

論文

Analyzing Expectations of English
- Medium Instruction (EMI) and Global Competence among Japanese
University Students -

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Abstract: Globalization is a defining force of our era, driving the exchange of goods, services, information, and ideas, and integrating a country's culture, society, and economy with the global community. The benefits of globalization have reached nearly everyone today. After the global COVID-19 pandemic emerged in 2019, globalization facilitated the distribution of vaccines, medicines, technology, and information. With countries working together, including Japan, the world has gradually begun to return to pre-pandemic norms. Another aspect of globalization is evident in social media and streaming services. For instance, K-pop groups like BTS and Blackpink have gained global popularity, and Hip-Hop music from the United States has influenced artists worldwide, even contributing to the inclusion of Break Dancing in the 2024 Paris Summer Olympics. However, questions remain: Do Japanese students possess sufficient global competence? Are they prepared to enter the global workforce? To thrive in today's global job market, students must understand the necessary skills, knowledge, attitudes, and qualities. While Japanese universities are expected to nurture globally competent graduates, the exact parameters of global competence in Japan are still not well-defined (Sakamoto, 2022). Therefore, Japanese universities must develop effective pedagogies with clear goals to compete with other Asian nations. This research explores the role of English Medium

Instruction (EMI) in Japanese higher education, where English is used to teach academic subjects in non-English-speaking countries. The study investigates the popularity and expectations of EMI in Japanese classrooms, examining its potential as a strategy for fostering global competence. Additionally, the research addresses Japanese university students' attitudes toward global competence, offering insights for future studies.

Keywords: English Education, English Medium Instruction, Global Competence

1. Introduction

Globalization has become a defining feature of the modern world, influencing various aspects of life, from economic activities to educational practices. The COVID-19 pandemic, which began in 2019, highlighted the pervasive impact of globalization by demonstrating how interconnected nations are in addressing global challenges. The distribution of COVID-19 vaccines showcased international cooperation, enabling countries, including Japan, to gradually return to pre-pandemic conditions. Globalization is also evident in international trade, where trade agreements between nations boost economies, create jobs, stimulate investments, and increase the availability of goods and services across borders.

As globalization continues to shape diverse sectors, a crucial question emerges: Are Japanese students adequately prepared for the global workforce? The modern job market requires a range of global competencies, including specific skills, knowledge, and attitudes. Japanese universities are responsible for developing graduates with these competencies, yet the precise definition and scope of global competence in Japan remain unclear (Sakamoto, 2022). To strengthen their global position, Japanese universities must adopt effective pedagogical strategies with well-defined objectives, especially in light of rising international competition.

One educational methodology that has garnered attention in response to these demands is English Medium Instruction (EMI), which can be defined as the use of English to teach academic subjects in countries where English is not the first or primary language. This approach contrasts with Content and

Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), which may involve multiple languages depending on the region. Historically, English-medium education has its roots in the expansion of the British Empire, and today, it is prevalent in many non-English-speaking countries.

This research investigates the role of EMI in Japanese education, focusing on its growing popularity and the expectations tied to its implementation. The study also aims to evaluate EMI's potential as a teaching strategy with far-reaching implications for enhancing global competitiveness. Additionally, it will explore the attitudes of Japanese university students toward global competence, offering valuable insights for future research and educational development in this field.

2. Background

2.1. Globalization and EMI in Japanese Classrooms

In the era of globalization, both the economic and educational landscapes of many countries, including Japan, have undergone significant transformations. To adapt to these changes and meet the growing demand for bilingual and multilingual workforces, some Japanese universities have increasingly incorporated EMI into their curricula. This shift reflects the broader global trend of integrating English into academic programs to better prepare students for the international job market.

The Global 30 program (G30), initiated in the early 1990s, was one of Japan's first major efforts to enhance English language education at the university level. Funded to support 13 universities, the G30 aimed to equip students with the skills needed to thrive in a globalized economy. Approximately 25 years later, this initiative evolved into the Top Global University Project (TGUP), which expanded to include 37 universities, continuing to emphasize the importance of EMI (Aizawa, 2018).

As of 2018, 305 out of 740 undergraduate institutions in Japan (41.2%) offered some form of EMI classes, while 42 universities (5.7%) provided fully English-taught degree programs (Galloway & Ruegg, 2022). A comparison with China reveals that, in 2006, 132 out of 135 surveyed tertiary institutions offered EMI courses or programs, with an average of 44 courses per institution (Galloway & Ruegg, 2022). This highlights Japan's potential for further expansion in EMI implementation.

2.2. Benefits of EMI Classes

English has become the global lingua franca, widely used by businesses and institutions around the world. EMI programs, therefore, offer significant advantages in facilitating both regional and international communication. Implementing EMI requires redesigning courses, adjusting teaching methods, and modifying instructional materials to suit English-language instruction. Collaboration between EMI instructors and language experts is essential to address the linguistic challenges faced by both faculty and students.

Japanese universities have adopted a range of EMI implementation models. These include informal or semi-structured classes often led by language instructors, as well as more formalized approaches such as “+ α ” programs, English-taught programs, and campus-wide EMI initiatives. On campuses with widespread EMI adoption, nearly all undergraduate courses are taught in English (Harris & Strefford, 2022).

Notable examples of EMI programs in Japan include KEIO University’s PEARL (Program in Economics for Alliances, Research and Leadership), which offers a fully English-taught bachelor’s degree in economics; Sophia University’s three entirely English-taught programs; and Tohoku University’s FGL (Future Global Leadership) program, which offers three degree programs in English. These initiatives demonstrate how Japanese universities are evolving to remain competitive and attract international talent. The benefits of EMI for both students and universities are clear, as these programs enhance global readiness and appeal to a broader student base. Table 1 shows some benefits of EMI.

Table 1 Benefits of EMI

For Students
✓ To improve the learning of English
✓ To promote economic competitiveness
✓ To produce graduates with global literacy skills
✓ To develop students’ intercultural communication skills
For Universities
✓ To enable universities to attract international students
✓ To raise university rankings
✓ To increase the prestige of the university
✓ To promote the competitiveness of universities

Richards, J.C., & Pun, J. (2021). A typology of English-medium instruction. *RELC Journal*, 0033688220968584.

2.3. Global Competence and EMI

As universities incorporate EMI programs to improve global readiness, it is crucial to understand the specific competencies students need to thrive in an increasingly interconnected world. This study is grounded in the OECD's Global Competence Framework, which defines global competence as the capacity to examine local, global, and intercultural issues, appreciate different perspectives, communicate effectively with people from diverse backgrounds, and act responsibly towards collective well-being and sustainable development (OECD, 2018; See Figure 1).

EMI provides students with an opportunity to develop these competencies by immersing them in English-language instruction and encouraging interaction with diverse perspectives. By engaging with content delivered in English, students are not only improving their language skills but also enhancing their ability to navigate cross-cultural communication and understand global issues. Thus, the OECD framework serves as a guiding theoretical model for examining how EMI contributes to the development of global competence among Japanese university students.



Figure 1 OECD (2018) PISA Global competence

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study utilizes a quantitative research design to examine the perceptions and attitudes of Japanese university students toward EMI and global competence. Data is collected through a survey to gain insights from a representative sample of students.

3.2 Participants

The target population for the survey comprises from freshmen to senior students at X University. A total of 78 students are selected through a stratified random sampling method to ensure the sample is representative of the broader student body.

3.3 Data Collection

A structured questionnaire is designed to capture data on two primary areas: students' perceptions of EMI and their views on global competence. The questionnaire is divided into the following sections:

3.4 EMI Perceptions

This section includes questions about students' experiences with EMI classes, the perceived benefits and challenges they face, and their overall attitudes toward EMI as an educational strategy.

3.5 Global Competence

This section assesses students' understanding of global competence, focusing on the skills, knowledge, values, and attitudes they consider essential for succeeding in a globalized environment. The questionnaire consists of closed-ended questions using Likert scales to provide a detailed analysis of students' perspectives. The survey is conducted online via platforms such as Google Forms, ensuring accessibility and efficiency in data collection.

4. Results and Discussion

The data collected from the survey were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Descriptive statistics were employed to summarize key features of the data, such as overall student attitudes towards EMI and global competence, while Spearman's rank correlation coefficient was employed to explore relationships between ordinal variables, such as the

perceived effectiveness of EMI and students' preparedness for global competence. These statistical methods enabled a deeper understanding of how different factors influenced students' views on EMI and their readiness for a globalized workforce.

The analysis focuses on key aspects of the survey, particularly the perceived effectiveness of EMI in enhancing students' global competence. The findings indicate that students generally recognize the value of EMI in preparing them for the global workforce, though some challenges remain. Table 2 presents the survey results related to students' perceptions of EMI. For instance, students reported various benefits, such as improved English proficiency and increased exposure to global perspectives, yet they also faced challenges related to language barriers and difficulties in understanding subject content delivered in English.

A key result is the correlation between students' perceptions of EMI and their views on global competence. Those who viewed EMI positively tended to demonstrate a stronger understanding of global competence, suggesting that effective EMI programs can enhance students' global awareness and readiness for international careers. However, differences emerged when analyzing demographic factors, such as academic year and field of study. Senior students prepared higher levels of comfort with EMI compared to freshmen, possibly reflecting greater exposure to EMI over time.

The discussion further explores the implications of these findings for the future development of EMI programs in Japan. While the results show that EMI has the potential to foster essential global competencies, the challenges faced by students suggest the need for improved support systems. These could include language assistance, more tailored teaching materials, and enhanced collaboration between EMI instructors and language specialists.

In conclusion, this section provides critical insights into how EMI programs can be optimized to better support students in developing the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for success in a globalized environment. Future initiatives should address the identified challenges while building on the strengths of current EMI practices to maximize their impact on student learning.

Table 2 Survey Results

1. How would you expect the effectiveness of EMI classes to be in enhancing your understanding of the subject matter?

Very effective	13	16.7%
Effective	48	61.5%
Neutral	13	16.7%
Ineffective	4	5.1%
Very ineffective	0	0%

2. What are the main benefits you perceive from EMI classes?
(Select all that apply)

Improved English language skills	59	75.6%
Better understanding of subject content	2	2.6%
Enhanced global perspectives	16	20.5%
Increased competitiveness in the job market	1	1.3%
Other (please specify)	0	0%

3. What challenges have you faced in EMI classes?
(Select all that apply)

Select all that apply:			
Difficulty understanding the content		32	41%
Language barriers		36	46.2%
Lack of support from instructors		5	6.4%
Limited interaction with classmates		2	2.6%
Nothing		1	1.3%
Other (please specify)	learning gap with students who have difficulty understanding the content	1	1.3%
	lack of appropriate instructors	1	1.3%

4. How likely are you to recommend EMI classes to other students in your major?

Very likely	9	11.5%
Likely	35	44.9%
Neutral	23	29.5%
Unlikely	9	11.5%
Very unlikely	2	2.6%

5. In your opinion, what are the key components of global competence?
(Select all that apply)

Communication skills in multiple languages	23	29.5%
Cultural awareness and sensitivity	34	43.6%
Problem-solving skills in a global context	11	14.1%
Understanding global issues and trends	10	12.8%
Other (please specify)	0	0%

6. How important do you believe global competence is for your future career?

Extremely important	18	23.1%
Important	33	42.3%
Moderately important	22	28.2%
Slightly important	5	6.4%
Not important	0	0%

7. To what extent do you feel your current program of study is preparing you for global competence?

Very well prepared	3	3.8%
Well prepared	18	23.1%
Somewhat prepared	41	52.6%
Slightly prepared	12	15.4%
Not prepared at all	4	5.1%

8. What additional support or resources would help you develop global competence? (Select all that apply)

More EMI classes	13	16.7%
Language exchange programs	33	42.3%
Cultural immersion activities	20	25.6%
Workshops on global issues	12	15.4%
Other (please specify)	0	0%

Note: This survey has been approved by the ethics committee of the university to which the authors are affiliated. [Reference#24-35]

4.1. Findings

This section provides a comprehensive snapshot of the survey's findings to easily grasp the key points before moving into the more in-depth discussion in the next section.

4.1.1. Perceived Effectiveness of EMI (Q1):

The majority of respondents (78.2%) believe that EMI classes are either "Very effective" or "Effective" in enhancing their understanding of the subject matter.

4.1.2. Perceived Benefits of EMI (Q2):

A significant majority (75.6%) perceive improved English language skills as the main benefit, while only 20.5% see enhanced global perspectives as a benefit.

4.1.3. Challenges in EMI Classes (Q3):

Nearly half of the respondents (46.2%) face language barriers, and 41% struggle with understanding the content.

4.1.4. Recommendation of EMI Classes (Q4):

A substantial number of students (56.4%) are “Very likely” or “Likely” to recommend EMI classes, while only 14.1% are “Unlikely” or “Very unlikely” to do so.

4.1.5. Key Components of Global Competence (Q5):

The most valued component of global competence among respondents is cultural awareness and sensitivity (43.6%), followed by communication skills in multiple languages (29.5%), suggesting that students prioritize these aspects in developing their global competence.

4.1.6. Importance of Global Competence for Future Career (Q6):

The majority of respondents (65.4%) consider global competence as either “Extremely important” or “Important” for their future careers.

4.1.7. Preparedness for Global Competence (Q7):

Over half of the respondents (52.6%) feel only “Somewhat prepared” for global competence, with just 26.9% feeling “Well prepared” or “Very well prepared.”

4.1.8. Additional Support for Global Competence (Q8):

Language exchange programs (42.3%) and cultural immersion activities (25.6%) are seen as the most needed additional supports, while 16.7% believe that more EMI classes could help.

4.2. Discussion

This section synthesizes the key findings from the survey and provides insights into how EMI impacts students’ global competence while exploring the challenges and opportunities for improvement in EMI programs.

4.2.1. Perceptions of EMI and Global Competence

The survey results indicate that a substantial majority of students perceive EMI as either “Effective” or “Very effective” (78.2%) in enhancing their understanding of subject matter. However, significant challenges remain, with 41% of students citing difficulties in understanding course content and 46.2% experiencing language barriers. These findings highlight that while

students acknowledge the advantages of EMI, they also encounter considerable obstacles, particularly regarding content comprehension.

Students' understanding of global competence varies, with the most critical components identified as cultural awareness and sensitivity (43.6%) and communication skills in multiple languages (29.5%). Moreover, 65.4% of respondents believe that global competence is "Important" or "Extremely important" for their future careers, reflecting the increasing demand for skills necessary to thrive in a globalized workforce.

4.2.2. Correlation Between EMI and Global Competence

To investigate the relationship between students' perceptions of EMI and their readiness for global competence, Spearman's rank correlation coefficient was applied to assess the strength of associations between relevant variables. The following correlations were particularly noteworthy:

4.2.2a Perceived Effectiveness of EMI and Importance of Global Competence for Future Career (Questions 5 and 10):

A positive Spearman's rank correlation coefficient ($p = 0.836$) was found, indicating a strong relationship between how effective students perceive EMI in enhancing their understanding of the subject matter and their belief in the importance of global competence for their future careers. This suggests that students who see value in EMI also recognize the significance of global competence for their professional futures.

4.2.2b Perceived Effectiveness of EMI and Current Preparedness for Global Competence (Questions 5 and 11):

A positive Spearman's rank correlation coefficient ($p = 0.892$) was observed between students' perceived effectiveness of EMI and their sense of preparedness for global competence. This strong correlation suggests that students who perceive EMI as effective also feel more prepared for global competence, though additional factors beyond EMI may contribute to their overall preparedness.

4.2.2c Perceived Benefits of EMI and Key Components of Global Competence (Questions 6 and 9):

The significant Spearman's rank correlation coefficient ($p = 0.778$) was also detected between students' perceptions of specific benefits of EMI (e.g., language skills, global perspectives) and their understanding of the

components of global competence. This suggests that while students recognize the value of EMI, particularly for improving English language skills, these benefits do not necessarily lead to a comprehensive understanding of global issues without further support.

The findings of this study can be understood in light of the OECD Global Competence Framework, which emphasizes intercultural communication and the ability to interact across cultural boundaries. The correlation between students' positive perceptions of EMI and their readiness for global competence suggests that EMI can facilitate these core competencies. However, the language barriers and comprehension difficulties identified in this study highlight challenges in fully achieving the framework's goals. Addressing these challenges will be crucial for ensuring that students not only improve their English skills but also engage more deeply with the intercultural elements of global competence as outlined in the OECD framework.

4.2.3. Challenges and Opportunities

Despite the positive correlations between EMI and global competence, the survey revealed several challenges, particularly language barriers and content comprehension issues in EMI classes. These challenges underscore the need for improved language support systems and tailored teaching materials to help students overcome these difficulties.

Interestingly, students reported higher levels of comfort and preparedness with EMI, suggesting that greater exposure over time allows them to adapt more effectively to EMI environments. This observation reinforces the importance of early and continued exposure to EMI throughout the university curriculum.

4.2.4. Implications for Future EMI Programs

The findings from this study provide valuable insights for improving EMI programs at Japanese universities. While EMI plays a crucial role in enhancing students' global competence, there is a clear need for enhanced support systems to address the challenges students face, particularly in content comprehension and language proficiency. This could involve implementing targeted language support programs, developing more accessible teaching materials, and providing training for instructors to better address diverse student needs.

4.2.5. Summary

In sum, this study highlights the potential of EMI to foster global competence among Japanese university students, particularly in improving language skills and global perspectives. However, to maximize the effectiveness of EMI, universities must address challenges related to language barriers and content comprehension. By refining support systems and materials, EMI programs can be optimized to better prepare students for success in a globalized world.

Additionally, Spearman's rank correlation coefficient supports the idea that effective EMI programs are linked to a stronger sense of global competence.

Thus, it is crucial to not only enhance language skills but also to adopt an integrated approach that fosters the essential knowledge, values, and attitudes necessary for developing global competence.

5. Conclusion

The findings of this study indicate that EMI plays a critical role in fostering global competence among Japanese university students, yet challenges persist. The survey results show that students generally perceive EMI as an effective tool for enhancing English proficiency, global perspectives, and overall readiness for the global workforce. A notable correlation was found between positive perceptions of EMI and a stronger understanding of global competence, indicating that well-implemented EMI programs can significantly contribute to students' global preparedness.

However, several barriers to maximizing the benefits of EMI were also identified. Language barriers and difficulties in understanding subject content were common challenges, particularly among students with less exposure to EMI. These findings highlight the need for targeted support systems, such as enhanced language assistance, improved instructional materials, and closer collaboration between EMI instructors and language specialists, to ensure that all students can fully benefit from EMI programs.

Future research could explore the long-term impact of EMI on students' global competence over multiple academic years. Further studies might also investigate the effects of specific EMI program structures, such as blended learning or content-focused EMI courses, on the development of different dimensions of global competence. Additionally, cross-cultural comparisons

between EMI programs in Japan and those in other non-English-speaking countries could provide valuable insights into the global efficacy of EMI in fostering global competence.

To optimize the impact of EMI in Japanese higher education, future initiatives should address these challenges while expanding opportunities for practical engagement with global issues, such as cultural immersion activities and workshops on global problems. Such initiatives can further enhance students' global competence, preparing them not only for academic success but also for active participation in the global workforce.

In conclusion, EMI has the potential to be a powerful vehicle for developing global competence among Japanese university students, as outlined by the OECD Global Competence Framework. However, its success depends on ongoing improvements in program design and support systems that address both language barriers and intercultural communication challenges.

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日本人大学生を対象とした英語を媒介言語とする授業(EMI)と
グローバルコンピテンスに対する期待の評価分析

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要旨: 本研究は、現代のグローバリゼーションが進展する中で、日本の教育システムにおける英語を媒介言語とする授業(EMI)の役割と、そのグローバルコンピテンスへの影響を探ることを目的としている。グローバリゼーションは、商品、サービス、情報等の交換を通じて世界中の文化や経済を統合しており、COVID-19 パンデミックを契機にその重要性が一層顕在化した。しかし、日本の大学生がグローバルな労働市場で必要とされるコンピテンスを十分に備えているかには疑問が残る。日本国内でのグローバルコンピテンスの定義が不明確であり(坂本、2022)、大学は効果的な教育方法を開発する必要がある。本研究では、EMI の役割や教育的意義を検討し、日本人大学生のグローバルコンピテンスに対する態度を分析し考察する。この結果をもとに、グローバルに通用する人材を育成するための英語教育への示唆を提供することを目指す。

キーワード: 英語教育、EMI(英語を媒介言語とする授業)、グローバルコンピテンス