

HIROSHIMA UNIVERSITY広島大学

Reflection Sheet: Class 7

FOREIGN LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AND COMMUNICATION II

外国語習得とコミュニケーション II

**Submission Information**

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Summary

Building on the previous session’s discussion of neoliberalism, which associates English proficiency with economic success, this class expanded on the role of translanguaging in English-medium instruction (EMI) and how language ideologies shape academic learning, particularly in Japan.

## Influence of Ideology

Japan’s education policies, much like in many countries, including my own, emphasize a monolingual approach that prioritizes test scores over real-life communication skills, and often requires native-like proficiency to be valid. This resonates with my experience as an Informatics and Data Science student, where much of my coursework is in English, yet the way I process and understand information often involves switching between multiple languages. In my opinion, the ability to code-switch between languages, technical jargon, and simpler explanations is far more important than achieving native-like fluency. In a technical context, I often find myself using Arabic, English, and even programming languages interchangeably to understand and explain concepts.

## English as Medium of Instruction

One of the session’s key takeaways was how EMI programs in Japan are designed to attract international students while also improving local students’ English skills as a side effect. English-Medium Instruction (EMI) refers to teaching academic subjects in English rather than in the students’ native language, in contexts where English is not the dominant language. According to Macaro (2018), EMI’s primary goal is to deliver subject knowledge, not to teach English as a language itself.

## Internationalization

In Japan, EMI is used as part of the internationalization of higher education, allowing both local and international students to access courses and programs entirely in English. EMI courses typically refer to individual subjects taught in English, often integrated into a broader curriculum where other subjects may still be taught in Japanese. In contrast, EMI programs involve full degree tracks where all subjects are delivered in English, requiring no prior knowledge of Japanese for completion. While EMI courses introduce English-taught instruction and are often aimed at improving students’ language skills alongside academic content, EMI programs cater to a more global audience, offering an immersive, English-only academic experience.

However, this comes with both advantages and challenges, particularly in a country where Japanese remains the dominant academic and social language. As professors may not be comfortable teaching in English, as well as the cultural resistance that favor non-discussion-based teaching in classrooms. Japan’s traditional teacher-centered, non-discussion-based classrooms often conflict with the interactive, dialogue-driven nature of EMI.

## Solution: Translanguaging

My field is dominated by English-language research, so having access to EMI programs is an advantage. However, I understand the challenges of learning in a non-native language. Like Japanese students in EMI programs, I am a student who have taken courses that follow the JMI (Japanese-Medium Instruction) approach, where even technical discussions require a mix of English and Japanese. This is where the concept of translanguaging becomes particularly crucial, allowing students to use their native language when necessary. Rather than imposing strict language rules, translanguaging enables students to use all the “linguistic repertoire” they are familiar with, making learning more flexible and meaningful. By recognizing that students naturally move between languages, universities can create more inclusive and effective learning environments.

(Note: Based on recent comments, I have changed the structure of the paper as instructed.)