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Feature Article

Decolonising a Literature CLIL Course in Japan: CEFR integration and course design recommendations

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Abstract

In this paper, the planning of an undergraduate content and language integrated learning (CLIL) course is discussed through the lens of decolonisation. Although it has not yet been widely adopted in Japanese English classrooms, decolonisation of English language and literature curricula, particularly regarding the selection of literary texts, has grown in popularity around the world. This preliminary report makes the case that allowing students to participate in the process of selecting appropriate texts encourages critical thinking and in-depth learning. Looking beyond the canon can also reveal students' interest in learning about history, culture, and intercultural understanding with the aim of nurturing skills to evaluate literary texts in the global context. Using principles from the Common European Framework of References for Languages (CEFR), and reflecting on applications of the decolonising lens, this paper offers insights into the process and suggests strategies for decolonising English language and literature education within the Japanese context.

Key words: decolonising, curriculum design, pedagogy, EFL, postcolonial literature

In this age of globalisation and multiculturalism, it is increasingly important to review literary texts used in language classes. This motivation stems from the need for new and creative ways to use literature in the teaching of second (L2) and additional (L+) languages. It is natural that educators would incorporate international perspectives into the range of texts available for classroom use. In Japan, however, the adjustments to decolonise literature curricula (what we teach) and pedagogy (how we teach it) have not yet been implemented. One of the most important aspects of preparing a literature and language course is selecting the texts for students. Using literature for language learning can be done in many different ways (see Paran, 2008 for a review of approaches). Teachers planning courses

want to know what kinds of texts they should select, and how these texts can be used to engage learners. Which aspects of reading will really resonate with students? Which characters will they relate to? Which themes will they want to discuss? Which aspects of the texts may bring the most cultural enrichment? These questions, as well as many others, help guide curriculum planning and decision-making (Applebee, 2008). Finding relatable stories that foster empathy and connection for thought-provoking conversations are just two of the many variables that affect curriculum design.

Global concerns about the future of languages and culture appear to be growing and cannot be ignored. David Graddol's *The Future of English?* (1997) raised a number of issues relevant to language learning contexts,

such as the role of English, its status as a global language, and considerations of how English may evolve in changing times. Graddol's predictions have proved to be only part of the story since the impact of globalisation has gone beyond these earlier considerations. Educators should ensure that changes to planning and text selection are done with careful review of language and content-related course aims.

An additional way to do this is by using language-based descriptors in activity planning. The Council of Europe released the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, and Assessment (CEFR) in 2001, meant as a thorough assessment of language competency levels. However, when it first appeared, its application to literature courses was limited. The document briefly mentioned that literature fosters “imaginative and artistic uses of language, which are important both educationally and in their own right” (Council of Europe, 2001: 56). It wasn't until the Council of Europe's Companion Volumes (CV), appearing in 2018 and 2020, that the addition of descriptors with explicit literary connections received formal recognition. These three new scales have been added since 2018, specifically for literature, in order to make clear the function of literature in language learning. These are: 1) reading as a leisure activity 2) expressing a personal response to creative texts, and 3) analysis and criticism of creative texts (Council of Europe, 2020: 24). For more detail about how this might be achieved at different levels of language proficiency, Appendix A provides a list of descriptors at the relevant levels. Any language course that uses literature must carefully consider the texts that are chosen for reading, analysis, and individual response. The second and third of these aims are most obviously related to the current topic (see emphasis in the quote below):

Analysis and criticism of creative texts (including literature): This represents an approach more common at an upper secondary and university level. It concerns more formal, intellectual reactions. Aspects analysed include the significance of events in a novel, treatment of the same themes in different works and other links between them, the extent to which a work follows conventions, and *more global evaluation of the work as a whole* (Council of Europe, 2018: 117)

The essential elements of this skill are not simply to look at the texts in isolation, but to be able to evaluate them.

Evaluation, as a higher-order thinking skill involves making judgements, through the use of criteria or values, considering aspects such as reliability, perspective and awareness of impact and importance. Combining the CEFR and literature has been receiving more attention recently with emerging frameworks such as that of the model of literary competences (Alter & Ratheiser, 2019). The concepts of empathetic competence, aesthetic competence, cultural and discursive competence, and interpretative competence can be used to evaluate literature and CEFR aims. Reviewing texts and commenting on them using a decolonising lens is one potential way in which students can interrogate texts for the information they present, as well as looking for missing details using wider knowledge of global contexts.

To clarify the focus and structure of this paper, it is important to highlight that the central aim is to examine the integration of decolonial perspectives into a specific content and language integrated learning (CLIL) course in the Japanese university context. While the background information on decolonisation efforts in higher education provides important context, the main part of the paper will be dedicated to a case study of how these ideas have been put into practice in the development and implementation of a CLIL literature course. Through a detailed analysis of the course content, student responses, and reflections on the process, this paper seeks to offer insights and practical strategies for incorporating decolonial approaches into language and literature education in Japan and beyond. Building on the growing body of scholarship on decolonising higher education, this paper aims to contribute to the discussion by offering a detailed examination of how decolonial perspectives can be integrated into the design and implementation of a CLIL course in the Japanese university context. By focusing on a specific case study, the paper seeks to bridge the gap between theoretical discussions of decolonisation and the practical challenges and opportunities of putting these ideas into practice in the classroom. With these aims in mind, the next section discusses what decolonisation may look like in English studies and literature courses in the tertiary context in Japan.

What does it mean to start *decolonising* the English curriculum?

Decolonisation involves investigating and identifying colonial systems, structures, and relationships while working to challenge them. Related to what Giroux and Penna (1979) referred to as the *hidden curriculum*,

colonial attitudes and perspectives may be embedded in institutional cultures, which the University of Liverpool has described as barriers to success (Chavez and Cheetham, 2021). Around the world, there have been attempts to look at the content taught at universities with a decolonial lens. Specific to curriculum development are the kinds of courses, texts, and methods employed, depending on the context and geographical area.

Focusing on language learning, in a 2019 edited collection edited by Donaldo Macedo, Michel DeGraff writes simply that the decolonising refers to “coloniality in the teaching of foreign languages” (Degraff, p.xii). The urgency is found in countries where language learning was used for the project of coloniality itself. The collection covers a variety of key research areas including the displacement of indigenous languages, critical pedagogy and ways towards multilingualism. Those interested in global perspectives will find the book a detailed introduction.

In recent years, educators have also become more aware of the need to make diverse reading lists in literature courses. For various historical and cultural reasons, representing diverse literary voices and considering the situation of the authors of literature (gender, race, social background, etc.) may have become more commonly accepted recently. Initiatives to decolonise have become associated with curriculum design and delivery, research agendas and staffing. There has been a welcome and general shift away from the so-called “male, pale, and stale” overwhelming whiteness of the choices in literature courses. As Munslow Ong (2021) points out, many of the initiatives have been led from global regions beyond Europe and have often been initiated by students themselves. Universities around the world have taken steps to decolonise their curricula in recent years. One example is the University of Cape Town in South Africa, which led the way after the 2015 student-led movement #RhodesMustFall. The campaign, initially aimed at removing a statue of colonist Cecil Rhodes on campus, sparked a broader conversation about the university's role in addressing its colonial past. As part of its decolonising mission, the university now includes more diverse voices from African and postcolonial literature to address the imbalance of Western literature. Similarly, the English department at the University of Toronto in Canada has focused on creating postcolonial and Indigenous literature courses. In the US, many universities have intensified their efforts to

integrate marginalised faculty and support diverse students, particularly in response to the #BlackLivesMatter movement of 2020. The University of Oxford has also initiated change by targeting iconography, curriculum, and representation.

Studies, such as one conducted by the London School of Economics (El Kadi, 2019), have found that analysing reading lists can provide valuable insights into perspectives and biases. Scholars have addressed the specific steps needed to decolonise English studies through edited collections (Beyer, 2022), news articles (Shay, 2016), and special issues of journals. In postcolonial contexts, the discussion centres on power dynamics, with local writers and indigenous languages being considered for inclusion in curricula. Bernard (2023) examines the need to decolonise literature from various angles, considering history, translation, context, and the value of reading colonial and anti-colonial texts together. In “Decolonizing Methodologies,” Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012) critiques the colonial foundations of Western research methodologies and advocates for indigenous research paradigms. Smith argues that traditional Western research has often been an instrument of colonialism, exploiting indigenous peoples and their knowledge systems. She calls for decolonising research methodologies that transform the power relations in the research process. Some suggestions have been made by Kubota (2021) from the perspective of decolonising scholarly knowledge. Kubota argues that epistemological racism, which privileges white Euro-American knowledge and marginalizes knowledge produced by scholars from the Global South and scholars of colour, is deeply entrenched in academic practices and institutions.

In Asian contexts, decolonisation has already become a normalised and familiar approach. For example, a drive to teach ethics through literature is an ongoing concern in literature classrooms, as explained in detail by Choo (2021). Choo is writing in Singapore about literature education in high schools, but it can be argued that her ethical approach can also be applied effectively in language courses which use literature as the content. In order to keep up with global trends and provide students with valuable opportunities to critically analyse their own relationships with books and reading, this article argues that decolonising language and literature curricula in Japan should receive more attention.

One earlier discussion of decolonial approaches in the sphere of linguistics came from Pennycook (1998),

writing about the English language education in China. Although China is not a country usually considered to have been fully colonised by European powers, Pennycook's analysis of textbooks and language course materials showed that colonial perspectives were all-pervading. Essentially, even countries not considered colonised are still influenced by colonial discourses. In a related call to educators, McRae (1991) discussed the idea of literature with a small 'l', which means looking beyond canonical texts and including literature broadly defined as including all kinds of storytelling genres, non-traditional and diverse literature, and including learner literature. Recently, Kester et al. (2019) offered valuable insights into decolonising higher education in the Korean context, drawing on a comprehensive review of literature and practical workshops with educators. The decolonial toolkit that emerged provides concrete strategies for addressing coloniality and injustice, ranging from curricular interventions to pedagogical approaches.

In Japan, the discussion enters another layer of depth when considering the influence of Japanese as colonial languages in parts of Asia in the first half of the 20th Century. Within the field of applied linguistics and language teaching, the issues surrounding colonialism have begun to be addressed in policy statements and course planning. For example, Eoin Jordan and colleagues at the University of St Andrews have created a set of resources for teachers as a set of audio recordings and accompanying reading lists (Jordan, 2023). The key questions for decolonisation are:

1. What is meant by the term "decolonisation"?
2. Why would a language teaching practitioner want to decolonise their class, and how should they go about doing this?
3. What impacts might this type of action have?

Identity, ideology, and decolonisation are brought together in this toolkit meant as a starting point for discussions on how to make departmental changes happen in any language teaching context (available from <https://ciltlp.wp.st-andrews.ac.uk/>). This discussion does not fully explore the range of language

and culture-related issues in Japan itself, however. Indigenous populations (Ryukyu and Ainu cultures and others) are those which have been marginalised within Japan through a process of cultural assimilation.

In 2018, the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in London created a teaching and learning resource kit for their departments. With a connection to "broader institutional questions about the principles and practices of good teaching" it seeks to create curricula in "a spirit of critical dialogue within education" (SOAS, 2018: 1). The focus is on both curriculum choices and academic freedom (the development of courses, selection of courses, and ways of managing diversity), as well as the ways of teaching and learning (broadly referred to as pedagogy). Table 1 illustrates the range of actions that departments should think about, which include discussions amongst colleagues, extensive reading on the subject (points 2-3), and student involvement in decision-making and action-planning (points 5, 6, and 10). These broad recommendations can be used to review courses with a colonial lens.

All of these universities take a strategic and thorough approach to raising their awareness of problematic text selections while simultaneously addressing the systemic changes necessary to bring about long-lasting improvements in the educational experiences of their students.

Review of the Context: English literature programmes in Japan

To undertake an examination of the choices for potential literature students in Japan, an initial step involves an analysis of how literature is portrayed on university websites, and what kinds of texts are used in literature classes in Japan. Based on the latest data from the Times Higher Education (THE) ranking, an analysis of prominent English literature and language departments in Japan provides a comprehensive overview (THE, 2023). The primary aim is to examine the initial attitude towards issues and concepts related to the study of English literature as a subject. Table 2 contains excerpts from three high-ranking literature departments in Japanese universities introducing the study of English literature.

Table 1: Suggested curricula and pedagogy adaptations to decolonise the disciplines (SOAS, 2018: 10)

	Suggested adaptations from the Decolonising SOAS Working Group
School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Re-organise material in the syllabus to bring different issues to prominence, in particular through bringing various kinds of critical perspectives to the earlier sessions 2. Consult a wider range of journals or textbooks for source materials, particularly journals located in the global South which may help capture different debates or perspectives 3. Talk to colleagues in the discipline who specialise in different research areas to get recommendations 4. Read articles about pedagogy in your field which speak to questions of diversity, coloniality, inclusion and critical thinking 5. Talk to students about what kinds of content they would like to see addressed 6. Keep open some spaces in the course to teach around topics identified by students in that year 7. Teach ‘controversies’ around key issues in the field or think about how to engage topics dialogically 8. Teach through the juxtaposition of material from different areas 9. Contextualise the subject in its historical moment, making explicit the kinds of research programmes, assumptions and aspirations that generated it 10. Facilitate students’ engagement with language learning within programme design 11. Diversify the kinds of source material that come into the classroom; intelligent writing or comment on particular issues might well be available online in non-academic form 12. Confront issues that may arise around potentially distressing topics

Table 2: English literature and linguistics and course descriptions (Times Higher Education (THE), 2023)

Country Ranking	University Name	Department Name	Description of Course
1	Tohoku University	Faculty of Arts and Letters, English Literature	English literature is not limited to England; taken in a broad sense, it also includes works from Australia, South Africa, Canada, and even the United States.
2	Tokyo University	The Department of English Language and Literature	English Literature is, to begin with, so broad that its limits are difficult to define. In general, our staff’s research interests cover the traditional core of the discipline in British and American literature, and classes typically focus on close reading of texts.
3	Osaka University	English and American Literature and English Linguistics	Students majoring in Anglo-American literature will receive a general overview of the world of English-language literature with a central focus on Britain and America, as well as the characteristics of different genres and their formation and development from a range of cultural perspectives.

In the descriptions in Table 2, there is a sense that something about literature is being hinted at, i.e., “English literature is not limited to England” and “so broad that its limits are difficult to define” and a course gives a “general overview of the world of English-language literature”, without historical reasons given. It is possible that there are ongoing efforts that have not been documented or summarised on the department websites. However, at a superficial level, there is limited indication of any focus on decolonising the literature curriculum at these universities. Issues of identity and a raised awareness of multiculturalism, limited though they may be, are beginning to appear:

“Nowadays, we see many writers with complicated cultural backgrounds, like Ishiguro Kazuo, enjoy success in the English literary world—proof that the adjective refers to the original language of the work, rather than to a specific country.” (Tohoku University, Department of Global Humanities: English Literature, n.d.).

The complicated background of Ishiguro is of course his Japanese national identity (by birth) and his current citizenship (British) by naturalisation. His Nobel prize in Japan was warmly received, while his books are in the international section of the bookshop using his name in *katakana*. Ishiguro’s work is used in the English General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) English literature examination as a British author of colour (along with Meera Syal). While these areas of literature and nationhood are certain curiosities that Japanese students may find broadly linked to social changes in Japan (issues of immigration, emigration, naming, dual nationality, and so on), they are not directly concerned with the same direction of any decolonisation project. Another way to learn more about the current situation in Japan is to take a close look at the reading lists and texts used in language and literature classes. This may not fully reflect how some teachers are already decolonising or are making attempts to do so but is meant as a snapshot to give a general impression. The situation with textbooks for English literature courses available for teachers of literature in Japan provides additional context. Offerings from a major Japanese publisher for their 2024 include the following:

1. British and American Short Stories (Graham Green, James Joyce, etc.),

2. Contemporary British and American Short Stories (Kinsley Amis, John Updike, etc.)
3. Modern British and American Short Stories (James Thurber, Aldous Huxley, etc.)
4. Charming Stories by Modern Authors (Ernest Hemingway, Somerset Maugham, etc)
5. Gems of Modern Short Stories (John Steinbeck, Katherine Mansfield)

The closest in the catalogue to a non-European collection was a set of short stories by Katherine Mansfield, including *The Garden Party* (set in New Zealand, but written while the author was in Europe) and *Kwaidan* by Lafcadio Hearn (written by a European in Japan). From this it may be inferred that many English literature courses in Japan at the current time are taught in departments not yet discussing decolonisation, using texts which focus on traditionally canonical (if adapted or shortened) literature. A fuller investigation of courses and texts used in Japan could show greater diversity and the work already done by researchers and instructors in this field, so this beginning discussion is not meant as a fine-detail investigation. The next section looks at how decolonisation may be realised by using examples from one undergraduate CLIL course currently being developed.

Examining the decolonial lens: Course planning perspectives

As with other components of the course design, the instructor's situation should be taken into account. Although not all CLIL teachers have experience in the field, the course instructor should ideally be knowledgeable about the most recent methods for teaching language through literature. In this case, my background of teaching literature and language was with subject knowledge from an undergraduate degree in English and Scottish literature, PGCE in English (language and literature, with drama and media studies), master's degree in applied linguistics and PhD in applied linguistics with thesis on uses of literature for language learning. Though my four-year undergraduate course touched on subjects that are commonplace today only briefly. That is, my subject knowledge began at the undergraduate level when I was aware of coloniality and the post-colonial lens reading novels in class such as Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and learning about Edward Said's *Orientalism*. However, that introduction was taken from a single course and was not essential to comprehending English as a subject in general. In the

current English program at the University of Aberdeen, an undergraduate course called “Rethinking Reading” is offered in the first year. It explains in detail “the history of English studies and its relationship to colonialism, and how this impacts on conceptions of literature” (University of Aberdeen, 2023). A continuing component of this project is learning about the decolonisation process and carrying out decolonising work as a kind of continuing subject-based learning. Data for this paper came from practitioner research investigating literature and language learning using the CEFR and CLIL.

Context and course information

The course reflections were gathered at a medium-sized liberal arts university in Tokyo, Japan. The new language curriculum for undergraduate language courses across the university includes both content and CLIL classes, with English as a medium of instruction (EMI) classes at a higher level of challenge. Prospective students were required to self-select courses according to their English proficiency level. It is scheduled to be included in a new curriculum that will be introduced in 2024 to commemorate the university's 150th anniversary of its founding. The entry English language level was B2, with a target of CEFR C1. In 2021, 2022 and 2023 during initial piloting of the literature course, enrolments of students ranged from the B2+ level up to C2. This course met 14 times for 100 minutes throughout one spring or fall semester (see Appendix C for a weekly plan). All students in the course agreed to contribute data in the form of lesson reflections. The four Cs of CLIL (Content, Culture, Curriculum, and Content) were used to create a syllabus with objectives related to language and content. According to Coyle, Hood, and Marsh (2010), the four C's approach is designed to be an integrated and interconnected web of learning objectives, with each component having a strong connection to and embeddedness in culture. Key CLIL concepts in the course planning included activating students' existing knowledge; scaffolding of input; focus on vocabulary; and a use of authentic texts. A small number of international students and undergraduates from any department at the university were permitted to enrol in the elective course.

Students enrolled in this course thus far come from a variety of university departments, such as literature, business, mathematics, and natural science. Students from the literature department tend to come to the CLIL seminars course to develop their English skills but may

also be curious about how English literature is taught in English by instructors outside of the literature department. International students are limited to five with the limit on enrolment set at a maximum of 30. One effect of this is that a small number of international students including those from Anglophone countries take the course along with domestic students. What this has meant in practice for course activities and grading is that the language-related aims of the course are interpreted broadly. In multilingual settings, students themselves can be a linguistic resource which can bring in multiple perspectives (Preece, 2019). As Japanese classrooms also become more multicultural, plurilingualism can become a built-in resource. Some students in the class were multilingual and multicultural, with several of the Japanese students having lived abroad for part of their schooling. The course included some domestic students who had not left Japan before. Several of the comments in the following section were from these students. All comments were written before class or after class, giving everyone time to consider their responses and the opportunity to write after reviewing the course materials closely. Those who have completed the course to date report satisfaction with the course contents and the small class size, allowing them to interact with each other and receive feedback from peers on their presentations and in class discussions.

Teachers in the language centre have access to a shared folder containing course resources, which includes a list of potential content areas. As demonstrated in Appendix B and C, the course materials are adaptable and can be added in accordance with the interests and backgrounds of the students as well as the instructor's expertise and area of specialisation. For this course, there is not currently a commercially available textbook; instead, it is advised that the material be taken from a range of sources. As can be seen from Appendix B, decolonising the curriculum is only one of the possible suggestions given to teachers as suggested topics. The intention is that a three- or four-week Unit could be created within the 14-week plan, in which the issues and background to decolonising the curriculum could be the main focus, with a culminating project on a text, course or topic of interest to students.

During the initial two teaching cycles of the course, a contemporary literature text from the Oxford Very Short Introduction series (Eaglestone, 2013) was effectively utilised. However, given limits on time and a sense that localised content would need to be added meant that this course book is recommended as a

reference text only. The general recommendation for those assigned to this course is to start with the objectives of the course and the relevant language descriptors from the CEFR, then plan the course using tasks, projects, or other appropriately varied contents.

Responses to *A Year of Reading the World* by Ann Morgan

In the course described above, a unit entitled *The Future of Reading and Global Literature* centred around discussing Ann Morgan's reading project *A Year of Reading the World*. The reading project website (available at <https://ayearofreadingtheworld.com/>) describes the experiences of read books from different countries around the world. Morgan carefully documented the books she read along with her critiques, prompting reflection on her own reading prejudices, and then investigating a more expansive discourse on reading lists in both formal and informal settings, including educational institutions and book clubs. The project is introduced through Morgan's TED talk (Morgan, 2015), and additional information is available in news articles, her blog (Morgan, 2023), and a book. While the project's motivations provide valuable introductory material for discussion, the project itself opens potential conversations surrounding decoloniality.

Preparation for the discussion was conducted as follows. The Ann Morgan TED talk was allocated as homework, and the review activities discussing high school course texts was a post-discussion reflective activity. To encourage student engagement with the topic, first students were asked to select countries they were familiar with and analyse the corresponding book lists. Second, they were encouraged to explore reviews of countries they were less acquainted with and speculate about the reasons behind their inclusion on the lists. This approach aimed to promote a critical examination of the representation and selection of literature from diverse global contexts within the framework of *The Future of Reading and Global Literature* unit.

For Japan, the list of books seems to be a combination of predictable canonical texts and authors such as Yukio Mishima, and lesser-known or new authors such as Mieko Kawakami (<https://ayearofreadingtheworld.com/thelist/>). Kawakami's *Breasts and Eggs* has a short review, perhaps in response to its commercial success overseas and media coverage of the book (<https://ayearofreadingtheworld.com/2020/09/25/book-of-the-month-mieko-kawakami/>).

Students were intrigued by the Japanese list, what seemed to be missing from it, and how the list may have been collated by international readers. They had many suggestions for what to add and reasons for their inclusion. The discussions about the reading list also touched on the issue of translation, since some of those listed seemed to be available in various languages along with Japanese, while others have only been translated into English. Some of the students in the class are literature majors, so they had opinions about the courses and texts chosen by their professors. Students were also keen to discuss books from their high school literature courses, recommending more of the canonical readings than appear on Morgan's list.

The classroom discussion also encompassed an examination of multiculturalism in Japan, which included a reference to the recent distinction of the Akutagawa Prize given to bilingual Japanese-Chinese novelist Li Kotomi, who became the first Taiwanese-born writer to achieve this award (Kotomi, 2021). As for the topic of decolonising the curriculum, students grasped the concepts immediately and suggested ways to discuss the topic in their reflective papers after the lesson. In their reflective comments, learners responded to the questions before and after classroom discussions.

The following selected comments were submitted in a Google Form and answers were converted into a PDF to be shared on the class learning management system (LMS). The purpose of sharing the comments is to emphasise the value of learner's perspectives and to emphasise the value of different opinions. Students agreed to submit comments for research and course development purposes. They are referred to by pseudonym with their writing unedited.

The comments and opinions emerging from this lesson were surprising in some ways since the topic of diversifying literature (and other subjects) may have been new, given that they were from different academic backgrounds and some of them admitted it was the first time to discuss these types of topics in English. The CEFR concept of mediation, which includes critique and offering personal responses, can be nurtured through discussions involving such topics. As follow-up activity students were given the opportunity to present on a topic of their choice at the end of the semester. Themes from the unit appeared to be used in those presentations.

Student responses: Topic 1

Explain in your own words why you think literature from some countries is more familiar to us than others.

Ann Morgan's project of reading a book from every nation is really significant because it shows the potential of literature to broaden and widen our understanding of different cultures. Reading novels from various nations allows us to move outside of our own cultural bubble and get fresh ideas and viewpoints when unfortunately, we are often not aware of all possible perspectives and opinions, as people tend to read literature from nations with cultures similar to their own, which can limit their viewpoint and create a limited understanding of the world. A lot of people in Europe, for example, are familiar with European literature or Western literature but are less familiar with Asian literature.

(Hana, Mathematics Department)

Some countries are more familiar to us than other countries because they are historically similar to each other. The project is worthwhile because it is good to see the world by the different point of view as Ann Morgan herself says. It is good to know the similarity with other countries, like reading other Asian books for me. Similarity and differences both will give me an opportunity to rethink my identity and the world.

(Leon, Intercultural Communication Department)

I consider that the reason for this inequality in distribution of books from each country is mainly capitalism. Which book shall be translated and published is decided based on its potential profit and to make a lot of money from the publishing industry, it cannot be helped but to pick a book based on its popularity. This selecting process unconsciously leaves out the books from countries with low populations and unpopular languages. Consequently, books from non-English speaking countries such as Asian countries, African countries, and Caribbean countries have less chance to be translated and to be read by people from other countries.

(Miri, Education Department)

Student responses: Topic 2

Imagine you could make changes to the reading lists for high school students. What changes would you make and why?

Because I'm from Hiroshima, let me talk about Hiroshima's reading lists for high school students. Because of the atomic-bomb, Hiroshima has peace studies from elementary school, or even from kindergarten. When I grew up there, I had a lot of chances to read about World War 2 from the perspective of Japan, however, there were few chances to know about other perspectives or peace problems like conflicts in Africa, or refugees. To learn more about other countries, I think it is better to have other countries' stories, like I mentioned above. Students need more opportunities to know and understand about other countries' problems.

(Maya, Mathematics Department)

I agree with the idea of Ann Morgan that you can tell a lot about a person looking at what's on their bookshelves. I think books they read represent their characters. I think it is an interesting point that Ann noticed a contradiction of her character that she thought and her reading. Reading this part, I noticed that my reading is also quite unbalanced. It was quite surprising that in the list of books all over the world, in some countries' sections, I have read some of these and I know the titles of almost all of them, but in some countries' sections, I can't even read the titles of books. Therefore, I thought my reading was very biased.

(Yui, Department of Business)

When I went to school, literature was limited to famous classic novels from my own country and later in high school with growing understanding for English also a few British or North American ones, but these kinds of books were rather supposed to help us practice English than getting too deeply involved with the story itself. Therefore, if I could change the reading list in high schools, I think it's better to include more literature from other parts of the world which are not as dominant as their own country's literature. Even though it's impossible to cover all countries during school time, it would be a great start to widen and also deepen the understanding of other cultures than our own and could support interest in these as well.

(Kai, French Literature Department)

Hana, Leon, and Miri's comments reveal a growing awareness of the factors that shape their own reading experiences and the imbalances that exist in the representation of different cultures and perspectives in literature. By reflecting on their own backgrounds and the historical and cultural contexts that have influenced their reading choices, these students are beginning to develop a more critical understanding of the ways in which power and privilege operate in the realm of literature and education.

Maya, Yui, and Kai's reflections on their local experiences in Japan also highlight the importance of considering the specific cultural and educational contexts in which decolonial approaches are being implemented. Their comments suggest a desire for greater diversity and inclusivity in their own educational experiences, as well as a recognition of the limitations of the current curriculum in terms of representing marginalised voices and perspectives. Notably, Kai's reflection on the lack of exposure to literature from other parts of the world during their high school education speaks to the broader issues of cultural hegemony and the dominance of Western literary traditions in many educational contexts. By acknowledging these limitations and expressing a desire for change, Kai demonstrates the potential for students to become active agents in the process of decolonising the curriculum.

Overall, the themes that emerge from these student comments suggest a growing awareness of the need for greater intercultural understanding and a more inclusive approach to literature education. By engaging with decolonial perspectives and reflecting on their own experiences and backgrounds, these students are developing the critical skills and cultural competencies needed to navigate an increasingly globalised and diverse world. While the process of decolonising the curriculum is complex and ongoing, these student reflections demonstrate the transformative potential of engaging with these issues in the classroom. By creating spaces for critical dialogue, reflection, and action, educators can empower students to become active participants in the process of creating a more just and equitable society. Themes from the comments overall seemed to suggest a general agreement that considerations of adapting reading lists (in class and outside) could help to ring about greater intercultural understanding.

As described in the earlier section, the 2018 SOAS list of ideas for any decolonial project lists "bringing different issues to prominence" and "asking students

about what kinds of content they would like to see addressed". Looking for key controversies in topics in the field can mean looking at how literature is taught and presented in schools as well as examining literature in society (book clubs, social reading etc.). Diversifying the texts brought into the classroom, as well as opening up discussion about what else can be included are ways in which a decolonial lens can become central to classroom activities. As for the aim of looking beyond a text itself and global considerations, discussions related to the global reading project could be extended to include a number of other activities (time permitting). Project-based approaches, critique and reviewing or creative responses to the project could be added to a course of study to further explore the topic.

Discussion

This paper aimed to explore the integration of decolonial perspectives into the design and implementation of a CLIL course in the context of a Japanese university. By focusing on a specific case study, the paper aimed to contribute to the growing discussion on decolonising the curriculum in English language education, which has been less prevalent in Japan compared to Europe. While the paper did not look closely at decolonisation work being done in Japanese language education, it provided a detailed examination of the factors affecting course design and the practical application of decolonial approaches in a particular English course at one private liberal arts university. Although the broad field of decolonising studies cannot be fully detailed in this short paper, the insights offered from this specific perspective may serve as a starting point for others considering similar steps in their own contexts.

When it comes to course planning, many contexts still underutilise CEFR concepts like mediation and plurilingualism. The CEFR descriptors for language learning allow for a range of teaching approaches because literature can be discussed, translated, adapted, and remixed. Sociocultural approaches and the CEFR concept of mediation may also be well-suited to the literature descriptors of the CEFR. According to the CEFR, mediating a text entails both analysing and critiquing literary texts in addition to providing one's own personal reactions to them. Bloom's taxonomy of higher order thinking skills (HOTS) and other approaches such as multiliteracies are suggested as ways to develop learning activities which match the key objectives of the course. In the next section, one of the

lessons and discussion texts is introduced with some suggestions for further adaptations.

Zidani (2020) offers a critical perspective on decolonising the curriculum, arguing that it requires not just diversifying content but also fundamentally rethinking pedagogical practices and power relations in the classroom. The author emphasises the importance of embracing difference, challenging dominant Western frameworks, and creating space for marginalised voices. Zidani proposes a “pedagogy of discomfort” that encourages both students and teachers to confront difficult truths, engage in critical self-reflection, and imagine alternative possibilities for knowledge production and social transformation. This involves building relationships of trust, valuing students' lived experiences, and working towards a more holistic vision of education.

When considering the implications of decolonising the curriculum in the Japanese context, it is essential to acknowledge potential challenges and resistance that may arise. From an institutional perspective, there may be barriers related to existing academic traditions, departmental structures, and faculty expertise. Decolonising the curriculum requires a significant shift in perspective and a willingness to challenge established norms, which may be met with resistance from some faculty members or administrators who are accustomed to traditional approaches to language and literature education. Despite these challenges, it is crucial to recognise that decolonising the curriculum is a necessary and worthwhile endeavour. By engaging in ongoing dialogue, collaboration, and reflection, educators can work to overcome these barriers and create more inclusive and equitable learning environments. This may involve building alliances with colleagues across disciplines, seeking out professional development opportunities, and advocating for institutional support and resources.

Choosing texts for literature classes is a critical thinking exercise that expands on mediation strategies. Students must look beyond the texts themselves to take into account the historical and global contexts in which they were written. *Plurilingualism*, another element of the CEFR, values language knowledge at all levels across languages. Plurilingualism (Council of Europe, 2018/2020), which emphasises the benefits of learning languages concurrently, is relevant to the current debate on decolonising the English language and literature curricula since it incorporates the use of multiple languages (both in translation and for proficiency

development). Teachers who study translated literary texts and engage with literature inside and outside of the classroom might think about implementing a plurilingualism approach in their course design. In this context, it refers to the decolonisation of the English literature and language curriculum as well as pedagogical approaches to these changes.

According to the UK's University of Bristol's *Ten Tips to Start Your Curriculum Decolonisation Journey* (2022), fact-finding is a key step in evaluating the current situation. The approach recommends looking for examples of practice specific for the discipline, including finding researchers who are already approaching the topic. By incorporating texts from various cultural backgrounds and expanding the canon, the University of Bristol's English Department has significantly altered its curriculum and teaching pedagogy. Compared to 2004, when I finished my PGCE English studies and became a trainee secondary teacher, the current situation is a very different scenario. The potential inclusion of courses at the University of Bristol that examine the literary consequences of colonialism could be attributed to a wider societal acknowledgment of the enduring impact of slavery. This observation can be attributed to a recent period of self-reflection over the economic advantages that Bristol acquired from its period of involvement with colonial practices. Recently, I learned more about the context of this and how universities can decolonise from an online course. The University of Bristol created a Futurelearn MOOC, *Decolonising Education: From Theory to Practice* in which different departments discuss their current stages of decolonising (Futurelearn, 2023). The course looked at literary studies as well as the sciences, history, the arts, and humanities. The four-week course is an introduction to the topics, with discussions from participants revealing various perspectives and opinions. Those interested in the topic could access this free resource to learn more.

A decolonial lens brings potential benefits for learners as they critically analyse their own understanding of culture and literature, while also offering opportunities for faculty to address contemporary issues. Careful planning is required when applying content-based changes to specific disciplines. Once the decolonisation process begins, it is inevitable to examine the degree to which academics and students will accept its efforts. According to Ranasinha (2019), students may be opposed to diversity if it is seen as a superficial gesture. Including texts from marginalised communities in supplemental courses does not equate

to actively substituting classic texts with works from the global south or balancing traditionally marginalised works with traditionally canonical pieces. It will also be necessary to think of ways to effectively incorporate non-Western and marginalised voices into the curriculum.

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Appendix A**Expressing a Personal Response to Creative Texts (Including Literature)**

CEFR Level	
C1	<p>Can describe in detail his/her personal interpretation of a work.</p> <p>Can outline interpretation of a character in a work and/or their psychological/emotional state. This could include the motives for their actions and the consequences of these actions.</p> <p>Can give his/her personal interpretation of the development of a plot, the characters and the themes in a story, novel, film or play.</p>
B2	<p>Can give a clear presentation of his/her reactions to a work, developing his/her ideas and supporting them with examples and arguments.</p> <p>Can describe his/her emotional response to a work and elaborate on the way in which it has evoked this response.</p> <p>Can express in some detail his/her reactions to the form of expression, style and content of a work, explaining what he/she appreciated and why.</p>
B1	<p>Can explain why certain parts or aspects of a work especially interested him/her.</p> <p>Can explain in some detail which character he/she most identified with and why.</p> <p>Can relate events in a story, film or play to similar events he/she has experienced or heard about.</p> <p>Can relate the emotions experienced by a character in a work to emotions he/she has experienced.</p> <p>Can describe the emotions he/she experienced at a certain point in a story</p> <p>Can briefly explain the feelings and opinions that a work provoked in him/her.</p> <p>Can describe the personality of a character.</p>
A2	<p>Can express his/her reactions to a work.</p> <p>Can describe a character's feelings and explain the reasons for them.</p> <p>Can say in simple language which aspects of a work especially interested him/her.</p> <p>Can say whether he/she liked a work or not and explain why in simple language.</p> <p>Can select simple passages he/she particularly likes from work of literature to use as quotes.</p>
A1	<p>Can use simple words and phrases to say how a work made him/her feel.</p>

Based on the CEFR-CV (Council of Europe, 2018 p. 116)

Appendix B

Description of CLIL Seminars: Literature

Course outline

This course is designed for students to study literature in English while developing their language skills. Students will be encouraged to develop an informed and perceptive understanding of literature in today's society using multiple perspectives and critical thinking. Course content will support the use of language strategies to read and respond to literary texts using concepts from critical theory and the broad field of English studies. Individually and in groups, students will discuss and react to various literary texts. Students will select texts related to their own interests and will work on a creative and interactive presentation at the end of the course. Throughout this course students will learn to

1. describe and analyse features of literature and contemporary literary trends (C)
2. show understanding of language and literary features such as narrative structure and theme (C)
3. apply knowledge of contemporary literature in society in reflective writing and presentations (C)
4. understand a clearly structured lecture, and take notes on major points (L)
5. understand and use target specialist vocabulary required in 1) academic lectures and 2) literary topics (L)
6. respond appropriately using questions and responses in discussions and presentations (L)

*L = Language goal, C= Content goal

Grading

Pair/group work and preparation for weekly discussions (30%)

Vocabulary/reading notebook and lecture notes (20%)

Project presentations and reflection papers (20%)

Final presentation (30%)

List of possible topics

- Children's literature
- Young adult literature
- Trends in literature and reading in society
- Critical reading (reader response, feminist reading, post-colonial, post-structuralism)
- Various ways of learning literature around the world
- Global literature
- Gender issues and literature
- Social issues through literature
- Ethical reading and ethical questions in literature
- SDGs in literature
- Decolonising the curriculum
- The future of literature teaching around the world
- Adapting the school literature curriculum for 21st century skills
- Digital learning using literature
- Paper books vs. digital reading
- School-based literature learning vs. 'in the wild' reading
- Evolving habits of reading in society
- Translanguaging in literature
- Language learning using literature
- Effects of banning books
- Influences of Bookstagram and BookTok
- Creative remixing of literature
- Creative adaptations of literature

Appendix C**CLIL Seminars: Literature****Weekly Contents**

Lesson 1: Introduction, reading survey and reflective writing: Personal literature learning experiences

Lesson 2: Discussion circles: Methods and expectations

Critical reading and critical thinking skills: Considering audience and purpose

Lesson 3: Unit 1: Multiple perspectives of contemporary fiction

Note-taking skills: Annotation

Critical reading/critical thinking skills: Argument and evidence I

Lesson 4: Unit 1: Multiple perspectives of contemporary fiction

Note-taking skills: Selecting evidence and data

Critical reading/critical thinking skills: Argument and evidence II

Lesson 5: Unit 2: Genre and contemporary fiction

Note-taking skills: Summarising content using narrative structure

Critical reading & critical thinking skills: Language and tone I

Lesson 6: Unit 2: Genre and contemporary fiction

Presentation skills: Using visual storytelling

Critical reading & critical thinking skills: Language and tone II

Lesson 7: 1st project: Individual presentation and reflection paper

Lesson 8: Unit 3: The globalised novel and the future of reading

Note-taking skills: Organising ideas

Critical reading & critical thinking skills: Judgement and comparison I

Lesson 9: Unit 3: The globalised novel and the future of reading

Presentation skills: Creating and responding to questions

Critical reading & critical thinking skills: Judgement and comparison II

Lesson 10: Unit 3: The globalised novel and the future of reading

Note-taking skills: Rebuilding main points from lecture notes

Presentation skills: Focusing on fluency and spontaneity

Lesson 11: 2nd project: Group presentation and reflection paper

Lesson 12: Preparing for the final project

Notetaking, presentation, critical reading & thinking: Applying all skills

Lessons 13 & 14: Final project: Group presentations and reflective paper