

Trajectory Equifinality Modeling Analysis of Critical Career Events Leading to Teaching English in English by High School Language Teachers in Japan

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Abstract This research aimed to identify critical variables for Japanese teachers of English to decide whether to use English as a medium of instruction (EMI) in senior high schools. Their use of English in class is far from the English-only policy established in the Course of Study (CS), irrespective of their high proficiency. Interviews of ten alumni teachers before the pandemic about their teaching English in English (TEE) journeys were mapped using the trajectory equifinality approach, highlighting the landmark events and the social/personal factors that either enhanced or suppressed the passages toward TEE. The impact of role model teachers, overseas experience before and after becoming tenured, and in-service training opportunities are discussed in trajectory equifinality modeling analyses. The additional influence of CS and school transfer is also addressed. The findings indicated that teachers' experience envisioning themselves teaching the target students successfully in English was critical in implementing TEE. The study suggests future directions for effective first language use in class and more support for novice teachers toward EMI.

Keywords EMI, Trajectory equifinality approach (TEM), High school, Teacher education, Teaching English in English (TEE)

日本の高校英語教師が英語を英語で教えるに至る 決定的なキャリアイベントの複線径路等至性モデリング分析

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あらまし この研究は、英語を授業の媒介言語とするかを、日本の高校英語教師がどのように決定するか、その要因を特定することを目的とした。教師の高い英語力にもかかわらず、現場の授業での英語使用は、学習指導要領 (CS) による「英語による授業 (EMI)」の方針には程遠い。調査では 10 人の卒業生教師に行ったパンデミック前のインタビュー結果を基に、英語で英語を教える (TEE) までの道のりを複線径路等至性モデリングでマッピングし、英語による授業を促進または抑制する社会的・個人的要因について分析した。結果として、模範となる教師、正規採用前後の海外経験、現職研修の機会の影響が浮き彫りとなったほか、CS や学校の転勤などの影響も認められた。さらに、自らが教える生徒に対して、英語による授業を成功させている自分を想像できるような経験の有無が、教師の TEE 実施を左右することが示唆された。今後の課題として、授業での効果的な母語使用と、新任教師への EMI に向けたサポートの強化の必要性が挙げられる。

キーワード EMI, 複線径路等至性アプローチ (TEM), 高校, 教師教育, 英語による授業 (TEE)

1. Introduction

Using the target language (TL) is vital for successful second language acquisition (SLA). Despite many theories

and approaches that explain the SLA process, it is generally accepted that more input, output, and interaction in the TL potentially lead to higher proficiency

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(Lightbown & Spada, 2021). Therefore, in a foreign language environment where TL exposure is often limited to instructional settings, the choice of language for the medium of instruction (MoI) is critical (Toh, 2016). Although more instruction time alone may not guarantee successful language acquisition, it is associated with good TL proficiency.

This has resulted in efforts to increase second language (L2) exposure. Immersion programs, in which all or most of the school subjects are taught in the TL, maximize chances of acquiring L2. With the globalization context at the tertiary level, English medium instruction (EMI) is widely recognized and practiced worldwide (Lasagabaster, 2022; Rugg & Williams, 2018). Japan is no exception, intending to achieve higher English competency as a byproduct. EMI has been implemented primarily at the university level (Aizawa & Rose, 2020), with some efforts in Super English Language High School projects (Nishino & Watanabe, 2008) and in the Course of Study (CS), which started in 2020.

However, the gap between tertiary EMI programs and regular high school curricula is significant (Aizawa & Rose, 2020). In Japan, English is regarded merely as a school subject at the high school level. Teachers tend to use more Japanese than English to explain grammar, which is far from “English for Communication”—the goal of the CS established by the Japan Ministry of Education, Sports, and Technology (MEXT), as clarified by Nakamura (2017), Negishi (2015), Nishino (2011), and Nishino and Watanabe (2008). What is striking is that Japanese high school teachers generally possess an English proficiency sufficient to conduct their classes in English, yet refrain from using more English in class (Kamegai, et al., 2023; MEXT, 2018, 2020, 2024). Even in the current implementation of the revised CS in senior high schools, teachers need time to adjust their teaching to the updated policies (Hiruta, 2023; Negishi, 2015; Tokito, et al., 2024; Tsukui, 2024).

The current study is part of a larger project aiming to identify the critical experience of Japanese teachers in teaching English in English (TEE) across elementary, junior high, and high schools (Toya, 2021c) using the trajectory equifinality approach (TEA; Valsiner & Sato,

2006). The systematic qualitative approach enables us to examine the dynamic complexity of related events and factors (Aoyama & Yamamoto, 2020). This study explores how EMI* can be achieved at the high school level by examining 10 trajectories of English teachers in-service.

2. Literature Review

2.1. English teaching in the Japanese school system

The growing concept of located second language teacher education (Nguyen & Dang, 2020) addresses the importance of teacher learning in a localized context. In response to criticism of its ineffectiveness (Asaoka, 2019; Steele & Zhang, 2016), a new CS in the national English education curriculum aimed at higher competency levels was issued in March 2018 (MEXT, 2018) and implemented across the different school levels from April 2020 to April 2022. The starting age was lowered to Grade 3 from Grade 5, coursebooks and the formal evaluation were introduced for Grades 5 and 6, and English was designated as a basic MoI in junior high schools (Grades 7–9). However, a national survey on English education in December 2019 (MEXT, 2020) around the time when the interviews of this study were conducted reported that only 12.6% of teachers used English in more than 75% of their classrooms. The latest survey results in December 2023 show that English teachers spoke English for more than half of the class time in approximately 40% of high schools (MEXT, 2024).

Although Nishino and Watanabe (2008) pointed out the teachers’ insufficient proficiency, particularly in speaking, linguistic competency seems to matter less today for high school teachers whose Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) B2 attainment is 72% as of 2019 (MEXT, 2020). The most current figure in 2023 is 80.7%. However, the discrepancies between the ideal communicative language teaching (CLT) prescribed in CS and actual classroom practice seem apparent. Teachers who used English in more than 75% of their classrooms remained at only 8.6% even in 2023 (MEXT, 2024). Sakui’s (2004) longitudinal study of junior and senior high school teachers revealed their teaching style was mostly teacher-fronted with a grammar explanation. CLT practice was generally limited to team teaching with a native-speaking assistant language teacher (ALT). In her investigation of high school English teachers’ beliefs toward CLT, Nishino (2011) showed that most respondents accepted the core ideas of CLT

positively; however, under a large-class situation and pressure from entrance exams, teachers' beliefs about CLT's effectiveness did not energize classroom implementation. Furthermore, Tsukui (2024) observed much confusion among high school teachers about the key concepts introduced in the new CS. Negishi (2015) pointed out a clear tendency: the more English teachers spoke, the more productive, expressive activities were conducted in the classroom.

2.2. English teacher learning in the Japanese context

The Japanese teaching license for junior and senior high schools is obtained by completing predetermined credits in the university's teaching license curriculum (Asaoka, 2019). For the university preservice curriculum of secondary school English, four categories are required: English linguistics, literature, communication skills, and cross-cultural understanding, in addition to general education coursework, including school systems, management, educational psychology, and counseling. Two to three English teaching methodology courses are also required, while the current junior high school curriculum has increased the requirement from six to eight credits. Teaching practicums for 2 and 3 weeks are compulsory for senior and junior high school licenses, respectively.

In-service teachers must be trained to develop competencies to teach English communicatively with more use of English in the classroom (Nishino, 2011; Sakui, 2004). EMI is becoming more common in Japanese universities (Aizawa & Rose, 2019, 2020; Hino, 2017), while high school English teachers are still reluctant to conduct TEE in their classes (MEXT, 2020, 2024). The effects of teacher learning on teaching ability (Ishida et al., 2011; Nakamura, 2017, Tokito et al., 2024) at universities are somewhat limited (Fujishiro & Okunishi, 2020; Hiruta, 2023), as teacher growth occurs mainly on the job (Clarke & Hollingworth, 2002; Lasagabaster, 2022).

The new teachers must be on the first-year training scheme and under the supervision of a mentor-teacher once employed as a tenured teacher (Asaoka, 2019), just like other Western teacher training programs (Ponce, 2018). In addition to another compulsory in-service training in the 10th year, the local education board may conduct training in the 2nd, 5th, 15th, and 20th years (Ishida et al., 2011). The local education board organizes small seminars and workshops (Nishino, 2011), and teachers are expected to share their knowledge when they return to

their schools.

However, teachers' quality improvement has become an issue (Steele & Zhang, 2016). With its emphasis on nurturing communicative competence, especially English productive skills, the new CS (MEXT, 2018) expects teachers to use more English in class and evaluate students' speaking and writing skills (Hiruta, 2023; Tsukui, 2024). The reform influenced the university preservice training curriculum nationwide, as a review by MEXT was required as part of the reaccreditation process (Asaoka, 2019), confirming compliance with the national core curriculum based on the model suggested by the research findings by a team of Tokyo Gakugei University (Tokyo Gakugei University, 2017). This has influenced teacher trainers like Hiruta (2023) to comply with the new CS more carefully.

3. Purpose of the Study and Research Question

Studies on teacher identity have investigated language teachers' professional development for over two decades (De Costa & Norton, 2017). Jiang and Zhang (2021) observed that curriculum reform influenced teachers' ontological and epistemological beliefs, leading to learning effects. Preservice and in-service learning opportunities for professional growth may not guarantee professional growth (Ishida et al., 2011) unless teacher agencies (White, 2018) motivate teachers to implement what they learned on those occasions. While the TEE policy of CS at the high school level was stated in 2008, its influence seemed insignificant at the time of Nishino (2011), and the implementation rate was still low with the CEFR B2 proficiency of teachers considered (MEXT, 2020, 2024). This may indicate the limited impact of teacher learning opportunities on EMI. The American Council for Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) enforced the maximal use of TL in class to be at least 90% (ACTFL, 2010); however, LeLoup et al. (2013) found that actual implementation was not easy for either preservice and in-service teachers. Notably, the tendency to avoid high TL use was more apparent among in-service teachers than preservice teachers.

In light of the above, Japanese English teachers challenged by the CS ideology of the exclusive use of English must find a way to implement EMI as part of their professional growth.

Therefore, the current study examines how in-service English teachers can reach the stage of conducting TEE in the context of Japanese high schools. Most EMI studies in

Japan have been conducted at the tertiary level (Aizawa & Rose, 2019, 2020; Hino, 2020). EMI has not been extensively investigated in teacher identity research, especially in Japanese secondary schools. This study intends to fill these gaps by analyzing the history of in-service high school teachers using the TEA (Valsiner & Sato, 2006). Initial analyses of a few teachers revealed the effects of mentor-teacher interaction during first-year training and school transfers (Toya, 2020a), overseas experience and in-service training (Toya, 2020b), and the unique Okinawan environment (Toya, 2021, 2024). This study presents more solid findings with the trajectory equifinality modeling (TEM) analysis of 10 English teachers, addressing the following research question: What events/factors in high school English teachers' careers are critical in implementing EMI?

4. Method

4.1. Participants

All participating teachers had received an English teaching license from the university where the researcher was involved in the National Licensing curriculum. The researcher knew all of them from when they were university students. The eldest teacher had been a major in the Faculty of Education, and the rest graduated from the English department, where the teaching license was optional and required extra credits. These teachers were invited to participate based on the following inclusion criteria: (a) with more than 10 years of teaching experience, they were tenured in local high schools, (b) the researcher knew them during their time at the university so that in-depth interviews would be possible, and (c) the researcher was familiar with the details of the courses offered when the participating teachers received their preservice training. Conditions (b) and (c) were crucial as they entailed the researcher's credible

Table 1
Participating Teachers' Profiles and OPP Summary

Participant	University Enrolment	Overseas experience	OPP (Obligatory passage points)	Notes
A	1994 (Education)	Univ (Canada, 2 months), traveling, in-service (US, chaperon)	OPP1: Univ (Canada, 2 months) OPP2: In-service (US, chaperon)	
B	1998 transfer to a junior	MA (US, pre-service)	1 st tenured HS (Ss w/ learning difficulties)	TEE unachieved
C	1998	Univ (US, 1 year)	OPP1: Univ (US, 1 year) OPP2: TEE w/peers	
D	1998	HS (US, 1 year), Univ (US, 1 year), In-service (Australia, 6 months)	OPP1: British council workshop OPP2: Active learning workshop	
E	1998	In-service (Australia, 6 months)	OPP1: Teaching in difficult schools OPP2: In-service (Australia, 6 months)	
F	1999	Univ (US, 1 year)	OPP1: Teaching practicum OPP2: 1 st year tenured teaching (Both related a mentor-teacher)	
G	2000	N/A	Meeting with the mentor in tenured 1 st year	
H	2001	Univ (US, 1 year)	Use of iPads for TEE	
I	2001	Univ (US, 1 year)	Action research in the 1 st tenured year	TEE rather unconvincing
J	2002	MA (US, pre-service)	Meeting with the mentor in tenured 1 st year	

Note: Univ = University, US = United States, MA = Master of Arts, HS = High school, Ss = Students

interpretation of the interview data by the researcher. The details of the participants are listed in Table 1, in the order of their university enrolment and interview timing.

4.2. Data collection

The researcher conducted individual interviews at her office on campus, the participants' workplace, or in a coffee shop close to the participants' school. The data were collected in 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic. The interview session began with a brief explanation of the study and the signing of a consent form. The researcher then led the interviews based on predetermined questions for about 1–2 hours. The question items were designed before the interview, enabling the researcher to draw a TEM chart from the point of university enrollment until now; however, the researcher avoided asking individual questions and instead attempted to maintain a friendly conversation with her former students. Any related events mentioned by the interviewees were further clarified through detailed questions. The face-to-face interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. All interviewees consented to the publication of the interview data, with anonymity maintained.

4.3. Analyses

The researcher mapped each interviewee's career trajectory using the analytical framework of the TEA (Valsiner & Sato, 2006). Although Kitade (2015) and Zhang et al. (2019) analyzed their teacher data using the TEA, using the TEA in teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) is relatively new (Aoyama & Yamamoto, 2020). The TEA is considered relevant for the current study as the data are complex and dynamic (i.e., in the complexity dynamic systems theory; Hiver & Al-Hoorie, 2020). The approach comprises three main components: a map called the TEM chart, historically structured inviting (HSI), and the three-layer model of genesis (TLMG). The participants were called for an interview based on the HSI concept and the 1/4/9 principle (Yasuda et al., 2015). This recommends data collected from nine (plus minus two) participants to generate the principles. As the current research aimed to clarify the patterns toward EMI, TEMs were created to identify similarities and differences among 10 teachers.

The TEM includes an arrow indicating "irreversible time" and events/actions (i.e., points) aligned chronologically. On the right side of the chart, the achieved stage is described as the "equifinality point" (EP), with alternative stages that the interviewed teachers otherwise reached. The trajectory also offers the

"bifurcation point" (BP), at which alternative decisions made by the interviewees would have led to a different path. These are indicated by dotted lines. Based on the trajectories, the "obligatory passage point" (OPP) is identified for each participant, which determines the critical event/action that led to the EP. OPPs are highlighted in gray and double-bold lines. The factors that influence the passage to the EP positively (*social guidance*: SG) or negatively (*social direction*: SD), and are added to the chart with upward and downward arrows. The results section summarizes each participating teacher's story with the TEM, followed by the standard and varied aspects based on the 10 teachers' trajectories.

5. Results

5.1. Individual teacher's trajectory-based story

The following are each participant's stories, based on their TEM chart. The TEMs for Participants G and J were printed with their analyses in a previous study (Toya, 2020a), although their stories have been rewritten in this section. Initial analyses of Participants A, C, D, and E were orally presented in previous studies (Toya 2020b, 2021), and their data were analyzed again to summarize the pattern across the 10 teachers. Additionally, the author analyzed Participants B, C, D, E, H, and I, focusing on their overseas study experiences in 2023. Only previously unpublished TEM (Participant F) is featured in this paper.

Participant A

One of the eldest alumni teachers, Participant A, was the only participant originally from outside Okinawa and who studied at the Faculty of Education. After enrollment, he was astonished at his Okinawan peers' high communicative ability, which inspired him to study hard. He pursued a 2-month ESL program in Canada (OPP1), which was the foundation for his teaching career.

He had not planned to teach after graduation but accepted a 20-day English teaching opportunity at a local high school. This led to further teaching at another school for 2 months. He enjoyed interacting with teenagers, which made him decide to be a tenured teacher. He claimed that he did not initially choose to teach everything in English. Primarily working in academically challenging schools, he spoke English for roughly half his class time. He could see his students enjoying his class and was very happy and satisfied until one student commented, "Your class is enjoyable but that's it." He then began his journey to develop a better teaching style. His study of Master of

Arts (MA) in Educational Psychology while working at the third school improved his knowledge and skills. He significantly increased his use of English after attending a 3-week TESL program (OPP2) when escorting a group of students in his fourth school to Montana in the U.S. Observing his students in English-only classes in the U.S. led him to visualize himself conducting EMI back in his classroom in Japan.

Participant B

Although Participant B liked learning English, her teacher was brutal in her treatment of weak students like her. Thus, she chose her future career as “a teacher who could understand and support weak students to learn English better.” Because her high school performance was not high enough to be accepted at the researcher’s university, she took the college entrance exam outside Okinawa as a backup. She qualified for both schools and chose the one not in Okinawa to see the world outside. However, she was transferred to the university where the researcher worked, hoping to obtain an English teaching license by completing her third and fourth years.

Subsequently, she took a nontenured full-time teaching position in a highly proficient school. Although she passed the teaching exam that year, she decided to study further in the MA program. Her first teaching experience after returning from the U.S. was challenging, owing to the students’ low proficiency and lack of motivation. She considered resigning in the second year but decided to persist in the third year because she felt she was “needed by the students who were struggling in learning and living.”

Surprisingly, Participant B had almost given up TEE at the time of this interview, as she was perceived as an energetic and lively student at the university and very proficient in the MA program. She was confident and naturally intended to conduct EMI when she returned to Okinawa for teaching. However, the first tenured school made her spend most of her time and energy not on teaching but on behavior/attitude instructions. When she found her value as a teacher who could take the side of the weak students (OPP), the idea of an English-only classroom appeared unrealistic. Therefore, her interview revealed that her use of English was limited to greetings and some warm-up activities at the beginning of the class (EFP). Occasionally speaking in English during team teaching with an ALT created a positive impression among students. However, she had strong doubts about the

current TEE policy, saying that her students often demonstrated weak first language (L1) ability. Although she felt the pressure of TEE every time she attended professional seminars and workshops, she was unconvinced that it applied to her students, as she believed that extensive use of English would further demotivate weak students. Therefore, she resorted to teaching for exams using Japanese, which would provide clearer outcomes in the short run.

Participant C

Participants C, D, and E were university classmates. The TEMs and initial analyses are presented in a previous study (Toya, 2020b). Participant C’s TEM illustrates that she faced several negative external factors compared to Participant D, who graduated in the same year; for example, she was more tense during the university teaching practicum and was unable to carry out EMI effectively. She said that her 9 months of study abroad experience in the U.S. made her realize that the Japanese tended to be too vulnerable and self-conscious to speak up or express their opinions. This fueled her determination to conduct EMI (OPP1).

However, her strategies for TEE seemed weak. The first three schools, as well as those she worked at as a nontenured teacher, were academically challenging, and she gave up on EMI. She tended to add a Japanese translation after her English sentences in class because she hoped to interact more with the students. The turning point was the fourth school, where the students had higher levels of proficiency and motivation. The English teachers in this school shared the idea of implementing EMI as a team, and Participant D also became a colleague. During the British Council (BC) workshop with Participant D, she learned how to use visual aids and where and how to use L2 instruction effectively. This led to collaborative work with Participant D, who served as her second OPP (OPP 2). However, her actual implementation of TEE was limited. She was unable to continue EMI with the knowledge from the BC workshop as she took her first maternity leave during her fourth high school tenure and then transferred to the fifth school, where she observed that students’ proficiency was insufficient for EMI. While feeling the external pressures of the CS policy and the MEXT Survey, she seemed to lack practical strategies to pursue TEE implementation.

Participant D

Participant D was a top student granted a one-year student exchange program at the University of Hawaii. During the interview, her good command of English appeared to result from a year in Massachusetts as a high school student. She referred to her junior high school English teacher, whose pronunciation was strongly affected by Japanese, and said she felt the need to improve her pronunciation. Despite efforts to conduct her teaching practicum in English, she found making EMI materials too time-consuming. She also preferred to study language structures as a learner, making it difficult for her to give up on grammar instruction and use L1 in class.

However, when she was transferred to the third tenured school, the English teachers had a more positive attitude toward TEE (cf. Participant C). The students' proficiency was also good; therefore, she started using more English. She was keen to update her skills by attending in-service workshops and seminars, such as a 6-month TESL program in Australia. The most influential events in her TEM seem to be BC workshops (OPP1) and workshops by a well-known high school teacher who had been practicing active learning (OPP2). She was still in the third school, where she implemented what she developed in such training programs, and luckily, the subsequent school environment allowed her to continue TEE.

Participant E

Unlike her university classmates, Participants C and D, Participant E did not have the opportunity to study overseas as an undergraduate student. Her preservice training was identical to her two peers, but she took a long time to become tenured. Thus, she worked as a nontenured teacher in seven elementary and junior high schools before the first-year training (OPP1). Although TEE was promoted in university methodology courses, the concept of student-centeredness was not included in the 2001 curriculum. She quickly picked up such important ideas through her day-to-day teaching experience and provided maximum opportunities for students to speak in English to one another.

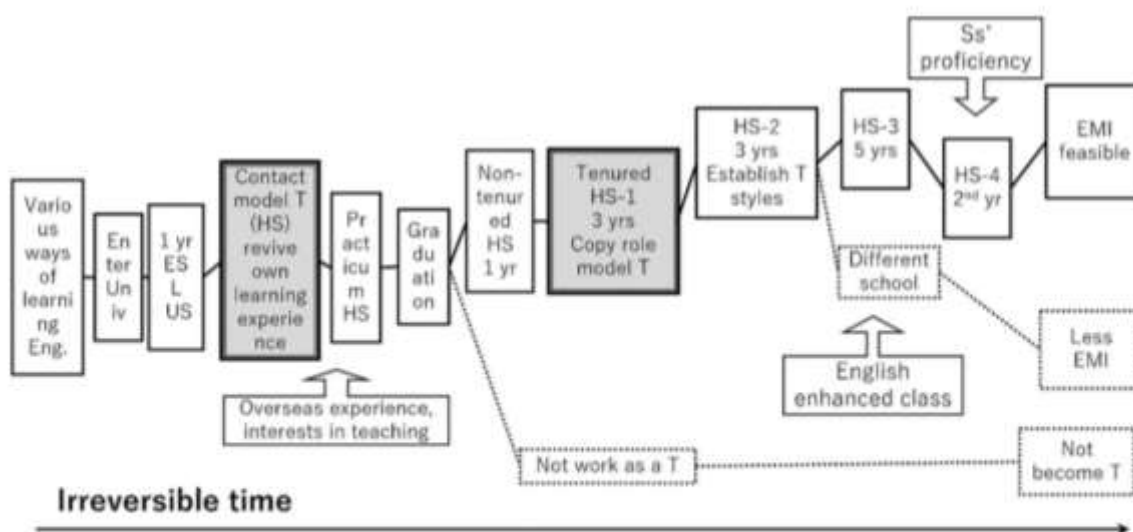
Participant E's TEM shows that her motivation to use as much English as possible in class never wavered, even with her transfer to a more academically challenging school. She admitted that she never felt a drastic turning point in her teaching history; she kept adjusting her teaching style to accommodate more EMI. Even in academically challenging schools where many English teachers tended to regard their students' abilities as too

low to understand grammatical concepts, Participant E tried to reduce grammar instruction using L1 and maximized L2 use. She witnessed her students still communicating in English despite their limited proficiency and minimal understanding of grammar. Therefore, school transfers had little effect on her TEE. Moreover, she improved and adjusted her teaching methods by attending in-service training programs. Among the events she went through, the Australian TESL program for 6 months seemed quite influential in "labeling" what she was doing in class in terms of SLA and TESL theories. This accredited her teaching style and gave her confidence in conducting EMI.

Participant F

Participant F showcased her TEE ability in an open-class demonstration in 2018 when she team-taught with a Canadian ALT, which the author witnessed in person. Her trajectory in Figure 1 shows that she loved English and had various learning experiences via sound, which helped her cope with the native-speaker classes at the university. She had no initial intention to become a teacher; however, the experience of helping pupils learn Japanese during her one-year overseas stay to "live a life surrounded by English" changed her career goals.

She was unique in that her high school English teacher influenced her tremendously. She recalled her learning experience in his class: "I liked that teacher very much because it [the class] was organized. I felt secure in class. The handout we received in class was easy to understand, and we could follow his instructions without confusion." Before her teaching practicum, she contacted the mentor-teacher, who offered her many of his teaching materials. She even observed the mentor-teacher's class before the practicum and used what she believed to be the best teaching style during the practicum (OPP1). When she began her career as a tenured teacher, she continued to refine the same teaching style she developed during the teaching practicum, which was again based on her HS mentor-teacher (OPP2). To date, she has utilized carefully designed handouts, almost exclusively written in English, which allows both the teacher and students to follow step-by-step instructions without getting lost even with EMI. The amount of English instruction could be modified depending on the students' proficiency and responses to the same material. This enabled Participant F to keep TEE by default and insert Japanese whenever she found it more effective. She still retains the knowledge of the



Notes: Eng. = English, univ = university, yr = year, ESL = English as a second language, US = United States, T = teacher, HS = high school, yrs = years, T styles = teaching styles, Ss = students, EMI = English as medium of instruction

Figure 1
Participant F's TEM Chart

advantages of EMI classes gained in her university teaching methodology courses.

The analyses determined that her attitude of pursuing TEE originated in having a mentor-teacher who taught her securely, which led her to develop her teaching style accordingly. One important note from her interview was that she did not separate English for communication from English during the university entrance examination. She believed that teaching communicative English would include English for examination. Therefore, regardless of the entrance exams, she wanted students to feel that listening to and speaking English would be fun.

Participant G

The TEMs of Participants G and J were analyzed in the previous study (Toya, 2020a), and both appeared to show a common OPP of meeting a mentor who had been conducting TEE. Participant G recalled learning the advantages of TEE in the university methodology course; however, her teaching practicum showed a clear gap between theory and practice. Her experience as a nontenured teacher after graduation confirmed this gap, making her consider TEE unrealistic. However, during her first-year in-service training, the mentor-teacher was determined to conduct EMI. Participant G still recalls that he spoke English even outside the class to his students and that he also conducted the meeting with her in English. He

became living proof of TEE being appropriate for Participant G, whose default became TEE since then (OPP). Therefore, she tried to use as much English as possible even with school transfers. However, she may have been less affected by the transfers because the schools she had worked in generally held academically competent students with few behavior/attitude problems.

Participant H

Participants H and I were male teachers from the same local HS and entered the university hoping to obtain an English teaching license; however, their overseas experience before university differed. Participant H experienced a short-stay program in Oregon in the ninth grade and an exchange program in Massachusetts in the eleventh grade. The programs fueled his motivation to learn English. He was also engaged in the ESL program for approximately 1 year in New Orleans after his fifth semester at the university. With this background, the 2-week teaching practicum at the high school he graduated from gave the impression that he had a bright future teaching career.

However, after graduation, the 3-month nontenured teaching position was difficult, as he was assigned to an academically challenging school. As he was depressed with the time spent dealing with students' behavior/attitude problems, he discontinued working at a

nontenured level. He started his tenured year at the same school he graduated from and did his teaching practicum, which helped him regain his passion for teaching. He experimented with new materials, such as graphic organizers and mapping, for his start-up project during the first year of training. He had little intention of conducting TEE because it was not reinforced in the teaching methodology courses at the university during his time, and not many teachers around him used English to teach. When transferred to the next school, he became involved with school projects where iPads were introduced to connect classrooms. At the time of the interview, he was in the third school and had just finished half a year of off-the-job research on teaching English with ICT (OPP). Primarily using an iPad, Participant H found a way to increase the teacher's use of English in class because the visualized materials, such as photos and pictures, required little or no L1 explanation. He also designed his class with routines, which led to more use of English in class without sacrificing the students' understanding.

Participant I

Participant I, a university classmate of Participant H, also intended to become a teacher after graduation. Although his learning experience was very traditional with the grammar–translation method in L1, his motivation for his future career originated in his enjoyable experience of mingling with international students in 12th grade. He took a year off from the university and studied overseas, including a few months in the TESL program. During his time, TEE was not explicitly promoted in the university preservice curriculum; however, Participant I chose EMI as his action research topic for his mandatory first-year training (OPP2). He found that his students in the 10th grade could learn communicatively only in English and was amazed that the English-only policy was accepted more positively than he had expected. However, he decided not to continue it in his second and third years because he perceived a gap between TEE and teaching for university entrance examinations. As students' grades progressed toward the exam year, he became very uncomfortable with EMI and shifted his teaching style, providing more L1 explanations. He was unconvinced that TEE communicative competence would be directly related to his ability to pass the entrance exam. This persistent gap seems to have been influenced by his own learning experience in traditional instruction (OPP1). He also indicated that TEE would have a negative effect when

working as a “team.” “Most teachers want to provide the best teaching possible, but somebody must take on more administrative work in school than others. This means that a person cannot spend much time on teaching preparation and ends up with less innovative classroom instruction.” Additional teaching experience at junior high schools and the overseas ESL and TESL programs must have equipped Participant I to adapt various methods and task activities that would make TEE possible. However, he knew the limitations of introducing the TESL approach in the Japanese context.

Participant J

When Participant J was asked about her teaching licensing curriculum and practicum, she recalled her lack of confidence in English communication and a bitter memory of being rebuked by her mentor-teacher during the teaching practicum. Therefore, she studied English overseas after graduation and worked in a company rather than starting a teaching career immediately. She then enrolled in an MA TESOL program in the U.S., where she learned the concept of “autonomous learner.” With such empowerment, she was ready for the TE, but her nontenured experience in an academically challenging school after returning was discouraging. What helped her was the first-year preservice training where she was supervised by a mentor-teacher who was an influential role model for conducting TEE (OPP), just like Participant G. Participant J lacked concrete measures for EMI and could acquire practical skills from her mentor. This experience convinced her that EMI would be possible in a Japanese high school context.

5.2. Common influential events and factors

None of the 10 English teachers' TEM charts were identical. Although they were trained in the preservice program at the same university, events such as first-year training and school transfers were common for all. The results showed various passages toward TEE among the teachers in the Japanese high school setting. Their OPPs sometimes overlapped, but no sole event/factor was found to be critical to all TEMs.

5.2.1 Mentor or role-model teacher

In the first year of their tenured career, the teachers were assigned to experienced mentor teachers as in-service training supervisors. The mentors of Participants G and J, who had already used English mostly in their classes, became good EMI role models (Toya, 2020a). Strongly influenced by her high school English

teacher, Participant F also had a clear image of an “ideal” teacher. She continued to develop her teaching style around this model teacher, which enabled her to reach TEE practice at a fairly early stage of her career. This indicates the importance of having a good role model, just as the successful student teachers in Asaoka’s (2019) study learned student-centered pedagogy from their supervisor teachers. Teachers who are strong role models provide practical TEE skills in the real HS classroom and must have given no excuse to participating teachers not to employ EMI in their classes. Such experience must have shown them positive reactions to EMI (i.e., students’ acceptance, speaking in English, and proficiency growth).

This leads us to wonder whether the vision of an ideal, possible teacher self could function as an imaginary role model teacher. Similarly, having a self-image of successfully conducting EMI with one’s own students would enhance the motivation to put the theory into practice when the teacher can clearly visualize it as possible. This is the case for Participant A in his experience of observing his students in the ESL classroom in the U.S. During the interview, he did not refer to any mentor or role model teachers; however, the TEM analysis revealed that Participant A could envision himself teaching his class exclusively in English in Japan. He confirmed that his students could learn English in English and visualized how he could contribute to fulfilling this goal when he returned. Altogether, good role-model teachers in their EMI classes and the vision of a successful TEE self can lead to TEE. Notably, the memories of the practicum, including the supervisors’ impact, seem to have been lost after a long period for most interviewees, and their attention was not necessarily on using English in class during the relatively short practicum.

5.2.2 Overseas study and/or training experience

Although overseas experience is not required in the teaching licensing curriculum (Asaoka, 2019), most of the interviewed teachers had extensive overseas experience, such as ESL and TESL programs and studying for an MA in American universities. Comparing the timing of their overseas experience, that is, either BEFORE or AFTER they started teaching as tenured teachers, the impact of the BEFORE condition on achieving EMI appears to be less than expected. A notable comparison is seen between Participants B and G, who both studied an MA in TESL in the U.S. They both returned to Okinawa full of expectations of putting what they had learned into practice; however, they were both shocked by the fact that

the students’ proficiency levels were below accepting TEE. While their trajectories were parallel in this respect, the events after that point illustrated a clear contrast. Compared to Participant G, who met a mentor-teacher and found a way to pursue TEE, Participant B failed to regain motivation for EMI and resorted to instruction mainly in Japanese. In general, overseas programs are effective in increasing teachers’ self-efficacy (Jochum et al., 2017), broadening cultural understanding and knowledge (Covert, 2014), and TL proficiency, especially in speaking (Roskvist, 2017). The participants in this study also engaged in communicative language activities from their overseas experience to a different degree, which is in line with Zhao and Mantero (2018), who found that teachers were excited to experience new approaches and methodologies during the study abroad program, which were reflected in their subsequent classroom teaching.

In terms of the effect on EMI, in-service training AFTER they became tenured was found to be more effective than in the cases of Participants A, D, and E. We have seen how such a program helped Participant A envision himself conducting EMI. We can also examine the impact of the same program because of the different trajectories. In attending the Australian ESL program, the effects on EMI were more significant for Participant E, whose approach was already communicative. Participant E used this opportunity to improve her speaking skills and strengthen her teaching style by gaining theoretical knowledge. In contrast, Participant D, with more extensive overseas experience and a structure-oriented learning style, needed more events that convinced her that EMI was possible in the Japanese high school context. This indicates that teachers’ personality and readiness must be considered in program evaluation, as Zhao and Mantero (2018) reported that the use of TL in class did not necessarily increase among teachers after overseas training programs.

5.2.3 In-service training programs inside Japan

Of all available professional development programs, the effects of first-year training were most apparent when TEE model teachers supervised the interviewees. This means that the initial training project focusing on EMI could guide the new teacher to start with good use of TL in class as Participants G, J, and I’s case indicated. However, Participant I took a unique path of distancing himself from TEE, coming to believe that EMI was not the best approach for his students. In any case, TEE practice can be set during novice teachers’ first year if appropriate role

models guide them.

Participants C, D, and E joined the same in-service training program conducted by the BC. Similar to the effects of the 6-month Australian TESL program between Participants D and E, the BC workshop also showed different weights in the trajectories of the three teachers. The BC workshop had a more significant impact on Participant D's teaching style than the Australian program, more so than the other two peers. She also found another in-service seminar about class implementation of active learning more effective. This indicates that the training program will be effective toward TEE if the content allows the attendants to visualize themselves applying the gained knowledge with the students they taught and/or are teaching. This analysis further explains the negative attitudes of Participant B, who was doubtful about the effectiveness of EMI. Her students ranked lowest academically among the schools of the interviewed teachers; therefore, she could not visualize her students' learning in the EMI context, no matter how hard in-service programs promoted English use in class. In contrast, Participant E took such opportunities more positively, even with the teaching experience at the challenging schools. Based on her strong belief in CLT at the early stage of her career, she easily developed a self-image of implementing ideas introduced in the training programs.

5.2.4 Social factors: Course of study and school transfer

The interviewees mostly admitted that pressure from the CS worked as an enhancing factor toward EMI. The MEXT annual survey, in which teachers must report on their classroom use of English, reminds them that they should be teaching in English. In-service training opportunities are designed to reinforce TEE policies in the CS; however, the current analyses revealed that effective training must lead the attendants to visualize themselves teaching their own students in English with the students accepting it. This visualization effect can be high with teachers' readiness in their career path stages; however, to maximize the impact, the training contents must be carefully designed and evaluated to determine whether they resemble the attendants' teaching environment.

The visualization effect would depend significantly on the teachers' classrooms. In this respect, the factor of school transfer was either guided (positive) or directed (negative) TEE practice. The path toward TEE was enhanced when the school environment supported TEE, as in Participant C's case. Meanwhile, the interviewees

tended not to always speak in English as they found that the students could not cope with the situation (Cf. Leloup et al., 2013). The exceptions were Participants E and I. As noted, Participant E was determined to teach for communication. At the same time, Participant I decided not to conduct EMI even with his students' positive reaction due to his concern for the entrance examination (cf. Nishino, 2011).

6. Discussion and Conclusion

6.1. Summary

This research study sought to address how Japanese senior high school teachers of English accept and practice TEE. The literature suggests that language teachers' professional development must be investigated in a localized context. The TEMs showed the complex interaction of landmark events and social factors after graduation, while the participants grew as competent teachers. The analyses revealed that the effects of university preservice training mostly disappeared after many years, confirming that teachers' knowledge became outdated. The initial in-service training worked toward EMI only when the assigned mentor-teachers demonstrated practical teaching techniques that benefited the students. The overseas experience was also effective, as it provided TL proficiency development and communicative teaching models (Jochum et al., 2017; Zhao & Mantero, 2018); however, the teachers must be provided with a bridge to TEE implementation. It should also be noted that using TL as a medium of instruction is only one aspect of what happens in the classroom (Zhao & Mantero, 2018); therefore, attention may be necessary to understand its usefulness in SLA.

In sum, the findings indicate that how teachers visualize themselves teaching exclusively in English while believing that it is beneficial for their students is the critical experience toward the practice of TEE in the Japanese high school context. Aizawa and Rose (2020) argued that university EMI is ineffective when Japanese students lack English learning experience at the high school level. Role model teachers and in-service training are great opportunities for high school EMI promotion; therefore, they should be mindful of concrete goals (i.e., TEE). It is inevitable that teachers will be transferred and must deal with different levels of proficiency. However, the opportunities that help TEE visualization must be matched with the context in which trained and motivated teachers can implement their vision to increase TEE

practice among high school English teachers.

6.2. Future directions for research

The data for this study were collected in 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic. The academic year 2021 was the first year of CS implementation at junior high schools, while teachers were faced with additional challenges with school calendar adjustments, online teaching, and maintaining distance among students owing to the pandemic. The new CS implementation started for 10th graders from April 2022, meaning the interviewees may have different attitudes toward TEE now. Although a confirmatory interview with Participant A in November 2022 indicated that his beliefs and behaviors toward TEE remained unchanged, collecting new data and performing comparisons is desirable because the new CS will be completely implemented for 12th graders in March 2025.

To understand language teacher development, many studies have investigated teacher identity, including transdisciplinary work by the Douglas Fir Group (De Costa & Norton, 2017). Additionally, a new theoretical framework using complex dynamic systems theory (CDST; Larsen-Freeman, 2012) is emerging (Jiang & Zhang, 2021). However, the current study used an alternative approach with TEM analyses and attempted to explore and identify the underlying variables focusing on achieving TEE. This also enabled the researcher to analyze the data considering CDST (Aoyama & Yamamoto, 2020); however, intercepting the results with existing teacher identity research was extremely challenging. Therefore, situating the current study in existing teacher development research is necessary.

6.3. Future directions for teacher learning toward EMI

Even with the difficulty in generating a new theoretical framework, the current study's findings will lead to some critical and practical suggestions. Chinese English teachers with study abroad experience prefer non-native speaker teachers, as they share the same culture as the students and communicate to build a rapport in the common L1 (Wang & Hui, 2014). According to Zhao and Mantero (2018), participants regarded themselves as more competent, as they became less concerned with linguistic native-speaker norms (see also Prabjandee, & Nilpirom, 2022). Although the current research sets EMI as a desirable state of equifinality, research on L1 use requires more attention. Code-switching is a common phenomenon in bilingual teachers' classrooms, and the literature found when, how, and why teachers use the L1

common to the students (Alshehri et al., 2017; Zainil & Arsyad, 2021). Rather than restricting the classroom to using only the TL as a rule, adding a TL that gradually alters L1 may be more desirable in an English as a foreign language context, such as Japan. In addition, the effective use of L1 in class should be introduced in teacher training, both for preservice and in-service teachers.

This also leads us to focus on following up with student teachers after graduation. Farrell (2012) reported that it was common practice for novice teachers to have little support from their university teacher trainers once they started working, leaving them with the shock between preparatory content and the reality of schools. The case of the interviewed teachers in this study was no exception, as the researcher met them for the first time after graduation. This indicates the separation between university academia and real education setting. At the same time, however, it indicates that university teacher trainers do not intend to impose a set teaching style on the experienced in-service teachers. However, the TEMs in this study showed not only agentive professional development but also tremendous struggles after graduation. As teachers required a long time to apply preservice content knowledge to their own classrooms (Farrell, 2012), training by university teacher trainers could be organized to guide novice teachers to conduct classrooms more effectively.

Notes

*I used terms such as TEE, EMI, and English only interchangeably.

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