

Philosophical Dialogue in English Education

P4C, CLIL, and P4ELT

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【Summary】

This paper examines the potential of Philosophy for Children (P4C) in English education as one example of applying philosophical dialogue to various subjects. We present Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) as a pedagogy that is highly compatible with P4C practices in English education. Finally, we position our practices as Philosophy for English Language Teaching/Teachers/Trainees (P4ELT).

【Keywords】

P4C (Philosophy for Children), CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning), P4ELT (Philosophy for English Language Teaching/Teachers/Trainees)

1. Introduction

Philosophical dialogue is increasingly being implemented throughout Japan, particularly in education. Elementary, junior high, and high schools have encouraged its use in the curriculum as it is expected to promote “independent, dialogical, and deep learning” (MEXT, 2017a, 2017b, 2018) in each subject. In this kind of learning, students are expected to proactively learn about something deeply and exchange ideas. Under these circumstances, philosophical dialogue is required in various subjects.

In fact, Lipman et al. (1980) suggested incorporating philosophical dialogue into various subjects, and Kono (2014) proposed ways to apply it in specific subjects such as Japanese, social studies, art, music, physical education, mathematics, and science. Furthermore, Terada (2021) advocated introducing philosophical dialogue in specialized and liberal arts higher education courses. However, in modern Japanese education, philosophical dialogues are usually exclusively incorporated in limited subjects, such as morality and ethics or during the Period of Integrated Study⁽¹⁾. In other words, it is common for students to conceive philosophical dialogue as occurring only during pre-designated times. Given these issues, we explored the different ways philosophical dialogue can be applied to a variety of subjects.

This study examines the possibility of conducting philosophical dialogues in English education. Chapter 2 introduces content and language integrated learning (CLIL), a foreign language teaching method that we believe works well with philosophical dialogue. Chapter 3 provides practical examples of Philosophy for Children (P4C) implementation in CLIL. Chapter 4 compares the theory of CLIL and P4C, and examines their combination. Finally, Chapter 5 attempts to position the practices in this paper as Philosophy for English Language Teaching/Teachers/Trainees (P4ELT) (Kanazawa, 2021, 2022b).

2. What is CLIL?

CLIL is a pedagogical approach aimed at deepening learning by teaching content in the target language⁽²⁾. The year 1995 was a notable one for CLIL. It was when the Council of Europe adopted the principle of mother tongue plus two foreign languages with the aim of fostering citizens beyond one nationality. The principle has since spread to Western European countries.

2.1. 4Cs Framework

CLIL is defined as “an education approach in which various language-supportive methodologies are used which lead to dual-focused form of instruction where attention is given both to the language and the content” (Coyle et al., 2010, p. 3). This approach draws “inspiration from earlier bilingual education programs such as French immersion in Canada” (Tsuchiya and Murillo, 2019, p. v). CLIL is characterized by the integrated learning of the 4Cs framework: content, communication, cognition, and community/culture (Coyle et al., 2010; Watanabe et al., 2011; Ikeda et al., 2016; Sasajima 2020).

Content refers to subjects or topics such as history, civics, science, or mathematics. It also refers to new knowledge, skills, and the understanding acquired in the learning process, and includes

declarative as well as procedural knowledge.

As for communication, beyond acquiring vocabulary, grammar, and the four skills, using language in interpersonal communication is emphasized and “dialogical talk” should be pursued.

Cognition can be divided into two categories according to Bloom’s Taxonomy: lower-order thinking skills (LOTS) and higher-order thinking skills (HOTS). Students display LOTS with remembering, understanding, and applying specific knowledge. HOTS involves analyzing, evaluating, and creating something by utilizing knowledge acquired in a class.

Community/culture begins with classmates and teachers and continues through the classroom, school, municipality, region, country, and eventually the entire world. This awareness encourages students and teachers to think about a target topic from a different perspective and leads to fostering global citizenship.

CLIL is not about teaching the 4Cs individually, but rather effectively integrating them. Students are guided to interact with classmates about a certain subject or topic to gain different points-of-view through which their learning is deepened.

2.2. Constructivism

One of the philosophical cores of the CLIL approach lies in social-constructivism ideology (Sasajima, 2020), which presumes that learners deepen their learning by themselves, and that teachers are a facilitator of students’ learning (Ohshima, 2019).

Social-constructivist learning focuses on interactive, mediated, and student-led learning, which requires social interaction between learners and teachers, and a scaffolding approach (Coyle et al., 2010). A scenario in which a student has difficulty understanding a specific English passage and the teacher explains what the passage means in Japanese, does not work as scaffolding of learning, although the explanation itself could help the student better understand the passage. Scaffolding, therefore, is not merely about providing abundant support of learning to learners.

Based on social-constructivism, scaffolding from teachers leads to students interacting with classmates and learning specific target content. Such learning is closely aligned with the concept of the 4Cs framework that scaffolding is crucial for the CLIL approach. Ikeda (2011, p. 22) stated that scaffolding is regarded as highly important in CLIL classes to support students’ learning in content, communication, cognition, and community/culture.

Chapter 3 reports on P4C practices in English classes at high schools and universities based on these CLIL theories.

3. P4C Application in CLIL

This chapter reports on the practices of the application of P4C in CLIL with philosophy and ethics as the content. We then analyze those practices by means of the 4Cs framework in CLIL.

3.1. Practice in High School

In 2019 and 2020, the author facilitated philosophical dialogues in English for 2nd year students of a medical course class at Kaichi High School in Saitama, Japan. The author was asked to implement

P4C for the medical course class because the teachers thought the future doctors and nurses would need to dialogue with English-speaking patients. Below is the overview of the P4C in 2020 (Table 1).

Table 1

Class name	Philosophical Dialogue in English
Students' grade level	2 nd year of high school
Topic	How can we live without producing garbage?
Number of students	About 30
Time	50 minutes / 4 sessions

Before the dialogue began, we presented effective English expressions used in philosophical dialogues so that the students could feel comfortable speaking up. This linguistic support can be categorized as scaffolding in CLIL. While students discussed the question “How can we live without producing garbage?”, they came across more fundamental questions such as “Can we live by using only recycled things?” and “How can we live without depending on industrial products?” (Figure 1). Thus, the dialogue naturally led them to think about environmental ethics, and consequently enabled them to have deeper philosophical dialogues. The dialogues between students could be categorized as “each other’s scaffolding” (Costa-Carvalho et al., 2017, p. 132) in P4C because their interactions seem to have deepened their thinking.

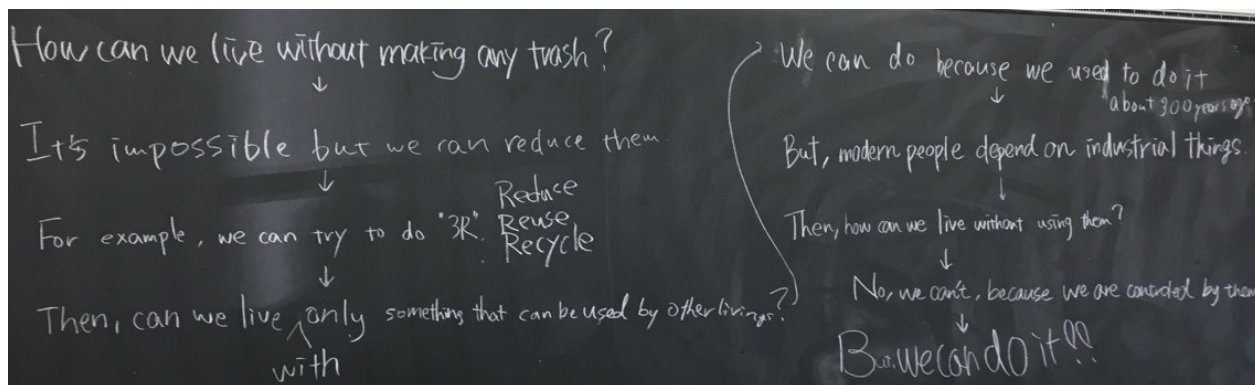


Figure 1.

3.2. Practice in University

During the spring terms of 2021 and 2022, the author conducted an ethics seminar in English at Sophia University, Chiyoda City, Tokyo, employing the method of P4C. Below is the 2022 seminar overview (Table 2).

Table 2

Class name	Seminar on Ethics
Students' grade level	1 st and 2 nd year
Topic	The meaning of life
Number of students	4
Time	100 minutes / 15 sessions

Before each session, the students were assigned 5–7 pages of an influential essay (Searchris et al., 2012) on the meaning of life and instructed to prepare at least one question in English. At the beginning of each session, the students wrote down their prepared question(s) on the whiteboard (Figure 2). Afterward, they discussed the questions with each other in English.

As the students read and discussed the essays, they reflected on and repeatedly inquired into their own questions, such as “What is the difference between meaning and value?”, “How does the meaning of life relate to happiness?” and “Are our lives worth living?”

This practice has the potential to create a shift from the traditional seminar, which is limited to “learning philosophical thoughts,” to “philosophizing” in the original sense through the P4C methodology.

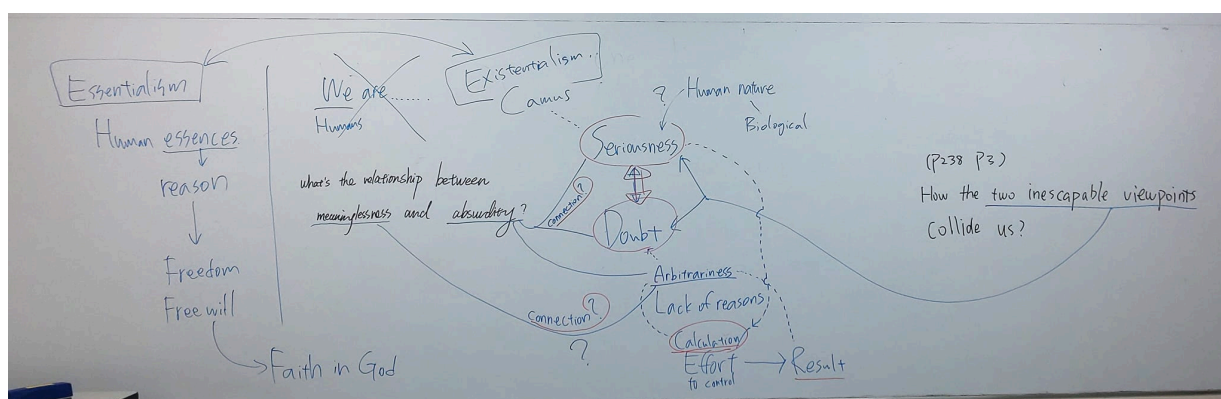


Figure 2.

3.3. Reflection

Having P4C dialogues in English, which is the students' foreign language, the students could only speak slowly and use simple words. This matches the purpose of the P4C dialogue, wherein participants are expected to think slowly without depending on authority or authoritative vocabulary. Through this practice, students were able to speak as younger children do by using their foreign language. The following table summarizes the application of P4C practices to CLIL's 4Cs in high school and university (Table 3).

Table 3

Content	Communication	Cognition	Community (Culture)
Declarative knowledge • philosophical concepts • philosopher's name	Language knowledge • philosophical vocabulary • dialogic strategy	Lower-order thinking skills • summarize • explain • interpret	Cooperative learning • philosophical dialogue • ask questions to each other
Procedural knowledge • as a related party • meaning of life	Language skills • express one's opinion • listen to other's opinion	Higher-order thinking skills • comparative analysis • value judgment • new ideas and questions	Global awareness • foreign thoughts • international issues

Although a variety of topics or subjects are taught in CLIL classes, few CLIL practices focus on philosophy as learning content in Japan. Furthermore, our practices show that the P4C theory can be informative for the 4Cs framework of CLIL in that it promotes students to have deeper conversations with each other. These points can be regarded as the originality of our practices.

4. Comparative analysis of CLIL and P4C

In the previous chapter, we presented an example of P4C in CLIL and analyzed its implementation based on the 4Cs frame of CLIL. The analysis suggests that P4C can be successfully combined with CLIL to encourage deeper learning. Therefore, in this chapter, we discuss how to further facilitate the combination of CLIL and P4C. Specifically, we compare the concept of thinking and community and the role of teachers in both CLIL and P4C.

4.1. Concept of Thinking

First, we compare the concept of thinking in CLIL and P4C. As indicated in Chapter 2.1, the concept of thinking in CLIL is addressed in the cognition framework, which utilizes Bloom's Taxonomy. This section specifically focuses on the element called HOTS in CLIL and 3Cs in P4C⁽³⁾.

4.1.1. Critical Thinking

Critical thinking in P4C corresponds to analyzing and evaluating HOTS in CLIL and further complementing them. According to Sasajima (2020, p. 25), analyzing means critically thinking about the content and language learned in class. Evaluating means critically reflecting on what was learned in class. In contrast, Lipman (2003) in P4C indicated that "critical thinking is self-corrective" (p. 218), that is, "the members of the community begin looking for and correcting each other's methods and procedures" (Ibid., p. 219). He also stated that, "critical thinking displays sensitivity to context" (Ibid.) and is "sensitive to particularities and uniqueness" (Ibid., p. 220). Therefore, students are not forced to apply general rules to individual cases.

Given the above, critical thinking in CLIL (such as analyzing and evaluating) is limited to what is being learned, whereas critical thinking in P4C is further directed toward the learner's way of

thinking. These characteristics of critical thinking in P4C would complement critical thinking in CLIL. Given that “critical thinking skills are complemented by creative and caring thinking” (Lipman, 2003, p. 229), we focus on creative thinking in the next chapter.

4.1.2. Creative Thinking

Creative thinking in P4C corresponds to creating HOTS in CLIL and further developing it. According to Sasajima (2020), creating in CLIL means producing and expressing something based on what was learned in a class. In contrast, creative thinking in P4C works against doubts arising from critical thinking.

When our doubts cause us to suspend our working beliefs, it is our creative thought that reformulates the problematic situation, entertains alternative hypotheses as ways to attack the problem, considers possible consequences, and organizes experiments until the problematic character of the situation is provisionally vanquished. (Lipman, 2003, p. 249)

In addition, creative thinking in P4C is especially characterized by “generativity” (Ibid., p. 246) and “maieutic thinking” (Ibid., p. 252). The former means that participants stimulate other’s creativity, and the latter is extractive, educative, and seeks to elicit the best thinking possible from another person. Maieutic thinking cares about another’s creativity, and consequently, creative thinking is associated with caring thinking.

4.1.3. Caring Thinking

In CLIL theory, we cannot find any correspondence to caring thinking in P4C. According to Lipman (2003), “caring thinking involves a double meaning” (p. 262). The first is “to think solicitously about that which is the subject matter of our thought” (Ibid.). The second one is “to be concerned about one’s manner of thinking” (Ibid.). As described above, the inquiry progresses with an interest in the subject matter and manner of thinking. Furthermore, in the community of inquiry, “members are caring participants” (Lipman et al., 1980, p. 199): “As the children discover one another’s perspectives and share in one another’s experiences, they come to care about one another’s values and to appreciate each other’s uniqueness” (Ibid.).

In this way, participants are able to care for the opinions and values of others and appreciate the presence of others. While referring to Jackson’s “intellectual safety,” Homma (2018, p. 302) emphasized the importance of caring for others ⁽⁴⁾, which contributes to community building. Introducing caring thinking into CLIL could further enrich learning. In the next section, we compare the concept of community in CLIL and P4C.

4.2. Concept of Community

As indicated in Chapter 2.1, community in CLIL starts with cooperative learning inside a classroom and extends to global awareness. In P4C, on the other hand, cooperative learning is already assumed by “converting the classroom into a community of inquiry” (Lipman, 2003, p. 20).

Therefore, community in P4C is a community of inquiry. Inquiry in P4C is naturally cooperative learning.

Students listen to one another with respect, build on one another's ideas, challenge one another to supply reasons for otherwise unsupported opinions, assist each other in drawing inferences from what has been said, and seek to identify one another's assumptions. (Ibid.)

More succinctly, “a community of inquiry starts with a commitment to thinking with others” (Costa-Carvalho et al., 2017, p. 131). This leads participants to experience “plural democracy” (Echeverria et al., 2017, p. 3) and “deliberative democracy” (Ibid.). Therefore, the concept of community in P4C is highly compatible with the concept of community in CLIL, which aims at citizenship education. In addition, teachers are greatly influenced by children in the community of inquiry because “children, unlike adults, do not look insistently for answers or conclusions” (Lipman, 2003, p. 86) and they tend to be “not giving a new answer to an old question, but transforming all the questions” (Ibid., p. 87). Hence, “above all, inquiry involves questioning” (Ibid., p. 95) in P4C. As such, the fact that the community of inquiry emphasizes questioning also has implications for the role of teachers.

4.3. Role of Teachers

Finally, we compare the role of teachers in CLIL and P4C. In referring to Dewey and Mead, Lipman (2003) argued that “the role of the teacher is to mediate rather than dominate” (Ibid., p. 84). One of the features in P4C is “absence of indoctrination” (Lipman et al., 1980, p. 45). While there is also a tendency to avoid indoctrination in CLIL, how is it different from that in P4C?

As indicated in Chapter 2.2, teachers are required to scaffold in CLIL, whereas children can be “each other's scaffolding” in P4C (Costa-Carvalho et al., 2017, p. 132) because participants are saying things which others can build upon. Furthermore, “students and teachers are co-inquirers engaged in deliberating together about the issues or problems” (Lipman 2003, p.111). In this way, teachers in P4C participate in the dialogue not only as facilitators, but also as co-inquirers. According to Homma (2018), “there is a critical difference between letting children ‘discuss’ as expected and having a dialogue with them” (p. 304). Therefore, teachers in P4C must “follow the inquiry where it leads” (Lipman, 2003, p. 20) as they often do not know the answers to questions raised by children. Questions in P4C need to be explored by teachers as well as students. Kono (2014) summarized the role of teachers in P4C as “not to ‘teach’ but to facilitate dialogue by asking questions, changing the angle of the discussion, waiting slowly for opinions to emerge, and expressing opinions as a participant on the same level as the child” (p. 10). Therefore, teachers in P4C are also learners in the role of a co-inquirer. This attitude of teachers in P4C would be applicable to the role of teachers in CLIL. The following table summarizes the discussion (Table 4).

Table 4

Subject of comparison	CLIL theory	P4C theory
Concept of thinking	Analyzing Evaluating Creating	Critical Thinking Creative Thinking Caring Thinking
Concept of community	Cooperative learning Global awareness	Community of inquiry Deliberative democracy
Role of teachers	Teaching Scaffolding Facilitator	Questioning Facilitator Co-inquirer

This chapter has analyzed the differences between CLIL and P4C and examined their potential for integration. In the final and 5th chapter, we attempt to position our practices as P4ELT (Kanazawa 2021, 2022b).

5. P4ELT (Philosophy for English Language Teaching/Teachers/Trainees)

The discussion so far echoes the idea of P4ELT in applying P4C insights to English language teaching (Kanazawa, 2021; 2022b). According to Kanazawa (2023, forthcoming), previous theories and attempts in the fields of applied linguistics and foreign language education tend to have the following limitations. First, although deep active learning educational approaches that aim at fostering 21st century skills⁽⁵⁾ have increasingly been appreciated, they usually focus mostly on the cognitive aspects and fail in organically integrating the affective aspects. Second, although many previous studies in language learning psychology have shed light on the affective aspects of learning, they have typically been trapped in the dualistic epistemology concerning the emotional valence (i.e., minimizing negative emotions such as anxiety while maximizing positive emotions such as enjoyment). In reality, significant moments are filled with subtle and elusive micro-level emotions that deny naive identification as either positive or negative. Furthermore, ambivalent epistemic emotions such as intellectual surprise constitute Triadic Emotions, which enable higher learning and development supported by rational, emotion-involved conduct (Kanazawa, 2022a). Interdisciplinarily integrating P4C insights, such as Lipman's 3Cs, into foreign language teaching will pave the way for better pedagogical frameworks and practices, as have been corroborated by the successful practical attempts in high school English class (Chapter 3.1), university Ethics class (Chapter 3.2), and university English classes (Kanazawa, 2021, 2022b).

6. Conclusion

In this paper, we presented and examined the potential of applying the P4C methodology to English education (CLIL) as an example of how philosophical dialogue can be used in various subjects. It is clear that the P4C framework can improve thinking skills and language competence in English education. We therefore positioned our practices as P4ELT and aim to promote its

widespread use.

Lipman (2003) also suggested that philosophical thinking skills have a positive impact on other disciplines ⁽⁶⁾ and emphasized that the relationship between thinking and language in foreign language teaching is inseparable ⁽⁷⁾.

Although CLIL was used as an example in this paper and as Kono (2014) has shown, it is expected that philosophical dialogue such as P4C will be implemented in a variety of other subjects. Therefore, the challenge is to train teachers as facilitators/co-inquirers who can practice philosophical dialogue in each subject area ⁽⁸⁾. In other words, there would be an urgent necessity to establish such a system and curriculum for teacher training, especially at universities in Japan.

【Notes】

- (1) In the Period of Integrated Study, teachers encourage students “to make good use of their skills to create a new value and make society better through using their agency and collaborating with others well” (MEXT, 2017c, p. 11).
- (2) For a detailed history of CLIL, see Sasajima (2011; 2020).
- (3) Lipman (2003) refers to Bloom’s taxonomy and praises his accomplishments. Thanks to Bloom’s taxonomy, “the way seemed much clearer than before to the installation of critical thinking as a major objective of the educational system” (p. 39). However, according to Lipman, the Bloom’s hierarchy was to be understood with Piaget’s theory of developmental stages. Because “the context into which Bloom’s ideas were dropped was that of sovereign Piagetianism, the dominant force in child psychology from the 1930s through the 1970s” (Ibid.), Bloom’s taxonomy was understood “as a theory of developmental stages (Ibid., p. 40). Then, Lipman especially disagreed with the interpretation and suggested 3Cs as is well known.
- (4) Jackson (2017) emphasized Intellectual Safety, arguing that a sense of trust among participants allows for free dialogue. In addition, Homma (2018) pointed out that Lipman’s caring thinking does not include “care for others” enough, and also argued that Jackson’s Intellectual safety would be able to complement it.
- (5) The term 21st century skills typically describe skills such as creativity, critical thinking (problem solving), communication, and collaboration (Koul et al., 2021). They are also known with different terms such as general capabilities, soft skills, non-cognitive skills, and transversal competencies (Scouler & Care, 2018).
- (6) According to Lipman et al. (1980), “in foreign languages, for example, one may learn words and phrases, declensions and conjugations, but such knowledge is considered insufficient by language teachers. One is educated in a language only when one begins to think in the language itself” (p. 208).
- (7) According to Lipman (2003), “the entire discipline of philosophy bears a unique relationship to the other disciplines, in that philosophy prepares students to think in those other disciplines” (p. 70).
- (8) Although it is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss in detail, Lipman et al. (1980) had already proposed the need to train teachers capable of conducting P4C.

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