork.	Demonstrated teamwork in some part of the presentation.	Demonstrated teamwork in most part of the presentation.	Showed cooperative teamwork throughout the presentation.

Figure 5. Example of group-presentation rubric

Stage 3: Planning Learning Experiences and Instruction

As presented thus far, we designed our curriculum based on the action-oriented approach to developing autonomous, interculturally competent agents by promoting their linguistic and cultural diversity. In the action-oriented philosophy, "learning takes place in a context and evolves through the participants' interaction and participation in that context" (Richards, 2013, p. 19). It is underlined by the belief that learning is a non-linear process and emerges by participating in meaningful activities that are part of the classroom's dynamic system (van Lier, 2007).

Each lesson was designed to accomplish tasks while learning a specific field's content. Pair and group work are frequently used to negotiate and complete their tasks to develop general competences. In action-oriented tasks, students are no longer passive recipients but actors and agents, "since they take ownership of what needs to be done to reach the goal and what they have at their disposal to build on" (Piccard & North, 2019, p. 139). In the example course, students will learn the note-taking strategies to record a lecture's major points and use the content to engage in group discussions using critical thinking skills to understand and analyze each lecture's content. After each content introduction, students will deliver presentations related to the topic covered in class.

As suggested by the course schedule (Figure 6) as well as the rubric (Figure 5), the course's syllabus is content-based, task-based, process-oriented, and skills-based. The syllabus is primarily content-based because it is designed on the basis of Humanities-related content—Psychology, Intercultural Communication, Sociology, and Linguistics. The syllabus can be regarded as task-based because action-oriented tasks are designed in individual lessons and the entire syllabus. At the same time, it can be regarded as process-oriented because it is based on the principle that "classroom activities are not the means that result in the learning of language; rather, language is the means for accomplishing classroom activities" (Graves, 2008, p. 160). In each class, students pool their language

	Content	Academic skills
1	Introduction to the course	
2	Trips to become academically successful	Effective vocabulary learning strategies: Introducing New Academic Word List
3	Psycology: The stages and symptoms of culture shock	How to take notes effectively 1: Finding major points and outlining
4	Psychology: The secrets and becoming mentally strong	What is critical thinking?
5	Intercultural communication: How miscommunication happens	What makes a good presentation?
6	**1ˢᵗ group project**	
7	Sociology: Why gender equality is good for everone	How to take notes effectively 2: Using symbols
8	Linguistics: Do animals have language?	How to take notes effectively 3: Using abbreviations
9	Linguistics: The secrets of learning a new language	How to take notes effectively 4: Summarizing
10	Linguistics: Factors affecting second language learining	Explaining and creating visuals
11	**2ⁿᵈ group project**	
12	Preparing for the final project	Creating PPT slides
13	**Final individual project**	
14	**Wrap-up**	

Figure 6. Sample course schedule for Introduction to Global Studies A (Humanities)

ability to engage in meaningful interactive group tasks such as creating and presenting a poster presentation. Finally, the syllabus involves skills-based elements because each course introduces academic skills such as note-taking and presentation skills to deepen their understanding of class content. In these multiple methods, "language becomes the means not only for carrying out tasks or using skills but for learning new content" (Graves, 2008, p. 161).

Conclusion

We presented the ongoing development process of our CLIL curriculum at Rikkyo University from theoretical and methodological perspectives. In a contemporary society characterized by complexity, it is vital to develop students' competences with action. By taking the action-oriented approach, we designed the new English curriculum at the university where students in various majors develop their competences throughout their study period; students are viewed as social agents, and situated actions are prioritized in a classroom. From the methodological perspective, we adopted the backward design approach—starting with a description of learning outcomes, followed by decisions on methodology and syllabus development.

In designing the overall curriculum, we followed the three stages proposed by Wiggins and McTighes (2005)—identifying the desired results, determining acceptable evidence of learning, and planning learning experiences and instruction. On the basis of the results obtained from interviews with faculty professors, we constructed the CLIL framework that includes Global Communication, Global Studies, and Global Career.

To set each course's goals and objectives and make teaching and assessment constructively aligned, we adopted the updated version of CEFR (Council of Europe, 2018). Using the CEFR descriptors as a guide, the rubric was created for assessing students' activities in the example course. Each lesson was designed to accomplish tasks while learning a specific field's content to engage students in language-using experiences as social agents. Pair and group work are used to negotiate and complete their tasks.

Throughout this paper, we described our curriculum development process in depth, which, we believe, will be valuable information for language-teaching professionals aiming to adopt the backward design approach for their curriculum development and also those who wish to design their syllabuses by using the CEFR standards. It should be emphasized, however, that we are still halfway through the entire curriculum development process; pilot courses, including 'Introduction to Global Studies,' will soon be conducted as a significant step for starting the proposed new curriculum.

We will revise the curriculum by using feedback obtained from the pilot teaching. As succinctly argued by North et al. (2018), "a curriculum or syllabuses, as a document, does not have a life of its own. Unless and until it is enacted in teaching and learning experiences, there is no curriculum" (p. 8)." Therefore, the curriculum will be shaped and developed through the co-adaptive and evolving relationship between the instructor, learners, and subject matter (Graves, 2008). In other words, designing, planning, enacting, and evaluating should all interact and contribute to curriculum development.

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