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# Content-Based Instruction (CBI) for the Social Future: A Recommendation for Critical Content-Based Language Instruction (CCBI)

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In this article, we seek to reconceptualize content-based instruction (CBI) curricula and practices from a critical perspective. Further, we propose developing criticality as an essential component of CBI, advocating for an approach we call critical content-based instruction (CCBI). While the importance of CBI has long been recognized, previous discussions predominantly focused on its effectiveness for language learning (and content learning to a lesser degree), and overlooked its fundamental linkage and relevance to broader educational missions. In order to fully maximize the potential of CBI and envision language education as integral to the advancement of society, we argue that a critical approach to CBI should be considered. First, we lay out how CBI came to be and how it has been treated in language pedagogy. We believe CBI is indeed a suitable forum for introducing and implementing a critical perspective because of its original contribution of broadening language education to meet societal needs. Second, we provide an overview of recent discourse surrounding world language education. Based on these reviews, we lastly and most importantly delineate directions for CCBI by presenting examples and possible challenges.

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## INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>

Content-based language instruction (CBI) was first introduced and discussed in the early

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<sup>1</sup> Some parts of this paper are based on Sato, Hasegawa, Kumagai, & Kamiyoshi (2013) that appeared in Kondo-Brown, Saito-Abbot, Satsutani, Tsutsui, & Wehmeyer (pp. 69–94).

1970s, in response to the then emerging demand for effective French immersion programs in Canadian schools (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Since then, CBI has been widely accepted and adopted in language programs across the world. Previous literatures have generally agreed that CBI facilitates language learning (e.g., Brinton, Snow, & Wesche, 1989; Swain, 1993; Wesche, 1993), but that its benefits are not confined to that of linguistic gains per se. CBI is also instrumental in furthering overall academic attainments, inspiring learners to actively partake in learning, fostering learner independence, and so forth (Duenas, 2004).

Along with the general pedagogical trend of incorporating “content” into language instruction, we have also recently observed a growing discourse, centered in the North American academy, concerning future directions of world language education, particularly in the current age of expanding globalization (e.g., Cammarata, 2016; Kramersch, 2014; Kumaravadivelu, 2008). It is largely responsive to the recognition of increased challenges and difficulties facing current society vis-à-vis the education of languages and cultures, or more broadly, humanities and liberal arts education at large. This emerging discourse comprises discussions and debates that treat such concepts as global competency, translingual/transcultural competence, and multiliteracies as impetuses for the reconceptualization and restructuring of world language education. For example, the Modern Language Association of America (MLA)—a highly respected U.S. organization of world language education—published a report in 2007 calling for structural and curricular reforms geared to equip students with translingual and transcultural competence. Similarly, numerous applied linguists have discussed and questioned the current status of language education and proposed alternative frameworks (e.g., Byrnes, 2006; Cammarata, Tedick, & Osborn, 2016; Kramersch, 2008). All of these discussions represent legitimate attempts to situate world language education in the context of broader society.

Aligned with these precursors, in this article we try to reconceptualize CBI curricula and practices from a critical perspective and propose developing criticality as an essential component of CBI, an approach we call *critical content-based instruction* (CCBI). By “critical perspective” we mean that of the Frankfurt school, which fundamentally involves a reflective critique of the imbalance of power in society, and the instigation of changes needed to emancipate and empower people (Giroux, 1983). By upholding a critical perspective as the central and overarching element of CBI, we hope to (re)locate language education as something integral to society. As practitioners and scholars of Japanese language education, our discussion will necessarily draw on this particular educational context. Considering that the prevailing language-education discourse in North America (and probably Europe) is predominantly based on English and a few other European languages like Spanish, French, and German (cf. Kubota, 2014), this article contributes contextual diversity to an otherwise monolithic discourse. With this attempt we hope to significantly advance collective academic thinking.

In this article, we first lay out how CBI came to be and how it has been treated in language pedagogy. We believe CBI is indeed apt ground for introducing and implementing a critical perspective because of its original contribution of broadening language education to meet societal needs (see below). Second, we provide an overview of recent discourse surrounding world language education. Based on these reviews, we lastly and most importantly delineate directions for critical content-based language instruction (CCBI) by presenting examples and possible challenges.

## CONTENT-BASED LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION

### Roots of CBI

CBI began more as a consequence of necessity than choice. In the 1970s, when the numerous French immersion programs then being established in Canadian schools were generating a need to accommodate two seemingly separate goals of instruction—knowledge of the French language and of the subject matter—CBI emerged as a solution (Duenas, 2004).<sup>2</sup> Around the same time, a growing movement in the United Kingdom was calling for increased emphasis on language arts (English) across the disciplines. Reacting to the rising demand for educational reform (Honeychurch, 1990), this movement also contributed to CBI's development. In the United States, CBI was first introduced in Spanish immersion programs established in California schools during a rapid increase in immigration from Latin American countries. These programs followed the model of the Canadian predecessors (Brinton et al., 1989). In Japan, CBI was implemented in elementary schools where children of foreign nationals needed help with the Japanese language to keep up with their schoolwork (Murata & Harada, 2008). By and large, CBI emerged in response to the needs of society.

Various types of research—both pedagogical and theoretical—have endorsed CBI for its effectiveness in both language development and content learning (Grabe & Stoller, 1997). In fact, the central tenet of CBI—teaching content and language simultaneously—has rarely been criticized or dismissed because of its versatility in scope and depth. While gaining popularity in the course of its development, however, the connection between CBI and society seems to have diminished. Meanwhile, the profound influence of communicative approaches on language pedagogy across the world has led to an acceptance of the belief that communicative competence is the primary aim of language instruction. By viewing language as merely a tool of communication, this framework inevitably separates content—conceived of as what is being exchanged through the use of that tool—from language, creating a bifurcation between language and content at both the curricular and the organizational levels that leads to an imbalance of status between content courses and language courses in U.S. institutions of higher education (MLA Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages, 2007).

### Forms of CBI

Various forms of and approaches to CBI have appeared to date, but their overarching principle is simple: the integrated instruction of content *and* language. Brinton, Snow, and Wesche (1989), for instance, described CBI as “concurrent teaching of academic subject matter and second language skills” (p. 3). They further argued that the main goal of foreign language education at the college level is to “develop academic language skills through the process of acquiring information using a second/foreign language”; accordingly, “students can apply the skills to other subjects in a specific second/foreign language” (p. 3).

In contrast to the rather simple conceptualization of CBI, what counts as “content” varies somewhat depending on the instructional contexts. Examples include: academic

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<sup>2</sup> Although some forms of CBI existed earlier, most scholars consider CBI to have originated within Canadian immersion programs of the 1970s (see Swain & Johnson, 1997).

subjects (Crandall & Tucker, 1990); various topics and themes that interest students or important matters including non-language issues, not restricted to academic subjects (Genesee, 1994); topics regarding language in general, particularly intellectual topics that advance understanding of the language required for learning (Chaput, 1993); and concepts that can be formally taught in a foreign language at a level appropriate to the student's grade (Curtain & Pesola, 1994).

These differences among definitions of content are largely attributable to the characteristics of the various programs, as well as where each program situates itself on the content–language continuum (Met, 1991). Accordingly, several distinct types of CBI models have been proposed—language across curriculum (LAC), language for specific/special purposes (LSP), and theme-based approaches—based on how language instruction is structured vis-à-vis content instruction.<sup>3</sup> In LAC, the main goal is not the acquisition of language per se, but the learning of subject matter. Thus, the curriculum is collaboratively developed by both language and content specialists (Caldwell, 2001; Jurasek, 1993), typically through use of the “adjunct model,” whereby multiple instructors teach a single course. This CBI model treats language as a tool with which students can expand their knowledge of the respective fields (Caldwell, 2001). In contrast, LSP emphasizes language skills needed for particular fields of study or vocational and occupational areas and primarily involves language teachers rather than content specialists. Similarly, a theme-based approach typically involves only language teachers, whose task is to incorporate a kind of content learning, represented as a “theme,” in their language classes. Courses are organized around thematic units that are deemed relevant to learners’ interests (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). The selection of thematic units seems to be the central element of theme-based CBI.

The various forms developed over the years show that overall, CBI is an inclusive and versatile pedagogical approach that can be and has been adopted in many educational settings (Grabe & Stoller, 1997). In particular, theme-based CBI has been a popular option for many university foreign language programs hoping to fill a gap between language courses and content courses (Dupuy, 2000).

### Situating CBI in Context

CBI is rooted in the demands of the society, and as such is suited to realize the societal missions of education at different levels. More specifically, CBI can potentially realize *linkage* on three levels: connections between (a) language education and other academic fields, (b) language education and education at large, and (c) language education and society. In order to fully maximize the potential of CBI, we should reemphasize these different levels of connection. We believe that CBI should take a sociocultural turn, and that discussions of the future directions of CBI curricula and practices should again stress these three levels of connectedness.

Optimally, CBI integrates several elements. First, language users in a CBI curriculum

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<sup>3</sup> The main purpose of this article is to provide a broad overview of content-based language education in second- and foreign-language education environments. Therefore, the discussion does not extend to the shelter model, which treats language learning as merely supportive of the content learning that is that model’s main focus. Traditionally LSP is not in the CBI territory. However, since both LSP and CBI share a dissatisfaction with the traditional abstraction of language from its natural environment and real language use, and they have as their goal the transfer of language skills and content to real life (Brinton, 2012), the authors see the discussion of LSP as relevant to CBI and have thus included it in this paper.

should be active agents who not only strive to acquire the given linguistic and cultural knowledge, but can also adopt critical perspectives when analyzing and evaluating that knowledge. They should have the flexibility and tolerance to understand and accept different views while constantly pursuing change for the better.<sup>4</sup> Realization of this goal hinges on a concrete set of educational principles that will guide students to develop skills and knowledge for critical analysis and to nurture a critical disposition (Sato & Kumagai, 2011; Suzuki, Ohi, & Takemae, 2006). We call these educational principles the *critical approach*.<sup>5</sup>

## CURRENT DISCOURSES ON WORLD LANGUAGE EDUCATION

In this section, we provide an overview of recently emerging discourses in the field of world language education, particularly at the university level. Some discussions are focused on curricular issues; others concern sociopolitical issues surrounding world language education.

### Post-Communicative Language Teaching, Post-9/11 Society, and Neoliberalism

The current state of world language education in the North American context can be summarized, at least partially, as reflecting the discourses of post-communicative language teaching (CLT), of the post-9/11 sociopolitical environment, and of neoliberalism. In the wake of the communicative movement of the 1970s and the later proficiency movement initiated by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), language education almost exclusively emphasized the pragmatic aspects of language. This trend had such enormous impact that language instruction came to be narrowly regarded as the teaching of tools or skills for effective communication; hence, the view of language learning as secondary to learning something more substantial (e.g., academic subjects) remained pervasive. In the past decade or so, however, given the needs of post-9/11 national security, the orientation of discourse about the future directions of world language education has clearly shifted toward equipping U.S. citizens with more than practical language skills (Edwards, 2004).

In fact, some applied linguists have already recognized the inadequacy of CLT and proficiency guidelines as principal pedagogical frameworks, criticizing them on the basis of unrealized, unwarranted goals (e.g., Magnan, 2007; Schulz, 2006). In the late 1990s, ACTFL undertook the development of a more elaborated framework, the National Standards for Foreign Language Learning (ACTFL, 2006). The National Standards posit five core elements of language instruction, or the so-called 5Cs—communication, cultures, comparisons, connections, and communities—as interconnected links. The 5Cs are supposed to set the goals for language education and guide curriculum planning with reference to sub-components of each C. For Byrnes (2008, 2012), however, these guidelines reproduce the dilemma that has prevailed since the era of CLT. That is, such a framework simply states desired ideals of language pedagogy without taking into consideration the missions and the reality of literary-cultural studies programs at universities, in which many world language

<sup>4</sup>This direction coincides with the one stated in the MLA report (MLA Ad Hoc Committee on foreign Languages, 2007).

<sup>5</sup>A *critical approach* encompasses acquiring skills and knowledge for critical analysis as well as nurturing a critical disposition. We acknowledge that skills and knowledge influence a critical disposition and vice versa, but here they will be treated as two separate categories in order to make the discussion clearer.

programs are housed. Though Byrnes recognizes that the mismatch between the educational missions of world language education and its actual results is attributable to the inescapable cycle that “frameworks” of any type tend to create, she also points out that any existing framework like the proficiency guidelines or the National Standards “shuts out those performance areas that would be more in line with its educational mission” (Byrnes, 2012, p. 3). This evaluation of the National Standards seems to be the accepted consensus among many language scholars (Beyer, 2000; Kadish, 2000; Knight, 2000; McAlpine, 2000; Steinhart, 2006; Swaffar, 2006; Tucker, 2000).

The challenges facing world language education in the post-9/11 era are multifaceted, to say the least. It must, on the one hand, address the legitimacy and the adequacy of curricular goals and planning, as described above. On the other hand, it must also ensure the accountability of language programs within and beyond the university setting. Neoliberal discourse in higher education has created an unhealthy tension between educational missions and socioeconomic reality (Bernstein, Hellmich, Katznelson, Shin, & Vinall, 2015). Not only are language programs pressured to compete against each other in student recruitment and maintenance of the number of enrollments and majors, but they are also forced to prove how productive, efficient, and profitable their programs are, to both university administrators and the general public. And although our academic enterprise is not entirely a victim of this neoliberal discourse, we are also contributing to this trend. As Bernstein et al. (2015) rightly put it, “second/foreign language education, like education more broadly, has not only been influenced by neoliberalism; it has been responsible for reproducing many of its discourses” (p. 6). Privatization and marketization of universities and the resulting neoliberal discourse have jeopardized “academic freedom, collegial governance, and democratic discourse” (Ramírez & Hyslop-Margison, 2015). The concerns this has raised among many involved in world language education prompted the dissemination of position papers and reports, most notably the report by the MLA Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages, published in 2007.

## The MLA Report

The MLA report “Foreign Languages and Higher Education: New Structures for a Changed World” (MLA Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages, 2007) was issued as the association’s response to the post-9/11 language crisis.<sup>6</sup> Acknowledging the frustrations and complications plaguing language education, the committee took up the task of submitting recommendations aimed at transforming the field.

Of the numerous problems and dilemmas identified by the committee, its dissatisfaction with the structure of many university FL programs is what the report covers most intensively.

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<sup>6</sup> The MLA report calls attention to the post-9/11 language crisis as follows: “The committee was charged with examining the current language crisis that has occurred as a result of 9/11 and with considering the effects of this crisis on the teaching of foreign languages in colleges and universities.” The committee’s sense of crisis noted here is expressed most clearly in the following statement: “The United States’ inability to communicate with or comprehend other parts of the world became a prominent subject for journalists, as language failures of all kinds plagued the United States’ military interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq and its efforts to suppress terrorism” (p. 1).

The standard configuration of university foreign language curricula, in which a two- or three-year language sequence feeds into a set of core courses primarily focused on canonical literature, also represents a narrow model. (p. 2)

In a sense, this is how CBI became popular among many language programs across the nation. Far from being accorded dignity and due respect, introductory-level language courses are regarded more or less as a service sector to the entire university. This structural configuration has created a bifurcation between language and content, with the former being devalued. The report urges a structural transformation of language programs.

Replacing the two-tiered language-literature structure with a broader and more coherent curriculum in which language, culture, and literature are taught as a continuous whole, supported by alliances with other departments and expressed through interdisciplinary courses, will reinvigorate language departments as valuable academic units central to the humanities and to the missions of institutions of higher learning. (p. 3)

Besides the organizational and structural challenges facing current language education, the report also delves into specific curricular issues, including the goals of language education. Here, “translingual and transcultural competence” become the ultimate goals of language/cultural studies. Instead of educating students to aspire to the impossible level of native speakers and become like (monolingual) native speakers, the report recommends that curricula undergo a drastic paradigm shift toward a primary goal of learners becoming able to operate between different languages and cultures. This is echoed in the writings of others, such as Kubota (2009) and Pfeiffer (2008).

The actual impact of the MLA report is still unknown, but we believe it is a significant document—not only for theorists and practitioners of commonly taught languages, but for everyone involved in language education. In what follows, we will provide an overview of new developments in the teaching of language, literature, and culture that present various paths for curricular reformation in the new era.

## **New Frameworks and Beyond**

Whether and how culture can be effectively incorporated into curricula is not a new topic in our profession. Yet the publication of the National Standards, which establish culture as one of the five central components of a curriculum, spurred increased interest in a more theoretically sound and practically valuable discussion on this subject, which led to the proposal of numerous new frameworks (e.g., Allen, 2009, 2010; Byrnes, 2005, 2008, 2012; Byrnes & Maxim, 2003; Kern, 2008; Paesani & Allen, 2012). Many of these proposals highlighted the importance of literacy as the overarching goal of language curricula that unites language, literature, and culture. As Kumagai and López-Sánchez (2015) rightly point out, the recent turn to literacy in FL education is a reaction to, and a natural consequence of, the aforementioned shortcoming of CLT and proficiency, which overwhelmingly emphasized oral language skills (Homstad & Thorson, 2000; Kern, 2000; Matsuda, 2001). There are numerous ways to conceptualize literacy, but according to Scribner and Cole (1981), to which many of the above scholars refer, “Literacy is not simply knowing how to read and write a particular script but applying this knowledge for specific purposes in specific contexts of use” (p. 236). This conceptualization does not view literacy as sheer



knowledge or ability, but rather as socially contextualized practices in which texts play an integral part.

The notion of texts, often discussed in these new frameworks, rests on various theoretical bases. For example, Byrnes (2002, 2008, 2012) advocated a genre-based (text-based) approach to teaching literacy by drawing on Hallidayan systemic functional linguistics (SFL), Bakhtinian dialogism, and Gee's concept of primary and secondary discourses—discourses that are associated respectively with the private sphere (e.g., narratives and orality) and with public life (e.g., expository writing and literacy) (Gee, 2002). Genre is defined as “the ways in which things get done in society in contexts of situations when language is involved” (Byrnes, 2012, p. 19), including, for example, biographical narrative, historical narrative, poems, news, manuals, and so forth. A curriculum organized around different genres no longer treats language as isolated bits of rules separate from their contexts, but rather integrates it into more socially and contextually meaningful units. Genre-based approaches have been increasingly popular in recent years and are commonly referred to as guiding principles, as is the case within academic writing (Dickinson, 2013). Although Byrnes was not the first to endorse SFL and its application to language teaching (e.g., Hyland, 2004; Tardy, 2012), she and her colleagues at Georgetown University's German Department carried out a highly extensive and thorough project called “Developing Multiple Literacies,” which closely observed a curricular progression over a four-year period (Byrnes & Maxim, 2003).

Paralleling Byrnes' approach, Swaffar and Arens (2005), Allen and Paesani (2010), and Kumagai, López-Sánchez, and Wu (2015), among others, have also advocated a multiliteracies approach to the teaching of language, literature, and culture. The pedagogy of multiliteracies was first proposed by the New London Group (1996, 2000), comprised of ten scholars with backgrounds in diverse academic disciplines. Multiliteracies approaches emphasize the multiplicity of languages (e.g., world Englishes, dialects, registers), media, and modes, and encourage learners to develop the skills needed to act in a context of multiplicity. Whereas the New London Group's original proposal of multiliteracies did not necessarily concern foreign language instructional settings per se, the very idea of multiliteracies entails and values multiple languages, and as such has become an increasingly popular approach in foreign language education. The pedagogy of multiliteracies encourages the critical textual analysis espoused by advocates of critical literacy (Janks, 2013). Accordingly, some scholars, such as Byram and Kramsch (2008) and Kumagai and López-Sánchez (2015), highlighted this element particularly in their teaching of multiliteracies. A heightened emphasis on critical analysis of texts can enable learners to consciously gain power over the texts, facilitating their active engagement with the texts.

The idea of living with multiple languages (and cultures) naturally leads to the concept of translingual (and transcultural) competence, or translanguaging (Garcia & Wei, 2014), and similar theorizations such as the translingual approach (Canagarajah, 2011; Kramsch, 2008) and metrolingualism (Pennycook & Otsuji, 2015). The idea of translanguaging acknowledges the frustration caused by the inability of previously dominant notions, such as monolingual vs. bilingual competence, to capture and explain the fluid, transformative nature of multilingual abilities and practices. In this sense, the argument for translanguaging resembles Cook's (1999) theorization of multicompetence. Yet as Canagarajah (2014) rightly points out, multicompetence is conceptualized at the level of individuals, whereas translanguaging is

understood as essentially a social practice.<sup>7</sup>

While these new frameworks have different foci and goals, they all concern the education of individuals who aim to be equipped with the ability to mobilize available linguistic and cultural resources and to engage with social texts (broadly defined). That is, to borrow Kramsch's (2011) concept of symbolic competence, it is the education of an interculturally competent “symbolic self” equipped with symbolic representation, action, and power (p. 356). Our view of language education aligns with these frameworks, and we believe that all CBI curricula should educate individuals to not only read texts, but to read them critically and even act on and adapt to diverse and changing environments in a sensible and nuanced manner.

## **TOWARD CRITICAL CONTENT-BASED LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION (CCBI)**

We will now present our proposal for the future directions of CBI curricula and practices, based on the current state of world language education. What we advocate here, termed *critical content-based language instruction* (CCBI) (Kubota, 2012; Sato, Hasegawa, Kamiyoshi, & Kumagai, 2015; Sato, Hasegawa, Kumagai, & Kamiyoshi, 2011, 2013), emphasizes students' development of the *critical perspectives* required to accomplish the mission of educating future citizens.<sup>8</sup> It also stresses making the enterprise of world language education an integral and indispensable part of society. The second objective seems to be easily overlooked or distorted in the face of economic pressures driven by neoliberal discourses. In what follows we will first explain the theoretical basis of our thinking, and then discuss how CCBI curricula can be realized in practice. Lastly, we illustrate potential challenges that could arise in realizing CCBI.

### **Critical Pedagogy and Critical Literacy**

Teaching that encourages critical perspectives, and thus the critical approach we are discussing in this article, adheres to perspectives originating in the critical theory of Marxist social philosophy. Critical theory examines intricate power relationships within society with the aim of creating a fairer, more just society than the one now existing. It entails a constant and endless process of reflecting on the present and acting for a better future. Approaches that apply this perspective in education include *critical pedagogy* and *critical literacy*. Critical pedagogy encourages both teachers and students to actively engage with society so that they can recognize and transform the unfair and unjust situations around them (Freire, 1968/2000; Giroux, 1981; Norton & Toohey, 2004; Shore, 1980). Critical literacy, which

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<sup>7</sup> Noting the growing popularity of plurality, multiplicity, fluidity, and hybridity in the applied linguistics discourse, Kubota (2014) cautions against blindly celebrating the multi/plural turn without critically reflecting on the omnipresent imbalance of power structures that underlies the trend. From a slightly different angle, Canagarajah (2011) also recalls the pitfalls of discussing “a suppressed communicative practice,” where previously overlooked practices like multilingualism and translanguaging tend to be “romanticized” in discourse, which then “leads to an uncritical orientation to marginalized rhetorical traditions” (p. 3).

<sup>8</sup> This goal includes critically examining the neoliberal emphasis of particular types of global competency. The core of the critical approach should maintain “its potency by continuing to expose and critique injustice, critically understand power and inequalities, and exercise engaged praxis for establishing societal and individual wellbeing” (Kubota & Miller, 2017, p. 150).

makes text analysis a core element of education, aims to unpack and transform ideologies that are embedded in texts (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Freebody & Luke, 1990; Janks, 2009; Lankshear & McLaren, 1993).

The word “critical” denotes various meanings, such as “inquisitive, skeptical, reasonable, logical, open-minded, fair, intelligent and flexible” (Suzuki, Ohi, & Takemae, 2006), so it is difficult to draw a clear line separating what is critical and what is not. Rather, criticality should be conceptualized in terms of degrees of strength. For example, Wallace (2003) described the analysis of logic in texts and discussions as “weakly critical” but saw issues of power and ideology as “strongly critical” (p. 27). The practices generally known as “critical thinking” and “critical reading” (e.g., Flower, 1990) are often categorized as “weakly critical,” whereas critical pedagogy is viewed as “strongly critical.”

Our critical approach is grounded in critical theory, which starts with questioning what seems obvious in the existing framework (Giroux, 2001; Pennycook, 2001). In contrast, traditional social theories like positivism aim to define existing situations accurately by analyzing existing objects and notions (Durkheim, 1895/1982). These traditional theories not only fail to question existing frameworks (e.g., existing inequity, injustice, different rights), but also indirectly and unknowingly perpetuate their own existence by premising their discussions on the very frameworks that the theories aim to examine. In sharp distinction, critical theory questions the status quo, focuses on the various forms of power struggles, and attempts to transform existing unjust frameworks (Gur-Ze’ev, 2005). We do not consider critical thinking important simply because it facilitates the (weakly critical) in-depth analysis of objects valued in higher education. Instead we hold that critical perspectives push people to question existing frameworks and change them as needed, and are therefore indispensable to building their future and that of their communities (Sato & Kumagai, 2011).

## The Premises of CCBI

CCBI has three equally important curricular goals. Alongside the integrated subject goals of mastering both language and content, CCBI sets another central goal, “critical perspectives,” in its curricular planning. This third goal, adoption of critical perspectives, is both a process and an objective of learning. Thus, as students in CCBI curricula are expected to learn language and content *critically*, namely through critical analysis, they are also expected to develop their *criticality*—the skills, knowledge, and disposition required to engage in critical analysis—as an outcome of learning. We believe that all students come to their classrooms already equipped with varying degrees of the needed skills and knowledge, acquired in their prior experiences. In CCBI, then, they are expected to “sharpen” or “broaden” their criticality through instructional activities. Meanwhile, the learning process involved in the development of criticality should be a collaborative endeavor among fellow students, as well as with instructors. As discussed above, world language education in the post-9/11 era has

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<sup>9</sup> Generally, critical thinking skills are understood as the abilities at work in logical analysis. This poses two possible problems: First, such a definition is very vague; and second, it tends to focus only on the cultivation of critical thinking skills and thereby neglect discussion of why critical thinking skills need to be developed. The fact that the nurturing of critical thinking skills is usually carried out as part of skills training permits the inference that the latter problem may result from the notion that critical thinking skills are techniques rather than “thinking skills,” or from overemphasis of the skill aspect due to the development/administration of such training.

the mission of promoting an understanding of *others*. Others may or may not share similar cultural traditions and beliefs, and may or may not be your foes or allies. The collaborative critical analysis in CCBI can serve as the impetus driving this important mission and shaping each student's learning process.

In order to foster “translingual/transcultural” competence—including the ability to question monolingual native-speakerism as an essential ability for such a role—CCBI practitioners need to consciously work to include various values in its curricular planning. For example, the recent popularity of “cross-border” literature by “non-native” writers and the growing demand for foreign or international employees in the professional and business worlds exemplify the changing society in which translingual/transcultural individuals are welcomed and valued. And, in this new society, these individuals with diverse competences and values are expected to innovate and transform industries and communities. In CCBI, students should aim to become language users who can set goals and strive to accomplish them; who are willing to negotiate their identities in their languages; who can present themselves as translingual/transcultural individuals rather than passive non-native speakers; who understand the fluidity and diversity of language and culture; and who can analyze existing rules and norms from different angles and willingly participate in discussions to create new values.

Like the students in the expected roles described above, teachers need to present themselves as co-participants in this endeavor and critically engage in analysis of issues surrounding language and content in relation to teaching activities, language policies, linguistic rights, literacy, and so on. Teachers should also be able to provide their students with opportunities to think about what it means to develop critical perspectives. To that end, they should reconsider the view of learners as lacking in knowledge (e.g., vocabulary and grammar) and of teachers as feeding them knowledge. Instead, teachers need to position learners as able to question and challenge the contents of learning and language use and also able to take action by sharing viewpoints that facilitate necessary changes they want to bring about. When learners' opinions and (linguistic) behaviors differ from those of teachers or from established norms, teachers need to exercise open-mindedness, tolerance, and a willingness to accommodate differences as needed. Only when teachers and learners perceive themselves as active agents mutually influencing one another is it possible not only to facilitate the active engagement of the entire classroom community (thereby improving curricula and teaching methods, among other benefits) but also to challenge institutional policies and practices of injustice.<sup>10</sup>

## Developing Curricula for CCBI

Needless to say, curriculum development is a crucial element in the successful practice of CCBI. In what follows, we will lay out specific learning goals and teaching materials in hopes of illustrating how CCBI could be implemented in the classroom. We conceptualize three elements of learning goals in CCBI curricula: learning of language and content; gaining skills and knowledge for critical analysis; and fostering a critical disposition in learners. Although

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<sup>10</sup> One of the reviewers pointed out that our view here is too optimistic because it presumes the outright agency (power) of students and teachers. It is important to underscore once again the power of discourse, or symbolic competence (Kramsch, 2011), which entails not only various sociocultural values and meanings, but also “divergent subjectivities and historicities” (p. 356). We strongly believe that critical skills and dispositions are *fundamental* to the development of such competence integral to humanity—nothing more or less.

these three elements are interlocked in actual teaching, it is important to clearly state them as independent goals, because the instruments used to assess each component will be designed separately. It is also important to design long-term curricula according to these goals. Compared with mastery of the subject matters of language and content, achieving the goals of criticality—skills, knowledge, and disposition—requires an extensive time commitment, so separate time frames are envisioned for each component. In addition to designing a long-term curricular vision, instructional materials aimed specifically at these three goals must be developed.

It is practical to use commercially available textbooks, but they tend to promote norms and stereotypes that CCBI tries to question. For example, textbooks and materials used in Japanese for Specific Purpose (JSP) are created with an eye to the best ways to teach the language and related content in specific situations (such as language use requiring technical terms) in stereotypical, normative business settings. Uncritical use of these materials will impede the cultivation of critical perspectives. However, the strong stereotypes supported in those textbooks can still be put to advantageous use by starting a discussion on how teaching materials, which wield much power over students' knowledge formation, in fact promote and preserve fixed knowledge (Kumagai, 2008, 2014). Kumagai and Fukai's (2009) report on a "textbook revision project" provides an example of such a practice. In this project, students referred to various resources and their own experiences to analyze stereotypical images of Japanese linguistic and cultural practices depicted in textbooks, and revised the text collaboratively. By reading texts depicting different scenes and discussing them with classmates, the students became aware of diversity (in terms of region, gender, class, age, etc.) in the language itself, as well as the diverse views and values held by Japanese people.

Although commercially available textbooks can be used in this way to boost students' critical awareness, it is still important to develop materials aimed specifically at nurturing students' criticality. For example, Iwasaki and Kumagai (2015) created a reader that incorporates authentic texts, such as newspaper and magazine articles, interviews, essays, and novels on various sociocultural themes, along with accompanying questions and activities designed to develop students' criticality. The types and contents of the texts were carefully selected to represent various genres that have specific social functions, and to present sociopolitical and cultural issues that stimulate learners' intellectual curiosity and challenge stereotypical views of Japanese society, language, and people. Accompanying questions and activities encourage learners to think about "what texts do and how texts mean" (Bazerman & Prior, 2014, p. 3), going beyond the usual comprehension of "what texts mean." To get students to sharpen and broaden their criticality and learn to engage critically with the material, texts—along with a variety of questions and activities—were sequenced in such ways that promote their awareness. These questions guide students to pay more attention to the sociocultural backgrounds of writers and target readers alike, as well as the purpose and social roles of the texts. They also facilitate active exchange of opinions on interpretations of texts with other people (Iwasaki & Kumagai, 2008; Kumagai & Iwasaki, 2011, 2015). Having compared stated norms with actual language use, they began to recognize the arbitrariness of rules and norms (Kumagai, 2007a, 2007b). Creation of a space where this critical language awareness could be used to participate in and engage with their chosen communities made CCBI eminently possible and achievable (Sato & Kumagai, 2011).

## Case Project: Linking an Advanced-Language Course and a Literature Course

As one example of pedagogical implementation inspired by the tenets of CCBI, we will present below a linked-courses curricular project that was collaboratively planned and implemented for an advanced-level (fourth-year) Japanese language course and a literature seminar at a women's liberal arts college in the United States (Kumagai & Kono, 2016).<sup>11</sup> Both the theme and the shared, synergistic goal of the linked courses were chosen to fit with the college's stated mission. The mission was to educate leaders who use "creativity and critical thought" to understand "diversity" and "the world's cultures"; who "fulfill their responsibilities to the local, national and global communities in which they live and to steward the resources that sustain them"; and who will become "agent[s] of change" within their communities.

In the spring of 2013 and fall of 2014, the linked courses were offered with a common theme, "Ethnic Minorities in Japan." Students were encouraged but not required to enroll in both courses. The number of students who enrolled in both courses was three in the earlier term (out of five in the language and five in the literature course) and four in the later term (out of seven in the language and ten in the literature course). The schedules were arranged to make sure each unit (on Ainu, Burakumin, Okinawans, and Zainichi Koreans) overlapped and that students read materials in both English and Japanese concurrently. In the language course, students engaged with a wide variety of materials in Japanese, including literary texts, film, manga, essays, and journalistic pieces. Students in the literature seminar read literary texts in English translation and supplementary materials, such as literary criticism and historical background, in English. Unlike many foreign-language-across-the-curriculum (FLAC) formats that assign language courses a supporting role and regard them as add-ons (as reflected in the credits earned for them), these courses were equally weighted in recognition of each discipline's different yet equally important contributions to the study of Japanese language and culture.

Linking the courses had educational merit in several areas. First, it gave students greater access to various texts on a given topic. Learners studying a Category IV (Defense Language Aptitude Battery) language like Japanese require additional time to become proficient in reading at an advanced level; hence, literature-in-translation courses have long been an essential part of many Japanese language and literature programs in the United States. In the past, however, this situation imposed different kinds of limitations on language and literature courses: For language courses, selecting texts at a feasible linguistic level was restrictively difficult; for literature courses, the original Japanese texts had to be available in English translation, which necessarily narrowed the selection. In contrast, the collaborative nature of the linked courses provided students with a wider selection of texts, both original and translated, on the same topic.

Second, the design of the linked courses, taught by two instructors with different disciplinary expertise (language/linguistics and literature), allowed the students to learn different approaches to critical engagement with texts. The language course focused particularly on linguistic analysis, examining how linguistic and semiotic choices construct meaning and its effect on readers, whereas the literature course trained students to analyze

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<sup>11</sup> For an extended discussion on the linked-course curricular project, please see "Collaborative curricular initiatives: Linking language and literature courses for critical and cultural literacies" (Kumagai & Kono, to appear) in *Japanese Language and Literature*.

literature from various critical approaches (e.g., feminist, Marxist, postcolonial) and to situate texts within specific literary and artistic movements and their broader historical and cultural contexts. Together, the two courses encouraged the students to utilize their linguistic and literary analytical skills and integrated their learning in both Japanese and English. Reading the same texts (sometimes the original and its translation; sometimes texts on the same topic) and discussing surrounding issues in both Japanese and English enabled the students to develop critical language awareness (Fairclough, 1992; Janks, 2009), for instance by recognizing how the cultural context of language shapes different perspectives on a topic that suit respective audiences.

Similarly, through engagement with both original and translated texts, the curriculum heightens students' awareness of translation as a critical element in development of translanguaging and transcultural competence (MLA, 2007). In these courses, students who are literally "shuttling between languages and cultures" take part in translanguaging practice (Canagarajah, 2012) (or translanguaging) by exploiting knowledge and resources in both languages and cultures to further their learning.

The linked courses also have an important implication for the structural issue faced by foreign language departments of tertiary-level academic institutions. The curricular project described here attempts to challenge the existing structural inequality and hierarchy between language instructor and content instructor (e.g., Hanabusa, 2015; Suderman & Cisar, 1992) by acknowledging both literary and language study as unique *disciplines*, while also fulfilling the shared goal of critical literacy.

## Challenges of Implementing CCBI

The critical approach we promote here may conflict or prove incompatible with institutional environments that prioritize efficiency and practicality. CBI grew out of the diversified needs of society and individuals, so it is understandable that CBI curricula often value efficacy and practicality. Business and academic Japanese language courses especially have tended to focus on the mastery of practical skills required in given situations (business and academic). This tendency is also evident in language for specific purposes (LSP) overall, because of its strong emphasis on immediate practical needs. However, if the aim is to educate individuals who can reflect on the status quo and make changes for the better, it is insufficient to satisfy immediate practical needs.

To be clear, it is important to avoid viewing practicality and criticality as opposing notions, and to instead recognize the tension and set short-term and long-term learning goals for learners. The notion of "critical pragmatism"<sup>12</sup> proposed by Pennycook (1997) is highly suggestive in that it critically captures the notion of efficiency and practicality and implies transformation in the future (Benesch, 2001, 2009; Canagarajah, 2002; Harwood & Hadley, 2004; Morgan, 2009a, 2009b; Pennycook, 1997; Singh & Doherty, 2004; Starfield, 2004).

Another challenge facing teachers of CCBI is to avoid imposing certain perspectives. It is important for teachers to create a safe space—both physically and mentally—in which students can openly express their own views and learn to be global "ethical" citizens

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<sup>12</sup> The term "critical pragmatism," coined by Cherryholmes in 1988 as a concept opposed to "vulgar pragmatism," takes the position that educational activities require practicality with regard to epistemological, ethical, and aesthetic choices, rather than blind acceptance of the norms and customs that maintain the status quo (Pennycook, 1997, p. 256).

(Kubota, 2014). This safe space should also catalyze the development of a “third place” for each individual (Kramersch, 2011). Dogmatically denouncing injustice and imposing justice-oriented views could silence students. Needless to say, successful classroom practice requires humility and contextual sensitivity (Kubota & Miller, 2017).

## CONCLUSION

In closing, we return to why CCBI and its emphasis on criticality are necessary. CCBI does not deny the acquisition of language and knowledge, without which students would doubtless be socially disadvantaged. However, we cannot stress enough that the ultimate mission of education is to educate the people who will take on responsibilities to help sustain and improve the communities or societies they are part of, contributing to the creation of a better future. To achieve this, students’ criticality should be nurtured by instructors who encourage critical engagement with texts and reflection on self and others via open dialogues about various social issues. Indeed, this cultivation of criticality should be taken as a core component of language instruction at all levels, not as something to be added after mastery of “language” and “content.”

There seems to be a tendency in foreign language education to place more emphasis on “language” (instruction) than on “education.” We believe that it is important to reemphasize the aspect of “education” and reposition foreign language education within the field of education. The key is to situate foreign language education within a bigger frame and in multiple layers of different educational areas: education in general, lifelong education, higher education, and world languages education. Doing so will foster a comprehensive vision of what and how foreign language education can contribute to the larger scheme of students’ education, guiding them to become translingual, transcultural language users with social agency.

Currently the field of foreign language education is considered as a supporting, instrumental field providing a service to “academic” practices in other fields. Therefore, it is also important to share this vision and initiate dialogue with scholars from other academic fields and the field of education more broadly. In this way, foreign language education can gain recognition as an important discipline in and of itself rather than being seen as a secondary, peripheral field. Both teachers and researchers need to adopt critical and proactive attitudes and affirm foreign language education’s role in educating global citizens for our future.<sup>13</sup> That, we believe, is what the principles of CCBI aim to achieve.

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<sup>13</sup> In the recent resurgence of nationalism, ‘globalization’ has been questioned on the grounds that it connotes eurocentrism or American hegemony and that it is limited to neoliberalistic values. While we are aware of such criticism, we believe that upholding ‘global citizenship’ as a primary goal of language education becomes even more important in the time of divisions like this. We also believe that it is ‘global citizens with critical minds’ (emphasis on criticality) that should be set as a goal of education in order to avoid falling into said dangers.



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