

EAP as a Bridge to EMI: Learning from the UK

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Japanese universities are increasing their course offerings through English-medium instruction (EMI) and even full-degree English-taught programs (ETP), but language proficiency and the integration of language support courses and EMI classes remain challenges. English for academic purposes (EAP) courses might be used as a bridge to EMI coursework just as they assist international students coming to study in the UK. UK EAP programs are explored through statistics on international students, a description of testing and degree entry language requirements, and semi-structured interviews with 10 EAP program directors and course leaders who outline program funding and autonomy; program perception by university communities; teachers, course materials, goals, and objectives; program and teacher evaluation; teacher support and faculty development.

日本の大学では、教授言語としての英語 (EMI: English as a Medium for Instruction) の授業や、すべての単位を英語で修得するプログラム (ETP: English-Taught Programs) が増えてきているので、英語能力測定試験や学術目的のための英語 (EAP: English for Academic Purposes) を大学の入学試験に利用するという、より伝統的なアプローチを考察することは有益である。英国におけるEAPプログラムが、そのモデルとして役立つと思われる。本論では、EAPプログラムを次の点から考察する。まず、英国における留学生の試験や入学要件の統計について述べる。次に、プログラムディレクターやコースリーダーとの（臨機応変に質問を変える）半構造化面接のデータについて述べる。前述の両者は、プログラムの資金と自治、大学コミュニティによるプログラムの認知、教員・教科書・目的、プログラムと教員の評価、教員支援と専門能力の育成などを意図する。さらに、日本の学習課程が本アプローチを採用する方法を探るための提案を行う。

English-medium instruction (EMI) is steadily increasing at Japanese universities with 40.9% offering it in the most recent MEXT survey (2017, p. 59). The Japanese government has encouraged this growth to help internationalize higher education, raise academic standards, improve the profiles of Japanese universities, and attract international students (Yokota & Kobayashi, 2013). The latter effort forms part of a global trend with an increasing number of universities teaching academic subjects through EMI to attract more international students (ie. Dearden & Macaro, 2016; Doiz, Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2013). In 2013, the government economic revitalization strategy formulated the goal of attracting 300,000 international students by 2020 (Nihon Keizai Saisei Honbu, p. 56). Morizumi (2015) credits government funding of programs such as the Global 30 and the Top Global University Project with the increase in EMI coursework.

But Japanese universities promote EMI for a more important market: the domestic one. Summarizing a survey of 258 institutions offering EMI courses, Brown (2015) noted that “preparing Japanese students for global job markets and improving their language skills were the top rationales” (p. 420). The next four reasons were attracting domestic students, offering content better taught in English than Japanese, improving the university’s profile, and responding to the government’s call for greater internationalization. Bringing international students to Japan ranked only seventh. Furthermore, Yokota & Kobayashi (2013) observe that for many Japanese students, taking EMI coursework in Japan serves as a convenient and financially appealing alternative to studying overseas.

Students’ Language Proficiency and EMI

The chief obstacle to adopting EMI coursework at Japanese universities seems to be the low English language proficiency of many Japanese students. For example, Chapple (2015) examined questionnaire and feedback data from 89 Japanese students in two EMI courses at two “second tier” universities (those just below the level of institutions receiving government funding in the Global 30 Project). He found that 74 of the students had enrolled in EMI courses “to improve their English,” but 74% found the courses too hard and 34% gave up, dropping out or officially withdrawing (pp. 4–5). Sauzier-Uchida (2017) at Waseda University, one of 13 institutions chosen in 2009 for the Global 30 project and in 2014 for the Top Global Universities Program, stated that the average 509.8 TOEFL-ITP scores for freshmen in the School of Political Science and Economics (SPSE), a B1 CEFR level, was not high enough for the faculty’s EMI classes (p. 5).

The UK as a Model: A Description

Many students in Japan lack the language proficiency to take EMI coursework; similarly, so do many international students entering the UK to study at universities there. The EAP approach taken by UK universities toward integrating international stu-

dents might be worth considering in Japan. The UK has evolved national guidelines and is second only to the U.S. for the size of its English language education industry. There were 442,375 international students seeking degrees and professional certification contributing £25.8 billion to the economy in the years 2014-2015, creating or supporting 944,000 jobs (HESA, 2019, Universities UK, 2019).

International Students Entering UK Universities

The UK lists 167 institutions offering undergraduate and post-graduate degrees (HESA, 2019). These range from 15 international students at St. Mary's University, a research facility with 990 students, to the 15,725 at University College of London which has a total of 37,905 students.

International students from non-English speaking countries primarily enter UK universities by taking the International English Language Test System (IELTS). Typically, to enter a university department, out of a possible total of 9, a candidate's IELTS score must reach 5.5 for a department like Nursing and 6.5 for one requiring higher language skills like Law. A student scoring low can retake the IELTS test and re-apply. Alternately, if a student scores nearly high enough, the university may make a *conditional offer* provided the student enrolls in a *pre-sessional course* supplied by the university's EAP program, for which the student pays tuition. This intensive EAP course, taken before the regular semester begins, emphasizes study skills, academic reading, writing, and language

development. Finally, if a student's scores are too low for a conditional offer, the student may take a *foundation course*, and after one or two semesters, gain entry. Additional *in-sessional* lectures on academic skills as well as writing conferences support students during their university studies.

Standards for EAP Programs in the UK

These programs are attached to universities through semi-independent language centers and institutes, or attached to particular departments. The British Council which also assesses language schools and other institutions has accredited 41 EAP programs at universities (British Council, 2019). The British Association of Lecturers in English for Academic Purposes (BALEAP), a professional educational organization promoting learning, teaching, and research in EAP, has accredited 27 university EAP programs (BALEAP, 2019). In both cases, an assessor observes classes (limited to 16 students or less) and student library access, and reviews instructor qualifications. The British Council also examines institutional standards for health and safety, advertising, protection of copyright, staff management, administration, and suitable facilities. BALEAP assessors, working solely with universities, emphasize the institutional context, course management, teaching and learning, teacher qualifications, and professional development. Although seeking accreditation is voluntary, subsequent British Council and BALEAP endorsements provide

Table 1. EAP Program Informants and Enrolments in 2017

| | Name | Enrolment | International Students | EAP unit | Position |
|----|--------------------|-----------|------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| 1 | Alpha University | 20,220 | 4,810 | Center | Director |
| 2 | Beta University | 32,515 | 7,275 | Center, Faculty of Social Sciences | Course leader |
| 3 | Beta University | 32,515 | 7,275 | Center, Faculty of Social Sciences | Course leader, past acting director |
| 4 | Gamma University | 21,655 | 2,805 | Language Institute, Faculty of Humanities | Course leader |
| 5 | Delta University | 18,385 | 5,060 | Center | Director |
| 6 | Epsilon University | 29,370 | 3,935 | Center, School of Arts and Humanities | Course leader |
| 7 | Zeta University | 15,840 | 4,115 | Institute | Director |
| 8 | Eta University | 13,550 | 3,580 | Student Services | Course leader |
| 9 | Theta University | 10,330 | 4,695 | Center | Course leader |
| 10 | Iota University | 30,565 | 9,990 | Center | Course leader |

institutions with a competitive advantage in attracting international students.

Interviews with EAP Program Personnel

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 participants at nine different UK programs in order to describe EAP programs in terms of their place within universities, their curricula, the operation of student assessment, and faculty and program evaluation. The participants worked in supervisory roles as center directors and course leaders. They had extensive experience in English language teaching, from 10 to 41 years, and had either an MA or a PhD in the field. The group of participants was a sample of convenience recruited at educational conferences, through social networks, or by contacting the personnel listed on university websites.

Interview questions were derived from descriptions of language curriculum development and organization (Brown, 1995; Richards, 2001). Answers were recorded and transcribed and common themes identified.

Table 2. *Questions for EAP Program Informants*

1. How is your EAP program perceived within the university community?
2. What part do teachers, course materials, and goals have in the program?
3. What types of student assessments are used in your EAP program?
4. How do you evaluate your program and your teachers?
5. What types of faculty development does your program offer?

Results

University Perceptions of EAP Programs

Most participants felt their university never appreciated their contributions, especially the financial ones. The Epsilon course leader commented, “They weren’t even aware of how much money we were making for them . . . I think we make a million and a half [pounds].” A few like Alpha University’s center director took the opposite position: “We’re about preparing students effectively for undergraduate and post-graduate study and therefore increasing the number of students who are able to move into those courses. We’re a full part of the university.”

An EAP unit’s designation impacted its status according to the Zeta University program director. The Zeta program was unusual because of its history of research and of publishing EAP textbooks. The

university eventually granted institutional status to the unit which gave it more autonomy and access to funding. In contrast, the Eta University program coordinator described being attached to the university administration as a service unit and their personnel termed “instructional support.” At another EAP unit, Beta University, instructors had less prestige and fewer benefits than faculty in a traditional university department. A course leader and the past acting director contrasted the differences between working in the center and in a traditional university department:

I have one hour of prep and marking time for one hour of teaching. People in Education have a 2-to-1 ratio, more marking and prep. The explanation has always been, “We’re academic. You’re language teachers.”

At times, university instructors with inadequately prepared international students in their classes blamed their university’s EAP program. The Epsilon course leader complained, “The finger is pointed at us sometimes, ‘How on earth did you pass that student?’” He countered that some students might have entered the university with a high IELTS score and never even studied in the EAP Program.

Teachers, Course Materials, and Goals

Most students in EAP programs take a summer pre-session. If they pass, they enter the university in the fall term. The sudden brief influx of students means that there are not enough full-time teachers to meet the demand in any EAP program, and adjunct staff members are hired on short-term contracts and given course materials and very strict guidelines and supervised by full-time teachers. The Eta University coordinator explained:

We’re incredibly prescriptive in our pre-session. So, we’ve got learning outcomes. We’ve got handbooks for the tutors [“teachers” in North American English], handbooks for the students. We outline all the learning outcomes for the overall course.

Participants described how a course leader, program director, or assistant director takes the responsibility for a curriculum. Teaching materials ranged from wholly original ones created by the staff to combinations of textbooks and original materials developed over a number of years. In one case, these original materials were published commercially. Materials were designed to be similar to the reading and writing tasks that students would encounter in future studies.

However, a single short intensive EAP course serves more as an introduction to academic skills

rather than thorough preparation for students entering a broad range of departments. The Eta University program director commented, “You’ll have an engineering student sitting next to a humanities student.” A few participants described additional English for Specific (ESP) courses for international students who had been accepted into specific departments such as Nursing, Accounting, or Pharmacy. The departments concerned paid EAP programs to develop and staff these courses; however, because of this expense and personnel requirements, there were not many of these courses.

Student Assessments

Pre-sessional courses have a final assessment to determine if students graduate and start their degrees. Some programs employ the Test of English for Academic Purposes (TEAP). This four-skill test, developed in the UK, often serves as a follow-up to the IELTS test because of its similarity. Other programs assessed students solely by coursework done. The Delta University director described an “integrated academic process approach” where students had to successfully complete tasks such as reading journal articles, book chapters, and attending academic lectures.

Evaluating Teachers and Programs

All EAP program informants described a computer-graded evaluation form common to all university departments. In addition, most programs had course leaders or program directors conducting classroom observations, particularly of new faculty. At Eta University, annual observations were even conducted of full-time instructors.

One formative evaluation unique to the UK, but found in every university department, is the staff-student liaison committee. Each class elects a representative to meet at least twice over a semester with a department administrator and to raise any student concerns about the class. This formative evaluation shapes the teacher’s course while students are still taking it and communicates to the students that they have an active role in their education.

Faculty Development

University administrations in the UK provide faculty development in the form of workshops, opportunities for faculty exchanges overseas, and a performance review of full-time faculty. For this review, a senior faculty member in each department conducts a one-to-one meeting with each of his or her colleagues and asks them to describe their professional

development that year. Though a good review can lead to a bonus, these are very restricted; at Beta University, only the top 3% of the faculty are eligible. In contrast, adjunct faculty is only given pre-service orientations, provided with course curriculum guides, library access, and photocopying privileges.

However, EAP programs benefit from their association with BALEAP. The organization provides an annual institutional membership so that if a university has this membership, all their faculty members, whether full-time or adjunct, are entitled to free attendance at all BALEAP conferences held that year. Sometimes, EAP programs offer a transportation allowance to conferences as well. A further impetus is also from BALEAP which offers an individual teacher accreditation program consisting of three levels, which encourages continuing professional development and provides certification, which is helpful when teachers apply for positions in EAP programs.

Discussion

This examination of UK EAP programs offers suggestions that might improve EMI programs in Japan. As described earlier, they offer standardization of testing and entrance requirements, and an introductory EAP course for students who need it. Support for these steps is already found in the literature on EMI in Japan. Chapple (2015) argued that EMI classes need language support and planning for entry requirements, personnel, and pedagogies. He proposed an introductory course to enable students “to work their way up into high level content courses” (p. 9). Brown (2017) found only 8% of the 118 institutions he surveyed offered EMI programs that provided targeted EAP classes. He concluded that EMI programs would improve with benchmarks for student performance, proficiency testing upon entry, and “better coordination between EMI and the students’ language classes” (pp. 15–17). The interviews described in this paper outline the main features of UK EAP programs and potentially new directions for EMI programs in Japan.

University Perceptions of EAP Programs

In the UK, EAP programs and their contributions are seldom recognized in the wider university community. Also, other university faculty are critical of the abilities of international students that graduate from EAP programs. In Japan, EMI programs are also marginalized; in this case because few students have high enough English proficiency to be successful in EMI coursework. Brown (2015) found that “more than three-quarters of EMI programs served less than 10% of students with most serv-

ing fewer than 5%" (p. 419). Sauzier-Uchida (2017) warned that students and faculty associated with EMI coursework "risk being disassociated from the core of an institution" (p. 11). In her case, only 8.7%, or 87 freshmen of the 991 at the School of Political Science and Economics at Waseda University took EMI courses.

Teachers, Course Materials, and Goals

EAP faculty in the UK often have lower status as language teachers rather than university researchers. Likewise in Japan, EMI program faculty members are frequently undervalued. Tsuneyoshi (2005) estimates that teaching in English and preparing an EMI course requires four to five times as much work for Japanese teachers, making it an unattractive assignment. Furthermore, Brown and Lyobe (2013) note that EMI programs often employ foreign teachers on short-term contracts whose expertise and insight into their programs are lost every few years when personnel change.

Whether or not UK EAP programs primarily use textbooks or original materials with their students, their goal is to integrate academic tasks into their curricula. This is seldom the case with English language classes that are meant to support EMI coursework in Japan. Instead, the classes emphasize traditional language teaching. Galloway, Kriukow, and Numajiri (2015) found that of the five Japanese universities they studied most students and teachers reported dissatisfaction with their university's language support which was often unavailable, irrelevant, expensive, or was badly publicized. Only Akita International University produced EAP course materials tailored for such students' needs as academic writing (p. 21).

Student Assessments

In the UK, assessments are either based on the IELTS exam, similar types of testing, or on students' performance on academic tasks similar to those they will undertake in their university studies. In Japan, there are no national standards for EMI, and universities offer courses based on their personnel and on their students' abilities. This makes it challenging for students to transfer between institutions and sometimes makes it difficult for them to study abroad.

Evaluating Teachers and Programs

EAP programs in the UK are similar to EMI programs in Japan in that students evaluate their classes and teachers. However, a very unusual feature of

all UK university departments is the staff-student liaison committee which has the potential to improve a class while students are still taking it. Such a committee facilitates improved communications between teachers and students and might also offer possibilities for EMI program development and evaluation in Japan.

Faculty Development

In the UK, EAP programs stress professional development among the fulltime faculty more than EMI programs do in Japan. Brown (2017) found two-thirds of those in his survey did not report any faculty development for personnel teaching EMI courses. He noted that faculty development has only been mandatory in Japanese universities since 2007 and Brown characterized it as often perfunctory with low levels of faculty engagement. Unfortunately, universities in both the UK and Japan often overlook the many adjunct faculty members who teach in their programs. BALEAP in the UK serves an important role by offering additional teacher certification and by offering institutional memberships which include adjunct faculty. Professional organizations such as JACET or JALT should do the same for adjunct teachers in Japan.

Conclusion

An exploration of the integration of international students into academic studies in English through EAP programs in the UK shows the importance of standardization, testing, and evolving appropriate curricula. National guidelines need to be developed and long-term institutional commitments be made to EMI coursework in Japan. Institutions should recognize the burden on Japanese teachers of creating content for EMI courses and for teaching in English and provide compensation either financially or through reduced departmental duties. Institutions also need to offer better contracts to foreign teachers employed as language support for these courses in order to retain experienced instructors and increase their motivation. Faculty development for all teachers involved in EMI coursework is required and a better integration of content and language teaching. Language programs in Japan that have traditionally emphasized communication skills need to move toward greater specialization, providing EAP coursework to support students learning content through English. Overall, the expansion of EMI in Japanese universities calls for a broad-based approach to implement it effectively.

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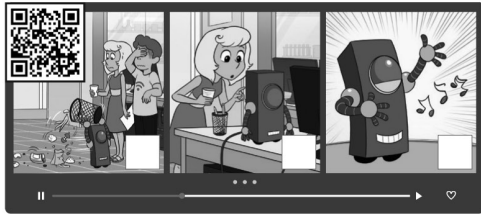
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Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank the participants who agreed to be interviewed for this study and the editors and colleagues who have commented on various drafts.

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