

New Approaches to Bilingual Education: A Pilot Program in a Japanese University

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Abstract

Bilingual education started in the 1960s to encourage bilingualism and multilingualism in predominately Western countries, but significant parts of its pedagogical underpinnings can be adopted for use in Japan. This paper highlights the efforts of Otemae University's language and content classes to incorporate a bilingual approach to improve student learning outcomes through an emphasis on culture and language. Results from a qualitative survey indicate broad levels of student agreement and support, with emphasis found on an improvement in English fluency and critical thinking skills. This preliminary study provides a platform for further research into bilingualism and course design.

バイリンガル教育は、1960年代から主として欧米諸国において二か国語あるいは多言語主義への志向を後押しするものとして始まったが、その教育方法や技術の重要な部分が日本の言語教育に少なからぬ影響を与え継承されていった。本論は、大手前大学における日本語による通常科目と英語による同一のコンテンツ科目の双方を二か国語で提供するプログラムによって、学生が言語と文化の重層的関係に気付き、内容的理解力を深め学習成果の伸長を図ることを目指す取り組みに焦点をあてている。授業評価調査によると、多くの学生が実践的な英語力及び批判的（クリティカル）思考の伸長を強く実感し評価していることが明らかとなった。この実験的教育試行の取り組みは、更に高いレベルのバイリンガル教育法や授業計画研究に資することを目標としている。

Bilingual education began in the 1960s as a way to encourage bilingualism and multilingualism. At its most basic, there are two main types of bilingual education: transitional, which aims to keep students' knowledge at level with their peers by teaching subjects such as mathematics in the native language while the student becomes fluent in a new language; and the second is dual language education, which was originally promoted to help native English speakers become fluent in a second language. Bilingual education in multiple forms, for multiple levels of learners, has flourished in the time since the 1960s, and its efficacy and ideology has been widely debated (Petrzela, 2015; Wang 2016; Baker 2007).

One of the most common criticisms of bilingual education programs is that it threatens national identity and cohesion (Wang, 2016) as well as impeding student's academic progress as their attention is divided between languages.

Yet, further studies have debunked these myths and proven the effectiveness of bilingual education for creating multilingual and culturally sensitive students.

At the same time, bilingual education has been primarily a Western model of language education. Perhaps in part because of the prevailing view that Japan is a monolingual country, bilingual education has received very little attention here. Much scholarly attention has been focused on building “Japaneseness” through language (Gottlieb, 2005). The two studies that do examine bilingual education in Japan have focused on minority identity and international language education programs for elementary and secondary school (Tamaoka, 1996; Kanno, 2003).

At the same time, only a small number of Japanese children attend international schools or have access to English language education programs aimed at fluency, rather than literacy. Thus, for many Japanese students wishing to learn English, university is where their primary language education occurs. And as Japanese companies increasingly shift to English as the language of international business and Japanese education becomes more global, innovation to create effective language education curricula in Japan becomes more important.

This paper aims to introduce an innovative approach to bilingual education at the tertiary level. We introduce a unique system of bilingual education for the required content classes for our English Communication and International Studies programs at Otemae University, a small, private university in Western Japan. Our content and language integrated courses are in dialogue with our English as a Second language courses to create fluent English speakers.

Bilingual Education in Japan

As part of our English language education program, we believe deeply in the incorporation of Japanese culture as a scaffolding tool for students’ language learning. As scholars such as Crystal (2003) and McKenzie (2010) have demonstrated, an increasing number of students are studying English with the goal of employment in their home country, rather than to study abroad or working in foreign countries. Furthermore, recent studies have convincingly demonstrated that cultural familiar textbooks and learning materials increase student language gains (Steffensen, Joag-Dev & Anderson, 1979; Alptekin, 2006; Erten & Razi, 2009).

While studies related to Japan are more limited, work by Chihara, Sakurai, and Oller (1984), Sasaki (1984), and Sheridan, Tanaka and Hogg (2017) demonstrate that slightly altering texts to reflect culturally specific contexts yield positive results for Japanese university students in vocabulary retention and content recall. In fact, our English language program is currently involved in a government-funded research project to demonstrate the positive benefits of culturally familiar materials in English language education in Japanese universities. This, therefore, is the philosophy underpinning our language program at Otemae: use your English to talk about the things that matter to you. And those things are often related to Japanese culture.

In addition to our English language program, Otemae University has also developed a high-level, content and language integrated learning program, our Global Japan Studies program. This program aims to teach humanities and social sciences courses about Japan in English. This program is inspired in part by Japan’s government-funded, Global 30 Project, a globalization project with the goal of increasing international students studying in Japan to 300,000 (MEXT, 2008). In 13 universities in Japan, degree programs are now offered in English. These programs are hard

science programs and computer technology classes, and Japanese cultural studies courses (MEXT, 2017).

Otemae is one of the few smaller, private universities in Japan offering a degree program that can be completed almost entirely in English. Another well-known example is Ritsumeikan Asia-Pacific University, whose website notes that 80% of its courses are bilingual. The difference is that Otemae University has designed our upper-level content classes in two ways: first, we have elective courses such as Japanese literature, manga, or comparative culture classes that teach Japan-based content. The second type of course we offer is one unique to Otemae, and we want to discuss that here today.

The required courses in our program are focused mainly on comparative culture. We designed these courses to be open in both Japanese and English during the same semester. This article discusses three examples of such courses: Race, Culture, and Religion, International Peace Studies, and US and Japan Comparative Cultural Studies. The same semester these courses are offered in English, they are also offered in Japanese as *Minzoku shūkyō bunka*; *Kokusai heiwa-gaku*, and *Nichibei bunka hikakuron*. These courses all look at Japan in a global context, with explicitly international or cross-cultural frames of references (for an example of a syllabus, see Appendix A).

The courses are designed to mirror each other. They share the same broad topics that structure the course, but the way those topics are taught are different. Teachers cover the topic in different ways and use different supplementary material, but the broad philosophies and overarching take-away lessons are shared between the courses. According to schema theory, these scaffolding elements provide important context in the form of specific knowledge students bring into each lesson (Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983; Stott, 2001). By covering the same big ideas in slightly different ways, students gain several important advantages.

First, the coverage of the same ideas in Japanese and English draws on the benefits of culturally familiar scaffolding. The Japanese lessons provide enough background that the students can follow and engage when the same material is presented and expanded in different ways in English. This gives the students confidence in the classroom to engage with and voice their opinion about complicated topics such as race and peace.

Second, the structure of the courses are different. The Japanese courses tend to be large, lecture style classes with over 50 students. The English language counterparts are smaller, typically about twenty, and heavily discussion based. This gives students the chance to bring the knowledge they gain as input in Japanese and actually give meaningful English language output. The confidence gained by familiarity with the concepts and material translates into deeper and more engaged English language discussion in the classroom. Furthermore, the smaller, discussion-based classroom encourages students to ask questions about points they did not understand, or points that they disagree with.

Third, through this course students naturally learn to approach the same subject in multiple ways. Again, the overarching ideas that structure the courses are the same, but teachers approach them differently, and student questions can drive the discussion in different directions in each course. The material is expanded on in new ways. For example, the US-Japan Comparative Culture class sometimes introduced cultural texts such as socially engaged, activist poetry, slogans, or music to expand upon points related to racial violence in Japan and America. This was done with the intention of introducing authentic discourse about the topic in English, but it also served as a point of cultural comparison and showed the way popular culture understood and engaged with the broad themes introduced in the

Japanese lessons.

Finally, these courses are designed with relative freedom. Some students take only the Japanese, or only the English, and earn the same credit for either course. At the same time, students are encouraged to take both the Japanese and the English, receiving double credits.

Student Responses and Results

In order to gauge the efficacy of our approach for our students, we designed a survey for students who took both classes. We wanted to know primarily what benefits the students perceived in taking these classes.

We asked the students six questions:

1. What was the reason you chose to take the same class in two different languages?
2. Apart from language, were there other differences in the classes in terms of structure, the teaching style, the topics taught, or your understanding of the content?
3. What were some good points and some points that need improvement in the structure or the teaching style of both classes (Japanese and English)?
4. What were some of the benefits to your understanding of the subject that resulted from taking the same course in both languages?
5. What were some difficulties in understanding the subject that resulted from taking the same course in both languages?
6. What thoughts do you have about the idea of taking the same class in two different languages? Please feel free to write anything.

While the students who took both classes were limited in number, we received six responses to our survey. The answers in many ways reflected our expectations. Students said that learning the material in Japanese first or simultaneously gave them the scaffolding they needed to deepen their knowledge in the English course. Students generally stated that the difference in structure was beneficial, with the Japanese course providing detailed explanations and materials that could be reviewed at home such as notes and handouts. The group work, presentations, and discussions in the English language class allowed students to pick up on the threads of the topic that interested them most, or the questions they had. One student wrote that in the English class the instructor and the students would think through the problems presented as a group, which they found helpful.

Further, the discussion style of the English class encouraged students to use the information to develop their own opinions about the materials. While some students noted this was a difficulty in the English class, they also stated it was a benefit, as a second student said: "It was difficult to give my opinion in the homework report every week, but my logical thinking skills and English skills improved." Another student echoed this, stating that the mirrored course structure allowed them "to easily remember the [specialized] English vocabulary" without really studying.

That said, students did note that the unevenness in English levels made the English-language content courses difficult at times, with some students not able to follow the discussion. At the same time, the feedback was largely

positive. For example, one student wrote, “Because different teachers taught in different languages, although the topic was the same, the culture and values were different, and this was a very good structure.” Several students also pointed out that the inclusion of exchange students who did not have strong Japanese language skills in the English language classes brought further viewpoints to the topics discussed. In all of our respondents, this way of introducing multiple approaches to the same issue was viewed positively.

Conclusion

Our research into the effectiveness of this course design continues. The next step is to interview only those who take the Japanese or only take the English and measure their satisfaction and learning outcomes against the students who have taken both. At the same time, we believe it merits further attention because the mirror nature of this program means that as long as two faculty members are willing to cooperate, it is fairly easy to implement. In conclusion, these preliminary results are very positive and indicate that such a program yields clear benefits to students.

Bio Data

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Appendix A. An example of a paired syllabus

Kokusai heiva gaku/ International Peace Studies

開講年度	2016	開講学期	春学期
科目コード	ZG0439	授業コード	40753
科目名	国際平和学	開講曜日・時限	木曜2限
担当教員名【代表】	安藤 幸一 (Koichi Ando)		
担当教員			
授業形態	講義		
単位数	2単位		
メジャー名	【平成23～25年度入学生】国際コミュニケーション 【平成26年度以降入学生】英語コミュニケーション、国際関係学		
授業の目的	世界でおきていること、ことに平和を壊す力に無関心でないために、国際関係を分析、理解するための知識と方法を学ぶ。		
授業の内容			
① 能力開発メソッド	映像教材とディスカッション、ディベート、発表		
② 課題レポート等	第2回から第14回講義まで10-15分の講義レポート作成。未完了の場合は宿題 講義レポートは、毎回4段階で評価、最終評価の重要な一部となる。		
③ 授業概要	21世紀初頭の世界、各地で紛争が続いています。現代国際情勢を俯瞰し、人類にとって安全で 住みやすい持続可能な平和を作るための方策について、学び考えていきます。		
授業時間外学習	毎回の講義の復習と、次回講義の予習を、ノートを使って行う。 科目専用のノートを用意してください。		
授業計画			
	目的	主題	概要
01	知識／能力	授業紹介	第2回以降の各講義の概略、課題、履修ルール説明、質疑応答
02	知識／能力	9・11 同時多発テロ以降の世界	2001年のアメリカを標的とした同時多発テロを境として、世界は大きく変化した。紛争や戦争の拡充について分析し国際社会の大きな変化について学び考える。
03	知識／能力	アメリカの戦争と外交政策	イラク戦争に象徴的に見られるアメリカの軍事戦略と外交政策の大きな変化を分析し、今後の世界情勢について学び考える。
04	知識／能力	開発と貧困	先進国、途上国の意味について考え、開発によってもたらされた負の部分、貧困の再生産について学び考える。
05	知識／能力	資本主義の歴史	現代世界を覆いつくした資本主義という経済制度の発生と発展の歴史を学び、大きな富や豊かな生活と同時に貧困や戦争を生み出す、そのシステムについて学び考える。
06	知識／能力	食糧から見る世界の格差	世界は、全人口の2倍を養うに足る食糧を生産しながら、なぜ貧困や飢えが存在するのか、食糧という観点から格差の原因を探る。
07	知識／能力	キューバの実験	アメリカから半世紀以上にわたる経済制裁を受けながら、その独自の方法で生き延びる社会主義の小国、キューバについて学び、これからの世界の方途を考える。
08	知識／能力	軍隊を放棄した国：コスタリカ	南北アメリカ大陸の結節点にあり、外交による防衛政策をとり、軍隊を放棄した小国、コスタリカについて学び、平和の方法を考える。
09	知識／能力	非武装中立	現代国際社会の中での様々な「中立」のありかたについて学び、ことに武力をもたずに中立を保つ方法について学び考える。
10	知識／能力	国際紛争の根源：イスラエルとパレスチナ	世界の紛争の震源ともいわれる、60年にも及ぶイスラエル・パレスチナ紛争、民族や宗教問題を含んだ根深い対立の歴史について学び、平和共存に向けた道程を考える。
11	知識／能力	兵士の心の傷	実際に戦闘を行う当事者である兵士の目から見た戦争、そして兵士が受ける心の傷について学びながら、戦争のもたらす被害を考える。
12	知識／能力	戦争はなぜ起こるのか	現代の戦争がおこる理由について、様々な角度から分析し、グローバル化する世界における平和のありかたを考える。
13	知識／能力	被爆国、日本の役割	人類史上、唯一の被爆国として、これからの世界平和にとって果たすべき、日本の役割を学び考える。
14	知識／能力	持続可能な平和の創り	平和・戦争、経済、環境、国際関係等のキー
			講義レポート

開講年度	2016		開講学期	秋学期	
科目コード	ZG0476		授業コード	45712	
科目名	International Peace Studies (GJS) 300			開講曜日・時限	月曜2限
担当教員名【代表】	田中 キャサリン (Kathryn M. Tanaka)				
担当教員	リカ・クラナ、アンドリュー・M				
授業形態	講義、				
単位数	2単位				
メジャー名	【平成26年度以降入学生】英語コミュニケーション、国際関係学				
授業の目的	Students will be introduced to concepts of international relations to equip them with knowledge and methods to critically analyze peace building				
授業の内容					
① 能力開発メソッド	Videos, discussion, debate and group work				
② 課題レポート等	Student must hand in weekly report in el-campus				
③ 授業概要	Students will be introduced to concepts of international relations, peace building, diplomacy and awareness of other people's plight.				
授業時間外学習					
授業計画					
	目的	主題	概要	授業時間外学習	
01	知識／能力	Introduction to the course	Course introduction, class policy on attendance, assessment, and group projects. What is Peace?	Weekly report	
02	知識／能力	The aftermath of 911	How did the 911 change not the only U.S.A but the the world: 3 Policy shifts	weekly report	
03	知識／能力	Modern war history	To examine the history of the modern wars and U.S. foreign policy	weekly report	
04	知識／能力	Poverty and Development	Poverty and development go hand in hand to keep the status quo	weekly report	
05	知識／能力	Capitalism	What is capitalism? You will be introduce to the basics ideas of capitalism	weekly report	
06	知識／能力	Poverty and Food	There is an overabundance of food in certain places while many starve to death. We will examine the relationship of poverty to food accumulation	weekly report	
07	知識／能力	Capitalism and Socialism	We will examine a socialist country, Cuba. Is it successful? Through Cuba, we can compare socialism and capitalism	weekly report	
08	知識／能力	A country without an army	We will examine the country without an army, Costa Rica. How can Costa Rica exist without an army to defend itself from aggression from other countries?	weekly report	
09	知識／能力	Article 9: The Peace Constitution of Japan	We will answer the question, "Can a country stay neutral using the Peace Constitution?"	weekly report	
10	知識／能力	Palestinian and Israel Debacle	How does the continued conflict between Israel and Palestine affects the entire world?	weekly report	
11	知識／能力	Soldiers in wars and after wars	How are soldiers affected by wars. What is PTSD? What happens to them after coming home?	weekly report	
12	知識／能力	The globalization of wars	Why do wars happen? We will examine the roots of war and its affect on human civilization	weekly report	
13	知識／能力	Peacemaker	Japan is the only country that was bombed not once but twice using the atomic bomb. With its existing Peace Constitution and its rapid economic development after the WWI, can Japan show the world that peace is the way?	weekly report	
14	知識／能力	Sustainable Peace	Can we build a sustainable peace? Peace, war, economy, environment, economy, international relations, etc. base on these, how can we build peace that will last a long time in our daily life.	weekly report	