

THE ROLE OF ENGLISH MEDIUM INSTRUCTION IN THE INTERNATIONALISATION OF JAPANESE UNIVERSITIES: APPROACHES, RATIONALES, AND IMPLICATIONS

Joe Garner^a

International Christian University, Japan

Abstract: *In response to the economic pressures of globalisation, the Japanese government has sought to internationalise its universities while at the same time attempting to protect Japan's culture. To achieve its goals, namely the increase in the number of international students and the development of human resources, it has initiated a number of top-down, quantitative policies which promote the Internationalisation of Higher Education (IoHE) through an increase in the provision of English Medium Instruction (EMI) courses. This paper provides a critical analysis of the government's approach and how the policies have been implemented by universities. The paper contends that the government's approach has enabled universities, which do not wish to make substantive changes to their curricula, to peripheralise EMI courses. The consequence of this is that the government's current approach of promoting EMI to internationalise Japanese universities is unlikely to achieve its goals.*

Keywords: *English Medium Instruction (EMI); Internationalisation of Higher Education (IoHE); Internationalisation at Home (IaH); Internationalisation of the Curriculum (IoC); Japan*

Introduction

Internationalisation of higher education (IoHE) has increased significantly since the turn of the millennium. This is not limited to certain geographic regions but is a “global phenomenon” (de Wit & Altbach, 2021, p. 31). IoHE has predominantly been driven by an economic rationale, with countries seeking a competitive advantage over their rivals (de Wit & Merckx, 2012). However, recently, there has been an attempt to shift the focus away from economic competitiveness to one which focuses on broader contributions to society (see de Wit, Hunter, Howard, & Egron-Polak, 2015). A key element of IoHE is the “unprecedented” increase in English Medium Instruction (EMI) courses (Galloway, Numajiri & Rees, 2020, p. 396). As such, EMI has been described as the “default choice” for universities which are trying to internationalise (Bowles & Murphy, 2020, p. 20), and, like IoHE, is a “global phenomenon” (Galloway et al., 2020, p. 396). However, despite the clear connection between IoHE and EMI, the use of EMI to promote IoHE is not without critics, with de Wit (2011) stating that it is a misconception to view education in the English language as equivalent to internationalisation. Moreover, EMI's dominant role is contributing to the devaluation of other languages (Bowles & Murphy, 2020), leading some to argue that its spread is “a sign of the deepening entrenchment of English colonization around the world” (Han, 2023, p. 2).

The drive to internationalise higher education through the promotion of EMI is apparent in Japan. This drive is to compensate for the shrinking population of university-age students and to ensure that young Japanese people have the skills needed to compete in the globalised economy (Poole, Ota & Kawano, 2020). Ninomiya, Knight, and Watanabe (2009) described IoHE in Japan as

^a Correspondence can be directed to: gajoe@icu.ac.jp

“a pervasive force, shaping and challenging the higher education sector” (p. 117). They identified three stages of IoHE in Japan: post-war to 1980, 1980s-2000, and 2000-2009. To these three stages, I add a fourth which commenced in 2009 and is ongoing. This period has seen the government initiate four key policies, which, despite their varying foci, have aimed to internationalise universities through the promotion of EMI. This is not to disregard earlier government-led internationalisation initiatives but to note that the role of EMI has only become an integral part of them in recent years (Hashimoto, 2017). For example, in 1983 the “International Student 100,000 Plan” was launched, but EMI only played a “minor” role in this (Brown, 2018, p. 274). The shift to a greater focus on EMI in this fourth stage is illustrated by the 2008 report from the Education Rebuilding Council which argued that EMI should be considered “a core of university internationalization and reform” (cited in Hashimoto, 2017, p. 23). The importance of EMI in efforts to internationalise universities in Japan has been noted by Bradford, Ishikura, and Brown (2022), who argue that “EMI programs are key to Japan’s higher education internationalization efforts” (p. 15, my emphasis).

Given both its rapid growth and the criticisms of its role in the process of internationalisation, as Bowles and Murphy (2020) argue, the role of EMI needs “urgent attention” from researchers (p. 8) as “a convincing educational case for internationalization through EMI has still not been made” (p. 21). This paper is a response to their call to action to better comprehend how EMI is implemented affects IoHE. By reviewing the extant literature on IoHE in Japan and the central role that EMI plays in this process, the paper deepens understanding of the rationale behind and effects of the current approach to internationalisation. While the paper examines the situation in Japan, as similar government-led approaches to IoHE through the promotion of EMI have been pursued in other East Asian countries, such as South Korea (see Bolton, Ahn, Botha, & Bacon-Shone, 2023) and China (see Rose, McKinley, Xu, & Zhou, 2020), conclusions are of relevance to countries across the region.

Perspectives on Globalisation and IoHE

Before examining the role of EMI in IoHE in Japan, it is important to note the broader context within which IoHE is occurring, namely a period of rapid globalisation. As Altbach and Knight (2007) note, globalisation and internationalisation are not the same. They define globalisation as the “context of economic and academic trends that are part of the reality of the 21st century”, whereas internationalisation refers to the “policies and practices undertaken by academic systems and institutions” in reaction to the globalised academic environment (Altbach & Knight, 2007, p. 290). As such, globalisation is seen “as the catalyst while internationalisation is the response” (Knight, 1999, p.14). This view of internationalisation as being a response to globalisation is valid, but it is important to note that IoHE can also lead to further globalisation (Beerkens, 2003). This reciprocal causation is also noted by Mitchell and Nielson (2012) in their observation that internationalisation can be viewed as both a “leading variable, encouraging and facilitating globalization” and “a response variable describing how institutions respond to the presence of globalization” (p. 4). Therefore, while the degree to which IoHE is both a reaction to and a cause of globalisation remains open to debate, it is clear that IoHE cannot be viewed in isolation from globalisation.

Beerkens (2003) provides a theoretical framework which can be used to analyse the role of EMI within the broader context of globalisation. He outlines four conceptualisations of globalisation: geographical, authority, cultural, and institutional. As institutions, namely the state and universities, play a central role in IoHE in Japan, applying his institutional conceptualisation of globalisation is most appropriate for this paper. According to this conceptualisation, “national commitments are eroding” as a “cosmopolitan identity or citizenship” is emerging to replace traditional ideas of national identity (p. 132); moreover, “social cohesiveness is no longer embedded in national institutions but is being substituted for some form of cosmopolitan solidarity” (p. 132). This institutional perspective views globalisation as a predominantly post-war process which has accelerated due to increased interconnectedness.

Contrasting Definitions of IoHE

There are differing views of what IoHE entails. For example, Källemark and van der Wende (1997) focused on its economic goals, defining it as “any systematic sustained effort aimed at making higher education more responsive to the requirements and challenges related to the globalisation of societies, economy and labour markets” (p. 19). This definition is in line with what Chan and Dimmock (2008) refer to as a globalist approach to IoHE. This approach prioritises national or institutional self-interests; it is economically driven and closely connected to the “values of the transnational capitalist class” (Cambridge & Thompson, 2004, p. 173). While Källemark and van der Wende’s (1997) definition makes no specific reference to EMI, its economic rationale clearly lends itself to the use of EMI in that it is commonly believed by policymakers that EMI will develop the English skills that are so valued by many multi-national corporations.

An alternative definition of IoHE is provided by de Wit et al. (2015), who state that it is:

the intentional process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of post-secondary education, *in order to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff, and to make a meaningful contribution to society* (de Wit et al., 2015, p. 283, emphasis in original)¹.

This view of IoHE is consistent with Chan and Dimmock’s (2008) translocalist approach to IoHE. Universities following such an approach aim to develop both national and global perspectives among students by internationalising their curricula. They also aim to increase their employability by building English-speaking environments at their universities.

Internationalisation at Home (IaH)

IoHE is multi-faceted and “eclectic” (Chan & Dimmock, 2008, p. 184). One common element is IaH, which is defined as “the purposeful integration of international and intercultural dimensions into the formal and informal curriculum for all students within domestic learning environments” (Beelen & Jones, 2015, p. 69). The concept of IaH overlaps with that of internationalisation of the curriculum (IoC), which is defined as the inclusion of “an international and intercultural dimension” in curricula (Leask, 2009, p. 209). According to these definitions, simply translating existing curricula into English without adding international and intercultural dimensions is “insufficient” for it to be considered internationalised (Beelen & Jones, 2015, p. 64). It is important to note that not only the formal curricula (e.g., syllabi), should be reformed, but that the informal (e.g., support services) and hidden (the “implicit and hidden messages sent to students”) elements of curricula also need to be internationalised (Leask, 2015, pp. 8–9).

However, the stipulation that curricula include international and intercultural dimensions is problematic for two reasons. Firstly, there is, as Leask (2013) herself notes, little agreement among universities as to what IoC means in terms of practical changes to curricula. Secondly, and more importantly, in terms of the focus of this paper, the incorporation of international and intercultural dimensions is at odds with the current internationalisation approach, which, through the promotion of EMI, strongly prioritises one language, English. This issue is heightened as Leask (2009) also writes that an internationalised curriculum “will engage students with ... linguistic diversity” (p. 209). In sum, while IaH is consistent with de Wit et al.’s (2015) definition of IoHE, it would seem that the current approach to IoHE, with its prioritisation of EMI, is not.

Government Policies Aimed at Promoting EMI and IoHE in Japan

As noted in the Introduction, since 2009, the Japanese government has launched four initiatives which use EMI to promote IoHE. The first of these was Global 30, which ran from 2009 to 2014. It set the target of accepting 300,000 international students, with EMI being central to achieving

this target, as it was thought that EMI courses would make Japanese universities more attractive to international students (Burgess, Gibson, Klaphake, & Selzer, 2010). Therefore, the policy called for the “aggressive establishment” of EMI programs at 13 universities (Rose & McKinley, 2018, p. 121). The Re-inventing Japan Project was launched in 2011 and is ongoing. This aims to “foster human resources capable of being globally active” (MEXT, n.d., a) and seeks to improve the foreign language (predominantly English) skills of domestic students but is not specific about EMI. The third initiative was the Go Global Japan Project, running from 2012 to 2016. Originally named the Project for Promotion of Global Human Resource Development, it sought to “foster human resources who can positively meet the challenges and succeed in the global field, as the basis for improving Japan’s global competitiveness” (MEXT, n.d., b) by promoting studying abroad and “internationalizing” Japanese universities (Kuroda, Sugimura, Kitamura, & Asada, 2018, p. 32); to achieve this, it encouraged the participating universities to increase the ratio of classes taught in English (Yu, 2023).

The most recent initiative is the Top Global University Project (TGUP). Launched in 2014 and scheduled to end in March 2024, it aims to “enhance the international compatibility and competitiveness of higher education in Japan” and to provide “prioritized support for the world-class and innovative universities that lead the internationalization of Japanese universities” (MEXT, 2014). Thirty-seven universities are participating in this initiative. These universities are categorized as either Type A (Top Type) or Type B (Global Action Type). Type A are “universities that are conducting world-level education and research and have the potential to be ranked among the world’s top 100 universities”; Type B are “universities that are leading the internationalization of Japanese society by launching innovative programs based on their track records” (MEXT, n.d., c). Although EMI has been promoted at both types of universities, it has a more prominent role at Type B institutions (Aizawa & Rose, 2019).

The four policy initiatives have different foci. For example, whereas the government has primarily adopted an approach which encourages universities to adopt policies which impact the learning experience of university students studying in Japan (Hofmeyr, 2020), the Go Global Japan Project aimed to increase the number of Japanese students studying overseas. Also, while the role of EMI is explicitly stated in some of the initiatives, it is implied in others. Therefore, while the government has promoted the increased provision of EMI programs at universities in Japan, the relative importance of EMI within the various initiatives has fluctuated. This lack of consistency illustrates the ad hoc way IoHE policy has been developed over time. Such ad hocery can occur as ministers and other key actors move to new positions, and as a result, “policies shift and change their meaning” (Ball, 1993, p. 11).

However, although these government policy initiatives have some different aims, they have two common threads. Firstly, to varying degrees, they seek to increase the number of EMI courses and to internationalise Japanese universities (Rose & McKinley, 2018); in other words, they implicitly, and sometimes explicitly, promote the process of what Bowles and Murphy (2020) refer to as “internationalization through EMI” (p. 21). Secondly, they focus on increasing the competitiveness of Japanese universities and their graduates. This can be seen in terms of making the universities more attractive to foreign students (e.g., Global 30) and improving their global ranking (e.g., TGUP), and in terms of developing the country’s human resources (e.g., Re-inventing Japan Project, Go Global Japan Project). In this way, rather than following a translocalist path to internationalisation, the government is adopting a globalist approach that is consistent with Kälveborn and van der Wende’s (1997) definition of IoHE.

Rationale Underlying the Current Role of EMI in IoHE in Japan

Adopting a translocalist approach to IoHE involves internationalising the curriculum (Chan & Dimmock, 2008). Including this element of IoHE has the “potential to transform teaching and learning”, but for this to happen, it is necessary that “dominant paradigms and long-held beliefs are challenged” (Leask, 2015, p. 105). This challenge to dominant paradigms has echoes of Beerken’s

(2003) institutional conceptualisation of globalisation in which traditional national identities are replaced by cosmopolitan ones. Furthermore, according to this conceptualisation, the role of national institutions in providing social cohesiveness is weakened. Therefore, from an institutional perspective, it is possible to see why there could be reluctance among key actors to adopt a translocalist approach to IoHE. In contrast, adopting a more pragmatic globalist approach to IoHE, while clearly involving change to existing practices, appears to necessitate a far less radical challenge to the status quo. It is, therefore, apposite to examine the rationale underlying the government's approach to IoHE.

The Japanese State

The Japanese government's IoHE policies are only one part of its broader response to globalisation; this response is commonly referred to as *kokusaika* (internationalisation). This policy has been a defensive one in which the government has sought to protect the country from foreign pressure; as such, it is "less about transcending cultural barriers and more about protecting them" (Burgess et al., 2010, p. 463). In this way, *kokusaika* is driven by fear of falling behind rather than a desire to promote cultural diversity (Inuzuka, 2017); it is a policy response which is characterised by a desire for the country to benefit from the changes brought by globalisation without "losing its power and identity in the world" (Hashimoto, 2000, p. 43). As such, *kokusaika* illustrates the government's institutional perspective of globalisation; it is an attempt to protect and strengthen the national identity rather than embracing a cosmopolitan one. As Inuzuka (2017) writes, "Internationalization in Japan is a national project, a patriotic endeavor. It is a means to an end, designed to strengthen the Japanese nation" (p. 220). This view is reflected in Meiji University's (n.d) description of its Global Common Project (part of the university's globalisation strategy), which states that it aims to "form a foundation for transmitting Japanese culture, technology and intellectual property to the world." In sum, the Japanese state seeks to maintain the country's position in the world while protecting and promoting its cultural identity.

It is within this philosophy of internationalisation that the government's EMI policies are shaped: it seeks to maintain the "framework of 'Japanese internationalisation' and the essential qualities of Japanese culture, whilst simultaneously promoting the learning of English" (Phan, 2013, p. 166). Therefore, the translocalist model, which includes the progressive philosophy of IoC, is seen as unsuitable as it may contribute to the development of a more cosmopolitan identity among students. Rather, the pragmatic, globalist model of IoHE is viewed as the appropriate approach as it is less likely to weaken the national identity.

A key goal of the government's policies to promote EMI is to improve the global competitiveness of Japan's universities and their graduates. In terms of increasing the competitiveness of the universities, it is hoped that the promotion of EMI will attract talented non-Japanese academics (Shimauchi, 2018a) and high-quality international graduate students (Rakhshandehroo & Ivanova, 2020), resulting in improved research output which will have a positive impact on the global ranking of these universities. Such an approach is clearly visible in the TGUP Type A universities. However, this approach is limited in scope, being aimed at elite universities (Shimauchi, 2018a). While there is an expectation that some of these international students will remain in Japan after graduation and, therefore, continue to contribute to the country's economic competitiveness (Yamamoto, 2018), the primary focus of EMI is the development of *gurobaru jinzai* (global human resources) among the domestic student population. The competencies of *gurobaru jinzai* extend beyond English ability; for example, Poole et al. (2020) note that it also includes the capacity to think independently and develop cross-cultural understanding. Nevertheless, English ability is seen as crucial, so much so that Hashimoto (2017) argues that English proficiency is often equated with *gurobaru jinzai*. Moreover, EMI is assumed to develop *gurobaru jinzai* effectively (Toh, 2020). As such, a key goal of the promotion of EMI is "the 'development' of Japanese citizens who are able to use English as an instrument or tool to promote, enhance and defend Japanese interests and independence in an age of globalization" (Burgess et al., 2010, p. 466).

Elite-Oriented Policies

However, despite this desire to improve the global competitiveness of Japanese students, the impact of EMI is still relatively small. Shimauchi (2018a) describes EMI courses as a “limited phenomenon” (p. 85). One reason for this is that the government policies have focused on promoting EMI at a limited number of universities (for example, TGUP only involves 37 universities); as such, EMI remains “elite oriented” (Iino, 2018, p. 82). However, although government policies tend to only affect elite institutions directly, they have had an indirect impact on a wider range of universities. Many non-elite universities see internationalisation as a way to survive (Yamamoto, 2018), and EMI is seen as a “billboard for attracting domestic students” as it creates an image of an internationalised university (Shimauchi, 2018a, p. 81). Therefore, although the government policy of using EMI to promote internationalisation has been directed at a small number of elite universities, the effects of the policy have started to expand beyond the targeted universities.

A Top-Down Approach to IoHE

As well as being elite-oriented, the government’s internationalisation policies have been characterised by a top-down approach (Shimauchi, 2018b). The policies, and the accompanying funding, encourage universities to adopt internationalisation strategies which respond to the government’s targets, which are generally quantitative (Yamamoto, 2018). A clear example of such a target is Global 30’s goal of attracting 300,000 international students. The quantitative approach to measuring internationalisation also applies to EMI programmes. For example, the number of courses offered in English is often used as a “simple but powerful indicator” of the extent to which a university has been internationalised (Shimauchi, 2018a, p. 82). This quantitative approach is central to TGUP, which includes among its targets both an increase in the ratio of international students in the total student population and an increase in the number of subjects taught in foreign languages and the development of English syllabi (MEXT, n.d. c). Here, it is interesting to note that MEXT refers to the promotion of “foreign languages” in general, but specifically the development of English syllabi; no other foreign languages are referred to by name.

Applying the government’s quantitative target approach, in terms of international student numbers and EMI provision, it is possible to argue that IoHE is progressing in Japan. While the COVID-19 pandemic and its resulting restrictions on travel impacted the number of international students in Japan, over the medium term, their number is increasing. According to the Japan Student Services Organization (JASSO), there were 132,720 international students at higher education institutions in 2009; this rose to a high of 228,403 in 2019 before declining to 201,877 in 2021 (JASSO, 2021). Furthermore, MEXT (2020) reported that approximately 40% of universities now have some credit-awarding courses taught in English. However, as Poole et al. (2020) note, this quantitative approach has led to university administrators simply playing “a numbers game” (p. 40). This has led some to argue that “a broad chasm can ... be seen between policy intentions and the ways in which policies are actually put into practice by universities” (Ota & Horiuchi, 2018b, p.19). This perhaps should not be surprising as policies are “more of a recipe than a blueprint”, which leaves room for interpretation by the different relevant actors (Rizvi & Lingard, 2009, p. 5). These different interpretations of a policy often lead to gaps between stated goals and actual outcomes.

Universities’ Approaches to the Provision of EMI Courses

Generally, Japanese universities have adopted different approaches to EMI courses depending on whether they are for international or domestic students. The majority of EMI courses are taken by domestic students (Bradford & Brown, 2018), and most of these tend to be part of Japanese-medium degree programmes. In fact, there are few full-degree undergraduate English-taught programmes (ETPs) at Japanese universities (Rakhshandehroo & Ivanova, 2020), and there is a limited number of places for international students on these courses (Poole et al., 2020). Shimauchi (2017) has provided

a useful categorisation of EMI courses (while Shimauchi was focusing on ETPs, her categorisation can be applied to EMI programmes more generally). The most common type of EMI course follows the Global Human Resource Development (GHRD) model, in which most of the students are Japanese who have been educated domestically. In these programmes, students generally take EMI classes to supplement their Japanese-medium degrees (Bradford, 2020). They are, to a large extent, made up of Japanese students being taught by Japanese faculty (Bradford & Brown, 2018, p. 4). These courses focus on developing international competencies such as English language skills and international awareness (Shimauchi, 2017). However, there are significant concerns that curricula in these courses are not being modified to contain more international and intercultural dimensions as called for in de Wit et al.'s (2015) definition of IoHE; rather, the course content tends to be what current faculty are able to teach in English (Takagi, 2017). Moreover, these courses tend to have a peripheral role within the university (Poole et al., 2020).

Courses for international students commonly follow the *Dejima* model (named after Dejima island, which was the only place non-Japanese were allowed to interact with Japanese during Japan's period of isolation from 1603 to 1868) in which international students, alongside a small number of Japanese returnees, take courses separately from Japanese students (Burgess et al., 2010). These tend to have been added to an existing department, and although the international students are enrolled in the same department as the domestic students, they use different curricula. The result of this is that there are very few chances for international and domestic students to mix (Ota & Horiuchi, 2018b); this could even be the result of these EMI programmes being physically secluded from other parts of the campus (Shimauchi, 2018b).

The final model is the Crossroads model, in which courses are designed for both domestically educated Japanese students and a diverse range of international students. While this final type of course provides opportunities for both domestic and international students to be educated together, these types of programmes place significant demands on universities and, therefore, tend to be limited to well-established and well-funded universities (Shimauchi, 2017). Consequently, it is most common for domestic and international students to take EMI courses apart from each other.

Reasons for the Universities' Approach

Government policy has often resulted in those Japanese universities which are developing EMI courses to make superficial changes (Toh, 2020) and adopt "easy solutions" (Hashimoto, 2017, p. 27), such as modifying existing curricula for EMI courses and the adoption of the *Dejima* model for international students on EMI courses. Therefore, it is important to question why there has not been a greater desire to implement EMI in a more proactive way in which its promotion is seen as an opportunity for greater transformation of universities so that they can meet the challenges they face, namely a shrinking number of domestic students and government pressure to produce *gurobaru jinzai*.

A key reason is that university administrations in Japan are generally conservative in their outlook, and while they want the grant money that is provided by the government's policies and to attract more students, they also want to maintain their universities' traditions and the dominance of the Japanese language (Poole et al., 2020) and EMI courses are viewed as a challenge to the identity of the university (Ota & Horiuchi, 2018a). In this way, university administrations' view of EMI echoes that of the institutional perspective of globalisation in that EMI is seen as a threat to the traditional identity of the institutions. Furthermore, making EMI central to the universities' identities would entail significant challenges to the existing power structures, potentially challenging "hierarchies of privilege and prestige, socioeconomic resource allocation, and educational practice in ways not seen in earlier internationalization policy" (Yamamoto, 2018, p. 236). Moreover, it would affect areas such as university governance, student and faculty recruitment, and language use in faculty meetings; in this way, giving EMI a more prominent role in the universities would bring the challenges of globalisation into the "local sociolinguistic habitat" (Iino, 2018, p. 87). Therefore, rather than embracing the possibilities of change which EMI could offer, the universities have chosen a

box-ticking approach which allows them to state their universities offer EMI courses without having to make more fundamental changes to the way they operate.

The universities' current approach benefits them. As noted above, it gives the elite among them access to government funding while allowing those in positions of power in the universities to maintain their status. Moreover, it helps the universities address the issue of the falling number of students because EMI courses, even if researchers have expressed concerns about their quality, can function as effective marketing tools to attract domestic students (Brown & Bradford, 2022) as they are seen as "innovative" (Birchley, 2018, p. 142) and "a symbol of academic rigor" (Brown & Bradford, 2022, p. 56).

Consequences of the Current Approach

EMI and International Students

As noted earlier, one reason for the promotion of EMI as a way to internationalise Japanese universities was to attract international students. This is not only to compensate for the falling number of domestic students but also to raise Japan's economic competitiveness. As such, it is pertinent to examine the experiences of international students who have taken EMI courses and programs at Japanese universities. While, as Galloway and Curle (2022) note, research into this field is limited, what research has been conducted does not paint a positive picture.

In analysing these international students' experiences, Leask's (2015) concept of the curriculum comprising formal, informal, and hidden interacting elements is useful. In terms of the formal curriculum, researchers have noted that international students have reported issues regarding the quality of the education that was provided. This is, at times, related to concerns about the English proficiency of their lecturers (Heigham, 2017) and that of their Japanese classmates (Galloway & Curle, 2022; Heigham, 2017). However, their concerns go beyond linguistic issues as negative comments regarding an overly teacher-centred teaching style and a lack of assignments, which led students to believe that the courses were not sufficiently academically challenging, have been reported (Heigham, 2017). Concerns regarding the teaching style and range of classes available were also reported by Galloway and Curle (2022). Researchers have also noted issues relating to the informal curriculum, with the support services provided being criticised. Heigham's (2017) study of international students in an ETP program found that they felt they received insufficient academic and non-academic support; for example, the university did not do enough to help them settle into life in Japan or to enable them to build friendships with Japanese students. The students in Heigham's study also reported a general lack of enthusiasm among the administrative staff tasked with supporting them. Ota and Horiuchi (2018a) similarly found that international students on EMI courses who lacked Japanese ability felt that they were not provided with enough information by the university.

Furthermore, for many international students enrolled in EMI courses, there are few opportunities for them to interact with domestic students. This is because the predominant model for EMI programmes for international students is the *Dejima* model. Consequently, a main concern international EMI students have reported is the lack of integration with domestic students (Galloway & Curle, 2022). The issues regarding the formal and informal curriculum directly connect to the hidden curriculum (i.e., the implicit messages that international students taking EMI courses receive about their programme and role within it). The administrative and physical divides which universities place between domestic and international EMI students do not provide a message of a desire to promote an internationalised campus. As Galloway and Curle (2022) conclude, because the experiences of international students who enrol in EMI courses in Japan do not match their expectations, there is a danger that it will hinder the future recruitment of such students.

EMI and Domestic Students

The potential negative impact of the current approach towards the provision of EMI programmes on international student recruitment may be less of a concern to the government and universities than one may expect. As noted above, there has been a dual approach to IoHE in Japan: an increased EMI provision combined with the increased recruitment of international students. However, the goal of increasing the number of international students has become secondary to the provision of “international” programmes for domestic students (Galloway & Curle, 2022). These programmes generally adopt the GHRD model. However, it may well be the case that these courses are failing to develop the desired international competencies among the students.

One possible reason for the programmes not achieving their aims is the predominance of the GHRD and *Dejima* models for domestic and international students, respectively. This results in a lack of opportunities for interaction between them, limiting opportunities for domestic students to be exposed to a more diverse range of students while also reinforcing a message of separation between Japanese students and international students. This hidden aspect of the curriculum is far from the internationalised curriculum outlined by Leask. A further reason is that modification of formal curricula to include international and intercultural dimensions has not been widely reported; rather, a rehashing of existing curricula to be delivered through EMI is much more common. This is problematic because only changing the medium of instruction to English is not equivalent to adding international and intercultural dimensions.

The reason for this lack of significant change to curricula may be because, rather than viewing the introduction of EMI courses as central to universities’ educational reforms, they are seen as peripheral (Poole et al., 2020), and therefore EMI courses tend to be simply tacked on to existing courses without changing the curriculum (Hashimoto, 2017). However, the separation of domestic and international students and the lack of significant reform to curricula may not concern the government. This is because such an approach to implementing EMI courses makes it less likely that cosmopolitan identities and “transnational community ties” will develop among students; such ties, according to an institutional perspective of globalisation, are viewed as having the potential to replace traditional nation-based connections (Beerens, 2003, p. 132).

Concerns regarding the development of students’ international competencies are heightened by the fact that there are significant doubts as to whether many Japanese students taking EMI courses which adopt the GHRD model have the linguistic proficiency to cope with the demands of the courses. As a result, EMI classes are often too difficult for Japanese students (Burgess et al., 2010). For example, it has been noted that the students often have problems with the reading demands of EMI classes (Aizawa, Rose, Thompson, & Curle, 2023) and comprehending the course content (Yamamoto & Ishikura, 2018). Compounding these issues is that it is common for Japanese universities to assume that teaching content in English will automatically lead to improved English proficiency, even if suitable pedagogical support is not provided (Bradford, 2020). Considering these issues regarding the English proficiency of the students and the lack of learning support from the universities, it is unsurprising that a negative impact on students’ academic performance in EMI courses has been reported (Aizawa & McKinley, 2020). One would think that universities would offer greater support to the students to allow them to cope better with the demands of the courses, but as the EMI courses are seen as peripheral to the curriculum, the motivation to do so is lacking. Consequently, there is a danger that EMI courses will not be able to develop students’ knowledge and language skills which the government’s policies have targeted with its globalist approach to IoHE.

Recommendations

The Japanese government’s current IoHE strategy, in which EMI is given a limited role, is unlikely to meet its economic objectives of attracting international students and developing *gurobaru jinzai*. If it is to meet these goals, it will need to change its IoHE policies. Rather than setting simple

numerical targets, which leads to universities viewing the implementation of EMI programs as box-ticking exercises, the government needs to adopt policies which require universities to have a more comprehensive approach to EMI programme development. To achieve this the government needs to be more prescriptive in what it expects universities to do in order to receive funding. If such policy changes occurred, to benefit from funding, universities would have to make substantive changes to the way they provide EMI courses and give them a much more central role. This would result in the universities making changes that lead to both faculty and students receiving the support they need to meet the demands of EMI.

However, reports indicate that the government is not planning to significantly modify its approach to IoHE when TGUP ends in March 2024. According to the Prime Minister's Office of Japan (March 17, 2023), to succeed TGUP, the government will launch the New Plan on Overseas Student Dispatch and Foreign Student Acceptance. This new policy targets sending 500,000 Japanese students overseas and recruiting 400,000 international students to study in Japan by 2033. As such, it is clear that quantitative targets will continue to play a central role in IoHE policy. In addition to these numerical targets, "English and international understanding education" is to be promoted (Prime Minister's Office of Japan, March 17, 2023); however, it is unclear whether the government will prescribe how universities achieve this.

If Japan is to meet its internationalisation objectives, several key reforms need to be made at the university level. Firstly, the current peripheral nature of EMI courses means that not enough time, thought, or money has been invested into developing them; it is essential that these courses are given a more central role and greater resources are allocated to them. This would enable the faculty responsible for teaching the courses, who have been found to feel unprepared (Toh, 2020) and overburdened (Bradford et al., 2022), to receive more effective training and support. Secondly, as some students lack the linguistic proficiency to cope with the demands of EMI courses, universities need to ensure that those students who need it are also provided with sufficient support in the form of additional English for Academic Purposes classes. These classes, which Richards and Pun (2022) refer to as "concurrent support", need to be offered to students throughout their EMI studies. Thirdly, given that international students, contrary to their expectations, are often isolated from the domestic student body, it is vital that universities move away from the *Dejima* model and adopt the Crossroads model. Doing so may put a strain on university resources in the short term, but over time, it will improve international students' learning experiences and should make it easier for universities to attract them in the future.

Conclusion

According to an institutional perspective, globalisation threatens to erode national commitments as national identities are supplanted by cosmopolitan ones (Beerens, 2003). This institutional view of globalisation is apparent in the Japanese government's approach to IoHE. This approach, which is consistent with its broader policy of *kokusaika*, seeks to protect Japanese cultural identity while strengthening the nation by taking advantage of the economic opportunities which globalisation offers. Therefore, as per Kälveborn and van der Wende's (1997) definition, Japan's approach has been to implement IoHE policies in response to global economic pressures. As such, Japan has adopted what Chan and Dimmock (2008) refer to as a globalist model of IoHE, and it is within this model that EMI is thought to be able to play an important role.

In order to achieve its IoHE goals, the government has initiated top-down policies which set quantitative targets for universities in terms of international student recruitment and provision of EMI classes. However, due to the conservative nature of their administrations, there is little desire among universities to make substantial changes to their curricula. Consequently, elite institutions have adopted an approach which gives them access to government funding by increasing the number of EMI courses offered while at the same time peripheralising these courses. Non-elite institutions have adopted a similar approach as EMI courses act as marketing tools.

The government's current approach of setting quantitative targets, which has been a core element of the four internationalisation initiatives launched since 2009, is unlikely to meet its objectives of developing the competitiveness of the universities or their graduates. This is because it has allowed the universities to follow a box-ticking approach when setting up EMI courses; this approach has had detrimental effects on the programmes. For example, international students taking EMI courses are often separated from the domestic student body, limiting both the international and domestic students' opportunities for intercultural interaction. In addition, this separation is likely to make recruitment of international students more difficult in the future. Furthermore, the peripheralisation of EMI courses has resulted in not enough resources being allocated to curriculum development or student support. Consequently, it is unclear whether domestic students who take EMI courses will be able to sufficiently develop either their subject knowledge or English language proficiency. If the government is to achieve its goals of attracting more international students and developing *gurobaru jinzai* through the promotion of EMI it needs to formulate policies which require universities to place EMI courses at their core.

This paper builds on existing studies into the role which EMI can play in IoHE. It provides insights into the consequences of the current Japanese IoHE policy and recommendations as to how the approach could be improved. While this paper is focused on Japan, as other countries in the region are also attempting to internationalise their universities through the implementation of top-down government policies which promote the development of EMI courses, it is likely that the paper's conclusions are applicable to them. A limitation of the paper is that it primarily relies on English language sources; therefore, it would be beneficial if future research in this field examined a broader range of Japanese language sources.

Note

¹ This is an updated version of Knight's (2003) definition which stated that IoHE was "the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education" (p. 2).

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