

Developing a support course for bilingual immersion students in Japan

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Abstract

The economic situation in Japan is contributing to a need for increased bilingualism in Japan, predominantly English/Japanese bilingualism, since there is a rise in international companies that are establishing branches in Japan (Reedy, 2001). Therefore the Japanese government has created important changes in English language education in Japan and one of these radical changes was to establish Immersion schools. In Japan, the idea of emphasizing the learning of English as a subject (content) and not as a foreign language is still a very revolutionary idea. As a result, English immersion students in Japan lack opportunities to use English outside the class and their motivation toward studying English tends to diminish. This project includes a literature review and a small needs analysis conducted at two Immersion schools. Also, this after school support course provides supplementary activities created for an after school course for Japanese immersion students to provide immersion students with opportunities to use English outside the class and aid them in overcoming the challenges they face in studying content in English.

Literature review

This project explores immersion education as one aspect of bilingual education. Moreover, this study specifically focuses on immersion education in Japan, since in Japan immersion education is innovative in terms of teaching English. The results showed that English immersion schools are facing challenges due to there being no specific program in teaching English compared to Japanese public school programs. The biggest challenge facing English Immersion schools is creating a pure English immersion environment. Therefore, this project created a support program to provide more opportunities for students to use English outside the class.

Definition of Bilingualism

Researchers provide various definitions of bilingualism. For instance, Page (2012) and Steiner & Hayes (2008) define bilingualism as the ability to speak, read, write, or even understand in two languages. In addition, Kamada (2000) presents different categories of bilinguals: Receptive bilinguals where subjects can comprehend the minority language (ML), however are able to produce only the majority language in response; Partially productive bilinguals where subjects can understand the ML, however sometimes are unable to produce the ML for reasons of vocabulary limitation; Productive Developing Bilinguals where subjects understand and produce the ML at (or near) native level and where subjects have no literacy training in the ML; and Productive Developing Bilinguals and Bi-literates where subjects understand and produce the ML at (or near) a native level with some writing and reading abilities in both languages.

As a result, a specific definition of bilingualism to identify and unify all fields of bilingualism does not exist. In addition, because bilingualism is not a static concept, but rather an ever-changing dynamic; it has proven very hard to describe all its various competencies, functions and identifications (Kamada, 1999; Baker & Jones, 1998). Although the definition of bilingualism and identification of bilinguals is a complicated task, this project uses Productive Developing Bilingual and Biliterate to define bilinguals based on Kamada's (2000) study.

Individual, parental, and societal attitudes toward bilingualism

Researchers discuss several factors that affect attitudes toward bilingualism, such as social, parental and individual factors. Social and parental attitudes are factors that may support or hinder the successful acquisition of bilingualism for a child (Cummins, 2003; Baker, 1995). Also a child's individual attitude affects his/her ability to acquire two languages (McGroarty, 1996; Backer, 1992).

McCollum (1993) supports the view that the school atmosphere regarding bilingualism, peer pressure, and language power at school and in society at large affect a bilingual individual's use of languages and attitude toward bilingualism. Hayashi (2005) also proves that the prestige language in the living community affects the language use and language choice of students and, in addition, their proficiency.

McGroarty (1996) states, that parental attitudes toward languages play an important role in children's own choice of language. McGroarty (1996) also explains that parental attitudes toward their children's language choice based on the parents' personal histories and experiences affects

their children's view of wider cultural themes. For instance, some parents are eager for their child to acquire the family standard language, for the reason that they feel that their own language is preferable. However many parents want to develop bilingual skills for their own lives and their children's lives because they think that knowing two languages will help their children in their future careers and education.

However, Takeuchi (2010) points out that parent's positive attitudes toward bilinguals sometimes may impact negatively on children. Children will feel obligated to continue what the parents have been encouraging even if the children are given a choice. In other words, children should make their own decisions regarding language choice, which can then lead to a deepening of their understanding of two different languages and cultures.

Bilingual education

Researchers agree that bilingual education is education where two languages are used (Martin, 2012; Hamers & Blanc, 2000; Garcia, 2009). However investigators also provide some differences in bilingual education. For instance Martin (2012) describes bilingual education as education that is conducted half in one language and half in another. Hamers and Blanc (2000) define bilingual education as 'any system of school education in which, at a given moment in time and for a varying amount of time, simultaneously or consecutively, instruction is planned and given in at least two languages'. Garcia (2009) agrees with Hamers and Blanc (2000) and adds that bilingual education is education where more than one language, and/or language variety is used in whatever combination. Baker (2011) describes bilingual education as 'a simplistic label for a complex phenomenon'. Baker (2011) presents four goals for bilingual education. The overarching goal of bilingual education is to educate meaningfully with some type of bilingualism. The academic goal of bilingual education is to educate bilingually and for students to be able to function across cultures. Language in bilingual education is used as the medium of instruction. The pedagogical emphasis of bilingual education is to integrate language and content. Baker and Jones (1998) and Garcia (2009) provide various types and criteria of bilingual education such as mainstream bilinguals, transitional, and immersion education. However the development of this project will focus on immersion education.

Immersion schools

Genesee (1984) defines immersion education as education in which 50% or more of the school curriculum is taught in the students' foreign language. Johnson and Swain (1997) and Hamers & Blanc (2000) describe types of immersion education and divide all programs into three parts: early total immersion, L1 (the majority language) dominant partial immersion and late

immersion. Hamers & Blanc (2000) add that these types can also be combined in various ways.

Bostwick (2001) and Johnson & Swain (1997) add an important point, that in immersion schools students' foreign language is not the subject of instruction, rather it is the medium of instruction through which the majority of academic subjects, such as math, science, social studies and other academic classes, are taught. The goal of immersion education is to develop bilingualism and bi-literacy in majority language students (Bostwick, 2001). Johnson & Swain (1997) mention that the academic curriculum of immersion schools should connect with the particular country's education system and also that the classroom culture is the same in the L1 society. The learning context is one where the L2 or foreign language is restricted to the classroom.

Immersion schools in Japan

To develop high proficiency in English the Japanese government has established important changes in English language education in Japan, such as the Assistant English Teacher program (Assistant Language Teacher (ALT)), and The Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) program (Kitao, Kitao, Nozava & Yamamoto, 1985; Reedy, 2001; Okuno, 2007). Moreover the Japanese Ministry of education and the Shizuoka Prefectural Board of Education established the first English immersion school in Shizuoka in 1992; Katoh Gakuen (Kamada, 2000). According to Kanno (2003), immersion students in Japan receive two thirds of instruction in English; by Grade 4 the proportion becomes approximately 50% English and 50% Japanese and continues at the same percentage until the end of the program. The immersion students use English translated textbooks that have the same content as the textbooks in the regular program. After each unit is completed, students in both programs should be able to pass the same test in Japanese. Bostwick (2001) states that students in the immersion schools are Japanese and almost all of these students start the immersion program with little to no English speaking ability. While students come from a fairly wide range of socioeconomic backgrounds, the majority of students come from middle or upper-middle class families. Students come from homes where the English environment is limited.

Kamada (2000) explains the difference between international schools and immersion schools. Kamada (2000) mentions that international schools in Japan prepare mostly foreigners with high English literacy skills for higher education overseas while the majority of the immersion students in Japan are Japanese students who have never lived abroad and have entered into this program with zero English proficiency. These schools use the same Japanese curriculum, but with all courses taught in English by native speaking teachers in the immersion track in lower

elementary grades, except for a Japanese language (kokugo) course taught by Japanese teachers. Progressively the Japanese medium of instruction is increased in the curriculum in the higher grades until reaching about 50:50, English to Japanese medium. The idea of emphasizing the content and not the language itself to teach English, is still a very revolutionary idea in Japan (Kamada, 2000).

Rational for the project

Purpose of the project

As English is a minority language in Japan and immersion students in Japan lack opportunities to use English outside the class (Hayashi, 2005), Immersion students in Japan have low motivation toward studying English especially as students respond in Japanese and do not understand the reason why they must study English (Kanno, 2003). Moreover, students tend to keep silent and not produce English in the class. One reason is as Japanese students' age they attempt to avoid speaking imperfect English. Another problem in immersion classes is that Japanese students have difficulties in code-switching between the two languages. Moreover, immersion teachers emphasize content over grammatical aspects of the English language (Kamada, 2000).

The purpose of this project is to create supplementary activities for an after school course designed for Immersion students in Japan (Receptive Bilingual-subjects who can understand, but produce only Japanese in response) to provide them with opportunities to use English outside the classroom.

Goals:

This project contains three goals:

1. Students will be able to overcome grammar difficulties. As immersion teachers focus more on content than grammar, this project will create materials to improve students' grammar difficulties. These activities will consolidate both previously learned grammatical points (e.g. prepositions, nouns, verbs, and etc.) and improve current grammar constructions. Immersion students are not going to learn additional grammar only those grammar constructions from one of the grammar books used by the immersion school.
2. Students will be able to develop a positive attitude toward English education. Since motivation is an important part of a successful educational process. Therefore activities will be created to motivate students to participate in class by reducing their anxiety.

3. Students will be able to understand cross cultural differences and communicate with English speakers in a variety of situations. In this project, students will be able to think critically regarding differences between Japanese and other cultures.

Significance of the Project

As Immersion education is a revolutionary idea in Japan, there are no definite structures (rules) for implementing immersion programs in Japan even though there is a fixed structure for Japanese public schools. As a result, this project will be useful for a targeted group of teachers interested in immersion education, who face challenges in their classes and wish to make their classes more effective. Also, this project will be useful for teachers who want to provide more communication activities to maximize students speaking time in their classes. Those teachers may also use some activities or acquire other ideas to make their classes more communicative.

This project will be useful for students who want to have more opportunities to communicate in English through improving grammar outside the class. Since this after school program uses the four skills (listening, reading, writing, and speaking), students can also improve their listening, writing, reading, and speaking skills. Students also will be able to improve their critical thinking.

Moreover, this project will be beneficial for parents and Immersion schools who want to provide opportunities for their children and students to communication in English.

Methodology

In order to create criteria and a syllabus for an after school support program for Japanese immersion students that provides additional opportunities for them to communicate a needs analysis was conducted. The participants in this project include: two principals of two immersion schools: Gunma Kokusai Academy and Columbia International School, which cater to immersion bilingual education in Japan; five teachers; and 45 immersion high school students (between the ages of 16-18) who have either one or two Japanese parents.

Instruments/ Methodology

This project interviewed principals to gather such kinds of information as school goals and objectives, and kind of difficulties the school faces. In addition, teachers were interviewed to gather such kinds of information as their opinions toward their English classes, grammar points studied and academic skills.

Moreover, this project used Downes' (2001) questionnaires for students to investigate their attitudes toward English language learning and also to gather the same kind of information:

attitude toward immersion, and student motivation.

In addition, this project conducted classroom observations and took detailed notes and records.

Principals interview analysis from Gunma International Academy and Columbia school.

Before creating this after school support, it was important to know the goals of immersion schools. As a result this project created supplementary activities that connect to the curriculum of the immersion schools. Therefore, the principal of the Columbia International School stated: “The goal of our school is to create a challenging and supportive lifelong learning environment that allows students to develop an appreciation of different cultures and perspectives as well as possess an excellent command of the English language and to have the knowledge and skills to be successful global citizens in the 21st century”. The principal of Gunma Kokusai Academy expressed the view: “The goals of our school are to empower students with the skills and knowledge necessary to contribute to, and provide leadership in, an ever-advancing global community, with the implementation of an English immersion-based curriculum. Another goal is to nurture people who will pursue distinguished careers in diverse fields in Japan and abroad”. Also according to Reedy (2001), currently Japanese companies require bilingual employees (Japanese/English) who can communicate appropriately; therefore one of the goals of this teaching and learning general goal is that students will be able to communicate in English. In addition, communication skills and knowledge of grammar will be useful when students enter Japanese universities since MEXT requires Japanese universities to conduct English-medium classes. Also the Japanese Ministry recommends Japanese universities include content-based classes in English; therefore when students acquire English proficiency in this after school course, they can concentrate on content rather than on improving their communication skills or the language itself (MEXT, 2011). Also if students are going to study abroad, communicative skills and grammar will be essential for those students, since they will be able to communicate with native and nonnative speakers. Therefore, this after school course is beneficial and useful for those students as well.

Also, before creating the project, it was important to research the challenges immersion schools face. The principal from Gunma Academy responded that one of the challenges is to establish an “English speaking Policy” inside the school. Another challenge is to develop a shared understanding between Japanese teachers and non-Japanese teachers, and to build closer ties between them. This project may address the first challenge of establishing an English speaking policy by providing supplementary activities to help students to communicate. In addition one of

the challenges in Columbia International School is to solve a problem with student complaints about difficult material. Therefore this project provided adequate material for Japanese immersion students in the low to upper intermediate and advanced levels.

Another main issue was how immersion schools motivate their students to study English to understand how this teaching and learning project can provide additional support to motivate students. The principal of Gunma Kokusai Academy stated: “We have been trying to establish our English Policy”. The principal of Columbia school responded that teachers form peer groups amongst the students where they challenge and encourage students to speak only in English. The result shows that Gunma Kokusai Academy and Columbia school are still in the process of establishing an English-speaking environment outside the classroom. Therefore this after school support is essential to help establish this policy at these schools.

According Kamada (2000), the focus in immersion schools is on the context rather than on grammar; however in Japan there is much emphasis on grammar (Kitao et al, 1985). In Gunma Kokusai Academy and Columbia school, grammar is taught once a week. The principals of the two immersion schools mentioned that grammar is important and an essential aspect in studying English; however they cannot lay much emphasis on it. Therefore this after school support is created to help Japanese immersion students to understand grammar better. This project also used grammar constructions from a textbook used by the one of the immersion schools “Focus on grammar” and a topic-based syllabus so students can discuss different topics. Topics were also selected from one of the immersion school textbooks “Engage Level 3” (Artusi & Manin, 2007) and from the textbook for upper-intermediate students “New Interchange 3” (Richards, Hull, & Proctor, 2001) since the students of this project are senior high school students from low to upper intermediate levels of English proficiency.

Another main point was to research how culture is presented in immersion schools since culture is an important issue. The principal of Gunma Kokusai Academy answered that culture is presented through various field trips to cultural sites in Japan and trips overseas to native English speaking countries such as New Zealand, Australia, the USA, and also school events. The principal from Columbia school also responded that they send their students overseas and also through events (Halloween party, Christmas party, etc.) and classes such as history, geography, and art students are exposed to aspects of culture. However, Moran (2001) expresses that field trips, subjects, and events are not enough to present culture since there are many other ways to present culture such as video, pictures, and stories. Therefore this after school program used additional materials to introduce culture in the classes since one of the goals of this project is that

students are able to understand cross cultural differences.

In addition, the principals provided some recommendations for this project. The principal from Gunma Kokusai Academy suggested that after-school programs would prove beneficial. An after-school class on critical thinking for 40 minutes four days a week would be good. It would be short enough to not conflict with bus schedules yet long enough to teach a specific critical thinking skill. The principal from Columbia school also expressed the view that an after school program would be beneficial for their school. He also suggested including teaching critical skills. Therefore this project included critical thinking skills in its activities.

Teacher interview analysis from Gunma International Academy and Columbia school.

With the permission of the principals, five English teachers, A, B, C, D, and E were interviewed. Questions for teacher interviews were divided into three parts: opinion toward English classes, questions about grammar points, and academic skills.

However, all teachers still face challenges in their classes. The teachers of both schools maintained different levels of students in the class. The issue is to create activities that will help all students to improve their skills in English. Also, because of Japanese immersion student shyness and anxiety to communicate with incorrect English, all the teachers have to create additional materials to help students to overcome their shyness. Teachers A, C, D, and E prefer to use pair or group work, and then ask students one by one to express their opinions. This teaching and learning project also used a grammar textbook from one of the immersion schools; "Focus on grammar". Since the teachers have flexibility to choose additional materials this program also used additional materials and textbooks. In practice, providing pair and group work is not enough for students to comprehend English grammar, since according to Larsen-Freeman & Anderson (2011), each student has a different style of learning. Therefore this after school support program project used elements from Multiple Intelligences Theory such as: visual/spatial, verbal/linguistic, body/kinesthetic and interpersonal intelligences, so students can use many learning input styles.

The immersion teachers spend at least 20-30% of the class on grammar when the class lasts 50 minutes. Teachers A, B, C, and D responded that students need to study grammar more than the time available during class time because in grade 10 the grammar constructions gradually become more difficult and complicated. Moreover, Japanese immersion students do not use English outside the class and there are students who are not motivated to study English. Therefore this program will provide more opportunities to use English outside the class. Also, as Nation and Newton (2009) mention a well-organized course should integrate the four skills: writing, reading, listening, and speaking. In addition, Larsen-Freeman & Anderson (2011)

emphasize that each student has a different style of learning. In this course students will be able to study English grammar through the four skills: writing, listening, speaking, and reading. Also, this after school program uses elements from Multiple Intelligences theory such as: visual/spatial, verbal/linguistic, body/kinesthetic, and interpersonal intelligences, so students can use variety of learning input styles to study English grammar.

However, Teachers A, B, and E mentioned that Japanese immersion students need more activities to improve their critical thinking. Also all teachers suggested creating activities to improve students' motivation, which is extremely important in teaching English. Therefore this program uses such critical thinking strategies as agreement and disagreement, expressing thoughts about a topic and supporting ideas. In addition, this course created activities to increase student motivation. One of the activities to improve student motivation is writing for their pleasure.

Observation analysis.

The results from observation showed that in the classrooms, students spoke more Japanese than English. While all communication between students and teachers was conducted in English, students rarely spoke English among their peers. As the 'English only policy' exists, this researcher believes teachers should be stricter in enforcing the policy. In addition, when a teacher asked a student a question, this student hesitated to respond. Also the classes tended to be teacher-centered where teachers talked most of the class.

More often than not, English Immersion schools rely on native Japanese teachers to teach English. In this situation there are both positive and negative effects. In the positive, Japanese students feel more comfortable being taught by native Japanese teachers. There is naturally a common bond between teacher and student that is more difficult to achieve with foreign teachers. With the high respect shown to native Japanese teachers, students strive harder to learn English. In observations, native Japanese teachers of English had good control over their students. However, through observation the results showed that Japanese teachers tended to use Grammar-Translation methods (translation from Japanese to English and from English to Japanese).

Results from student questionnaires.

This project distributed a questionnaire to students where students were asked some questions about how they felt about learning in an English Immersion school, other questions included the reason why they study in an English Immersion school. Many said it was their parents' choice and that they just want to please their parents. Some students said that they

know that learning English will help them achieve their life goals. A few students who already know what career they want in the future say that English will allow them to study and work anywhere in the world. Only a very few said that they study English for its own sake because it is interesting. Almost all students said they did not choose to study at their school and that they did not really have an opinion on whether their school was better or worse than other English schools. Many said that they were happy with their school because they have good friends there.

In asking the students about their parent's interest in English Immersion they said that their parents strongly motivated them to study English. Almost all students felt that their parents pressure them to learn English. They said that parents are very strict in making sure they maintain high marks in English.

Also, to questions about motivation most of the students answered that they do very well in the classes that are taught in Japanese. In addition, students prefer classes in Japanese to those in English, as they certainly can understand the ideas of the class when the classes are taught in Japanese. To the question of what difficulties they face in English class, the majority of students answered that even when they do not understand they are unable to ask for clarification because they are nervous and because they do not know how to ask a question, as the teacher talks most of the time. Most students believed that they could understand the teacher well enough and that they expected to receive good marks. Also students answered that they felt more anxious when a test is given in English. On the question regarding skills they would like to improve, the majority of students answered speaking and listening. Some of them want to improve writing skills and a few said reading. Therefore this project uses activities where students must show their understanding of the materials and also improve their four skills. Moreover, this project, through activities and a positive environment, encourages students to enjoy studying English (i.e. reduce student anxiety) and encourage students to communicate. This project does not use tests, rather students should create a group project (based on the topics of the syllabus) in the middle and at the end of the course. In addition, Cummins (1998) also suggests that educators in immersion programs should encourage students to create group projects focusing on structural, sociolinguistic, and socio-political aspects of language, in other words, language and discourse should become the focus of study.

Discussion.

Overall from extensive classroom observation and interviews with principals, teachers, and students, the results showed that English Immersion schools in Japan face challenges. The biggest challenge facing English Immersion schools is creating a pure English immersion

environment. For those schools, it is very difficult to enforce an English only policy in school. Students and educators clearly expressed their desire to maintain an English only policy, but that it was not working. Without a total English environment students are not advancing in English skills as quickly as expected. As an example, observation showed that in class students rarely spoke English among their peers even if communication between students and teacher was conducted in English. Therefore, the teacher in this course should encourage students to communicate in English, and establish some rules for students to prohibit them from talking Japanese, which may be part of an “English only” policy. The teacher should ask students the reason why they attend this class and provide some options (i.e. to talk in Japanese or to improve their English speaking skills). Students must clearly understand why they participate in class and why they have to communicate in English (i.e. because this is an English communication class). Also observation results showed that when a teacher asked a student a question, this student hesitated to respond. Therefore, the teacher should explain that students should not worry about making mistakes because it is only through mistakes that we learn. On the other hand, the teacher should indirectly correct student errors, since students may think that their error is correct, which may further lead to wrong habits in student speech. Moreover, the classes tended to be teacher-centered where teachers talked most of the class. Therefore, teachers should be more careful to balance their talking time with students talking time. As a result, recording the class procedure or asking another teacher to observe a class and provide feedback of the class is important. The teacher in this project should implement a more student-centered approach to provide opportunities for students to ask questions if necessary or maximize discussions.

However, schools have tried various ways to encourage their students to speak only in English. Gunma Kokusai Academy and Columbia International School have risen to the challenge by offering several lengthy field trips to English speaking countries. On such trips students see more clearly the relevance of learning English. Motivation to speak English occurs naturally on such trips out of necessity, but also from a desire to make friends with foreign peers. Although these trips positively affect student attitude toward studying English, these trips should not count as a true lasting English Immersion, for the reason that students return to a monolingual Japanese environment.

Educators and students have expressed a desire for parents learn and use English in the home. Communities in places like Gunma have no English community as can be found in Tokyo so English needs to be spoken as much as possible in the home. Parents greatly support their students learning English, but parents do not feel a need to learn English themselves. One of the

teachers at Gunma Kokusai Academy believes that a possible solution is for classes to be offered to parents after school. The classes could be just basic conversational classes. If children see a united effort of teachers, administration and parents to learn and speak English they will try much harder. However parents have not enough time to study English; therefore students lack opportunities to use English outside class. For that reason, this after school program was created to provide additional English language support for immersion students.

Also, in questionnaires with students, they repeatedly responded that they do not know the reason why they learn English. All they seem to know and feel is that they must speak English because their parents are paying money and so they are obligated to learn. Most Japanese students use English only in the classroom. Once school is done, they return to a total Japanese language environment. English is rarely used outside of school. Japanese is spoken in the home and on the street. To the Japanese student there seems no purpose in learning English because there seems to be no real-world purpose to it. So how can Japanese students find true motivation to learn English? Through casual interaction with students and teachers this researcher discovered a number of ways in which motivation to speak English can be enhanced.

Students need to build relationships with native English speakers and foreigners who can speak English to find the motivation to learn English. This is a great challenge in places in Japan such as Ota-Shi, Gunma where English is never spoken. Ota-Shi is a conservative Japanese community where there is little chance for Japanese immersion students to use the English they learnt in school. Columbia school and Gunma Kokusai Academy see the need for their students to build relationships with native English speakers so they organize school trips to English speaking countries, such as the United States, New Zealand, and Australia. In visiting these English countries the Japanese students have no choice but to use English out of necessity. During the trips, students travel to a city where they attend English-speaking schools for different lengths of time. They take all their classes with native English speakers. Columbia and Gunma Kokusai Academy provided samples of emails sent back from a current trip. These emails reflected how successful the trip was to motivate students to learn English. Many students commented on how they were glad and surprised at their level of English. Their motivation to speak English came from the necessity to make friends. The Japanese students are very curious about these countries and naturally made friends. This gave them a natural motivation to use the English they know. Also, the Japanese students were placed with English host families. The host families spoke no Japanese, making it necessary to conduct all communication in English. The Japanese students were shy, but the warm welcome of those families soon broke down any cultural walls. Japanese

students wrote about how they could now see a need to learn English. Columbia school and Gunma Kokusai Academy hope their students will return with renewed interest in learning English as friendship is a strong motivator.

The positive effects of a trip to an English speaking country are great, but the reality is that it is not enough. The trip can only last so long and the goal is for students to be immersed in an English-speaking environment for more than a month. Some teachers at Immersion schools have proposed the idea of having foreign native English-speaking students in their classes. Earlier this year Gunma Kokusai Academy invited an opera singer from Vienna Austria to do a six-week music workshop. The singer's daughter came along and attended tenth grade classes. All the students were very curious about her and strove to use their best English to make friends with her. It is through the pure motivation of friendship that Japanese students will learn English. However after students come back from the English-speaking countries they fall into Japanese society where students do not use English outside the class (i.e. students lack opportunities to use English outside the class); therefore their English proficiency is decreasing. Therefore this after school support for Japanese immersion students provides more opportunities to use English outside the class to maintain their English communication skills.

Lesson and Course Organization.

The general goal of this after school support is that Japanese immersion senior high school students will be able to communicate using appropriate grammar constructions by discussing the specific topics of the class. These topics provide more opportunities for Japanese immersion students to communicate inside and outside the class. Also specific goals of this after school support are: students will be able to overcome grammar difficulties and develop a positive attitude toward English education, and students will be able to understand cross cultural differences and communicate with English speakers in a variety of situations. To achieve these goals, this program uses a grammar and topic-based syllabus. Moreover, to achieve the first specific goal of the program, students will be able to use four skills: writing, reading, listening and speaking as well as elements of Multiple Intelligences theory such as visual/spatial, verbal/linguistic, body/kinesthetic, auditory, and interpersonal skills. To achieve the second specific goal the teacher provides positive feedback and creates a comfortable environment in the class. To achieve the third specific goal the teacher uses various materials to introduce culture.

The course is a 17-week course, classes are conducted four times a week based on the schedule of one of the immersion senior high schools, and classes are 40-minutes long based on requirements from principals. Each week a new topic is provided and one or two of the four skills

are integrated with discussions (see table 2). For instance after reading a story, students will be able to discuss this story. (see Appendix for an example)Also, after listening to a dialogue, students will discuss the dialogue.

Table 2 Syllabus (grammar and topic-focus syllabus)

Week and class	Topic/culture	Grammar	Skills work
1/1-4	Dates and Personalities Cross-cultural dating	Relative pronouns as subjects and objects; Relatives pronouns and Infinitives	Speaking Listening Writing Reading Express and support ideas
2/1-4	Foreign exchange Cross-cultural greetings	Simple Present and Present Progressive	Speaking Listening Writing Reading Compare and contrast Express and support ideas
3/1-4	Creative minds Creations by different famous persons	Simple Past and Past Progressive	Speaking Listening Writing Reading Express and support idea
4/1-4	I've never heard of that Cross-cultural cuisines	Present Perfect and Present Perfect Progressive	Speaking Listening Writing Reading Express and support ideas
5/1-4	Life issues Experiences in volunteering in different countries	Past Perfect and Past Perfect Progressive	Speaking Listening Writing Reading Express and support ideas Compare and contrast
6/1-4	Future life Future progress of different countries	Future Simple and Future Perfect	Speaking Listening Writing Reading Express and support ideas Compare with Japan
7/1-4	Behavior	So, Too, Neither, No, Either, and But	Speaking Listening Writing Reading Express and support ideas
8/1-4	Mid-term project		
9/1-4	Career moves Discussing different kind of job in various countries.	Gerunds as subject and object: Gerunds and Infinitives	Speaking Listening Writing Reading Express and support ideas Discuss advantages and disadvantages

10/1-4	Do the right things	Let, Help	Speaking Listening Writing Reading Express and support ideas
11/1-4	Relationship Different kinds of relationship in cross-cultural movies	Phrasal Verbs: Separable and Inseparable	Speaking Listening Writing Reading Express and support ideas
12/1-4	The right stuff	Infinitive clauses and phrases of purpose: in order to, in order for	Speaking Listening Writing Reading Express and support ideas
13/1-4	A star is made	Passive (simple present and simple past)	Speaking Listening Writing Reading Express and support ideas
14/1-4	There should be a Law	Modals and Similar Expressions	Speaking Listening Writing Reading Express and support ideas
15/1-4	Behind the scenes Famous movies of different countries	The Passive with Modals and Similar Expressions	Speaking Listening Writing Reading Express and support ideas
16/1-4	Challenges and accomplishments Discussing how people all over the world accomplish their challenges	Causative and the Passive Causative	Speaking Listening Writing Reading Express and support idea
17/1-4	Final project		

This after school program is created for immersion schools and employs a grammar and a topic-based syllabus. Therefore this after school project uses grammar structures from the grammar book used by one of the immersion schools, called “Focus on grammar” (Fuchs & Bonner, 2005). Also some topics were chosen from one of the immersion school textbooks called “Engage Level 3” (Artusi & Manin, 2007). These two textbooks were chosen as they are designed for students in upper-intermediate and advanced levels. Immersion senior high school students are students from low to upper-intermediate levels. Since immersion teachers complained that their students have different English proficiency levels causing challenges in the classroom, this after school course uses different print and video materials and texts from different sources in order to create understandable materials to improve the English proficiency skills of all students from low to upper-intermediate levels. Although these textbooks are for upper-intermediate and advanced

levels, students should challenge themselves and develop their English proficiency and not stay at the same level. In turn, the teacher for this after school course should simplify the information in these textbooks through providing different materials.

Also classes will follow the sequence below (Table 3). For instance, each class the teacher checks attendance and homework preparation to grade students. Therefore the students become familiar with what the teacher expects from them. Also, after checking attendance and homework preparation, the teacher uses recycled activities, such as warm-up questions, explanation of new grammar, listening the dialogue, and etc. This will reduce student anxiety because students will know what to expect from the lesson.

Table 3

<p>The sequence of the classes</p> <p>Class 1</p> <p>Checking attendance</p> <p>Homework preparation</p> <p>Warm-up questions</p> <p>Explaining new grammar</p> <p>Practicing in groups through using kinesthetic elements of learning</p> <p>Listening to a dialogue/watching a video and answering questions</p> <p>Explaining homework</p> <p>Class 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Checking attendance - Checking homework - Speaking fluency with time pressure (Nation & Newton, 2009) - Checking the previous grammar in groups - Listening to a dialogue - Quick writing -students check their vocabulary afterwards -Explaining homework (read a story) <p>Class 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Checking attendance - Checking homework and discuss in groups - Listening to a dialogue and discuss - Reading a story and discuss - Explaining homework <p>Class 4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Checking attendance - Checking homework and discuss in groups - Participating in an interview - Writing a story in class using brainstorming, mapping, etc. - Explaining homework

Assessment

The teacher assesses students based on homework, mid-term and final projects, attendance, and participation in class (see table 4).

Table 4 Assessment

Homework	17x2 = 34%
Participation	10%
Attendance	10%
Mid-term project	20%
Final project	20%

Homework preparation is 34% of the final grade. The teacher checks homework every time and provides 2% for each lesson if homework is completed. However, the teacher should emphasize that students must be prepared for class since homework is scaffolding for the next class to better understand the materials. For homework, the students should write short stories for their pleasure. Also in student writing the teacher should check the clarity of the topic explanation and the correct usage of grammar. In addition, for homework, the students should read a story and be prepared to discuss the story. Attendance is 10% of the grade to encourage students to attend and participate in classes. Participation accounts for 10% of the final grade and includes: preparation for the class (completed homework) and observation during the class (student answers, and speaking in class). For mid-term and final projects, students should prepare presentation-projects based on the topics they learned in class. The mid-term and final presentations account for 20% per project. In each presentation-project the teacher will focus on clear explanation of the topic and presentation skills such as eye contact, body movement and confidence (voice).

Educational Implementation

The implementation of English communication classes for the after school course will vary depending on the educational context such as student levels, student preparation for class, student participation in class, different teaching styles of future teachers of the course, the teacher role in the class, school bus schedules, conflicts with other after school activities, and the placement of this course in an immersion school curriculum.

The immersion teachers mentioned that one of the problems in immersion classes is that the students have different levels. Therefore this after school course uses activities that will be understandable for students from low to upper intermediate and also for advanced level students. However in an elementary level class the teacher should simplify the materials or not use these

activities at all for the reason that the grammar is complicated and may be too difficult for elementary level students.

Since students are exhausted and also students have their required classes, in this after school course a teacher must not provide too much homework as students will not have enough time to do much homework for this class in addition to their required classes. Moreover students may lose their motivation and not participate in class.

This after school program was created based on this researcher's preferences, in future; the sequence of this course may be changed by other teachers based on their own preferences. Also the sequence of the course may be the same; however other teachers may use their own activities. However, the important element of the current course is to scaffold student learning through homework and use the same sequence of activities. Moreover, providing a student-centered approach in classes is also key to the success of this course.

Also, the role of the teacher in this teaching and learning project is to guide learners, provide clear instruction for activities, and clearly explain English grammar usage. The teacher should also correct student grammar as a student expresses ideas, while controlling his/her speech, by rephrasing correctly. However, the teacher should not correct student errors every time a student makes a mistake, rather errors that distort the meaning of the sentence should be the focus.

One immersion school principal suggested creating additional classes of only 40 minutes after class, since, due the school bus schedule, students leave the school by 4.20 pm and classes end at 15.20. However the bus schedule of each school is expected to be different; therefore 40 minutes is only one option for the after school course (classes may last more than 40 minutes or be shorter depending on the bus schedule) However, immersion students are exhausted after all classes and also students have much homework; therefore a 40-minute lesson after the academic classes seems the best option.

In addition, the students may attend other after school activities; therefore this course may conflict with these activities. However, as the principals wish to offer this after course, this issue will be negotiated. Also the length of the classes of this after school course may be changed not only based on the bus schedule, but also to match this course with other after school activities so the students will not be too exhausted.

This is perhaps not optimal in all situations so an even better solution would be to implement this after school course as a required course in the regular curriculum. Although this is currently not required in the school curriculum, it may be necessary to consider doing so as students need to increase their communicative abilities. Even when they understand content and have good

TOEIC scores, they may lack productive skills. Thus, they need to develop these skills. At this time, as this after school course it is not feasible to be included as part of the regular curriculum, offering it after school serves as a good alternative.

Conclusion

In conclusion, nowadays bilingualism is still debatable since there is no specific definition of bilingualism (Kamada, 1999; Baker & Jones, 1998) and its specific educational program compare to Japanese public school educational programs established by Japanese Ministry of Education. However bilinguals have one important advantage is that they can be more successful in job-hunting. For instance, Japanese and international companies require a high level of bilingual ability and the majority of their employees are Japanese/ English bilinguals (Reedy, 2001). As a result, Japanese parents spend much money on their children's education at various international, public, or bilingual schools.

One type of these bilingual schools is a partial immersion school where students acquire two languages. In Japan, in partial immersion schools, Japanese students study English and Japanese. In these schools English is taught as content and not as a foreign language. The idea of emphasizing the learning of English as a subject (content) and not as a foreign language is still a very revolutionary idea. However, English immersion students in Japan lack opportunities to use English outside the classroom.

Moreover, observation results showed that students rarely spoke English among their peers, teachers use a teacher-centered (teacher talk most of the class) approach where the student do not have opportunities to communicate, and teachers use old-fashioned methods such as direct translation from Japanese to English and English to Japanese, and grammar drilling methods that are not always successful. Japanese immersion senior high school students mentioned in their questionnaires that they wanted to improve their speaking, listening, writing, and reading skills. Also, through interviews with teachers, results showed that teachers face challenges with different student levels of English proficiency. They also expressed the view that more grammar classes should be presented, since the grammar for senior high school students is more complicated and difficult, leading students to lose motivation to study English.

Therefore, this after school support provides more opportunities for Japanese immersion senior high school students to communicate. With this project, students study English grammar using various materials and discuss different topics. Moreover, in this course, the teacher uses a student-centered approach. The teacher encourages students to communicate in English in different activities through pair and group work.

This project will be beneficial for Immersion schools who desire to include an additional course in their curriculum or after school and provide more opportunities for their students to communicate outside classes. Also, teachers who are interested in immersion education and who aspire to implement communication activities in their classes will also find it valuable. Above all, it will benefit students who want to communicate outside class. Moreover, this project will be favorable for parents and immersion schools who wish to provide opportunities for their children and students to communication in English.

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Appendix

Read the text

Finders Keepers

Suddenly it was raining money. Money was falling from the sky and beginning to cover the ground like green snow.

David thought he was dreaming. He saw \$100 bills everywhere. All he had to do was reach out and take a handful. He did. He did it again and again. Soon he had more had more \$100 bills than he could hold. David saw an empty paper bag on the ground. He filled it up with more \$ 100 bills.

He looked up and saw, on the bridge over his head, an overturned truck. The truck had mashed into another truck. The accident was so bad that all of the money the truck was carrying spilled into the road. The wind was blowing hard, so the bills were floating all over.

David saw people running from everywhere. They were shouting to each other to hurry up. They were gathering and putting it in purses and bags. He had never seen people working so

quickly.

David then heard the sirens and saw the flashing lights on the police cars as they raced to the accident on the bridge. He left quickly.

When he got home, David counted the money he had picked up-almost \$ 25,000. He had never seen so much money. It was his! It belonged to him!

Or did it? David began to think about that. Did it really belong to him? If it wasn't his, then whose money was it?

Well, thought David, it might belong to the bank. It was the banks' truck that crashed, and the money came from that truck.

The money was just floating around. He had not robbed a bank or stolen the money from somebody. What he had done was different and nobody knew him. Nobody could say that he had picked up the money. Then David thought of all of those other people who were picking up the money, just like he had done.

David was worried. He wondered if he should return the money.

Answer the questions

1. Identify relative pronouns or relative pronouns as subject and object.
2. Explain the reason for your choice.
3. Describe David's personality and provide reasons?
4. If you were David what would you do? Why?