

Information about interviewee

Interview: Associate Professor

Gender: Female

Date of Interview: 24th February 2019

Major: Psychology

Method: Online Skype interview

English Proficiency: C2

(This interview was conducted entirely in Japanese and the transcript was translated into English as below)

*R=Researcher

*T=Teacher

Line R/S Transcript

Part 0: Introduction of the interview

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| 1 | R | Thank you for taking part in the interview with me to share your EMI teaching experience. |
| 2 | | Before starting this interview, can you spend some time to take a look at this consent form and please sign |
| 3 | | your name and date if you are willing to participate in the interview, please? |
| 4 | T | Yes that's fine. |

5 R Great, thank you very much. Just to let you know that I am recording our interview using a voice recorder and smart phone.
6 Is this okay? Information you provide through this interview will be shared publicly on a global online network, Teaching English and teaching IN
7 English in global contexts. Also you can withdraw from the study at any time, even after we start.
8 T That's fine.
9 R Okay we shall begin our interview then.

Part 1: Background Information

10 R First, I will be asking you some questions about your education and teaching background. Would you mind telling me your current
11 teaching position, major, study abroad experience, and your current English proficiency according to the CEFR?
12 T I'm an associate professor in psychology at the university. I studied in the US from 22 to 27 to complete a PhD. Before that I also
13 studied in a medical school in the UK for one year. So my English is highly advanced and C2 level according to the CEFR.

Part 2: English as Medium of Instruction (EMI) and teaching strategies

14 R Thank you very much. The next question is about your teaching experience at the university, especially EMI teaching. Which courses
15 do you teach and can you tell me how you find teaching in English?
16 T I normally teach both graduate and undergraduate students majoring psychology and linguistics in English. It's normally a small-scale
17 class and I ask students to give oral presentations on a topic we cover each week.

18 R What do you think about teaching in English? Do you think it is beneficial for teaching and learning?

19 T I of course support the expansion of EMI in Japan, but I also think it is not efficient to have non-native English speakers teaching in
20 English. It takes much more time to prepare for each class and deliver lecture content in class. I also find it difficult to teach abstract
21 concepts and other concepts that are only studied in a Japanese context. Simply there is no reason to use English to teach when Japanese
22 can be more effectively used instead.

23 R Do you think that students have sufficient English proficiency to study in English?

24 T I don't think many students have enough linguistic ability to actually study in English efficiently. I've taught some returnee students
25 who were educated in English from the young age, but I've also taught and supervised some students whose English was insufficient
26 to even write a short paragraph in English. So these low proficiency students must be equipped with enough English before taking EMI.
27 In my opinion, some students do not have sufficient English skills to take English-conducted courses even after they have taken EAP for two years.
28 Students that are placed in lower English-proficiency groups would need more time improving their English before taking EMI courses. These
29 students would learn less than their counterparts without sufficient English. I sometimes wonder if the
30 support the university offers to students to improve their English is sufficient. And before embarking on the expansion of EMI courses,
31 I'd urge that the university changes the ways in which the English language support is provided to students.

32 R So how do you decide if students have enough English proficiency to be able to take EMI courses?

- 33 T That's a difficult question but it boils down to individual teachers' decisions, we don't normally refuse students who wish to take EMI.
- 34 R The university seems to be suggesting IELTS 6.5 as an explicit threshold to take EMI course. Would you agree?
- 35 T I don't think it's necessary to have the threshold as the difficulty of each course is determined by not only the fact that courses are run in
36 English but also other factors, like course activities, the amount of assignments and how strict the teacher is. I remember that one of my
37 students who was not good at English still did very well in my class.
- 38 R Can you tell me how you select the language of instruction and how you operate your EMI courses?
- 39 T When I teach my classes that are labelled as EMI, I normally try to use only English. Otherwise, it is not an EMI course. But I sometimes hear
40 from other Japanese instructors that their students often use Japanese in their English-conducted courses. They believe there is no point
41 using English to ask questions or give presentations when the majority of their classmates are Japanese.
- 42 R So the reason that you might end up using Japanese is all complicated and dependent upon many factors?
- 43 T Yes, exactly. But I'd not say it's because of my English proficiency. Although I still find it difficult to teach in English and have many
44 challenges. I mostly use English to try and clarify content for students. The decision as to which language I use to teach is based on what I teach.
45 When teaching psychology studies that are based on Japanese medical settings, I would prefer to use Japanese as I would not be able to find enough
46 materials written in English. If I had to lower the quality of classes in exchange for teaching in English, I would choose to use Japanese instead. In my
47 opinion, language is only a means of communication.
- 48 R What do you think EMI teachers' general English proficiency?

49 I think it is normally advanced and one of the recruitments criteria is to be able to teach in English and Japanese. So after being employed
50 at the university, it is normally each teacher's decisions as to if they want to offer any courses in English. So there is not really an explicit
51 criterion for EMI teachers' linguistic ability.

52 R We've talked about some challenges you have faced in EMI courses. Can you tell me a bit more about those challenges?

53 T There are some drawbacks of teaching in English. I have to spend much more time on preparation for my class. In English there are
54 certain topics I'm not comfortable teaching, whereas in Japanese I can teach almost anything freely in my field. The quality of EMI courses
55 taught by a Japanese teacher can easily be lower than English native speakers

56 R In order to alleviate these challenges do you use utilise any support offered by the university?

57 T Hm I don't think there is enough support provisions for EMI teachers at the university. I'm normally too busy to seek support but I've
58 heard that there is a teacher training opportunity that teachers can apply every year but it is not well informed and not many teachers take
59 advantage of these support scheme offered by the university.

60 R So it seems to me that the university is trying to increase the number of EMI courses. What do you think about this recent plan?

61 T As I said earlier, I'm in favour of the whole EMI expansion plan, but it needs more careful thoughts and planning behind this initiative.
62 I'm aware that students need to undertake a certain number of EMI courses to graduate, but if the university really wants its students to
63 study in English, they should be more encouraged to study abroad in English speaking countries. That's more efficient.

Part 3: Tips for dissertation writing

64 R Right, so this will be my last question. What do you think of your students writing their thesis projects in English? Do you have any tips?

65 T Hm as I said earlier, I've supervised some students whose English was not sufficient to even write a single paragraph, so I don't

66 think it would be plausible to make it compulsory for all students to conduct their thesis projects in English. At the moment, it is up to

67 each student as to if they want it to be in English or Japanese. So the language of instruction should be considered much more carefully.

Part 4: Study abroad opportunities

68 R So you've mentioned that it'd be more beneficial for students to study abroad than taking EMI courses in Japan. Do you think that the

69 university offers enough opportunities? And do you recommend your students to take part in the programme if they could?

70 T I absolutely recommend my students to experience study abroad. But at the moment I think it is financially quite difficult for some

71 students to afford to study abroad so it'd be required for the university to come up with financial aid scheme for students.

72 R Okay so this is the end of our interview. Thank you very much for your time and input. I've really enjoyed our chat and hope you did

73 the same. If you have any questions regarding this interview, please don't hesitate to let me know. And it's nice to talk to you again.

74 T Yes, thank you. I hope you got good data from me.