A Tour Guide Course Incorporating CLIL Approaches —To Motivate Students to Learn about Japanese Culture

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1. Introduction

According to the White Paper on Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism in Japan (MLIT, 2020), Japan embarked on a path toward becoming a "tourism-oriented country" with the enactment of the Tourism Basic Law in 1963. Subsequently, it launched the "Visit Japan Campaign" in 2003 as a nationwide strategic initiative to dramatically increase inbound tourists to Japan. In recent years, Japanese pop culture centering on anime, manga, and games has captured the hearts of young people around the world; notably, it seems as if Japonisme—the popularity of Japanese art centering on ukiyo-e and crafts in the Western countries in the nineteenth century—has made a comeback. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Japan was brimming with international tourists who had a craving for Japanese culture and wished to experience it firsthand. Coupled with the designation of Washoku as a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Asset in 2013, Japanese cuisines were also whetting the appetites of many people from around the world. However, there are also concerns these interests remain superficial, and a deeper and wider understanding is required to foster a true appreciation of Japanese culture, which boasts a long and established history. In this regard, the Cultural Agency (2009, p. 1) said in its 2009 report "If the multilayered culture that has accumulated throughout Japan's long history is disseminated to the world more broadly and diversely, more people will come to know about Japan and its culture. In this way, we are convinced that many more people overseas will gain a lasting interest in, understanding of, and admiration for Japan and Japanese culture."

To make the above vision a reality, the Japanese people should first gain knowledge of their own culture and be able to talk about it in English, which is more than ever considered to be a global language of communication. The importance and necessity of English education in enhancing communication skills has been promoted for a long time and it seems to have shown some progress. Yet, education that focuses on Japanese culture has not received enough attention. As such, more efforts are needed

to improve the situation.

This paper reports on some of the attempts made in line with this goal in the course, "English for Tour Guiding." Specifically, tour guides are professionals who disseminate the culture of the country to inbound tourists. They must have advanced foreign language skills and a high level of knowledge related to tourism such as history, geography, and culture. Therefore, they are sometimes called "tourism ambassadors" or "people's diplomats" who work as mediators between different cultures. In 2018, the law concerning tour guides was revised, and the qualification of "Licensed Guide Interpreters" was changed from a business exclusive to a name-exclusive one. What this indicates is that even those who do not have a national license can conduct tours; therefore, if given a chance, students can work as tour guides for a fee. As expounded by Dewey (1938), "learning by doing" is an educational approach in which students are engaged in a kind of hands-on experience that is tailored to their needs. The change could provide a great opportunity to put into practice what they have learned.

The next chapter compares the two teaching methods English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) to consider what kind of teaching method is best suited for the above objectives.

2. ESP and CLIL approaches

For a long time, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has been used to achieve the goal of providing students in a specific field with the language they need to function as professionals. This section first provides an overview of the difference between ESP and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) and then the necessity of incorporating CLIL approaches in the course.

ESP emerged in the 1960s as demand increased to suit the needs of learners who studied a particular discipline. It aimed to help mostly tertiary-level or adult students acquire discipline-specific knowledge and communication skills in a professional setting (Sundrajun, 2022; Tzoannopoulou, 2015). Sidorenko et al. (2022, p. 36) presented a definition where ESP methodology combines three things: teaching specific English to learners who will use it in a particular setting to achieve a practical purpose. On the other hand, in CLIL, which gained prominence later, in the 1990s, language is not the only primary focus. It is dual-focused and the language learning process is intertwined with the acquisition of subject-specific knowledge. While the main aim of ESP remains language proficiency and communication within the specific field, CLIL attaches more importance to content (Cauli, 2021). This difference is

reflected in teachers' attitudes with CLIL teachers prioritizing content and ESP teachers dividing time more equally between content and language knowledge development (Yang, 2016). However, ESP and CLIL have several features in common such as language learning based on needs, the use of context and content from subjects, and communicative teaching and learning (Dalton-Puffer & Smit, 2013). In addition, Sidorenko et al. (2022) compare ESP and CLIL components in a structured way as seen in Table 1, although they claim that these two approaches have a common goal with only divergence in focus and that the relations between them require more research.

Table 1. ESP and CLIL Components (Adapted from Sidorenko et al., 2022, p. 38)

	ESP	CLIL
Aim	Focus on language: to meet the specific linguistic needs of a particular discipline	Dual focus: learning subject matter content through the medium of a foreign language or learning a foreign language by studying subject-matter content
Content	Content comes from the students' field of study. Content is used to develop linguistic competencies. Students are familiar with the content.	Specific content and the needed linguistic competence to communicate in a foreign language. Content determines the language to be learned.
Language	Vocabulary, grammar, register, genres, pragmatic, and discursive features. Usage of the language in a specific context. Content is often adapted to the learners' proficiency level.	Language is a tool for learning and communicating content. Content-led modalities. Language is needed to convey content.
Teacher	Language expert teachers	They are content experts with an appropriate level of language proficiency.
Students	They want to improve their English in a certain professional field of study; also, they may know the content better than a teacher.	They want to learn the content and improve their foreign language competence.
Lesson	Foreign language classes	This is not a language class in the traditional understanding as well as not a typical subject class (level of language fluency may have an impact on the scope of the content).

In the case of a conventional tour guide ESP class, it would be assumed the students are taught guiding-specific vocabulary, commonly used useful phrases, and then some model scenarios between a tour guide and tourists depending on typical scenes such as

"in a duty-free shop" or "in a restaurant." It seems that the primary goal of such a course is to provide students with a certain English proficiency level in the target situation. There is no doubt that ESP is a very practical way of learning and the kind of information and expressions that are used in those contexts are an absolute "must-learn" for a tour guide on the job. It could be said this suffices to achieve the aim of ESP: "to meet specific linguistic needs of a particular discipline" (Sidorenko et al., 2022, p. 38).

However, considering the primary goal of teaching Japanese culture to help students gain knowledge and spread the charm and attraction of Japanese culture, the traditional design of language-focused ESP classes was considered insufficient for this course. Although all of the students in this class are native Japanese and have lived in Japan since their birth, they lack deep knowledge about the Japanese culture required for them to work as tour guides. Therefore, rather than teachers lecturing on Japanese culture, courses should provide opportunities for students to research and explore Japanese culture on their own so that they can discover its attractions for themselves.

Based on the definition presented in Table 1, the course is quite different from the conventional ESP class concerning the following: 1) Aim: the aim is not primarily language learning; 2) Content: students are not familiar with the content; 3) Language: Content is not adapted to the learner's proficiency level; 4) Teacher: the instructor is not only a language teacher but also a content teacher, since she is a national licensed guide; and 5) Lesson: the lesson is not a foreign language class but mainly a class to learn Japanese culture.

This approach is more beneficial for students as it incorporates elements of CLIL, places more emphasis on content, and fosters autonomy through students' own exploratory learning. Tzoannopoulou (2016) noted that in CLIL classes students' cognitive processing should be activated, thereby leading to the development of their thinking skills along with language. In addition, their intercultural awareness is enhanced through learning about other cultures. While she acknowledged that CLIL was developed along the same line as ESP, she also highlighted some key differences: "CLIL is mostly a content-driven approach where content-led objectives are of equal or sometimes of more importance to language learning objectives, whereas ESP is language-led and language learning objectives constitute the driving force" (Tzoannopoulou, 2016, p. 4).

Next, the paper presents how attempts to incorporate CLIL approaches into the course

design were made by focusing more on the acquisition of knowledge in Japanese culture.

3. Course design

3-1 Participants and setting

The "English for Tour Guiding" course started in 2022 as one of the specialized subjects for junior and senior students in the faculty of humanities at a private university in Japan. All of the twenty-five students had completed the EAP (English for Academic Purposes) courses before enrolling in this class; moreover, some of them also had taken such elective ESP subjects as "Media English," "English in Tourism," "Writing for Business" and "Practical Speaking for Business" according to their interests. The proficiency levels of the students were scored between TOEIC 500 to 905 (6 students: 500–590; 12 students: 600–690; 4 students: 700–790; 1 student: 905, 2 students: NA), which is equivalent to the CEFR B1-B2 level.

The goals of the subject were to promote the students' deep and extensive understanding of Japanese culture and society and to develop their ability to communicate it to the level of a professional tour guide.

The course had two parts: 1) learning about major tourist attraction sites in the area and 2) learning about Japanese culture. Notably, the term "Japanese culture" is sometimes used in a narrow sense to refer to standard items like the traditional performing arts; however, in this paper, this term is inclusively used about the lifestyles, thinking, and everyday aspects of the Japanese people. In particular, it entails food, clothing, language, beliefs, religion, and everything else that may be passed down from generation to generation.

The first part not only dealt with practical information for tourists such as transportation or souvenirs, but it also focused on knowledge about the history or culture of each travel spot, thus, it had much in common with the second part. However, because of space limitations, this paper only focuses on the second part, Japanese culture. Although "culture" contains diverse fields, a limited number of topics and sub-topics were selected in consultation with the students, some of which were suggested by the students themselves. Table 2 presents the list of contents covered in the second part of the course.

Week	Topic	Sub-topic Sub-topic
1	History	The Emperor system, Samurai warriors, Ninja
2	Architecture	Japanese castles, Japanese architectural style Japanese gardens
3	Food	Japanese cuisines, Japanese sake Japanese Buddhist cuisines (<i>Shojin-ryori</i>) Japanese traditional multi-course dinner (<i>Kaiseki-ryori</i>)
4	Religion	Temples and shrines, Funerals, Buddhist statues
	Traditional culture (1)	Festivals, Bonsai, Kimono
5	Traditional culture (2)	Tea ceremony, Kabuki, Sumo, Judo, Gold leaf
6	Pop culture / other topics	Anime and manga, Enka, Fashion, Insects

Table 2. Topics covered in the second part of the course

3-2 The class procedures

Each class consisted of four components: 1) vocabulary reviews, 2) presentations by the students, 3) a Q&A session with feedback and discussion based on the presentations, 4) a short interpretation practice, and 5) role-play practice.

1) Vocabulary reviews

At the beginning of each class, words that are specific to Japanese culture were reviewed by way of a vocabulary quiz.

2) Presentations by the students

Each student was assigned to one of the aspects of Japanese culture from Table 2 in advance. After exploring online and offline authentic materials to gather enough knowledge, they put together an approximately 10-minute presentation as if they were a tour guide talking to inbound tourists who were visiting Japan with little prior knowledge about the country. They were advised to give an easy yet deep explanation for the visitors to understand. They were required to satisfy the interest and curiosity of those travelers seeking a cultural experience in a country that has a different culture from their own. The students were asked to give an informative and in-depth presentation but were advised to refrain from interjecting a series of dates or the names of historical figures which were considered common knowledge to Japanese natives. Finally, each student was later asked to evaluate their performance. Unfortunately, the practicum with actual tourists had to be canceled due to COVID-19 restrictions.

3) Q&A session and discussion

Probably the most challenging part of a tour guide's job is to have to answer any kind of questions from tourists. In this session, students practiced for such occasions. The

students in the audience were given a chance to ask any question they may have had in the course of the presentation. They were instructed to assume they were inbound tourists and give comments or ask a question from the viewpoint of foreigners; specifically, they should put themselves in the foreign tourists' shoes and should not take anything they know for granted. The instructor also asked some questions to check the presenters' depth of knowledge and also gave supplementary explanations.

As an example of the student activities, one student gave a presentation on Japanese gardens. It was composed of the following: 1) the difference between Western and Japanese gardens; 2) the classification of Japanese gardens concerning the use of water in them; 3) their history, and 4) the three greatest gardens in Japan (see Appendix A. for part of the presentation). In a Q&A session that followed, some questions such as the purpose of the creation of dry landscape gardens were asked, and then the concept of "shakkei," literally translated as "borrowing of scenery"—or integrating the surrounding sceneries into the gardens—was explained by the teacher as a follow-up. The session worked as a forum for interaction and further learning, thereby enhancing the knowledge of both the presenters and the other students. In the third week of the presentations about Japanese food, two international students from Indonesia and Taiwan, who were studying at the university, were invited to the class and they were also actively engaged in the Q&A session. One of the questions from them was about a "Sugiyama cedar ball", hung up in the eaves of Japanese sake breweries to announce the start of a new sake production season.

4) Interpretation practice

The job of a tour guide includes translating a wide variety of announcements, instructions, explanations, and so on, given by such people as curators, hotel clerks/managers, shop assistants/managers, and even nurses/doctors. Therefore, interpretation is an important skill that tour guides must learn; as such, the short practice of Japanese-to-English interpretation was implemented in each class.

5) Role-play practice and writing assignment

Finally, in this session, students were given a chance to turn knowledge into practice by way of taking on the role of a tour guide as well as an inbound tourist. For example, a tour guide had to answer a question from a French tourist about the conceptual difference between Japanese and French gardens. This was conducted with a pair of students in which one played the role of a tour guide and the other was a tourist. To perform this activity, students need to utilize the knowledge they learned concerning the difference and state it in their own words. In another case, they had to solve a practical task. In a Japanese inn, it is customary for a *nakai-san*, "room attendant", to freely enter a guest room to serve dinner, make a bed, etc.; yet, some tourists from

abroad might find it uncomfortable and unsafe. In the activity, the students needed to think about the best solution by thinking it through and using their ingenuity while still showing their hospitality and using polite language. After role-playing in class, the students were asked to create a written dialog as homework (See Appendix B).

3-3 The 4Cs incorporated in the course

As a summary, Table 3 shows the teaching principles of CLIL depicted in the 4Cs (content, communication, cognition, and community/culture) which are incorporated into the course.

Table 3. The 4Cs incorporated in the course

Content	Learning about our own culture and country—history, culture, pop culture, etc. Cross-cultural understanding Learning about some major tourist spots in the local areas
Communication (Language knowledge/language use)	Language knowledge: Learning English words specific to Japanese culture and society Language skills: Gathering information about Japanese culture (reading, translating, writing), Giving presentations (explaining, asking questions, answering questions)
Cognition	Awareness of our own culture Intercultural awareness Learning to cope with different values and perspectives
Community/Culture	Pair work/Group work Interaction with international students Interaction with inbound tourists (*It was not made possible due to the COVID-19 pandemic.)

3-4 The questionnaire survey

The questionnaire survey was conducted after the course to obtain an understanding of these two things: 1) the students' perception toward communicating about Japanese culture in English and 2) how they evaluated their performance.

4. Results of the students' questionnaires

4-1 The results of the questionnaire on communicating about Japanese culture

The first question asked about the reason for taking the course. Figure 1 shows only three of the respondents were interested in Japanese culture at the time they decided to take the course.

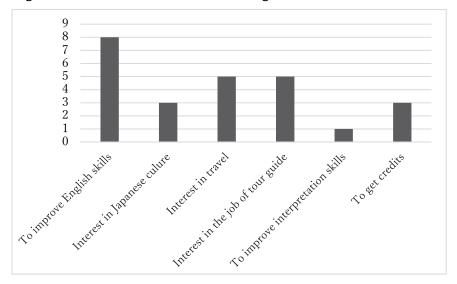


Figure 1. What are the reasons for taking the course? (n = 25)

The second question asked about their attitudes toward Japanese culture. The question was whether they think Japanese people must be able to communicate (transmit) about Japan in English to people in other countries or to foreign nationals. The respondents chose their answers from a five-point Likert scale. Notably, 72% of them (18 out of 25 people) chose "Agree" or "Somewhat agree."

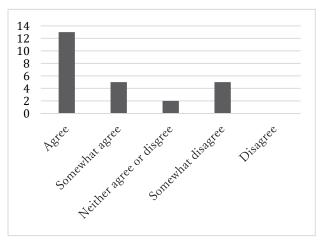


Figure 2. The necessity of communicating about Japan in English (n = 25)

Then, it was put to the respondents who answered "Agree" or "Somewhat agree," what aspect of Japan should be communicated to people overseas and visitors to Japan. Subsequently, "Japanese traditional culture" and "Japanese food culture" were at the top of the list, followed by "Japanese history," reflecting the general trend.

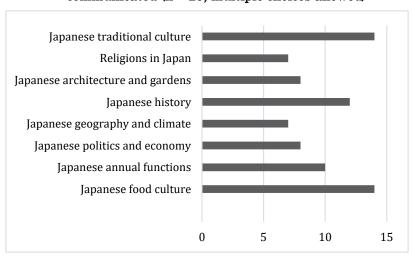


Figure 3. What aspects of Japanese culture must be communicated (n = 25, multiple choices allowed)

The next question asked whether they became better able to communicate about six of the aspects above that they thought were important. The graph below shows the percentage of the students who answered, "Agree," "Somewhat agree," "Neither agree nor disagree," "Somewhat disagree," or "Disagree." In each category, the number of respondents who answered "Agree" was still very small, but when combined with those who chose "Somewhat agree," in two of the categories that they considered important, more than half of them (52% in Japanese traditional culture, 68% in Japanese food culture) answered positively.

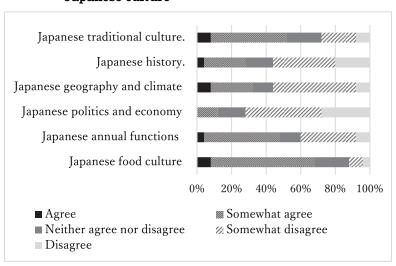


Figure 4. The self-evaluated ability to communicate about Japanese culture

The last two questions in this section were about motivation at the end of the course. Almost all of the students showed a high degree of motivation concerning both statements. In fact, 96% of them answered, "I need more practice communicating about Japan in English, and I want to practice." Also, 92% of them answered: "Communicating about Japan in English is very interesting."

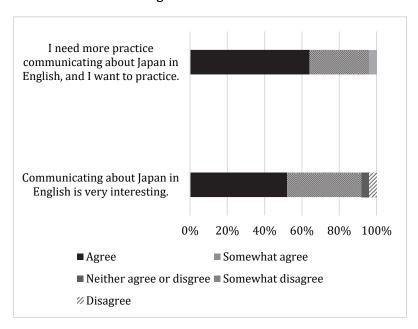


Figure 5. Motivation toward communicating about Japanese culture in English

Finally, regarding the open-ended question about communicating about Japanese culture, they expressed their feelings about how difficult it was for them. Many mentioned a lack of knowledge as well as that of vocabulary and command of English. One student wrote, "I was able to learn about Japanese culture in depth and realized my lack of knowledge." Another noted, "Some things are so obvious to us that when we are asked, we are very confused because we cannot explain well." Another pointed out, "I believe that English is not the only skill needed. When we try to convey what we take for granted to people who do not live in Japan, I think it important how objectively we can view Japan."

4-2 The results of the questionnaire about self-evaluation of students' presentations

This section shows the results of the questionnaire about self-evaluation the students made on a scale of 1 through 5. Accordingly, this is how they rated themselves in terms of fulfilling each of the following requirements: 1) "The presentations were creative

and original." 2) "The message and concepts conveyed were expressed in an easy-to-understand manner." 3) "I was able to devise ways to provide information from the perspective of foreign tourists." 4) "I paid attention to eye contact, voice volume, etc., and was able to deliver my presentation well." 5) "I was able to give a presentation without reading the manuscript." Finally, 6) "I was able to handle questions in a Q&A session." (1: Disagree, 2: Somewhat disagree, 3: Neutral, 4: Somewhat agree, 5: Agree).

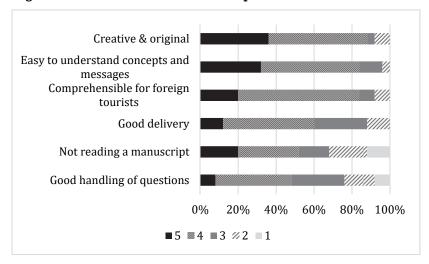


Figure 6. Self-evaluation of students' presentations

Regarding originality and creativity, nearly 90% of the respondents (Agree: 36%; Somewhat agree: 52%) agreed, showing their confidence in the content of their presentation. As to whether the message and concepts to convey were expressed in an easy-to-understand manner, 84% of the students (Agree: 32%; Somewhat agree: 52%) answered in the affirmative. About the way of presenting information appropriate for tourists from overseas, 84% of them responded favorably again.

Their self-evaluation about the delivery of the presentation was higher than expected (Agree 12%; Somewhat agree: 48%), but not as high as the first three questions concerning the content; so, it suggests that good delivery takes a little more getting used to. The percentage further fell with the next question asking whether they were able to give a presentation without reading the manuscript. In this question, 12% of the students chose "disagree." When combined, about half of the students (Neutral: 16%; Somewhat disagree: 20%; Disagree: 12%) did not perform satisfactorily, despite the guidance from the instructor not to read the script.

The last criterion in self-evaluation was whether they were able to handle questions in

a Q&A session. Only about half of the students (Agree: 8%; Somewhat agree: 40%) agreed in this regard. As in the preceding criteria, a large percentage of the students (Neither agree nor disagree: 28%; Somewhat disagree: 16%; Disagree: 8%) answered in the negative. Some of them were seen to be stuck for an answer or had no ready answer.

Related to their overall performance, the additional question asked about the activities they thought were effective in improving their language proficiency. As such, "Presentations" stood up among the others with 13 answers.

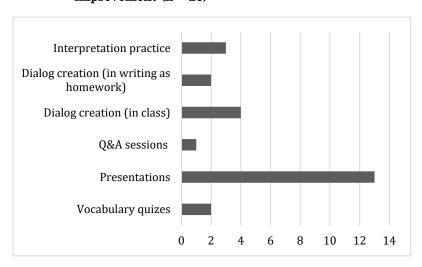


Figure 7. The effectiveness of the activities in terms of language improvement (n = 25)

5 Discussion

The first part of the questionnaire showed that the students were interested in communicating about Japanese culture through English and they felt eager to practice it further, despite their lack of interest at the beginning. The self-evaluation of their ability to communicate about Japanese culture was also high, though to a varying degree according to the topics. They realized they needed more knowledge and language skills to properly explain Japanese culture to foreign nationals. Also, they referred to the difficulty in explaining something too familiar for them to be consciously noticed to tourists from overseas, who might consider it unusual and even peculiar. For example, there is sumo wrestling. Many Japanese people never thought about the reason sumo wrestlers toss so much salt up in the air at their matches. Subsequently, by doing some research the students learned it is to purify the ring and pray for the deities; moreover, they were amazed to know an impressive 50 kg of salt is

used per day.

The second part of the questionnaire revealed the students gave quite a high evaluation of their performance in terms of their presentation contents. This indicates they successfully gathered proper knowledge from the authentic materials, analyzed it, and structured it creatively so they could convey their concepts and messages in a way that tourists from abroad would easily understand. This requires critical thinking and creativity, and also high language skills. Many students chose "presentations" as the most effective activity which enhanced their language ability. Contrary to the expectation, however, only one person answered "Q&A session" as effective; yet, one student commented that they were glad the instructor gave a lot of feedback on their presentations and responses in the session. The most challenging part of the tour guide's job is answering any questions from tourists. Therefore, the session was meant to be a good practice in handling any unexpected or difficult questions.

6 Conclusion

This paper demonstrates that the incorporation of the 4C's in Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is essential for achieving in-depth knowledge about Japanese culture. Additionally, it highlights how CLIL approaches empower students to learn autonomously, raise awareness and understanding of Japanese culture, and enhance their motivation to delve deeper into it.

In hindsight, several aspects could have been handled differently. For instance, as mentioned earlier, the planned guiding activities were not feasible due to COVID-19; consequently, most activities remained confined to the classroom setting. In an attempt to address this limitation, two international students were invited to participate in one of the classes. However, despite this effort, it cannot be denied that the impact was somewhat limited. Furthermore, a more robust emphasis on collaborative group work or project-based learning should have been implemented to achieve a broader spectrum of interaction goals.

Nonetheless, it is evident that incorporating CLIL approaches yields significant benefits for students. These approaches prompt students to discover previously overlooked aspects of their own culture. By taking on the role of tour guides who explain Japanese culture to tourists from overseas, their learning experiences are significantly enriched. The questionnaire results clearly indicate the students' eagerness to explore Japanese culture further and the imperative to engage in more practice. Moreover, students are compelled to consider how best to convey their culture

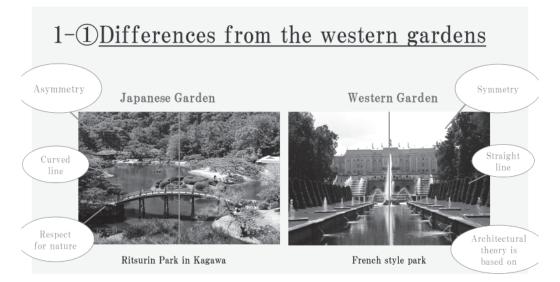
to overseas tourists whose cultural backgrounds, and thus their levels of general knowledge about Japan and Japanese culture, differ from their own. This promotes intercultural awareness and occasionally necessitates that students adapt to contrasting values and perspectives. When students are confronted with such situations (even in role-playing scenarios), they must formulate convincing explanations and realize that their culture is not universal, leading to a broadening of their perspectives. These effects would not have been possible without the inclusion of CLIL approaches, wherein content itself becomes the central focus, thereby promoting intercultural awareness. While focusing more on content in an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) class may enhance language skills related to that specific content area, it cannot fully replicate the integrated approach and depth of content knowledge achieved through CLIL. There exists a pressing need for initiatives aimed at promoting Japanese culture abroad and developing individuals capable of contributing to these efforts. CLIL approaches are undoubtedly instrumental in achieving these objectives.

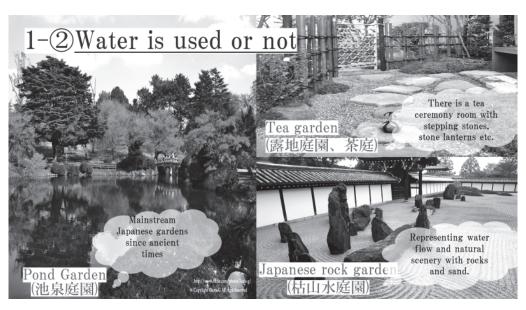
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Appendix A. Examples of part of a student's presentation slides





Appendix B. Dialogs between a tourist and a guide about Japanese and French gardens created by students (copied as is without any correction, or modification).

[Example 1]

Tourist: The Japanese gardens are very different from my country's French gardens. What is the concept behind those?

Tour guide: As you said, Japanese gardens are different from Western gardens. The main characteristic is curved forms and asymmetry. One of the reasons is that Japanese gardens are modeled after natural landscapes. Originally, when the landscaping culture came to Japan from the continent, rectangular ponds and fountains were created, but straight lines were less common as Japanese gardens began to express respect for nature, religion, and thought in an abstract manner and developed on their own. In addition, Japanese gardens have also been in vogue in different periods and have quite different characteristics. If you want to know detailed characteristics depending on the period, please do not hesitate to ask me.

[Example 2]

Tourist: Japanese gardens are quite different from my country, French gardens. What kind of concept is it made?

Tour guide: The Japanese garden is characterized by its shape and left-right asymmetry. It imitates nature and represents the beauty of nature that changes with the seasons. It builds a pond to look like a sea, grows moss on an artificial hill to make it look like a wild mountain or represents a mountain that stands out with large and small stonework. Therefore, it is a garden born from contact with nature. On the other hand, the French garden, which is one of the styles of Western gardens, has a symmetrical design with many straight lines, and represents an artificial and orderly beauty. In addition, flower beds and trees are planted regularly, and fountains shape the beauty by contradicting the flow of water. Therefore, it is a garden that reproduces artificial beauty.