

Introduction

With the growing interest in internationalization on university campuses in Japan that has been brought about by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) through various projects, such as Global 30, Global *Jinzai*, and Super Global Universities, the educational landscape in Japan is changing. In order to be able to attract more international students, part of the international reshaping of Japanese universities has been introducing more classes, and even undergraduate majors, that are conducted in English. While some international faculty, both native and non-native speakers of English, are being hired, many Japanese faculty members with English language skills are being required to teach in English.

Obviously, with such drastic changes to the educational system, there are bound to be some growing pains in the process. There is an increasing body of research that has investigated the problems that have arisen in similar contexts. The British Council, discussing *English Medium Instruction (EMI)* on a worldwide scale, points out that few teachers have thought about the fact that teaching in English is not simply a matter of translating from their native language into English (Dearden, 2014). Other research has pointed out three distinct areas that need to be considered: *linguistic*, *cultural*, and *structural* (Tsuneyoshi, 2005; Bradford, 2013). Bradford envisions this as language and academic skills courses for students and international teaching skills instruction for faculty plus engagement in conferences that help build upon these ideas through the structural aspect

(administration) of the program. However, the details of these courses are left to one's imagination.

Along with the research, the need to provide support for both faculty and students in these newly formed EMI classes and majors has been highlighted by student course evaluations, at least for the students enrolled in 4-year undergraduate EMI courses at Tohoku University. While the results show that students are more forgiving of linguistic issues that the instructors may have, they are more critical of the delivery and teaching skills aspects of the classes.

Some universities are developing their own faculty development (FD) programs to address the issues of instruction for faculty, but there is virtually nothing in the literature that offers a how-to approach, such as a resource guide, for faculty. Thus, this handbook is intended to help faculty who are non-native speakers of English understand the various components that must be taken into consideration when teaching in English, and to provide examples of the necessary language for implementing activities in the classroom.

This handbook is not intended to cover the literature in depth on each of the topic areas. Rather a brief explanation of the concepts will be provided with some references should the reader be intrigued to find out more. The intent is to provide ways, along with the language needed, to improve our instruction as teachers based on sound practices supported by research from the *Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL)*.

EMI for international students at Japanese Universities

This handbook is meant to serve as a guide for faculty and to address the concerns they may have with teaching their subject

material in English. Thus, this text will not cover the structural aspects that take into consideration the administrative support necessary for implementing these types of programs. As teachers, the linguistic and cultural aspects are key factors along with how teaching skills come into play. Thus, teachers need to focus on three aspects when conducting classes in English for international students: *Culture*, *Teaching* and *Language Skills* that overlap as illustrated below (Figure 1). EMI focuses on the central point where all three elements (*Culture*, *Teaching* and *Language Skills*) come together. However, many of the aspects presented in this volume are not concepts that are exclusive to the EMI classroom, but are rather good teaching principles that can be applied to teaching in any context and can help teachers in other classes that they teach in their native languages.

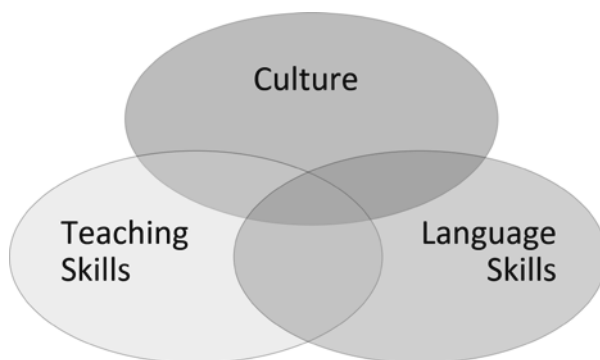


Figure 1: EMI – Where Culture, Teaching and Language Skills Intersect

Having problem with English pronunciation?

A diagram similar to the one presented above appears in Gorsuch *et al.* (2010). The authors identify three, overlapping, major components of classroom communication that need to be addressed for successful communication between teachers and students. They have labeled these components as “language, pedagogy, and culture” (p.5) with the central point where all three components overlap being identified as “discourse intonation”. This classification points out the importance of pronunciation, especially intonation, for conveying the teacher’s intended meaning to the students in the context of a foreign faculty member teaching to native English speaking students. While the three elements of intonation: thought groups, prominence, and pitch change (p.7) are important aspects of communicating accurately, pronunciation is beyond the scope of this text.

In addition, the context of EMI teaching in Japan where non-native English speaking teachers are often teaching to non-native English speaking students might make this aspect of communication less of a factor. However, I do not intend to diminish the importance of pronunciation, and I wholeheartedly encourage readers to refer to Gorsuch *et al.* (2010) for a detailed explanation and practice of these key elements of speech.

In addition to considering pronunciation and how it can help one communicate effectively. It is important to identify problems that you, personally, have with pronunciation that hinder communication with others and use compensation strategies to help the listener understand. Since improving one’s pronunciation takes considerable time, in the short-term focusing on compensation strategies may be of the most benefit. Smith *et al.* (1992, pp.21-22) identify six general strategies (listed below) to keep in mind.

Even if the meaning of a word is understandable when it is mispronounced, the odd way of saying it becomes a distraction to the audience and people may become more interested in the way you are saying the word than the message you are trying to get across.

1. Speak slowly and in short phrases.
2. Pronounce every sound as precisely as you can – perhaps even by exaggerating the movements of your mouth.
3. Use the written word to back up the spoken word – on the blackboard, on overhead projector transparencies, on handouts.
4. Be redundant: say each important idea several times in different ways.
5. Avoid the words or types of sentences that you know cause problems and find other ways to say the same thing.
6. Check the pronunciation of key vocabulary (common vocabulary from your field) before presentations.

Figure 2: Pronunciation Compensation Strategies (Smith *et al.*, 1992)