
Feature Article

Localizing EAP in Light of the Rise of English-Medium Instruction at Japanese Universities

Howard Brown

University of Niigata Prefecture

John Adamson

University of Niigata Prefecture

English-medium content classes are becoming more common on Japanese university campuses. When taught by Japanese faculty, the language of instruction may be English but the classroom culture remains grounded in local academic norms. This has implications for EAP practice at such universities. This study looks at data collected from Japanese faculty working in an English-medium program in the social sciences. The study examines their goals, expectations for student performance and descriptions of classroom practice. Data analysis shows important implications for change in four areas. EAP teachers preparing students for work in a local English-medium program in Japan, rather than for study abroad, may need to reconsider their practice including longer-term focus on a single topic, more one-on-one interaction with students, the addition of translanguaging and a greater focus on academic skills rather than language. Although findings are limited to our local context, some resonance may be found in similar Japanese universities offering English-medium content instruction and EAP courses preparing students for that purpose.

日本の大学において、英語による専門科目の授業が一般的になりつつある。しかし、日本人教員がそうした授業を担当する場合、使用言語が英語であるにもかかわらず、教室内の文化（カルチャー）は依然としてローカルな学術的規範に基づいている。このことは、学術的目的のための英語（EAP）の授業を展開する大学にとって重要な意味を持っている。本研究は、社会科学の分野で、英語による専門科目の授業を担当する日本人教員からデータを収集

し、考察したものであり、授業の目標と予想される学生の成果、そして実際の授業内容について論じる。データ分析の結果、4つの分野において重要な変革の必要性が示唆された。学生の留学準備ではなく、日本国内での英語による専門科目の受講準備を目的とするEAPの教師は、単一のトピックを長期的に扱うこと、一対一による学生指導の増大、トランスランゲージ手法の導入、言語スキルよりアカデミックなスキルに焦点を当てるといった方法を含め、その授業内容を再考する必要があるかも知れない。本研究の知見は一大学のコンテキストに限られたものであるが、日本で同様に英語による専門科目の授業やそれらの受講準備を目的としたEAPのコースを提供する大学においては、共通点を見出すことができると思われる。

Around Japan, English for Academic Purposes (EAP) classes are becoming more popular on university campuses. Many of these courses serve what can be thought of as a traditional need; preparing students who will study abroad or use English as part of an international academic career. However, increasingly, students will not be studying in English at foreign universities, but rather on their own local campuses in Japan. English-medium instruction (EMI) of content classes is a growing trend in at Japanese universities and has implications for preparing students. In this “intrinsic” case study (Stake, 1995, p. 3), we reveal how we reexamined our own EAP practice in terms of local needs and suggest some implications based on our findings.

The context of EAP in Japan

Bruce (2011) sees needs analysis as a fundamental first step in EAP curriculum design and includes location and context as key elements. Following Hutchinson and Waters (1987), Bruce says that “Where will the language be used?” and “Who will the learners use the language with?” are two of the key questions in preparing for EAP (Bruce, 2011, p. 39). While many EAP courses in Japan prepare students for overseas study, more and more, the location and context may be tied to local use of English. This can be attributed to the fall in the number of Japanese students studying abroad and the growing popularity of EMI.

Looking at the first of Bruce’s (2011) key questions, location, we see a fall

in the number of Japanese students who study abroad. The total number fell by more than 20% between 2000 and 2010. In 2008, a total of 67,000 Japanese traveled overseas for study (Tanikawa, 2011); however, most were language students. Since then, interest in studying abroad has rebounded somewhat but newer trends show more students travelling during high school or for short-term language programs (ICEF, 2013). The number traveling to study non-language (content) courses abroad fell considerably and has not rebounded due to several overlapping factors. First, study fees have risen in the west creating an economic disincentive for Japanese students. Also, language study in Korea and China is growing in popularity and competing with western programs (Ford, 2010). Another factor may be the pressure on students of job hunting which often leaves little time for study abroad. Also, students may question whether credits and qualifications earned abroad help job hunting (Koh, 2010). Together, these trends imply that fewer Japanese students need EAP for content study abroad.

A second key question in EAP needs analysis is context. In Japan, many universities now offer EMI classes. A few are entirely English-medium, and many others offer some courses in English. Government survey results show as of 2006, 46% of universities in Japan (318 schools) have content courses wholly or partially in a foreign language, a dramatic rise from 38% in 2000 (MEXT, 2003, 2008). Looking specifically at EMI, 227 universities (approximately one third of the total) offer some courses wholly in English (MEXT, 2006), a trend which is gaining attention nationwide (Hayashibe, 2009; Utagawa, 2011). In many cases, universities have taken this direction out of a sense of competition with rival universities (Brown, 2014; Taguchi & Naganuma, 2006), a desire to improve the public image of the university (Brown, 2014), or on pedagogical grounds (Brown, 2014; Harshbarger, Morrell, & Riney, 2011; Sekiya, 2005).

While some EMI courses may be taught by international faculty, MEXT (2009) urges universities to support Japanese faculty with training and development of locally produced English-language materials. So if EMI is offered on a Japanese campus by Japanese faculty for Japanese students, traditional EAP objectives lose some relevance on those campuses. The language of instruction will be English, but faculty and student expectations will arise

from local, Japanese academic culture. In this sense, Canagarajah's "local norms of relevance" (2005, xxvii) take precedence. While seemingly obvious, this has profound implications for patterns of classroom interaction, learning events, modes of expression, workload, and other pedagogical issues.

Considering this recent context shift, some re-examination of EAP in Japan seems appropriate. EAP courses designed assuming students study abroad may not serve their real needs or those of their institutions. There is a potential mismatch between preparation in EAP classes and the actual demands of EMI. Therefore, EAP classes may need redesigning to meet student and faculty needs on Japanese campuses. This study looks at one such campus to learn more about what students do in their EMI classes to inform our EAP program decision-making.

The Current Study

This case study is based on multimodal qualitative data collected in three stages at a small university in Japan. Formerly a junior college with a strong English language and culture department, it became a university in 2009. As part of the transition, the decision was made to teach some social sciences courses, specifically in the Department of International Studies and Regional Development, in English. Of 45 faculty members, seven (all non-native speakers of English, six Japanese, one Chinese) currently offer content courses entirely in English for second- and third-year students. Courses in economics, development studies, finance, political science and peace studies are offered in English, and several more use some English language materials, though they are delivered in Japanese. The English-medium program is, as such, currently developing.

To support students entering these classes, the former English language and culture department was converted to an EAP program taught by full-time expatriate language-teaching specialists, with semi-intensive classes (10.5 hours per week) for first-year students. The program initially focused on English for general academic purposes (Jordan, 1997) following commercial materials for academic listening, reading, writing and discussion skills. However, EAP faculty noticed the materials, and their own assumptions about preparation the students

needed, were not always aligned with EMI realities. Thus, we undertook a multistage project to determine our EAP students' actual needs by eliciting insights from key institutional voices at critical junctures in the EMI program development.

In the first stage of the study, conducted prior to the formation of the EMI program, the researchers looked into *kiso semi* classes, the fundamental seminar, a required class for all first-year students taught by Japanese faculty from a variety of specialties. It is a one-semester class preparing students for the requirements of university life. Though a Japanese-medium course and not part of the EAP program, in some ways it parallels EAP classes in that both prepare students for academic demands. Since *kiso semi* teachers are Japanese, we considered them part of the local academic community with insights into student needs and faculty expectations. We collected data on their insights into what it means to be a "good student" and expected learning outcomes through written surveys, follow-up interviews and on-going, informal communications, all of which were conducted in Japanese or English.

In the second stage, the researchers investigated EMI classes during the first year of the program. The university supported EMI faculty with workshops and support sessions for materials development, a program known as the Teaching Lab (Iyobe, Brown, & Coulson, 2011), which was part of the Faculty Development (FD) committee. Workshops and support sessions were facilitated by expatriate EAP teachers five times during the first year of EMI classes. At one Teaching Lab workshop, four Japanese EMI teachers participated in a panel discussion (in Japanese) sharing concerns and, importantly for this study, expectations about students, materials and activities in their classes and initial impressions of student performance. The audience was other faculty engaged in, or considering, EMI, along with EAP teachers. A video and transcript of this workshop, along with informal follow-up, became the basis of the second stage of data collection.

In the third stage of the study, all seven faculty members fully active in the EMI program were surveyed and interviewed (in English) one-on-one following one year of teaching in English. Interviews dealt with their classroom strategies,

materials, experiences and their impressions of students' work. An overview of the three stages is presented in Table 1.

While the three stages are described here as distinct, there was in fact overlap. In some cases, informal follow-up continued beyond initial data collection and into the next stage. In other cases, people's experience overlapped; for example, one was interviewed as a *kiso semi* teacher, participated as an EMI panelist, and was interviewed again following one year of EMI practice.

Throughout the study, we found it important to remain sensitive to the

Table 1

Overview of Data Collection

Stage	Collection	Informants	Timing	Research Question
1	Open-ended written survey, follow up semi-structured interviews and informal communications	Faculty members teaching <i>kiso semi</i> (n=6)	During 1st year of EAP program. Before the first EMI classes started	What do faculty members think it means to be a good student? What should the overall learning outcomes of the first year be?
2	Video and transcript of Teaching lab workshop session	Faculty members active in EMI (n=4)	During the second year of the EAP program, the first year of EMI classes	What is actually happening in EMI classes? What are the students expected to be able to do? How are teachers challenging students in EMI classes? How well do students meet those challenges?
3	Interviews with EMI teachers	Faculty members active in EMI (n=7)	Following the first year of EMI classes	What actually happened in EMI classes? What were the students expected to be able to do? How did teachers challenge students in EMI classes? How well did students meet those challenges? Do EMI teachers notice anything missing from students EAP preparation?

institution's social and political climate since we were acutely aware of potential difficulties in negotiating what Arkoudis (2006) calls the "rough ground that can sometimes separate ESL and mainstream teachers" (p. 415). Content teachers may view curriculum through the lens of their disciplinary culture focusing on the scope of the content, while language teachers tend to focus on practice—the process of learning and teaching (Reid, 1992). This fundamental difference can sometimes make communication and collaboration problematic. In addition, in contexts where the institution undergoes major shifts, as ours has, faculty may become uncertain of their role, competence and position. In cases where schools adopt EMI, Mehisto (2008) refers to this uncertainty as "disjuncture" (p. 93) and warns that teachers may be resistant to change due to a perceived threat, making open communication for research purposes challenging. Finally, there was the issue of resistance to voluntary collaboration on matters of teaching practice among Japanese faculty (Takagi, 2002), along with their tendency towards personal reflection rather than open collaboration (Okano & Tsuchiya, 1999; Sato & Kleinsasser, 2004). This makes collecting data from colleagues somewhat sensitive (Adamson, 2010), as it involves a potentially delicate investigation of their beliefs (Sikes, 2008).

Keeping these issues in mind, all three stages of data collection were done with sensitivity and patience. Data was collected over the course of three years, starting with the unidirectional, non-face-threatening surveys of *kiso semi* teachers. The later stages of the study, based more on potentially face-threatening sharing of practice, expectations and personal experiences, were only possible due to long-term relationship-building (Iyobe, Brown, & Coulson, 2011).

Results and Discussion

Collection and analysis of data from the three stages of the project was done through qualitative triangulation. This involved firstly identifying "natural meaning units" (Kvale, 1996, p. 195) in the data which were clearly key points for each participant, then noting similarity among informants' comments, and finally making connections between them to identify overarching themes. Our results imply that some elements of the EAP program do in fact meet students'

needs and faculty members' expectations. However, some results are indicative of change. Some ways in which English is used in EMI are not effectively supported by the EAP program.

Firstly, results indicate that some elements of the EAP program are appropriate to the local context as is (see Table 2 for paraphrased representative comments).

Table 2

Representative Comments from Informants

Research Question
<p>Concerning papers and presentations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students must gather information, write reports and seminar papers, make presentations. <p>Concerning multimodality and intertextuality:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students must manage and manipulate input and output for a composed, synthesized whole, take extensive notes on a presentation, ask questions, and combine information with their own research. <p>Concerning summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students must read and summarize what they learned from their reading and debate, and show correct understanding of expert ideas on various arguments. <p>Concerning discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students must communicate with other generations/ backgrounds, understand other views, be active in class, and give good presentations. <p>Concerning feedback and reflection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students need not wait for instruction or evaluation, must ask good questions, evaluate others' presentations and papers, and reflect upon their own work. <p>Concerning papers and presentations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students must write a paper (1000-3000 words) from outside sources, understand the structure of English academic writing, formulate a clear thesis, give academic presentations, and defend their ideas. <p>Concerning multimodality and intertextuality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students must base written work on multiple sources both Japanese and international, apply research skills, synthesize information, and understand differences between Japanese and international sources. <p>Concerning summary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students must understand the main ideas of lectures and documentaries, and summarize the main ideas of an article, book or other sources. <p>Concerning discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students must participate actively in class by speaking out and sharing their opinions

Concerning papers and presentations:

- Students must write notes in English, submit homework, assignments and mid-term papers in English.

Concerning multimodality and intertextuality

- Students must engage in Immersion language education (not necessarily English) to gain a broader horizon (to understand, recognize and acknowledge different perspectives of the same issue).

Concerning feedback and reflection

- Students must take turns preparing chapter summaries in collaboration with others, learning in foreign languages to encourage reflection and change their way of thinking.
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Data collected from *kiso semi* teachers showed that they value the ability to write coherent academic papers and give formal presentations, both of which are covered in the current EAP program. As one *kiso semi* teacher said, “good students are those who can write readable text following the manners of writing.” *Kiso semi* teachers also talked about the importance of multimodality and intertextuality in students’ work and prioritized summary as a key skill in both reading and listening comprehension, saying, “synthesizing and analyzing a lecture and documents is important.” Again, these are skills covered in EAP. Additional elements of the EAP program that were reinforced by messages from the *kiso semi* faculty included the value of class discussion, peer-feedback and reflective self-evaluation. These results were largely confirmed in the second and third stages of research.

While the appropriateness of much current EAP practice was confirmed through the study, other areas of practice were called into question by the results. In addition, new ideas for change were introduced through the three stages of the study. These can be summarized into four recommendations for change in our EAP practice, where the students will use English within the local, Japanese academic community.

First, longer term work seems to be called for. *Kiso semi* teachers placed a great deal of value on this. They spoke about single projects covering entire 15-week terms and the value of students preparing what one informant called a “composed, synthesized whole”, in other words, a project that draws together

many different threads and perhaps stretches across several courses. They also said that students need time to “naturally develop their own ability to understand, read, write logical/coherent papers, [and] make presentations.” This sustained contact with material was also perceived as being related to going beyond “superficial and one-dimensional understanding” of content and developing better understanding and critical thinking skills.

In short, the focus of Japanese faculty on our campus was on depth, rather than breadth, of coverage and sustained contact with a single topic. However, the current EAP program, based on widely available commercial resources, changes topics quickly. Each skill set is covered through different content and textbook chapters typically change topic, presumably to appeal to students of a wide range of interests. As a result, this may not prepare students to develop their ideas through materials that focus on a single topic throughout a semester. With this in mind, a move away from commercial texts may be necessary.

Second, patterns of classroom interaction may need rethinking. It became clear in the Teaching Lab workshop that EMI classes were smaller than expected. In our university, EAP courses have 20-25 students per class, one exceeding 180 students. This contrasts with class sizes in EMI with 5-10 students as a norm. In addition, content faculty members spend much time in one-on-one tutoring with students outside of class, making students feel “more free to ask questions, [and] come to [the teacher’s] office.” This individual attention is a key learning event with Japanese faculty but remains unexplored in EAP classes. A move then towards smaller classes and more direct contact with the EAP teacher may be called for.

Third, the important relationship between the students’ L1 and L2 was raised. Our EAP program, as in many language courses, follows an English-only policy in class and for assignments. This may not reflect the actual context of language use, typically characterized by intermingling (Jacobson & Faltis, 1990) and code-switching (Cummins, 2005). Discussions with EMI teachers revealed they wanted students to develop skills for intertextuality and multimodality across languages, termed as “translanguaging” (Blackledge & Creese, 2010, p. 105), and defined as strategic code-switching in bilingual contexts. Faculty

members engaged in EMI expected students to “develop an awareness of the difference between” and synthesize “multiple sources, both Japanese and international”. One teacher explained this by noting that Japanese and western scholars approach questions from different angles. Consequently, students need to have access to both academic traditions and to integrate them. This need for translanguaging can be thought of as an extension of Canagarajah’s (2006) ideas about shifting speech communities.

Rather than simply *joining* a speech community, then, we should teach students to shuttle *between* communities.... Not only must we possess a repertoire of codes from the English language, we must also learn to use it in combination with other world languages (p. 26).

In EAP courses, this implies a greater role for L1 source materials and activities involving comparison and synthesis of L1 and L2 resources.

A fourth implication considers the institutional role of EAP. Surveys and follow-up discussions with *kiso semi* teachers highlighted the overall lack of academic skills among students. While students performed well in high school and entrance exams, many were unprepared for the creativity, flexibility and criticality at university as they lacked higher-order thinking, independence, and particularly critical-reading skills, even in their L1. One informant attributed this to the teacher-centered approaches in high school, saying, “high school students can succeed by conscientiously doing what they are told, whereas in university they must think for themselves”, meaning students experienced a “difficult transition” to meet unfamiliar university expectations. The Teaching Lab workshop reinforced this message, highlighting for EAP faculty that the high school to university shift requires development of new competencies regardless of language. As one informant suggested of reading, “for first-year students, one’s feelings of ‘I understood this topic’ and his/her actual level of understanding is not always the same.”

This study highlighted the importance of first-year student experiences in developing new competencies and stressed the engagement of all first-year

classes in this transformation. The EAP program is a major part of students' first-year experience, implying it is important in developing not only language skills, but also academic competencies transferable across languages. As one workshop participant said,

EAP isn't only about the E anymore. The A is emerging as an important factor. It isn't about English for Academic Purposes; it is more about academic purposes in English. We cannot just teach them how to apply skills in English when those skills are not even there in L1.

Conclusion

Amid a growing trend towards EMI at Japanese universities, this study explored the emerging role of an EAP program at one university. In this context, our EAP program may need to change to better serve student needs using English in local EMI. In this case study, changes in four important areas are recommended: longer-term contact with topics for deeper rather than broader coverage; more one-on-one interaction between faculty and students; the addition of translanguageing to multimodality and intertextuality; and focus on academic competencies rather than language skills. Moving towards these changes will align the EAP program with actual conditions under which students use English on our campus.

The findings of this case study may resonate with experiences from other contexts, particularly universities in Japan implementing EMI with Japanese faculty. It may be that longer-term work, translanguageing, tutoring relationships and transferable academic skills are important priorities for EAP at many such universities in Japan. However, it is important to remember that our findings remain particular to a certain context. Rather than applying them directly, we recommend following our process in which we, as EAP practitioners, benefit from closer communication with EMI faculty and from understanding their expectations and teaching styles.

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Authors' bios

Howard Brown is an associate professor and EAP teacher at the University of Niigata Prefecture. His current research interests include EAP, CLIL and the growth of English-medium instruction at universities in Japan. brown@unii.ac.jp

John Adamson is a Professor at the University of Niigata Prefecture where he teaches EAP. He is Chief Editor of Asian EFL Journal and is interested in EAP, interdisciplinarity, CLIL, and academic publishing. adamson@unii.ac.jp

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