

LANGUAGE EDUCATION FOR CLD-CHILDREN GROWN UP IN JAPAN: BASED ON THE STUDY OF NIKKEI IN SOUTH AMERICA

日本で育ったCLD児のための言語教育—南米の日系人の調査をもとに—¹

*Makiko Matsuda*²

Abstract: In Japan, the language learning environment for CLD Children is in the process of reform. Based on my research findings on South American Nikkei, the paper discusses three areas for improvement: (1) support for “translanguaging” learning according to children’s attributes, (2) a shift from language knowledge learning to content-integrated language learning (CLIL), and (3) development of a reference framework for language education for children as a second language.

Keywords: Translanguaging. CLIL. The law to promote Japanese language education. CLD children.

要旨: 日本では、CLDの子どもたちの言語学習環境が改革されつつある。本論文では、南米日系人を対象とした筆者の研究成果に基づいて、以下の3つの改善点 (1)子どもの属性に応じた「トランスランゲージング」学習の支援、(2)言語知識学習から内容統合型言語学習 (CLIL) への移行、(3)第二言語としての子どもの言語教育の参照フレームワークの開発、を論じた。

キーワード: トランスランゲージング, CLIL, 日本語教育振興法, CLD児

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2 Professor, Kanazawa University, Japan. mts@staff.kanazawa-u.ac.jp, ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0801-9430>

1. INTRODUCTION

In 2019, the law to promote Japanese language education was enacted, and a cabinet decision was made in response to it; this clearly states the measures to be taken for CLD, that is, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Children. However, this situation remains in the process of reform. This paper discusses three areas for improvement: (1) support for “translanguaging” learning according to children’s attributes, (2) a shift from language knowledge learning to content-integrated language learning (CLIL), and (3) development of a reference framework for language education for children as a second language.

2. “TRANSLANGUAGING” LEARNING SUPPORT BASED ON CHILDREN’S ATTRIBUTES

2.1. CLD Children Studying in Japanese Elementary and Secondary Schools

Currently, there are approximately 93,133 children with foreign nationality enrolled³ in elementary and junior high schools in Japan (the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, thereafter MEXT 2019).⁴ According to the Survey on the Acceptance of Children in Need of Japanese Language Instruction (FY2018), the number of foreign children in need of Japanese language support is 40,755 (44%).⁵ It is often assumed that born and raised in a foreign country means children who need Japanese language support but the attributes of children who need Japanese language support are diverse. When the DLA⁶ (MEXT 2014) was used to assess the Japanese language proficiency of CLD Junior high school students in Kanagawa Prefecture, many of the students whose overall results were judged to be below the age-appropriate level of Japanese language proficiency (Stages 2 and 3) were born and raised in Japan (Izawa, Miyazaki, and Matsuda 2018). In addition, some children born in Japan were Japanese citizens. It is reported that there are currently about 10,000 children with Japanese nationality in need of Japanese language instruction, apart from children with foreign nationality. Japanese children who need Japanese language instruction are those whose parents are Japanese nationals, such as those from

3 The term “elementary and junior high schools” refers to public elementary schools, junior high schools, high schools, compulsory education schools, secondary schools, and special needs schools in Japan. Out of 93,133, 83,000 are elementary and junior high school students.

4 https://www.mext.go.jp/content/20200110_mxt-kyousei01-1421569_00001_02.pdf

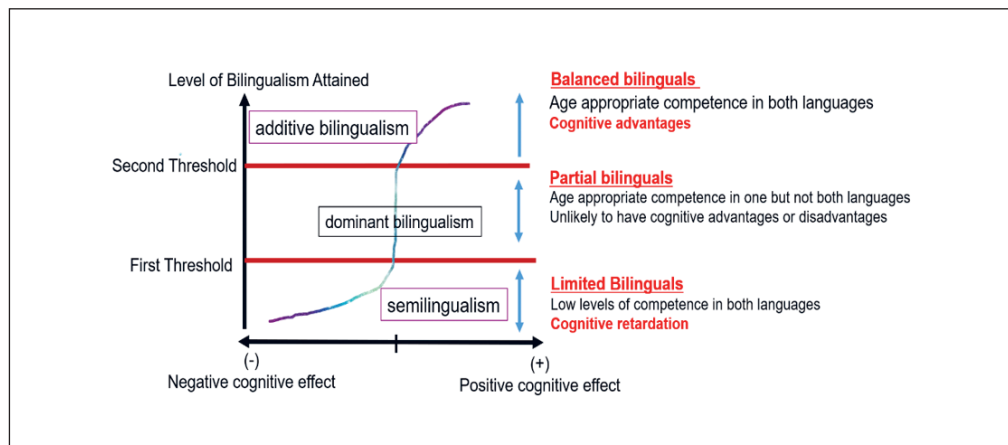
5 The term “need for Japanese language support” includes the ability to read and write. In many cases, daily oral skills are present.

6 The Dialogic Language Assessment (DLA) is a JSL interactive and dynamic assessment for foreign students that measures four skills-listening, reading, speaking and writing- to see if a child’s Japanese language ability is age appropriate.

internationally married families, and children who grow up in this situation face various challenges in their language development (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) 2019).⁷

Cummins (1976) compared multiple language proficiency to a threshold of reaching an age-appropriate language level and divided the threshold into two levels. He divided bilinguals into three categories: those who did not exceed the first threshold, those who exceeded the first threshold, and those who also exceeded the second threshold (Fig. 1). Those who exceeded both thresholds were called balanced bilinguals, those who exceeded the first threshold were called partial bilinguals, and those who did not exceed the first threshold were called limited bilinguals. Cummins also referred to cognitive effects, noting that limited bilingualism has negative cognitive effects (Cummins 1976).

Figure 1: Author's graphical representation of the threshold hypothesis (Cummins 1976, 1979)



As children born and raised in Japan are educated in Japanese elementary and junior high schools, in most cases they have oral skills in their parents' mother tongue, but not reading and writing skills. In other words, the need for Japanese language support means that they are temporarily in a "limited bilingual" situation, where neither Japanese nor their parents' mother tongue is at an age-appropriate level.

However, in Japanese elementary and junior high schools, there does not seem to be a sufficiently common understanding of multilingual ability due to such differences in attributes. In the next section, I will discuss the relationship between different attributes and multilingual abilities.

⁷ The number of students of Japanese nationality who need Japanese language instruction is https://www.mext.go.jp/content/20200110_mxt-kyousei01-1421569_00001_02.pdf 31.6% of them are Filipino; 21.2% of them are Chinese.

2.2. CONDITIONS CONDUCTIVE TO A LIMITED BILINGUAL SITUATION

Children's multilingual ability is greatly affected by the age at which they arrive in Japan (Nakajima 2019).⁸ As for the age of arrival, it is likely to vary depending on (1) arrival between birth in Japan and preschool, (2) arrival between preschool and age 8.9, (3) arrival between ages 10 and 14, and (4) arrival after age 14 (after graduation from junior high school). In addition, it is important whether the mother tongue of the parent (especially the mother) is the same as the local language; if it is different, parents' local language proficiency will affect the child's acquisition of multilingual skills.

In addition, the author believes that the acquisition of multilingual ability differs depending on which language the parents use to raise their children and which language they use to communicate at home. Table 1 shows the results of the study based on Nakajima (2019), with the horizontal axis indicating the category of arrival in Japan and the vertical axis indicating the language of the parents and the language spoken at home. The more likely condition is shown as 1, and the next most likely conditions are shown as 2 and 3. In reality, the situation will differ depending on the background of the individual, such as whether he or she has moved repeatedly, lives in more than one language, whether the household members are multilingual, and the number of siblings, grandparents, and other family members. "Balanced bilinguals" in this context means having age-appropriate language proficiency, including reading and writing skills.

8 Lecture material for "International Forum on the Promotion of Japanese Language Education in Kanagawa" by Kazuko Nakajima: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6dDG7gGQw8U&t=24s>

Table 1: Child's assumed multilingual ability in relation to time of arrival in Japan, parents' language, and home language.

	<i>Parents' mother language</i>	<i>family language</i>	<i>(1) Born in Japan – around school age (5–6 years old)</i>	<i>7–9 years old</i>	<i>(3) 10–14 years old (late stage of language development period)</i>	<i>Above 15 years old (post language development period)</i>
A	Mother: Japanese ⁹	Japanese	1 M (J) 2 PB (J)	1 PB (J) 2 M (J)	BB	1 BB 2 PB (F)
B	Father: X (low Japanese proficiency)	X	1 PB (J) 2 M(J)	1 PB (J) 2 BB	BB	PB (F)
C	Father: Japanese	Japanese	1 LB 2 M (J) 3 PB (J)	1 PB (J) 2 LB	1 BB 2 PB (F)	1 PB (F) 2 BB
D	Mother: X (Japanese language skills low)	X	1 PB (J) 2 LB	1 PB (J) 2 LB 3 BB	1 BB 2 PB (F)	PB (F)
E	Father and mother: Both X (low Japanese proficiency)	Japanese (X between parents)	1 LB 2 PB (J) 3 M(J)	1 PB (J) 2 LB	-Mr	-Mr
F		X	1 PB (J) 2 LB 3 BB	1 PB (J) 2 BB/LB	BB /PB(F)	PB (F)

Legend: PB: Partial Bilingual BB: Balanced Bilingual LB: Limited Bilingual
M: Monolingual X: Languages other than Japanese J: Japanese

The period in (1) requires the most vigilance. According to Nakashima (2019), if parents' cultural capital or resources are low, both the local language and the mother tongue (inherited language) will not grow. In period (2), the mother tongue has been acquired to a certain extent, and because it is the language formation period, it is said to be the time when the child will become “balanced bilingual and bicultural” if education is provided to acquire learned language skills in the mother tongue as well. (3) is the time when the local language is added to the mother tongue, and it is difficult to

⁹ In this paper, we mainly assume Japanese nationals who were born and raised in Japan, but also include dual nationals who were born and raised in the Nikkei community in South America and whose community language is Japanese.

become double-limited. (4) is the time when a person comes to Japan after completing middle school age and language formation; if Japanese is acquired, the person will become bilingual with the mother tongue predominating.

The patterns of the language environment in the home are indicated by A through F. Limited bilingualism is more likely to occur when both parents lack Japanese language skills and raise their children in Japanese (E), and when mothers lack Japanese language skills and fathers are native Japanese speakers and raise their children in Japanese (C).¹⁰

The situation that requires the most attention is when both parents lack Japanese language skills and raise their children in Japanese (E). This occurs when the child learns Japanese at daycare or school in Japan and speaks only in Japanese, and the parents try to respond in Japanese. In this case, both parents are unable to communicate with their children confidently in Japanese, and a rich language environment in the home is not guaranteed.

(C) also needs attention. It is said that if a mother raises a child in a language in which she does not feel confident, the child may not be able to communicate in the language necessary for growth (Nakajima, 2019). In Japan, the ratio of Japanese men to Japanese women in international marriages is 7:3 (Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare 2016),¹¹ so the (C)(D) pattern is more common than (A)(B). In the case of Japanese men who are Japanese nationals, their wives are Chinese nationals (38.7%) and Philippine nationals (20.7%). On the other hand, considering that the percentage of Japanese children who need Japanese language learning support is 31.6% Filipino and 21.2% Chinese, there is a need for educational intervention from an early age for children with Filipino mothers and Japanese fathers. Mothers whose mother tongue is a minority language that does not have a strong ethnic vitality in the world tend not to raise their children in their mother tongue.¹² In both cases, it is difficult to guarantee a rich language environment in the home, and there is a possibility that cognitive development is not sufficiently promoted in early childhood.

Children who come to Japan between the ages of 6 and 8.9 years learn Japanese very quickly. However, parents need to be careful about maintaining their native language and culture. Unless parents take conscious measures to maintain the language, children who move to Japan during the language formation period will forget their previous language. In addition, if the mother tongue is used only in the home, the child will not try hard to acquire it, and the language of friends will become dominant. The

10 If the mother's Japanese ability is high in C, there is not much of a problem. In that case, it will be similar to raising a child with two monolingual Japanese parents.

11 Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW), Vital Statistics for Fiscal Year 2008: <https://www.mhlw.go.jp/toukei/saikin/hw/jinkou/tokusyuu/konin16/index.html>

12 Mr. Rawinan Niramom conducted a questionnaire survey of about 30 Thai-speaking mothers married to Japanese, and reported that many of them raised their children in Japanese and did not teach them Thai.

10–14 years old period is when there is not much problem in retaining the mother tongue, and Japanese is acquired.

Children who arrive in Japan around the time of language formation are more likely to have developed language skills in their mother tongue. Based on Cummins' (1979, 2001) language interdependence hypothesis, knowledge acquired in the mother tongue can be transferred to the second language for further learning. In most cases, this is either a PB or BB.

2.3. The need to design education that includes the mother tongue

The author is currently conducting life story interviews with adults born in South America or Japan who are literate in multiple languages, including Japanese. More than forty interviews have revealed some common attempts by parents to implement family language policies to help them acquire and maintain multilingual literacy. In order, the following are frequently mentioned:

1. Have children attend a community language school as an extracurricular activity. (In South America, a Japanese language school run by a Nikkey organization)
2. Give them videos, manga, novels, etc. sent from their parents' home countries to read.
3. Provide more authentic language opportunities, such as interactions with relatives who speak the parent's native language or send their children to study in local schools for a few months during their furlough.
4. Make sure children follow the rule of using their parents' mother tongue at home and the local language outside the home.
5. Send the child to a foreign/international school taught in their home language and have the child learn the local language at the school as well.
6. Involve them in community activities such as religion and sports that use the family language.
7. One-Person One-Language (De Houwer 1990) (each parent uses his or her own mother tongue consistently).
8. Avoid migration before the child's language development period (keeping the child in the home country until the child is five years old).
9. Parents open a private school of mother tongue classes for their own children and accept other children in the vicinity who are in the same situation.

The most common practice was to send their children to community language schools where they could learn the home language (heritage language schools, foreign schools, supplementary schools, etc.) and receive literacy education. In South America, there were cases of children attending bilingual schools, where they learn subjects in the local language in the morning and learn foreign languages such as Japanese and

English in the afternoon. The next most common practice was to prohibit the use of the local language in the home and allow the children to use the local language outside the home. In addition, parents actively encouraged their children to read books (picture books and manga) in Japanese and foreign languages.

What we can see from this is that the first step is for parents to raise their children in the language in which they feel confident, and for parents to make efforts to ensure a multilingual learning environment for them. In particular, it is necessary to make efforts to educate children in their mother tongue, an environment that is difficult to obtain in Japan. Therefore, teachers at nursery schools and school education sites need to reach out to parents and encourage them to activate dialog and literacy education in their mother tongue. The importance of preserving and nurturing the mother tongue for such young people is a well-established theory among researchers in the field, but the future challenge is to spread awareness in school education settings (Nishikawa 2019).

In addition, regardless of the child's background, it is important that he or she is educated in a translanguaging (Garcia and Wei 2014) environment. Translanguaging is a theory of communication and education. It is the act performed by bilinguals of accessing different linguistic features or various modes of what are described as autonomous languages, in order to maximize communicative potential (Garcia 2009: 140).

While the language interdependence hypothesis (Cummins 2001) sees bilingualism as two overlapping icebergs, because they are a static and countable mass. I think it is more desirable to think of children's abilities as rolling sand dunes. Sand dunes are fluid and can take on the shape of mountains when the wind blows (or when the language scene changes), but the basic amount of sand is the same. The fact that it looks like a mountain means that we are trying to draw a boundary line, but I think that such a boundary line can be redrawn freely depending on the direction of the wind. What teachers need to do is not to confront children with the assumption that language has boundaries, but to try to understanding their language skills as a continuum spectrum, and increase the whole area of sand (language and cognitive skills) of children.

2.4. Limited Bilingualism and Special Needs Classes

Currently, the percentage of students connected to foreign countries enrolled in special needs classes in Japanese elementary and junior high schools is more than double that of Japanese monolingual speakers (Matsuda and Nakagawa 2018b).¹³ In collaboration with Nakagawa, a Japanese-Brazilian clinical psychologist, we conducted language and intelligence tests on 11 Brazilian children who had been diagnosed with a developmental disability at a Japanese hospital or were enrolled in a special needs class and found that more than half of the children did not have a developmental dis-

13 This means that while 1 out of every 100 Japanese children is enrolled in the school, and 2–3 out of every 10 children with foreign connections are enrolled.

ability, but “appeared to have a developmental disability” due to linguistically limited situation (Matsuda and Nakagawa 2018a). When intelligence tests were conducted, they tended to have significantly lower relative verbal knowledge and working memory values. Nakagawa made the following statement in an interview:

Working memory is information processing using the “ear” and requires knowledge of language. It also requires knowledge of vocabulary. Without it, working memory cannot function. In addition, it is a factor in losing concentration and attention. They cannot clearly understand what they do not understand, so they can only have a vague understanding. This situation can be improved through training attention and concentration. In addition, Brazilian children are more “active and restless” than their “Japanese” classmates, dancing and walking around in class.

It is possible that children in a linguistically limited situation simply lose their concentration and attention because their working memory is not functioning. Therefore, even if a child with a foreign connection “appears to have a developmental disability,” school educators should first suspect the possibility that the child is in linguistically limited situation; instead of moving the child to a special needs class, they should engage the child in any way they can through translanguaging and provide language education support to help the child develop concentration and attention. Over time, children acquire multiple language skills, and their behavior will become more relaxed.

3. FROM LANGUAGE KNOWLEDGE LEARNING TO CONTENT-INTEGRATED LANGUAGE LEARNING (CLIL)

3.1. Current status of teaching content for students who need Japanese language instruction

In a survey by MEXT (2018), the most common response to the content of instruction provided to students who needed Japanese language instruction was basic Japanese language instruction (Table 2).

In the education of children whose mother tongue is not Japanese, Japanese language instruction has been given priority. Japanese language instruction and academic instruction were separated from each other. However, the need to integrate Japanese language instruction and academic instruction arose, and the JSL curriculum (Sato, Takagi, and Saito 2005) was developed between 2001 and 2003 (MEXT 2003).¹⁴ However, in the latest survey conducted more than 10 years later, the number of those with integrated learning Japanese language and subjects using the JSL curriculum was the lowest among the four, and the most common was the formal learning of the Japanese language called “Basic Japanese.”

14 https://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/shotou/clarinet/003/001/008/001.htm

Table 2: Content of instruction provided to students who need Japanese language instruction (numbers indicate number of schools) (MEXT, 2018¹⁵)

1	Survival Japanese	5,057
2	Basic Japanese language class (characters, grammar, vocabulary)	7,198
3	Language and contents integrated (JSL curriculum)	3,031
4	Supplementary class for subjects	6,067
5	Other	2,287

The author believes that formal Japanese language instruction without meaning should not be given to foreign-connected students at any point in time. Essentially, it is the adult learner’s method of language acquisition that takes the structure and forms out of the language and produces it by knowing the rules and monitoring their own language use. For younger learners, language teaching methods appropriate for younger learners should be applied.

3.2. BICS and CALP

There are two main areas of concern regarding language proficiency for students with foreign connections: basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) and cognitive and academic language proficiency (CALP) (Cummins 1979, 2001). Cummins noted that learners first acquire conversational skills in face-to-face, highly contextualized situations, but it takes time for them to acquire the language that will contribute to their educational success. He said that learners acquire basic interpersonal skills (BICS) in just one to two years, but CALP takes five to six years.

In the early years of learning, it is important for young learners to acquire BICS, which is different from basic Japanese. In doing so, it is desirable to have them learn language in the context of relationships and contexts. It is also important to note that children acquire language skills in the following order: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Children do not start speaking immediately. Speech occurs only after a certain amount of input from the ear. The first step is to provide comprehensible input situations that are supported by a sufficient context. If this is done, BICS will be acquired to some extent in about 1–2 years.

The first thing to realize about CALP in Japanese is that it takes time. It takes 5–6 years to acquire age-appropriate CALP (Cummins 1979, 2001). As Japanese is a

15 https://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/houdou/31/09/1421569.htm

Chinese Character usage language, it is assumed that the burden of character acquisition will be even higher for those who have moved from country in which languages Chinese characters are not used.

3.3. From JSL Curriculum to CLIL

Content-integrated language learning (CLIL), rather than form-focused learning, is the preferred method for teaching CALP to migrant children. The main features of CLIL are its emphasis on understanding the content of learning, its focus on learners' thinking and learning skills (cognition), its development of learners' communicative competence (communication), and awareness of their culture or interculture (Sasajima 2017). The main features of the course are that it focuses on understanding the content of learning (content), the learners' thinking and learning skills (cognition), the development of learners' communication skills (communication), and enhancing their awareness of culture or interculture (Sasajima 2017).¹⁶ Rather than teaching only the Japanese language, language education embedded in the context of the subject matter should be conducted with the support of the mother tongue and various types of information. There are many reports of CLIL in English education for math, science, and social studies (Nigo 2014.). This should be designed to be conducted in Japan.

The JSL curriculum integrates Japanese language instruction and academic instruction and aims to develop the ability to participate in learning activities.¹⁷ The basic idea is similar to CLIL, but there are some differences. Izumi et al. (2012) listed the following specific characteristics of CLIL.

(1) The ratio of content learning to language learning is 1:1, (2) the four skills (reading, listening, writing, speaking) are used in a balanced and integrated manner, (3) many tasks are given, (4) utilize various levels of thinking skills (memorization, comprehension, application, analysis, evaluation, and creativity), (5) emphasize cooperative learning (pair work and group activities), (6) include elements of cross-cultural understanding and international issues, (7) encourage the use of authentic materials (newspapers, magazines, websites, etc.), (8) provide information not only in written form but also in audio, numeric, and visual forms (graphics and images), (9) provide scaffolding (learning aids) in terms of both content and language, and (10) provide instruction in study skills.

CLIL differs from the JSL curriculum in that it encourages scaffolding in both content and language, emphasizes cross-cultural learning, and aims to learn about the subject matter itself rather than learning in preparation for participation in learning. Another feature of CLIL is that it is taught by non-native speakers of the learner's

16 <https://www.j-clil.com/clil>

17 "Development of JSL Curriculum in School Education" (Final Report), Elementary School Edition

language. In Europe, CLIL classes are conducted by non-native teachers (Ikeda 2013). If CLIL classes for children with connections to foreign countries are conducted by teachers who understand the children's native language in a variety of languages, including Japanese, subject learning can be conducted smoothly and CALP can be expected to grow. In addition, by using cross-cultural learning as a theme and having Japanese-speaking children interact and learn together, we can expect to gain a broader range of linguistic and cognitive learning.

4. LANGUAGE EDUCATION REFERENCE FRAMEWORK FOR CHILDREN LEARNING IN MULTIPLE LANGUAGE ENVIRONMENTS

The Japanese Language Education Subcommittee of the Council for Cultural Affairs is currently working on the formulation of a reference frame for Japanese language education.¹⁸ The framework of reference for Japanese language education is a framework for all those involved in Japanese language education to refer to when learning and teaching Japanese and is intended to establish standards for Japanese language education in response to the enactment of the Law for the Promotion of Japanese Language Education. The reference framework is based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). This itself is very beneficial, but the problem is that the CEFR may also be applied to the Japanese language education of young people.

The cabinet decision “Basic Policy for the Comprehensive and Effective Promotion of Measures for the Promotion of Japanese Language Education” (November 2020)¹⁹ enacted in response to the Japanese Language Education Promotion Act of 2019, includes “a. Japanese language education for infants, children, and students who are foreign nationals, etc., and b. Japanese language education for children of Japanese nationals residing abroad, etc.” as the target of this policy. Therefore, children are also included in the development of a framework for the evaluation of Japanese language proficiency. It is commendable that children are included in the target of promoting Japanese language education and that children living abroad who are connected to the Japanese language are also included, but we believe that it is not appropriate to apply the same frame of reference to adults and juveniles.

The CEFR is basically a frame of reference for the “foreign language education” of adults who have a separate mother tongue²⁰. The CEFR has problems, such as the

18 https://www.bunka.go.jp/seisaku/kokugo_nihongo/kyoiku/ikenboshu/nihongokyoiku_sanshowaku/pdf/92343201_01.pdf

19 https://www.bunka.go.jp/seisaku/bunkashingikai/kokugo/hokoku/pdf/92664201_01.pdf

20 The revised CEFR published in 2018 & 2020 aims to integrate descriptions that also include those who learn the language as a second language, but the author believes that the integration work is in the process of creation.

existence of competence statements based on adult communicative needs that are not relevant to young people who are still in the process of language formation, and these concerns are expressed in the report (Bunkacho 2020).²¹ CEFR is not a frame of reference for native or second language speakers.

To measure the language proficiency of foreign-connected students in the CEFR, they are asked to give up their ability to carry out intellectually productive activities in that language as are native speakers. With proper educational support, they can receive public education in Japan, become good or better language users as Japanese monolinguals, and be active in the world.

To achieve this, it is necessary to be able to evaluate children's language and communication skills holistically, and to suggest directions for their growth. If we measure language ability only in Japanese or only in the mother tongue, he or she will be judged inadequate in both languages. Therefore, it is desirable to have a frame of reference that can measure what can be done in any language and what can be done in translanguaging. In concrete terms, this means that it does not matter whether one can "make a logically reasoned argument," "define something," or "explain the relationship between A and B" only in some "named languages." If it is acceptable to answer questions using all the words and resources one knows, write essays in all the languages one knows, and to understand texts using various dictionaries and human assistance, the assessment of language (and cognitive) abilities of children growing up in a multilingual environment will be different from what it is now. The evaluation of language ability (and cognitive ability) of children growing up in a multilingual environment would be different from what it is currently such a generic language education frame of reference must be developed. To be able to evaluate them, teachers must also know the language of their children. For this purpose, we need more teachers who can understand more than one language. Although it is not realistic to realize this immediately, I believe that the possibility of assessment can be increased by involving parents and siblings who are likely to understand the child's language in the educational process.

21 The Council of Europe has been testing the relevance of the European Language Portfolio as a language proficiency statement for children in two age groups: 7–10 years old and 11–15 years old. The results show that there are a number of language proficiency statements that cannot be associated at this time, and in particular that most of the C-level language proficiency statements from ages 7–10 indicate a level of cognitive and social maturity that is not relevant to the communication needs of this age group, and that many of the proficiency statements from ages 11–15 also need to be modified according to the child's development and knowledge. It is also reported that many competence statements for ages 11–15 need to be modified according to the child's development and knowledge (Primary Report of the Japanese Language Education Reference Framework, p. 14).

5. CONCLUSION

This paper discusses three areas for improvement for CLD children studying in Japanese public education: (1) translanguaging learning support according to children's attributes, (2) a shift from language knowledge learning to content-integrated language learning, and (3) the development of a reference framework for second-language education for children.

Japan is a country with strong assimilationist tendencies, and many school teachers want children to master the Japanese language before they start school, especially at Junior High school (Matsuda, Aoki and Shiraishi, 2020). They try to solve the problem by the individual efforts of the child. However, it is the schools and society that must change and it is the parents who must change.

Tada (2020) defines dialog as “a continuing, developing, and deepening verbal and nonverbal expressive activity for interacting with oneself and diverse others and events, making use of differences, creating new wisdom, values, and solutions together, and building good creative relationships in the process.” One type of dialog is “co-creative dialog,” in which diverse views are expressed and conflicts and disagreements are utilized to broaden and deepen the world, which should be emphasized in the utilization of diversity in learning (Tada 2020: 26).

The author agrees with this suggestion. The importance of creating friendships, co-creating, and creating a place for dialog and education is the same, regardless of whether one's roots are foreign or Japanese speaking. If learning in various languages is realized and the school environment is changed, Tada's co-creative dialog can be realized even in classrooms where children with different mother tongues learn together. Sunako Elementary School in Kadoma City, Japan, has successfully fostered global literacy and multilingual skills by creating a multilingual environment and providing classrooms for Chinese and other native languages (Tian and Sakurai, 2017). I hope that the boundaries between foreigners and Japanese will disappear in Japanese schools, and that co-creative interactive learning will expand the possibilities for the future of all children.

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