

The Possibility in Collaboration between English Teachers and Librarians for English for Academic Purposes (EAP)

Minako Nishiura

Center for Faculty-wide General Education, Kyoto Sangyo University

Introduction

Recent discussions have focused on the question of whether English education at colleges and universities should aim specifically at intensifying English for Academic Purposes (EAP), in order to differentiate itself from junior high school or high school level education. EAP is not contrary to business English or English for General Purposes (EGP), for “If one masters EAP, he/she will probably be able to apply EAP knowledge and skills to business English with little effort.”¹ In other words, learning EAP can be a highly effective way of acquiring English for other purposes.

Question

Whatever the language, what is indispensable for effective language education is collaboration. In EAP, the collaboration will most likely occur in classrooms. Outside of classrooms, academic libraries are essential. It can be assumed that if the collaborations between inside and outside classrooms are adequately developed, more fruitful outcomes will be provided. However, in Japan, there have been few cases of individual English teachers collaborating with libraries or librarians to design their own courses. Although teachers and librarians can collaborate for English education, they develop their own programs separately within their specific fields.

Proposal

This study shows why and how academic libraries can be suitable for collaborating with teachers to make EAP education more effective.

Literature Review

In previous studies on EAP or EGAP, such as Suiko (2006)¹ and Tajino (2005)², information research skills developed in academic libraries are mentioned. They indicate that academic libraries are recognized as an appropriate place to learn EAP outside classrooms; therefore, they can play a vital role in EAP. In the United States, it's common for librarians to “seek to partner with teaching faculty to develop curricula that contains learning objectives and assignments related to information competencies” because the library “is seen as an extension of the classroom.”³ Mounce (2009)⁴ supports this point, stating “In US, colleges and universities, academic librarians collaborate with teaching faculty and instructors in various subject disciplines,” and listing relevant articles dealing with some cases in English courses. Similarly in Japan, as stated in Ministry of Education (1953)⁵, teachers were expected to regard academic libraries as extended classrooms, and to develop effective EAP courses in collaboration with academic libraries.

Examples of Academic Library Services on EAP

① Nagoya University Library

“Academic Writing & Logical Thinking Skills” (an official certificate will be issued to the successful participants)



② Hokkaido University Library

offering a series of learning support services such as “English Writing Clinic”

③ Hiroshima University Library

“Hiroshima University Writing Center” offering support services such as “Guidance on Publishing in English”



④ International Christian University (ICU) Library

“Writing Support Desk”

Academic Library as a Place to Learn English

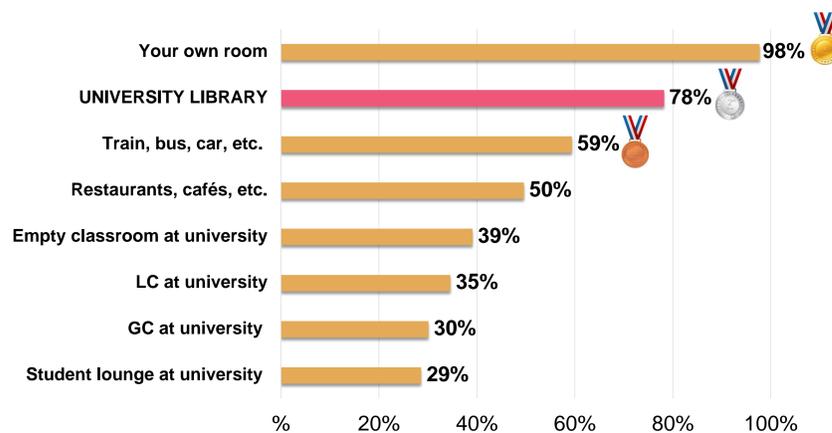


Fig 1. Places Used for English Learning (n=133)
※LC refers to Learning Commons, GC refers to Global Commons.

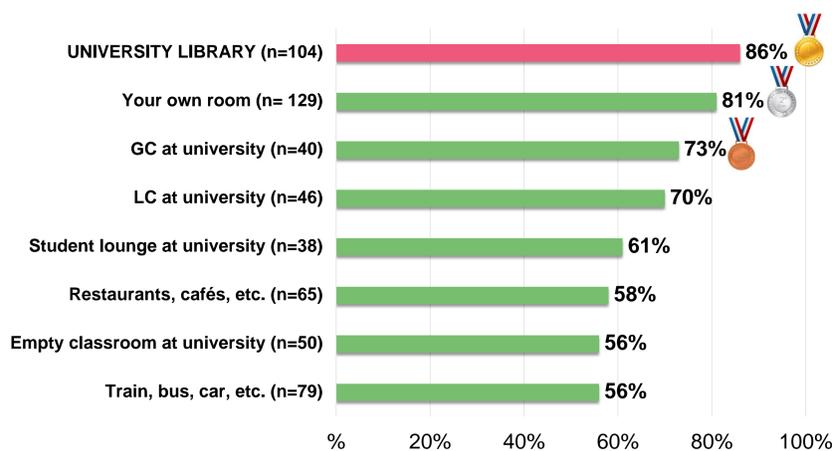


Fig 2. Places Efficient for English Learning

Figure 1 and 2 show a part of the results of a questionnaire.

Survey period: July, 2016
Respondents: 133 students (freshmen and sophomores) taking English classes at a private university in Kyoto

Analyzing the responses to some multiple choice questions, it was found that the most popular place for the students to study English was their “own room” (Fig. 1), but the place that they found the most efficient for studying English is their “university library” (Fig.2). This result indicates the possibility that the “academic library” has more needed elements than “your own room.”

As illustrated in these figures, the students recognize their university library as an efficient place for learning English.

Thus, the collaboration between academic libraries and English teachers should have a positive impact on students' EAP learning.

Future Research

An additional survey will be conducted on the students in the same classes this fall semester. Some assignments using the library reserve-book system will be given to the students, and whether this has any positive impact on students' English learning will be examined. In the long run, specifically designed research for EAP will be implemented to see if the collaboration between teachers and librarians can open a new door for EAP education in Japan.

Selected References

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- 5) Ministry of Education (1953). Kokuritsu daigaku toshokan kaizen yoko oyobi sono kaisetsu [Principles for the improvement of National University libraries]. Higher Education and Science Bureau.