

Guiding Principles for the Effective Implementation of English Medium Instruction

Takeharu Kiyoshi
Komatsu University

1. Introduction

The aim of this survey was to derive the best way to promote English Medium Instruction (EMI), specialized education using English as a medium language, in the development of “global human resources” who can think globally and act locally in their communities. In the future, I aim to package the curriculum, management methods, teaching and learning methods, and evaluation criteria for specialized English education for students whose native language is not English.

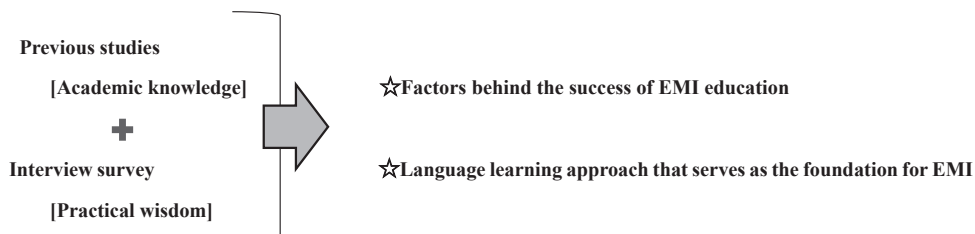
One of the challenges of EMI in Japanese higher education is that students’ comprehension decreases when specialized subjects are taught in English. The goal of this survey was to address this issue and identify the factors that will establish effective EMI operation methods. In addition, I intend to start by re-recognizing the concept of “internationalization” in the promotion of this survey, which will lead to the construction of an EMI promotion system that will increase students’ adaptability in the international community.

The biggest problem with EMI, which can be described as “specialized education in English for students whose native language is not English,” is that teaching specialized academic subjects in English significantly reduces students’ comprehension. In other words, simply providing specialized education in English is not sufficient. This is an extremely important issue that is inextricably linked to the question of how to maintain quality assurance in higher education.

I used the following two methodologies to collect and analyze qualitative data: First, I conducted a thorough review of previous research and organized the existing knowledge related to the research subject. This made it possible to understand the current situation and trends in the research field and obtain a bird’s-eye view of the entire issue. Second, I conducted semi-structured interviews with experts in this field. Through this survey, I collected opinions based on the knowledge and practical experience of experts and compared them with the results of previous research, making it possible to analyze the issue from a more practical perspective. By combining these two approaches, I gained a multifaceted and in-depth understanding of the research topic.

2. Survey framework

As mentioned above, this survey employed two methods—a review of previous research and semi-structured interviews with experts—to collect and analyze qualitative data, enabling a multifaceted and practice-oriented understanding of the issues.



3. What has been discussed in previous studies?

A) Previous studies on internationalization

- ✓ In recent years, the importance of International Program and Provider Mobility, which refers to the international movement of educational institutions and programs, has increased, and the internationalization of education is progressing.

B) Core previous research related to EMI

- ✓ Macaro (2018) is a leading researcher who has produced important results on the use of EMI in specialized education in non-native English-speaking countries. EMI involves teaching specialized subjects to non-English speakers using English. He states that it is important to distinguish it from content and language-integrated learning, which is designed to improve English proficiency.
- ✓ The promotion of EMI at Japanese universities is limited in terms of program standards, tuition fees, and faculty responses.

C) General trends in research on EMI

- ✓ EMI research is mainly conducted from the perspective of applied linguistics, and many researchers have examined EMI policy planning, teacher and student attitudes, characteristics of classroom dialogue, learning processes, and so on in detail.
- ✓ EMI has mainly attracted attention in higher education, and its introduction is being promoted as a policy; however, there is a lack of clear data on its learning effects and the improvement of English proficiency.
- ✓ When introducing EMI, the goals include internationalization, promoting learning, and improving language proficiency; however, implementation methods and policies vary from country to country

and region to region.

D) Research to clarify issues associated with the introduction of EMI

- ✓ The introduction of EMI in Japan faces problems such as a lack of English language skills, unclear learning goals, and a gap between government policy and the field. Strengthening teacher training and student support systems is important.

E) EMI research in Japan

- ✓ In Japanese EMI programs, self-efficacy and English proficiency have been shown to have significant impacts on positive learning outcomes, and students' English proficiency and prior knowledge play important roles in the outcomes of EMI programs.

F) EMI research in various countries

- ✓ In Europe, English has become more prevalent in the context of multilingualism, influencing educational policies and student exchanges. One example is the introduction of EMI at the University of the Basque Country (Spain).
- ✓ In Italy, issues such as a lack of vocabulary and teacher-led classes have been pointed out regarding the transition from secondary to higher education with EMI.
- ✓ Language proficiency has been shown to significantly impact academic performance in Turkey and China.

4. Suggestions from a professor who practices EMI: Interview survey

A) Dr. Victor Carpenter Lee (Professor Emeritus of Hirosaki University [Specialty: International Politics])

Background: A native English speaker specializing in international politics. Bilingual, teaching in Japanese, and promoting specialized education and academic research from a global perspective.

Views on EMI education:

- ✓ The success of EMI depends on participants' English abilities. A solid foundation of English skills (reading, listening, speaking, and writing) is a prerequisite.
- ✓ Therefore, it is important to improve the language curriculum for first- and second-year students. Therefore, a foundation for future EMI courses should be established.
- ✓ Syllabi for EMI courses should be designed flexibly. It is desirable to change the content according to students' English abilities.
- ✓ With EMI, there is no need to insist on teaching everything else in English. Matters related to

Japanese culture may be difficult to understand when only English is used.

- ✓ The participation of students from other countries is also important. It is possible to use international students to deepen Japanese students' understanding of English.
- ✓ Therefore, a teaching program is necessary for EMI classes taught by Japanese teachers. Attention must be paid to these nuances when conveying thoughts in the Japanese language.
- ✓ In case of personnel shortages, it is effective to utilize native speakers who cannot speak English but can teach specialized subjects.

B) Dr. Rong Zhang (Professor of West Japan Institute of Technology [Specialty: English Education])

Background: An English language education expert who serves on the editorial boards of numerous international journals and as a chairperson of international conferences. Has extensive knowledge and experience in EMI.

Views on EMI education:

- ✓ Strengthening English skills is essential.
- ✓ The four abilities of reading, listening, speaking, and writing are interrelated, and continuous effort is required to master the language.
- ✓ Language learning process: Language is like “pickles,” and it is important to learn it over time. You cannot master it unless you study hard.
- ✓ It is important for students to strengthen their reading comprehension and, in specialized subjects, increase their knowledge of unknown “words” and vocabulary.
- ✓ Vocabulary learning in specialized academic subjects.
- ✓ Word knowledge and reading comprehension are important for learning academic content. In English and Japanese, vocabulary and grammatical skills are essential for understanding.
- ✓ TOEIC is business English, so vocabulary is particularly important. In terms of improving scores, grammar can be mastered even at the junior high school level.
- ✓ Relationship between culture and language: Language is deeply connected to culture, and understanding the cultural background behind words is an important part of learning.
- ✓ EMI Education Practice: As the thinking methods and logical structures of English and Japanese are different, EMI requires teaching materials and methodologies based on logical thinking.
- ✓ Use teaching materials written by native speakers and adopt a learning method that uses English logic. This will enable students to acquire skills that can be used overseas.

C) Key points of both A) and B) arguments

Suggestions for “Factors behind the success of EMI education”

1. English ability of students
 - Importance of the foundational skills of reading, listening, speaking, and writing.
 - Enrichment of the language curriculum for 1st- and 2nd-year students.
2. Flexibility of syllabus and class content
 - Flexible changes in content and methods according to students’ English ability.
 - Not all teaching is necessary; consider using Japanese in addition for cultural content.
3. Importance of intercultural exchange
 - Interactions with international students deepen students’ understanding.
 - Japanese students are shy but have a positive attitude.
4. Teaching method and teaching program
 - Nuances may not be conveyed if Japanese thinking is directly taught in English, so specialized teaching programs for teachers are necessary.
 - Utilizing native speakers who can teach specialized academic subjects is useful.

Suggestions as a “language learning approach that serves as the foundation for EMI”

1. The importance of language acquisition
 - Learning a language requires time and effort, and it is difficult to improve language skills while having fun.
 - Strengthening reading comprehension and enriching vocabulary are essential to understanding academic content.
2. Reading comprehension and vocabulary in specialized academic subjects
 - Vocabulary is directly linked to academic understanding. Therefore, it is important to improve reading comprehension and vocabulary.
3. Relationship between culture and language
 - Language and culture are closely related, so you should learn a language while understanding its cultural background.
4. Innovative teaching materials and material selection
 - Using teaching materials written by native speakers and practicing learning based on English logic will increase your international competency.

5. Instead of a conclusion

In summary, this survey showed a clear direction for solving the challenges associated with the introduction of EMI (Figure 1). For EMI to be successful, it is essential to strengthen students’ language

skills based on their English abilities, and it is especially important to enrich the language curriculum in the first and second years. In addition, EMI requires flexibility in the syllabus and lecture content, and appropriate adjustments according to the students' English abilities and cultural backgrounds are effective. Furthermore, it is effective to place Japanese and international students in the same class and encourage interactions during lectures, which will increase their understanding of each other. On the other hand, specialized teaching programs are necessary for teachers, and they are required to provide guidance, such as the consideration of nuances, when conveying Japanese thought in English.

In this way, the success of EMI education is not limited to simply improving the foundation of English ability but also involves a variety of elements such as cultural understanding and flexible teaching methods. Therefore, as previous research has shown, to effectively promote EMI, it is essential for universities to provide institutional support, such as teacher training and English support for students. To achieve this, constant commitment to ensuring the quality of education is essential both in organizational

I. Learner Issues	
English Proficiency	
Issue:	Lack of balance between the four English skills (reading, listening, speaking, and writing) necessary for class comprehension
Countermeasures:	Pre-education: Establishment of pre-courses and support systems Support Tools: Learning support using dictionary apps and AI
Differences in cultural background and values, and changes in teaching methods	
Issue:	Japanese students' reluctance to speak up, traditional lecture-based education
Countermeasures:	Cultural Understanding: Introduction of English-speaking culture and teaching styles Teaching Method Reform: Active Learning and Discussion Promotion Training Collaborative Learning: Introduction of group work
II. Educational Design Issues	
Flexible Use of Language	
Issue:	The need for logical understanding unique to English and the difficulty of understanding specialized content
Countermeasures:	Bilingual Supplementary Materials: English teaching materials + Japanese supplementary materials Bilingual Classes: Supplementing difficult sections and important concepts in Japanese
Teacher English Proficiency and Preparation	
Issue:	Lack of high English proficiency and the ability to design lessons and support students
Countermeasures:	Teacher Training: Regular training to acquire teaching methods in English Provision of Educational Resources: Utilization of English teaching materials and academic materials written by native speakers
III. Issues specific to each academic field	
Characteristics of each academic field	
Issue:	Difficulties in English expression (terminology and concepts) in each specialized field
Countermeasures:	Customization by field: Developing teaching materials and creating glossaries according to each specialized field

Figure 1. Issues and countermeasures for introducing EMI (Path to effective promotion of EMI)
[Research period: January to March 2025, completed on April 6, 2025]

management and in the educational field at universities, and to do so it is necessary to continue asking, “Are students truly able to acquire academic knowledge in English?”

The findings of this survey clarify the challenges and progress in implementing EMI and thereby emphasize the importance of an educational strategy for internationalization in Japan.

List of previous studies used in this survey

The following EMI documents contain extremely important information and are recommended for anyone planning to practice EMI:

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