

From Implicit to Conscious DIL: What Japanese Students' Discourse Reveals

Ghislain MOUTON (Université Doshisha) and Mayo OYAMA (Université Métropolitaine d'Osaka)

This presentation builds on the findings of Mouton & Oyama (2024), which explored how didactique intégrée des langues (DIL) appears in Japanese university contexts. The previous study combined two empirical approaches: first, an analysis of French-as-a-foreign-language textbooks used in Japan, and second, a large-scale questionnaire survey with 257 beginner learners across nine universities. The results showed that while DIL is rarely made explicit in teaching materials, many students already engage with it implicitly, especially through cross-linguistic comparisons. Moreover, a majority expressed strong interest in learning strategies that mobilize their plurilingual repertoires, suggesting a gap between pedagogical practice and learner expectations.

Building on this observation, the present study examines what happens when DIL is explicitly introduced in the classroom. The data comes from a one-semester course on plurilingual and intercultural education at Doshisha University (2025), involving approximately 40 students. As a final task, students produced short reflective videos, from which a corpus of explicit reflections on DIL was extracted and analyzed using thematic analysis.

The results suggest a gradual progression from lived experience to critical linguistic awareness. Students' reflections can be categorized along several levels: from simple recognition of similarities between languages, to metalinguistic awareness, to more advanced forms of conceptualization, and finally to critical awareness of sociolinguistic inequalities. However, this progression is not uniform. While some students develop a sophisticated understanding of language as a social and political phenomenon, others remain at a more implicit level or even resist the approach.

These findings indicate that DIL can function as a powerful tool for developing linguistic awareness, but that its explicit introduction does not automatically lead to critical reflection. This raises an important pedagogical question: under what conditions do learners appropriate plurilingual perspectives, and what factors—cognitive, linguistic, or affective—shape this process?

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