

# Employment of CLIL in learning how to play baseball in English at a primary school in Japan

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# Outline

## The context

- Morimura Gakuen Elementary School
- Employment of partial CLIL

## Why CLIL?

- Raising motivation
- Developing agency

# Outline

Small-scale  
interpretive  
research

Results  
and  
discussion

Conclusions  
and  
Implications

# The context

- Morimura Gakuen
- Private school in Yokohama
- Founded by Ichizaemon Morimura in 1910
- 720 pupils
- 6-11 years old
- Years 1 and 2: 40 minute class per week
- Years 3-6: 40 minute classes 2 times week
- 2 teachers from the British Council, Tokyo are teaching there



# How do children learn languages successfully?

Children best learn to think, problem-solve, question and try to make sense of the things around them when they *interact* with what they are being introduced to

Learning is successful when the learners have the guidance, support and scaffolding of an adult / teacher / mentor

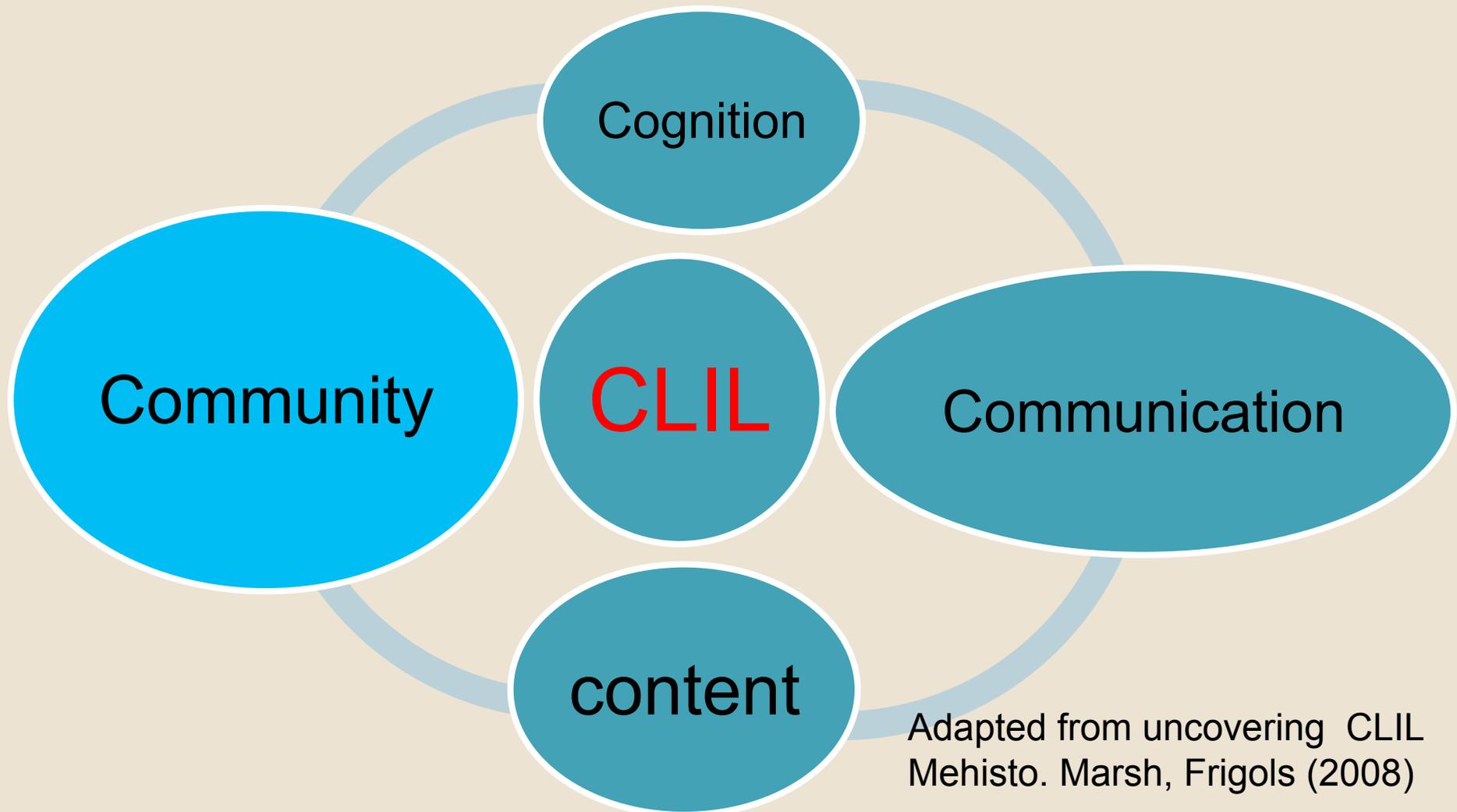
Learning takes place via real interaction, meaningful activities and challenging situations

Learning takes place when the learners can link the target subject activities with their own lives



Hughes, plenary  
Asia TEFL (2006)

# Four principles driving CLIL



Adapted from uncovering CLIL  
Mehisto, Marsh, Frigols (2008)

Yr 6 11-12	Module 7 This is my teacher	Module 8 This is my story	Module 9 This is my game	CLIL How to make welshcakes (HE)
Yr 5 10-11	Module 4 Let's go shopping	Module 5 Puppets on TV	Module 6 This is my food book	CLIL How to play baseball (PE in English)
Yr 4 9-10	Module 1 Hello from Morimura	Module 2 Morimura Animal Kingdom	Module 3 This is my animal book	CLIL
Yr 3 8-9	Recognition and production of special vowel-consonant combinations Numbers 1-60, telling the time, prepositions of place, things in the house			CLIL
Yr 2 7-8	Recognition and production of vowel-consonant combinations Numbers 1-20, classroom objects, food, in, on, behind, under Alphabet writing practice			CLIL How to sing English songs and perform on stage
Yr 1 6-7	Recognition and production of vowels and consonants Numbers 1-20, colours, names of animals Following instructions, story telling Alphabet writing practice			CLIL How to sing English songs and perform on stage

# Why baseball CLIL?

Needs analysis data from a previous series of CLIL (making welshcakes in the Home Economics class).

- The students found these sessions culturally and affectively motivating.
- They requested that they 'learn how to cheer' and 'do PE'.
- The researchers, Tom Ledbury and Richard Williams considered it important to focus on motivation of students.

# Individual differences and motivation

I WISH THOSE NOISY  
BOYS WOULD  
LET ME STUDY!

I DON'T WANT TO SIT AROUND:

I HATE ENGLISH!

I WANT TO PLAY OUTSIDE!

# Research Questions

1. How can we motivate students to learn English?
2. How can we give ownership and agency to students?
3. How can we encourage students to work collaboratively in the school community?

# Research Methodology

- In September 2009, Ledbury and Williams employed a CLIL approach to teach 120 Year 5 children to play baseball in English.
- They incorporated a partial CLIL approach to teaching the rules and the game of baseball over 5 consecutive weeks (ten forty-minute lessons).
- Two PE lessons were used to actually play baseball with the PE teacher and the English teachers (the researchers).
- A feedback questionnaire was given out to students to reflect on their learning in the baseball CLIL sessions.

## Procedure for teaching how to play baseball in English

### Vocabulary

- Pre-teaching baseball vocabulary to elicit awareness of loan words used in Japanese- Activating schemata (Preparation for scaffolding)
- Playing a baseball based vocabulary game
- Researchers recorded interactional language used by students (field notes)

### Interactional language

- Mimes were used to demonstrate appropriate and inappropriate uses of interactional language so as to teach how to use it in the right context
- Students matched responses and appropriate picture flashcards on board and later used matching/ labeling for consolidation
- Mimes were used to elicit or introduce other verbs- run, hit, catch, throw, drop

### Playing baseball

- Students played baseball with two English teachers (the researchers) and one English speaking Japanese P.E. teacher
- The P.E teacher pitched and English teachers played the game with students and asked for help with rules from students



well  
done!

Come

がんばれ



on! FIGHT!



Bad  
luck!



Never



mind!

Oh no!





Good  
catch!

Good  
hit!



Nice

throw!



Sorry!



Nearly!



## Results and discussion

- The researchers played the role of someone who did not actually know how to play baseball, and this created a genuine need for students to use English to tell them how to play.
- The students used expressions such as, *'No, no! Go! Run! Don't stop! Faster, faster!'*
- Bennett, Wood and Rogers (1997) advocate that a sense of ownership is central to children's learning through play. **Students initiated interaction in English showing a strong sense of agency and control.**

## Results of feedback questionnaire

The majority of the students gave positive feedback about doing sport in English;

- *I learnt English in a fun way while moving around.*
- *It wasn't like normal English.*
- *We used our bodies so it was really interesting.*
- *I was really surprised because everyone was speaking English more than Japanese.*

## Results of feedback questionnaire

- Motivation was raised

Student motivation was raised and the focus of substance (content) as opposed to form (Mehisto, Marsh and Frigols, 2008:30) paid tribute to the success of the baseball CLIL component of the Morimura curriculum.

## Results of feedback questionnaire

Abundant reflection was observed.

- *We learnt baseball in English, and it was the first time I'd learnt about baseball.*
- *What was good was that we managed to study not only English but baseball as well.*
- *Getting to do baseball while studying English was good.*

The above comments show that the students are able to 'analyse achievement of learning outcomes independently' (Mehisto, Marsh and Frigols, 2008:31) and are highly aware of their own development and can monitor their own learning.

## Results

When the P.E. teacher spoke in English, the students realised that English is used to communicate amongst people for a purpose, and it is not a language that foreigners use.

## Negative comments

- *I don't understand if it's all in English.*
- *Use Japanese sometimes, not just English.*
- *I wanted to have more time to study the English we'd learnt.*

The above shows that a few students were concerned about the form and the actual achievement in language development itself.

## Conclusion and implications

- How can we motivate students to learn English?

A partial CLIL approach seems to cultivate a positive attitude towards learning both the content and language, as the language is contextualised in a way that learners can have a reason to use the language learnt.

This approach creates opportunities to see that English is a tool for communication and that it is not just a subject to be learnt at school, nor a language that is *'used just by foreigners'*.

## Conclusion and implications

- How can we give ownership and agency to students?

A light CLIL approach can give opportunities for students to have control over their learning. The students took the initiative to give instructions to the others who did not know how to play baseball. It was mainly the very active boys who took over these sessions, and it was a chance for them to demonstrate that they play well, and they took responsibility in instructing the others in English. One could say that they had much agency and control.

## Conclusion and implications

- How can we encourage students to work collaboratively in the school community?

A partial CLIL approach enabled students to recognise the talents of individuals and groups of students with relatively low self-esteem. It gave an opportunity for the already motivated students to respect the ones who were often marked as being the underachieving less motivated students. This added positively to the fluctuating notion of social identity of students within a close community, such as Morimura.

## Conclusion and implications

- CLIL and cognition

Wiesemes (2009) in the Nuffield Inquiry (Nuffield Foundation, 2000:46) in the Content and Language Integration Project in the UK makes the following quotation from a CLIP trainer's interview:

*Actually what we're talking about is good teaching and learning, always and that a lot of what CLIL is about is simply reflecting that, only with a foreign language element. [...] everybody can see that content and cognition are part of every teacher's toolkit.*

## Conclusion and implications

- CLIL and cognition

Thus the pedagogical implication is that we should:  
consider CLIL as an approach to encourage the  
development of student thinking

We should create opportunities for self-reflection,  
at Morimura, in their first language, to cultivate  
awareness of self-monitoring of learning

## Limitations and implications for future research

- Much grading of language needs to be done in order to make the CLIL activities at this stage.
- Students, may in future be able to reflect on their learning in English, but at this point, it is productive and positive to encourage deep thinking in the students' first language when conducting reflective activities.
- There is a need to develop more CLIL activities based on multiple focus, safe and enriching environment, authenticity, active learning, scaffolding and co-operation (Mehisto, Marsh and Frigols (2008:45)