

Beyond Grammar and Grades: Rethinking English Language Teaching as Intercultural Capital in Japanese Higher Education

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ABSTRACT: English-medium instruction (EMI) and English for Specific/Academic Purposes (ESP/EAP) in Japanese higher education are commonly framed in terms of correctness, intelligibility, or intercultural appropriateness. Yet such constructs do not explain why multilingual students may be understood but still struggle to have their contributions taken up as credible. This article advances English as Intercultural Capital (EIC), a framework that redefines the pedagogical outcome of EMI/ESP as recognition—the credible uptake of ideas in evaluative encounters such as peer review, conference discussion, and doctoral defense. Synthesizing Bourdieu’s theory of symbolic capital with raciolinguistic scholarship, English as a Lingua Franca/pronunciation research, and Academic Literacies, the article specifies how recognition depends on genre-specific cues, audience positioning, and interactional repair under asymmetry. EIC is operationalized through five design principles for power-attuned teaching and six dimensions—symbolic literacy, positional reflexivity, plurilingual agility, negotiation strategies, affective resilience, and ethical stance—each linked to independent, observable indicators. Illustrative vignettes demonstrate how recognition can be fostered in classroom, supervisory, and institutional contexts. By shifting evaluation from surface correctness to uptake-oriented practices, EIC offers a design framework for curriculum, assessment, and teacher education that aligns equity with rigor.

KEYWORDS: English as Intercultural Capital (EIC); Recognition in English-medium instruction (EMI); Symbolic capital; Academic literacies; Plurilingual scaffolding; Interactional competence; Equity in higher education

I. INTRODUCTION

Across East Asia—and in Japan in particular—English is widely framed as a pathway to mobility, international participation, and employability. Policy documents and institutional strategies emphasize test scores, communicative benchmarks, and global-ranking targets. Yet such technocratic framings risk obscuring a sociological fact: English also functions as symbolic power, allocating prestige and mediating access to valued academic and professional fields (Bourdieu, 1991). In Japanese higher education specifically, credibility cues—accent, stance, and institutional positioning—shape how contributions are received beyond formal “correctness” (Zhang, 2025).

A growing body of work helps explain why recognition is uneven. Raciolinguistic scholarship shows that judgments about language are fused with judgments about people; the “appropriateness” of a performance is co-constructed with racialized and geopolitical expectations (Flores & Rosa, 2015; Pennycook, 1998). Within English language teaching, critiques of native-speakerism document how certain passports, accents, and phenotypes continue to be treated as proxies for authority (Holliday, 2005, 2006). Meanwhile, English as a Lingua Franca and pronunciation research decenter native-likeness in favor of intelligibility and comprehensibility, and academic literacies scholars situate language work within institutional power and genre conventions (Seidlhofer, 2011; Jenkins, 2000; Levis, 2005; Lillis & Curry, 2010).

This article synthesizes those strands and advances English as Intercultural Capital (EIC): a conceptual framework for reorienting English-medium instruction (EMI) and English for Specific/Academic Purposes (ESP/EAP) in Japanese higher education. EIC defines the goal of instruction not as correctness or imitation of native-like norms but as symbolic negotiation: enabling students to achieve recognition—credible uptake of their ideas—across unequal cultural and linguistic borders. Rather than treating “intercultural competence” as a portable trait, EIC treats English as a relational resource whose value depends on how audiences read stance, identity, and evidence in specific fields. This contribution builds on analyses of how symbolic capital regulates access to elite pathways in education, reframing English as a resource whose value is contingent on field-specific recognition (Zhang, 2024b).

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1.1 Contribution

This article's distinctive contribution is to place recognition—the interactional uptake of ideas as credible and valuable—at the core of teachable outcomes for EMI/ESP, beyond intelligibility and appropriateness. While existing frameworks such as intercultural communicative competence (ICC), English as a Lingua Franca/pronunciation research (ELF), and Academic Literacies have each advanced the field, they stop short of explaining how credibility is actually granted or withheld in concrete academic encounters. Learners may be intelligible and “appropriate” yet still find their ideas sidelined, because recognition depends on tacit evaluative regimes.

To address this gap, the article integrates four perspectives—symbolic capital, raciolinguistics, ELF/pronunciation, and academic literacies—into a single, actionable stance for course and program design, assessment, and teacher education in Japan. The framework is operationalized through six dimensions (symbolic literacy, positional reflexivity, plurilingual agility, negotiation strategies, affective resilience, ethical stance) with guidance for aligning tasks and rubrics to each.

1.2 Methodological orientation and scope

We offer a conceptual, design-oriented contribution. Through an integrative synthesis of scholarship on symbolic capital, raciolinguistics, ELF and pronunciation research, and academic literacies, we elaborate the EIC construct model and derive practice-grounded design heuristics. The evidence is theoretical and illustrative: we use analytically constructed vignettes that distill recurrent patterns reported in EMI/ESP practice in Japanese higher education to demonstrate how tasks and rubrics align with the model's six dimensions. We make no causal or effectiveness claims; empirical evaluation lies outside the scope of this article. Japan serves as the focal context because it concentrates the tensions that EIC targets; transfer to other EMI/ESP settings is argued on theoretical grounds and presumes context-sensitive adaptation. Ethical considerations and researcher positionality inform the selection and phrasing of vignettes; no identifiable data are used.

1.3 Terminology and framing

To avoid ambiguity, we use the following terms in the order they function in the argument: we first name the focal outcome (recognition), then delimit adjacent performance notions (intelligibility, comprehensibility, accentedness), and finally state our repertoire stance (plurilingual).

Recognition refers to the context-dependent ratification by relevant evaluative audiences (e.g., examiners, supervisors, peers, employers) that a contribution counts as credible and valuable. It is analytically distinct from approval (affective liking) and appropriateness (norm-conforming fit). In the EIC framework, recognition is the primary learning outcome.

Intelligibility denotes listener understanding accurate enough for task completion. We distinguish this from comprehensibility (the perceived ease of understanding) and from accentedness (the degree of foreign accent). Intelligibility is treated as necessary but not sufficient for recognition.

Plurilingual is used in the CEFR sense to indicate a repertoire-based orientation in which speakers flexibly mobilize available linguistic and semiotic resources across tasks and interlocutors. It does not presuppose balanced bilingualism or discrete language boundaries and underpins the “plurilingual agility” dimension of EIC.

With these constructs specified, the argument proceeds as follows. The next section situates English in Japan through a power-analytic lens; we then reframe intercultural competence as situated negotiation under asymmetry; we define and operationalize the EIC construct for teaching and assessment; finally, we translate EIC into course- and program-level design heuristics and discuss institutional implications.

II. LANGUAGE, POWER, AND SYMBOLIC CAPITAL

2.1 English as symbolic capital

Bourdieu (1991) argues that linguistic forms accrue value as symbolic capital when they are recognized as legitimate within a field's taken-for-granted norms: linguistic exchanges are relations of symbolic power (p. 37); the consecration and codification of a “legitimate language” fix value and delimit acceptable usage (pp. 59–60); and acceptability hinges on the relation between habitus and market (p. 81). In higher education, legitimacy is frequently attached to performances read as international, often equated with Inner Circle Anglophone Anglophone conventions such as linear argumentative organization, impersonal stance, and standardized citation practices. Raciolinguistic scholarship elucidates the mechanism: evaluations of language and evaluations of people are co-constitutive, so substantively similar ideas can receive different uptake depending on who voices them and how they are semiotically styled (Flores & Rosa, 2015; Pennycook, 1998). In this sense, English functions less as a neutral skill than as capital whose value is contingent on recognition within specific evaluative regimes.

2.2 Micro-politics of uptake

A recurrent misalignment persists between stated outcomes (critical inquiry, research communication) and the foci of evaluation (pronunciation and surface form), even in ostensibly content-driven EMI courses. Academic-literacies research shows that writing

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and speaking are social practices embedded in institutional power, with gatekeeping criteria that are often tacit and locally negotiated (Lea & Street, 1998; Lillis & Curry, 2010). Within such regimes, uptake is frequently granted to performances that sound familiar—stylistically and phonologically—rather than to arguments that are analytically clear and well-supported. The pedagogical consequence is predictable: students learn to equate legitimacy with mimicry of recognizable Anglophone conventions, diverting attention from substantive reasoning and evidence to surface conformity.

2.3 Nativeness ideologies in evaluation and hiring

Despite sustained critique, native-speakerism remains a structuring ideology in ELT/EMI, aligning valued linguistic forms with imagined “native” (often white, Inner Circle) norms and using passport and accent as proxies for quality in hiring and evaluation (Holliday, 2005, 2006; Houghton & Rivers, 2013; Ruecker & Ives, 2015). Pronunciation research and ELF scholarship have re-centered intelligibility and comprehensibility and questioned the pedagogical relevance of native-like accent targets (Jenkins, 2000; Seidlhofer, 2011; Levis, 2005; Munro & Derwing, 1995; Derwing & Munro, 2005). Yet high-stakes assessments and editorial conventions often lag, creating contradictory signals for learners who must reconcile intelligibility-oriented instruction with uptake regimes that tacitly reward mimicry of prestige varieties.

2.4 Genre, field, and habitus

Disciplinary genres function as technologies of recognition: they sediment field-specific norms for stance, hedging, evidencing, and citation that allocate credibility (Swales, 1990; Hyland, 2004; Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1995). Yet novices are rarely taught to read these scripts explicitly; academic literacies work shows that such criteria are often tacit and locally negotiated within institutions and disciplines (Lea & Street, 1998; Lillis & Curry, 2010).

EIC therefore treats genre not as a template to imitate but as a value system to analyze. Core questions include: who is cite-worthy and why; how warrants and evidence are sequenced; which metadiscursive resources index credibility; and what identity work is expected of a “credible” author in this field. This analytical stance links genre to habitus: students learn to make their positioning reflexive and to design for recognition without defaulting to mimicry of prestige varieties.

2.5 Japanese higher education: context and recognition cues

Japanese universities have expanded EMI in response to national internationalization initiatives—most notably **Global 30** (MEXT, 2009) and the **Top Global University Project** (JSPS, n.d.). On many campuses this expansion takes pragmatic forms: English-medium tracks embedded within largely Japanese-medium curricula; discipline-specific EMI modules; and graduate seminars with English reading lists and bilingual discussion (Brown & Iyobe, 2014; Bradford & Brown, 2017; Rose & McKinley, 2018). Routine practices, however, can still signal monolingual preference—for example, course descriptions that equate “fluency” with near-native pronunciation, oral assessments that reward speed over clarity, and writing support that defaults to surface correction—patterns that dovetail with documented gaps between policy goals and classroom enactment (Aizawa & Rose, 2019). Consistent with empirical accounts from Japanese higher education, **credibility cues** such as accent, stance, and institutional positioning can shape uptake beyond formal correctness (Zhang, 2025).

2.6 Interim synthesis

Across Sections 2.1–2.5, English appears less as a neutral skill than as symbolic capital whose value turns on recognition within specific evaluative regimes. Uptake is mediated by tacit genre conventions, locally negotiated criteria, and nativeness ideologies that align prestige with particular forms and voices. Consequently, while programs often profess outcomes such as critical inquiry and research communication, assessment practices may privilege surface conformity (pronunciation, familiar stylistic cues) over analytic clarity and evidential warrant. In Japan, the expansion of EMI has widened opportunities for English-mediated participation, yet routine cues can still index monolingual preference and reward mimicry of prestige varieties; policy–practice gaps are well documented (Aizawa & Rose, 2019; Rose & McKinley, 2018). This diagnosis motivates the shift EIC proposes: from correctness as the primary proxy for quality to recognition literacy—making explicit how credibility is allocated, how intelligibility interacts with genre and stance, and how plurilingual resources can be mobilized without penalty.

2.7 Policy–practice alignment

At the policy level, internationalization discourses position English as a conduit to global networks and knowledge (MEXT, 2009; JSPS, n.d.). At the classroom level, in the absence of explicit criteria, practices can drift toward English-only routines and surface correctness. EIC seeks to harness policy momentum while reorienting classroom emphasis toward audience-oriented clarity, intelligibility, negotiation strategies, and ethical citation—capacities that secure uptake in disciplinary venues (Seidlhofer, 2011; Hyland, 2004). Evidence from Japan-based classroom research points to parallel shifts “beyond language,” emphasizing intercultural orientations that support recognition rather than mimicry (Hofmeyr, 2024). Alignment therefore requires meso- and micro-level enactment that makes evaluative criteria visible and trains students to navigate—and, when necessary, contest—the recognition regimes documented in Japanese EMI contexts (Aizawa & Rose, 2019; Rose & McKinley, 2018).

2.8 Sites of uptake policing

To make the foregoing argument concrete, we offer three analytically constructed illustrations that distill recurrent patterns in EMI/ESP practice. In oral examinations and defenses, responses that are explicitly signposted and paced for clarity can receive lower ratings than faster, more fluent-sounding delivery. Rater judgments are sensitive to speaking-rate and prosodic cues: moderate rates elicit higher comprehensibility, while both very slow and very fast speech are penalized; suprasegmental features (rate, pausing, pitch, stress) independently shape perceptions of comprehensibility and accentedness (Munro & Derwing, 2001; Kang, 2010).

In TA-mediated feedback channels, discussion threads often default to sentence-level correction unless higher-order criteria are made explicit, a tendency widely documented in L2-writing response. Without deliberate prompts toward stance, contribution, and audience alignment, form-focused edits can crowd out engagement with argumentation and evidence (Hyland & Hyland, 2006; Ferris, 2012).

In writing support, line-by-line editing frequently dominates because it is measurable and scalable, leaving genre–value issues tacit. Writing-center scholarship has long argued that support should privilege writers' rhetorical decision-making ("higher-order" concerns) over wholesale textual correction to avoid mistaking surface conformity for credibility (North, 1984). These are precisely the sites where an EIC-aligned design can redirect attention from surface features to field-relevant clarity, negotiation, and ethically positioned contribution.

III. FROM "INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE" TO SITUATED INTERCULTURALITY

3.1 Limits of trait-like competence lists

Canonical ICC models supplied higher education with a shared vocabulary of attitudes, knowledge, and skills, and they legitimized reflection and decentering as curricular goals (Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2006). As portable frameworks, they also enabled rubrication and program-level assessment.

In practice, however, ICC often devolves into culture-as-facts (country checklists, etiquette) and competence-as-traits (stable attributes located "in" the person). Two limitations follow. First, decontextualization: traits are treated as transferable across settings even though uptake is locally produced within institutional norms and power relations (Lillis & Curry, 2010). Second, neutralization: appeals to "appropriateness" can depoliticize interaction, masking asymmetries over who is believed, who is interrupted, and which accents are granted authority (Dervin, 2016).

The consequence is pedagogically predictable: students can score well on ICC checklists yet struggle in sites where legitimacy is actively policed—oral defenses, lab meetings, reviewer exchanges—because the interactional work that secures recognition (framing claims, aligning stance with genre, negotiating uptake, practicing ethical citation) was never foregrounded. EIC responds by shifting from trait-like competence to situated interculturality, i.e., designing for recognition under asymmetry.

3.2 Interculturality as negotiation under asymmetry

We conceptualize interculturality as the situated negotiation of meaning, legitimacy, and affect among unequally positioned speakers. The construct is operationalized through four anchors.

Anchor 1. Symbolic asymmetry

Definition: Legitimacy is conferred unevenly; formally identical moves receive different uptake depending on who performs them and how those moves index stance and authority.

Rationale: Fields carry doxa—normative expectations for stance, accent, and citation—that map onto status; recognition is allocated through genre-specific cues rather than abstract merit (Hyland, 2004; Lillis & Curry, 2010).

Pedagogical cue: Ask, "If two people make the same claim, who gets uptake—and why?" Students surface their field's credibility signals (e.g., claim–scope pairing, proof standards, stance alignment).

Anchor 2. Positional reflexivity

Definition: Speakers read how they are being read (novice/expert, insider/outsider, accented/native-like) and calibrate stance, explanatory depth, and pacing without self-erasure.

Rationale: Raciolinguistic ideologies shape evaluations; reflexive positioning pre-empts misrecognition by making audience, scope, and warranting explicit (Flores & Rosa, 2015; Dervin, 2016).

Observable practices: Early audience statements; explicit scope-setting where authority may be presumed lacking; calibrated hedging over silence.

Anchor 3. Dialogic co-construction (repair as competence)

Definition: Competence lies not in avoiding breakdowns but in managing them through clarification, confirmation, and redirect-to-evidence moves.

Rationale: Recognition moments are often live (Q&A, supervision); strategy use is teachable and helps retain the floor while advancing evidence (Dörnyei & Scott, 1997; Tarone, 1980, 1981).

Indicator: Subsequent questions shift to method or evidence; floor time is retained without a defensive tone.

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Anchor 4. Plurilingual alignment

Definition: Repertoires are treated as fluid resources rather than sealed codes; brief L1–L2 scaffolds preserve meaning en route to English-medium products.

Rationale: A repertoire-based view supports clarity without penalizing identity or range, consistent with translanguaging research (García & Wei, 2014).

Implementation: Parallel abstracts, bilingual glossaries, and targeted terminology bridges that prioritize audience-first clarity while keeping assessment in English.

Together, these anchors move IC from trait-lists to designable practices: reading symbolic asymmetries, positioning reflexively, managing dialogue in real time, and mobilizing repertoires for recognition under asymmetry.

3.3 What EIC keeps—and what it changes

EIC retains three core commitments while reorienting the instructional target. It keeps intercultural reflexivity as a legitimate curricular aim (Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2006); it adopts the ELF/pronunciation turn from native-likeness to intelligibility and comprehensibility as instructional targets (Jenkins, 2000; Levis, 2005, 2020; Seidlhofer, 2011); and it takes seriously the academic-literacies insight that discourse is institutionally situated and evaluated through genre-specific norms (Lillis & Curry, 2010; Hyland, 2004).

What changes is the outcome. EIC reframes the goal as recognition—credible uptake in field-specific events (e.g., Q&A, review cycles, lab meetings). The guiding question shifts from “Is this appropriate/intelligible?” to “Does this secure uptake as a credible contribution—and for which audiences?” Power, audience, and interactional work thus become explicit objects of teaching and assessment, rather than background conditions.

A practical diagnostic for instructors is whether students exhibit an “EIC signature” in performance: (i) early establishment of claim and scope tailored to the named audience; (ii) visible repair moves—clarification, confirmation, redirect-to-evidence—to secure precision; and (iii) a question trajectory that moves from surface form to method and evidence.

3.4 Design principles for power-attuned teaching

The following principles translate the EIC framework into classroom enactment. Each principle specifies the underlying rationale, pedagogical approach, and observable indicators.

Principle 1. Surface tacit criteria (“genre archaeology”).

Definition. Make venue-specific recognition cues explicit rather than assumed.

Rationale. Students cannot target invisible evaluative norms; genre expectations are locally negotiated and often tacit (Hyland, 2004; Lillis & Curry, 2010; Swales, 1990; Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1995).

Practice. Analyze editor letters, reviewer reports, and calls for papers to construct a recognition map of “what counts” in the venue—contribution types, stance signals, evidential standards, and recurrent fixes.

Indicator. Earlier and clearer claim-plus-scope statements; literature reviews aligned with venue-specific warranting and evidential practices (Hyland, 2004; Lillis & Curry, 2010).

Principle 2. Normalize plurilingual scaffolds for precision.

Definition. Treat repertoires as resources rather than obstacles, using brief L1–L2 stabilizations to preserve meaning en route to English-medium outputs.

Rationale. Certain concepts travel poorly across codes; controlled scaffolds enhance precision without penalizing identity or range (García & Wei, 2014).

Practice. Incorporate parallel abstracts with a 120–150-word rationale; compile bilingual glossaries with “frozen” English renderings for key terms.

Indicator. Reduced “What do you mean by X?” queries; more stable terminology and tighter abstracts across drafts (García & Wei, 2014).

Principle 3. Build a repertoire for negotiation.

Definition. Frame competence as the ability to manage ambiguity and breakdowns in real time.

Rationale. Recognition often hinges on live repair during Q&A or supervision; strategic moves are teachable (Dörnyei & Scott, 1997; Tarone, 1980, 1981).

Practice. Rehearse compact interventions—scope clarification, meaning clarification (“X or Y?”), and redirect-to-evidence—and require at least two moves in Q&A drills.

Indicator. Subsequent questions focus on methods or evidence; instructor “rescue” is reduced; speakers retain the floor without adopting a defensive tone (Dörnyei & Scott, 1997; Tarone, 1980, 1981).

Principle 4. Support affective resilience.

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Definition. Address the face-threat of asymmetry so that participation continues after challenge.

Rationale. Withdrawal undermines recognition even when contributions are strong; reflexive affect work sustains engagement (Dervin, 2016).

Practice. Incorporate short resilience reflections after difficult exchanges; script re-entry lines (e.g., “Let me restate the claim with scope”).

Indicator. Students continue to participate after critical feedback and articulate concrete next steps (Dervin, 2016).

Principle 5. Foreground citation ethics.

Definition. Make inclusion and exclusion decisions visible as part of the argument’s credibility.

Rationale. Citation practices signal whose knowledge counts; reliance on canonical sources alone reproduces asymmetries (Lillis & Curry, 2010).

Practice. Require inclusion of at least one peripheral or under-cited source with rationale; discuss when accommodation to venue norms or principled deviation is warranted.

Indicator. Reviewer attention shifts from “add canonical sources” to “justify inclusion/exclusion decisions” (Lillis & Curry, 2010).

3.5 Debates and convergences

A substantive convergence has emerged across ICC, ELF/pronunciation, and Academic Literacies: evaluation is negotiated rather than inherent. Recent work shifts attention from correctness policing to the conditions under which contributions secure uptake, with intelligibility treated as necessary but ultimately mediated by audience, genre, and local evaluative regimes (Hyland, 2004; Lillis & Curry, 2010; Seidlhofer, 2011; Levis, 2020).

A frequent objection is that “recognition” simply renames appropriateness. It does not. Appropriateness indexes norm-conformity at the level of form or etiquette; recognition denotes an interactional outcome observable in the forward movement of discourse—restated claims, substantive follow-ups, content-focused reviews, and extended participation rights. Intelligibility and appropriateness are enabling conditions, but without attention to power, audience, and the interactional work through which credibility is granted, they do not secure uptake.

The consequence for pedagogy is straightforward: recognition is a teachable construct. The remainder of the paper specifies its six dimensions and embeds them in assessable tasks and rubrics.

IV. ENGLISH AS INTERCULTURAL CAPITAL (EIC): CONSTRUCT AND DIMENSIONS

4.1 What EIC is—and why it matters

We advance the construct of English as Intercultural Capital (EIC) to account for how multilingual scholars secure recognition of their contributions across stratified linguistic hierarchies.

Definition. EIC designates the capacity to achieve credible uptake of ideas across linguistic and cultural borders where legitimacy is unevenly distributed. It is not a fixed personal attribute but a relational practice that accrues value only in situated assessment encounters—such as peer review, conference discussion, or doctoral defense—where institutional gatekeepers determine whose contributions count (Bourdieu, 1991).

Conceptual integration. EIC draws together insights from three established literatures while redirecting their focus toward recognition. From intercultural communicative competence (ICC), it adopts an emphasis on reflexivity and decentering as prerequisites for engagement. From research on English as a lingua franca (ELF) and pronunciation, it incorporates the principle that intelligibility and comprehensibility, rather than proximity to “native” norms, constitute the relevant thresholds (Jenkins, 2000; Levis, 2005, 2020). From Academic Literacies, it foregrounds genre conventions, institutional power, and the situated nature of evaluation (Lillis & Curry, 2010; Hyland, 2004). Taken together, these perspectives converge on a single evaluative question: *Do relevant audiences treat this contribution as credible, and through which signals is such credibility conferred?*

Boundary conditions. EIC must be distinguished from perfectionist or deficit notions of “good English.” Its threshold is intelligibility, not native-like accent, and it does not require the erasure of speaker identity. Where full accommodation would compromise precision or ethical commitments, *principled deviation*—articulated and justified—remains within the construct’s ambit (Seidlhofer, 2011; Levis, 2020).

Transfer conditions. The salience of EIC varies across contexts. It is most diagnostic where evaluative criteria are codified yet interactionally negotiated, such as Q&A exchanges, peer review, or defenses, particularly in multilingual cohorts. By contrast, in strictly monolingual or fully asynchronous written environments, where opportunities for negotiation are minimal, EIC is less predictive of outcomes.

Illustrative contrast. Consider two students presenting identical findings. One explicitly frames the claim and scope, performs a scope-clarifying repair in response to questioning, and justifies the inclusion of a peripheral source; the other does not. The first

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receives method-focused follow-up questions, while the second receives little substantive uptake. The contrast lies not in accent or fluency but in the deployment of recognitional signals that condition credibility (Jenkins, 2000; Dörnyei & Scott, 1997).

4.2 Recognition as the outcome: levels, signals, and misreads

Within the EIC framework, recognition is treated as the central outcome variable. Unlike intelligibility or appropriateness, which operate at the level of utterances or turns, recognition indexes whether contributions are taken up as credible in interactional and institutional settings. This subsection specifies the scope of recognition, its empirically tractable signals, and the frequent misreads that obscure its operation.

Scope. Recognition can be observed at three nested levels of practice. At the *micro-level* of interaction, it is evident when interlocutors accurately restate a claim, accept clarifications, and redirect ensuing questions toward methods or evidence. At the *meso-level* of courses and programs, recognition is reflected in longitudinal shifts across drafts, presentations, and peer review cycles, where feedback increasingly targets argumentation and evidential warrants rather than surface form, and where speakers demonstrate repair strategies that allow them to retain the conversational floor. At the *macro-level* of fields and venues, recognition is manifested in reviews that focus on substantive contribution, in the acceptance of justified departures from genre templates, and in authorial decisions to target venues that align with the work's epistemic positioning (Hyland, 2004; Lillis & Curry, 2010).

Signals. Recognition is not an abstract quality but one that leaves observable traces. These include accurate restatements of claims by peers, substantive follow-up questions, reviewer emphasis on method and evidence, and consequential invitations such as revise-and-resubmit decisions, collaboration offers, or opportunities to chair sessions. Each of these constitutes a codable indicator that recognition has been secured.

Misreads. Recognition is frequently confused with proximate but unreliable proxies. Applause is often mistaken for recognition, though it indexes politeness rather than uptake. Similarly, processing-rate bias leads listeners to conflate speed of delivery with expertise, while prestige-accent bias equates native-like pronunciation with rigor. Intelligibility is necessary for recognition, but none of these proxies alone guarantees credibility (Levis, 2020; Seidlhofer, 2011).

Construct map. Recognition thus needs to be analytically distinguished from neighboring constructs. Intelligibility refers to listener understanding without strain at the utterance level, typically evidenced by listener ratings. Appropriateness involves conformity to pragmatic norms at the level of turns, evidenced through judgments of politeness or formality. Recognition, by contrast, operates at the level of the episode or event, evidenced through accurate restatement, content-focused follow-ups, revise-and-resubmit outcomes, or the retention of floor time. These constructs are related but not substitutable, and conflating them risks obscuring the mechanisms through which credibility is differentially conferred.

4.3 Six operational dimensions

Framing.

EIC is operationalized through six dimensions. Each specifies (a) a definition, (b) the mechanism by which it supports recognition, and (c) at least one independent indicator that makes the dimension observable in practice. Table X summarizes them in compact form. To avoid circularity, indicators are distinct from the instructional moves themselves. After the table, brief illustrations and failure modes are provided to retain nuance.

Table 4-3 Six dimensions of English as Intercultural Capital

Dimension	Definition (what it is)	Mechanism (why it matters)	Indicator (how recognition shows)
1. Symbolic literacy	Reading how legitimacy is allocated in a venue (stance, genre, citation politics).	Visible alignment with venue values reduces misattribution to "language deficiency."	Feedback shifts from wording edits to method/argument requests.
2. Positional reflexivity	Reading how one is being read (novice/expert; insider/outsider; accented/native-like).	Early audience/scope cues pre-empt misrecognition and counter credibility penalties.	Explicit audience/scope statements; questions move toward design/evidence.

3. Plurilingual agility	Using controlled L1–L2 scaffolds (e.g., glossaries, parallel abstracts).	Stabilizes meaning; prevents semantic drift; supports precision.	Fewer definition queries; stable terminology across drafts and teams.
4. Negotiation strategies	Repairing breakdowns via clarification, confirmation, redirect-to-evidence.	Keeps the floor and shifts interaction toward substance.	Peers restate claims accurately; speaker retains floor time.
5. Affective resilience	Sustaining participation after critique or silence.	Converts pushback into constructive next moves; prevents withdrawal.	Continued Q&A turns; documented revision or resubmission steps.
6. Ethical stance	Inclusive citation and justified language choices in multilingual contexts.	Fairness broadens whose knowledge counts and signals credibility.	Reviewer prompts shift from “add canon” to “justify inclusion/exclusion.”

1) Illustrations and failure modes

• Symbolic literacy.

Illustration: A submission that foregrounds scope, situates claims in venue debates, and includes a citation-diversity note draws questions about methods rather than “language.”

Failure mode: Investing heavily in surface polish while ignoring genre/power cues; or deploying open-science badges decoratively without verifiable transparency.

• Positional reflexivity.

Illustration: “For readers outside X, we define Y and test under Z constraints; limitations are A–B.” Questions then target design rather than basic definitions.

Failure mode: Assuming shared background knowledge; interlocutors fixate on accent or readability instead of the argument.

Plurilingual agility.

Illustration: A bilingual glossary (L1 term → frozen L2 rendering) stabilizes usage across drafts; reviewers encounter consistent labels.

Failure mode: Ad-hoc translation of key constructs, leading to shifting terminology and reviewer confusion.

Negotiation strategies.

Illustration: Compact repair—“To clarify: our claim concerns X under Y; evidence is on p.6”—elicits accurate restatement and method-focused follow-ups.

Failure mode: Over-apologizing or widening the claim mid-exchange; results in topic drift and loss of the floor.

Affective resilience.

Illustration: After critical reviews, an author drafts three concrete revisions, resubmits, and receives content-focused feedback.

Failure mode: Withdrawal after pushback; opportunities for clarification and revision are lost.

• Ethical stance.

Illustration: Methods section justifies inclusion of regional studies; reviewers respond by refining criteria, not checking pedigree.

Failure mode: Tokenistic or opaque citation rationales; reviewers default to gatekeeping on canonical sources.

Synthesis.

Together, these six dimensions operationalize EIC in observable ways. They specify how recognition is secured beyond intelligibility and appropriateness, provide indicators that can be coded in tasks and rubrics, and make explicit where learners and instructors can intervene. By coupling concise indicators (Table X) with nuanced examples and common pitfalls, the framework remains both teachable and inspectable in practice.

4.4 Positioning EIC among adjacent constructs

The distinctiveness of English as Intercultural Capital becomes clearer when set against adjacent frameworks in applied linguistics and intercultural communication. Although EIC draws on insights from intercultural communicative competence (ICC), English

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as a lingua franca and pronunciation research (ELF), and Academic Literacies, it reframes their contributions by placing recognition, rather than appropriateness, intelligibility, or genre mastery, at the center of evaluation.

In relation to ICC, the overlap lies in the emphasis on reflexivity and decentering as prerequisites for meaningful intercultural engagement. However, while ICC frameworks typically assess the appropriateness or effectiveness of interaction, EIC is concerned with whether a contribution is granted credibility in evaluative encounters such as conference discussions or peer review. The outcome variable shifts from social harmony to epistemic uptake. On this basis, we can hypothesize that in comparable student cohorts, indicators of EIC—such as the presence of content-focused follow-ups, revise-and-resubmit invitations, or accurate restatements of claims—will predict recognition outcomes above and beyond ICC-style appropriateness ratings (Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2006).

A similar relationship can be seen with ELF and pronunciation research. This body of work has convincingly demonstrated that intelligibility and comprehensibility, not native-like accent, are the relevant thresholds for successful international communication (Jenkins, 2000; Seidlhofer, 2011; Levis, 2005, 2020). EIC incorporates this insight, yet it also highlights the gatekeeping dimension that ELF research often brackets. Intelligible contributions may nonetheless fail to secure uptake if listeners continue to privilege prestige accents or if authors misread venue-specific signals of legitimacy. Recognition, therefore, is contingent not only on comprehensibility but also on the interaction between intelligibility and symbolic cues. We therefore advance the proposition that, once intelligibility is controlled for, prestige-accent cues will not independently predict recognition when EIC signals such as explicit audience rationales, justified departures from convention, or successful repair moves are present.

The Academic Literacies tradition provides another useful comparison. This perspective has illuminated the ways in which academic writing and communication are institutionally situated practices shaped by genre and audience expectations (Lillis & Curry, 2010; Hyland, 2004). EIC takes this insight further by arguing that decisive moments of recognition are not confined to textual production but also occur in live interactional sites such as viva examinations, review meetings, and conference Q&A sessions. In these contexts, recognition hinges on whether interlocutors treat a contribution as credible enough to warrant further substantive engagement. Interactional moves such as scope-clarifying repair or the retention of floor time operate as mediators between genre-fit and evaluative uptake. This leads to a third proposition: recognition outcomes in such settings are best explained not only by textual conformity to genre conventions but also by the interactional deployment of EIC signals.

Taken together, these comparisons clarify what is novel about EIC. It does not displace ICC, ELF, or Academic Literacies, but rather redirects their insights toward a sharper evaluative focus. By specifying recognition as the central outcome, EIC identifies how credibility is actively conferred or withheld in multilingual academic spaces. This reorientation provides a theoretical lens capable of explaining why intelligible, polite, or genre-appropriate performances may still fail to secure uptake, and why recognition requires a construct that integrates but also transcends its precursors.

4.5 From construct to practice: alignment, trajectories, and disciplinary variation

For EIC to function as a pedagogically useful and assessable construct, its dimensions must be translated into instructional and evaluative practice. This translation requires three forms of operationalization: alignment across tasks, rubrics, and evidence; sensitivity to learning trajectories in which recognition emerges through incremental moves; and attention to disciplinary variation, which shapes how credibility is conferred in different epistemic fields.

The first requirement is alignment. Tasks must be designed to elicit recognition signals, rubrics must evaluate those signals rather than accent likeness, and evidence protocols must document how recognition is secured or withheld across time. A task that requires students to articulate audience rationales, for example, should be accompanied by rubrics that reward explicit scope framing and portfolios that record whether subsequent questions shift toward methods or evidence. Validity rests on whether these layers converge. Fairness, meanwhile, is safeguarded by reporting intelligibility separately from accent preference, by auditing for processing-rate biases, and by permitting plurilingual scaffolds such as parallel abstracts or glossaries where meaning preservation requires them (Messick, 1996; Kunnan, 2004).

The second requirement is recognition of learning trajectories. Recognition is rarely achieved through wholesale transformation but rather through small, teachable moves that yield disproportionate returns. Hedging provides one illustration: when calibrated to align claims with evidential limits, hedging transforms over-generalizations into bounded, credible assertions. Metadiscursive positioning in Q&A offers another: a concise clarification of scope not only prevents drift but also redirects dialogue toward evidence. Citation practices also function recognitionally when they choreograph inclusion and exclusion, justifying the presence of peripheral sources rather than reproducing canonical lists. These micro-gains are particularly valuable because they are observable, codable, and auditable, allowing recognition to be tracked across drafts, feedback cycles, and interactional transcripts.

The third requirement is attention to disciplinary variation. Recognition is not conferred by identical signals across all fields but is mediated by local values and epistemic logics. In the experimental sciences, recognition tends to hinge on transparent design, error accounting, and diagnostic reporting. In computing and data science, credibility is indexed through benchmark improvements, ablation tests, and code hygiene. In the social sciences, it is linked to theoretical positioning, transparency of

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method, and handling of counterevidence. In the humanities, argumentative arc and epistemic care matter as much as stylistic precision. In business and policy domains, recognition depends on decision relevance and the articulation of trade-offs. These differences underscore the importance of teaching recognition as a heuristic for reading local value systems rather than as a universal template.

Such disciplinary variation can be rendered visible through lightweight, replicable methods. Programs may assemble small corpora of editorial letters, review reports, or award texts, annotate them for stance and evidential cues, and derive provisional hypotheses about what counts as credible. Cross-venue comparisons then highlight convergences and divergences, while peer validation prevents overfitting. Reliability can be monitored through cross-group swaps or drift checks, ensuring that scripts remain heuristics rather than rigid formulas. The purpose is not to codify immutable rules of success but to equip learners with tools for interpreting the evaluative criteria of the communities they seek to enter.

Taken together, these practices move EIC from abstract construct to operational principle. Alignment ensures that what is taught, assessed, and evidenced are the same recognitional signals. Trajectory-based design highlights that credibility accrues through small but powerful moves. Disciplinary variation and local scripting methods ensure that recognition is taught not as rote compliance but as situated interpretation. By integrating these elements, programs can make recognition both teachable and inspectable while preserving the flexibility required for equitable participation across diverse academic fields.

V. DESIGNING FOR EIC: CURRICULUM, ASSESSMENT, AND TEACHER EDUCATION

5.1 COURSE ARCHITECTURES THAT MAKE RECOGNITION VISIBLE

Recognition can be made visible in curriculum architecture through constructive alignment: tasks elicit recognitional signals, rubrics evaluate those signals rather than surface accuracy, and portfolios document cumulative evidence across time. Four domains illustrate how recognition can be operationalized at the level of course design.

5.1.1 *Genre archaeology as recognition mapping*

Academic genres are not simply templates but arenas where legitimacy is negotiated. Systematic analysis of reviewer reports, editorial decisions, and accepted abstracts enables students to construct “recognition maps” that surface stance conventions, warranting logics, and citation practices (Hyland, 2004; Lillis & Curry, 2010). This approach makes evaluative criteria explicit and shifts learner effort from cosmetic polishing toward positioning contributions strategically within disciplinary debates.

5.1.2 *Plurilingual scaffolding for precision and audience alignment*

Multilingual teams frequently risk semantic drift when working through English. Controlled scaffolding—such as bilingual glossaries or parallel abstracts accompanied by rationales—stabilizes terminology and clarifies audience orientation (García & Wei, 2014; Canagarajah, 2013). Such practices strengthen recognition by ensuring that reviewers encounter stable constructs across drafts and that term choices are auditable rather than improvised.

5.1.3 *Interactional practice in recognition events*

Because credibility is often granted or withheld in live exchanges, curricular design should incorporate opportunities to rehearse recognition moves such as clarification, confirmation, and redirect-to-evidence (Dörnyei & Scott, 1997; Tarone, 1981). Embedding these practices in compact workshops reframes breakdowns as occasions for competence, as when a precise clarification retains the conversational floor and redirects questioning toward methodological substance.

5.1.4 *Sequencing for cumulative recognition evidence*

Recognition is best supported when activities are sequenced so that signals are progressively introduced, rehearsed, and consolidated. A course spine might begin with recognition maps, move to stance and citation practices, integrate plurilingual scaffolds, and culminate in interactional rehearsal. Portfolios that assemble these artifacts provide cumulative evidence of recognitional growth and allow moderation anchored in observable outcomes.

5.2 ASSESSMENT ECOSYSTEMS FOR EIC (PROGRAM-LEVEL DESIGN)

Isolated tasks cannot capture recognition as an outcome. Instead, programs require assessment ecosystems that triangulate across artifacts, align rubrics with recognitional signals rather than accent prestige, and safeguard fairness through calibration and transparency. Four interlocking principles define such ecosystems.

5.2.1 *Blueprinting artifacts, dimensions, and indicators*

EIC assessment begins with a blueprint that maps diverse artifacts—abstracts with rationales, coded Q&A excerpts, reviewer-response memos, recognition maps, and final presentations—onto the six dimensions and their independent indicators. Triangulation across artifacts verifies whether signals such as accurate restatement, question shifts to evidence, or justified citation choices converge consistently over time (Messick, 1996). This strategy enhances validity and addresses student-reported concerns about fairness (Zhang, 2024a).

5.2.2 *Rubrics targeting recognition rather than accent likeness*

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Rubrics should assess what predicts uptake—intelligibility and recognitional signals—rather than proxies of accent prestige (Jenkins, 2000; Levis, 2005, 2020). Independent rating scales can capture audience/scope signaling, negotiation/repair, ethical citation rationale, and recognition evidence. Anchors must be tied to observable outcomes, such as accurate restatement followed by method-focused discussion. Narrative justifications linked to coded excerpts prevent reversion to fluency prestige and make assessment decisions auditable.

5.2.3 Reliability, calibration, and bias audits

Sustained fairness requires calibration routines that anchor judgments in shared standards. Co-coding anchored samples and reporting agreement metrics such as κ or ICC/G-study (Shrout & Fleiss, 1979; Shavelson & Webb, 1991) foster transparency. Regular audits can detect processing-rate biases or prestige-accent effects, with intelligibility coded separately from accent preference (Lev-Ari & Keysar, 2010). Corrective measures—mid-semester recalibration, rotating double-coding, and adjudication notes—stabilize judgments and strengthen the credibility of recognition as an assessable construct.

5.2.4 Evidence reporting and consequential validity

For recognition to be realized as an outcome, instructors must themselves be equipped to notice, foster, and assess recognitional signals. Teacher preparation therefore extends beyond linguistic correction to encompass capacities for interpreting evaluative regimes, coaching interactional practices, and mitigating bias. Five domains outline the forms of professional expertise needed to sustain EIC-oriented pedagogy.

5.3.1 Capability profile

An EIC capability profile specifies the competencies that instructors require to enact recognition-based teaching. These include the ability to interpret venue-specific signals of legitimacy, to support repair and floor management in interaction, to mediate between L1 and L2 resources without penalizing learners, to guide students in ethical citation practices, and to apply assessment literacy that distinguishes intelligibility from prestige proxies (Hyland, 2004; Lillis & Curry, 2010). Such a profile enables teachers to shift evaluative attention from surface form to practices that predict uptake, thereby anchoring feedback in recognition rather than linguistic conformity.

5.3.2 Calibration labs

Because recognition is distributed across interactional cues, instructor judgments must be aligned through calibration. Co-coding anonymized transcripts or video clips with an EIC codebook allows teachers to classify audience signaling, repair strategies, and negotiation moves, and to evaluate whether these lead to substantive uptake (Carless, 2020). Calibration reduces drift, fosters transparency, and produces more stable inter-rater agreement, ensuring that assessments of recognition are based on shared criteria rather than individual preference.

5.3.3 Observation protocols

Peer observation can function as a mechanism for sustaining recognitional pedagogy in classroom practice. Low-inference instruments allow observers to record whether core practices—such as explicit audience rationales, modeled repair strategies, and transparent rationale grading—are consistently enacted. When used for collegial learning rather than surveillance, observation protocols create feedback loops in which instructors adjust course design while remaining accountable to recognition as a construct.

5.3.4 Micro-credentials

Institutional uptake of EIC-oriented pedagogy can be supported through micro-credentials that recognize instructor expertise in discrete areas, such as genre archaeology, Q&A facilitation, or plurilingual scaffold design. To earn a credential, instructors submit both an instructional artifact and a reflective account of how it supports recognition. This model not only incentivizes teacher engagement but also builds a curated repository of validated practices that circulate across courses and programs.

5.3.5 Language ideology and bias

Finally, teacher preparation must explicitly address raciolinguistic ideologies and the conflation of intelligibility with prestige accent (Flores & Rosa, 2015; Lev-Ari & Keysar, 2010; Dragojević et al., 2020). Case analyses and bias-spotting exercises can sensitize instructors to the ways evaluative shortcuts distort recognition. Embedding commitments to separate intelligibility from accent preference into rubrics, and revisiting these commitments during calibration, inoculates instructors against regression to prestige-based judgments. Such critical engagement is essential if recognition is to function as a fair and equitable outcome across diverse student populations.

5.4 Writing-center integration

Writing centers represent a critical institutional site where recognition-oriented pedagogy can be enacted and reinforced. Traditional consultations often prioritize sentence-level correctness or stylistic polish, yet such practices risk obscuring the interactional and evidential dynamics through which credibility is actually conferred. Reorienting writing support toward recognition involves placing argumentative clarity, evidential alignment, and audience uptake ahead of surface-level language work (Lillis & Curry, 2010; Black & Wiliam, 1998).

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In practice, this orientation means that consultations begin by clarifying the intended claim, scope, and evidential structure, only addressing linguistic clarity once intelligibility is compromised. Tools such as recognition maps, claim-and-scope templates, and exemplar rebuttals provide resources for guiding students toward uptake-oriented revisions. Importantly, consultation notes can document the sequence of interventions, creating an auditable record that feeds into program-level moderation and ensures that writing-center activity aligns with curricular and assessment frameworks.

Sustaining this shift requires institutional safeguards. Consultant calibration sessions can ensure that recognition-first priorities are consistently applied, while bias audits help separate intelligibility judgments from prestige accent preferences. When enacted systematically, writing centers become more than remedial language services: they function as recognition laboratories where students rehearse the positioning of their contributions, and where institutions can generate evidence of equitable outcomes across diverse learner groups.

5.5 Recognition and equity in EMI

Foregrounding recognition as the central outcome of EMI also reframes debates on equity and fairness. Conventional evaluation models often reproduce stratification by privileging proximity to prestige accents or Inner-Circle norms, thereby disadvantaging multilingual and racialized students (Flores & Rosa, 2015). Such practices implicitly conflate linguistic identity with epistemic authority, reducing credibility to surface features of speech rather than to the substance of argument and evidence.

An EIC orientation challenges this logic by making recognitional signals—stance alignment, repair strategies, inclusive citation practices—the primary basis for evaluation. These signals are both teachable and auditable, providing independent indicators of uptake that reduce reliance on identity-laden proxies. In doing so, EIC broadens the conditions under which contributions are recognized as credible, ensuring that equity is not an incidental benefit but a constitutive feature of pedagogy.

This equity lens positions EIC within wider movements for raciolinguistic justice and decolonial knowledge production. By shifting the evaluative gaze from accent mimicry to practices of argumentation and uptake, EMI programs can expand whose voices are legitimized in international education. Recognition thus becomes not only a pedagogical construct but also an ethical stance: a commitment to ensuring that credibility is allocated fairly in multilingual academic spaces.

VI. ILLUSTRATIVE VIGNETTES (CONSTRUCTED; ANALYTIC)

Provenance and purpose. The scenarios below are constructed, illustrative vignettes. Their role in this conceptual/design paper is to instantiate mechanisms—to show how the dimensions of English as Intercultural Capital (EIC) become visible and teachable in routine higher-education settings. They are not reports of empirical data and make no causal claims. Each analytic note links the depicted moves to well-established literatures (ELF/pronunciation; interactional competence; academic literacies; translanguaging; formative assessment), making the design logic inspectable (Jenkins, 2000; Levis, 2005, 2020; Dörnyei & Scott, 1997; Tarone, 1980, 1981; Lillis & Curry, 2010; García & Wei, 2014; Canagarajah, 2013; Black & Wiliam, 1998; Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

How to read and evaluate. Each case follows Context → Intervention (EIC moves) → Outcome, then a brief Analytic note naming (a) the activated EIC dimensions and (b) a recognition signal (what changed in audience uptake). Instructors can adapt the same structure to generate local vignettes for their disciplines.

Ethics note. All details are fictional or generalized; no human subjects were involved.

6.1 The accented economist (presentation + Q&A)

Context. A third-year economics major rehearses a difference-in-differences study on policy X. Early critiques fixate on article usage and r/l contrasts; the identification strategy receives little attention.

Intervention (EIC moves).

- **Front-load claim + scope.** “We estimate short-run effects of X on Y in sector Z using difference-in-differences.”
Add an uncertainty budget slide. Parallel-trends checks, placebo tests, bandwidth/cluster robustness, and a note on external validity bounds.
- **Script repair prompts for Q&A.** “*To be precise*, we estimate short-run effects; long-run dynamics are out of scope.”
“Are you asking about functional form or instrument validity?”
- **Cue the chair.** Provide a one-line summary for the session chair to paraphrase at Q&A launch (“Claim bounded to short-run; identification via ...”).

Outcome. At the conference, discussants probe specification choices, diagnostics, and transportability; accent goes unremarked. The chair restates the claim accurately; follow-ups request robustness details rather than language corrections.

Analytic note. Dimensions activated: symbolic literacy, negotiation strategies, affective resilience. Recognition signal: questions shift from phonology to method; accurate restatement plus method-focused follow-ups. This reflects intelligibility-over-nativeness (Jenkins, 2000; Levis, 2005, 2020) and interactional repair in Q&A (Dörnyei & Scott, 1997; Tarone, 1980).

6.2 Translanguaging in a robotics lab (intra-group practice)

Context. A mixed-proficiency robotics lab shows slippage between whiteboard reasoning and manuscript prose; rapid speakers dominate turns, and key terms drift across drafts.

Intervention (EIC moves).

- **Time-box L1 bursts** during problem-solving sprints, then translate up to English for shared notes (designated scribe; versioned doc).
- **Build a bilingual glossary** (term → L1 label → frozen English rendering → one-line rationale + example) and keep it in the repo/README.
- **Draft a 200-word parallel internal abstract** (L1 + English) each sprint with an explicit **audience/scope line** to detect conceptual drift.
- **Rotate chair/turn-taking** and **script micro-repairs** (“*To be precise*, do we mean torque ripple or positional jitter?”).

Outcome. A quieter member chairs troubleshooting; sprint notes converge with manuscript prose; presentation hand-offs are smooth; mock-review shifts from “define X” to questions on diagnostics and benchmarking.

Analytic note. Dimensions activated: plurilingual agility, positional reflexivity, symbolic literacy (plus negotiation strategies via repair prompts). Recognition signal: redistributed floor time and ratified L1-scaffolded contributions in English artifacts; definitional queries drop while method questions rise—consistent with translanguaging as resource (García & Wei, 2014; Canagarajah, 2013) and genre-aware documentation (Lillis & Curry, 2010).

6.3 “Reviewer 2” and ethical citation (genre work)

Context. A sociology manuscript receives the stock critique: “Insufficient engagement with mainstream literature.”

Intervention (EIC moves).

- **Run genre archaeology.** Read recent editorials, desk-reject notes, and accepted articles to infer stance expectations and citation choreography.
- **Balance canon + periphery with rationale.** Add two canonical touchstones to locate the contribution, and retain regional studies with a methods-based justification (“local data capture institutional features central to identification”).
- **Structure the response letter.** **Gratitude** → **Action** → **Rationale**: thank the reviewer; specify “add/change/justify”; tie each decision to audience (who needs what) and evidence (how the change improves warranting). Include one-sentence deviation rationale where you keep a non-canonical source.
- **Make signals visible.** Insert a brief “scope fence” in the manuscript and a sentence explaining why regional evidence tests the boundary of the claim.

Outcome. The revise-and-resubmit endorses inclusion of regional scholarship; subsequent requests target framing and limits rather than pedigree. Reviewer tone shifts from gatekeeping to method dialogue.

Analytic note. Dimensions: ethical stance, symbolic literacy, negotiation strategies. **Recognition signal:** boundary-policing comments decline; follow-ups center on argument/method. This is a classic Academic Literacies inflection—treating genre as situated social practice (Lillis & Curry, 2010).

6.4 Chairing the multilingual meeting (leadership as discourse)

Context. A doctoral student perceived as “quiet” must chair a fast-paced lab meeting with mixed proficiencies and uneven turn-taking.

Intervention (EIC moves).

- **Pre-circulate a one-page agenda with time boxes and explicit pause points for checks.**
- **Set tempo norms on opening.** “I’ll pause after each segment for two questions; please flag ‘clarify’ vs. ‘challenge’.”
- **Signal transitions and floor rights.** “Switching to implications now”; “We’ll hear A, then B, then questions.”
- **Use targeted repair and parking.** “*To be precise*, the question is about the ablation, not the baseline—let me finish this method note, then I’ll take yours.”
- **Redistribute turns.** Quick round-robin on one item; invite a quieter member to summarize the decision line.

Outcome. Colleagues describe the session as “clear” and “well run”; interruptions drop; decisions are restated accurately; the student is asked to chair again.

Analytic note. Dimensions: positional reflexivity, negotiation strategies. Recognition signal: explicit attributions of clarity/leadership and renewed chairing invitations (expanded interactional rights). The move-set draws on interactional-competence repertoires of clarification, confirmation, and floor management (Dörnyei & Scott, 1997).

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6.5 Writing-center shift (feedback ecology)

Context. TA comments habitually target grammar; students revise sentences rather than arguments and audience fit.

Intervention (EIC moves).

- **Adopt two-layer feedback.** **Layer-1** (audience, argument, evidence, stance) must precede **Layer-2** (language that blocks clarity).
- **Calibrate on anchors.** Use an anchor pack (three anonymized samples + 120–150-word rationales) to align staff on Layer-1 priorities.
- **Require an audience rationale.** With each draft, students submit a 120-word audience rationale (“who, what they credit, what I foregrounded”).
- **Evidence-tied comments.** TAs quote lines/figures when giving Layer-1 notes (e.g., “Move *claim+scope* to line 1; link Figure 2 to boundary Z”).
- **Sequence check.** Consult notes code L1→L2 order; grammar-only sessions disallowed unless intelligibility is at risk.

Outcome. Drafts exhibit earlier *claim+scope*, restructured sections, and clearer evidence display; rubric gains appear on audience orientation and rhetorical clarity; surface error rates fall as a by-product.

Analytic note. Dimensions: symbolic literacy, ethical stance (feedback ethics). **Recognition signal:** more content-focused comments and clearer contribution signaling in subsequent drafts. Consistent with formative-assessment evidence on explicit criteria and actionable feedback (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

6.6 Industry interview reframed (external stakeholder)

Context. An industry liaison equates speed with competence and labels the student’s English “too slow”; substance is not being evaluated.

Intervention (EIC moves).

- **Lead with a 30-second executive summary: problem → approach → result → risk/off-ramp.**
- **Allocate turns by strength:** metrics lead, risks lead, delivery lead; pre-agree hand-offs (“A will take metrics; B covers risk”).
- **Use metadiscourse to pace without losing the floor:** “I’ll take five seconds to check the implication of X.”
- **Pre-empt scope drift:** “*To be precise*, our recommendation is bounded to corridors with Y; outside Y, Z dominates.”
- **Leave behind a one-pager** (decision relevance; costs/benefits; assumptions; next test).

Outcome. Discussion shifts to feasibility, metrics, and cost; the team is invited to submit a pilot proposal with specified metrics and timeline.

Analytic note. Dimensions: positional reflexivity, negotiation strategies (plus affective resilience under pressure). Recognition signal: topic shift from delivery to substance and a concrete next step (pilot). Field-level instance of intelligibility-plus-clarity over speed (Jenkins, 2000; Levis, 2020).

6.7 Supervisors’ email thread (micro-genre; stance work)

Context. A student drafts an overly deferential reply to a conference invitation; the contribution is buried under apologies.

Intervention (EIC moves).

- **Tag stance** in the draft (supervisor margin notes: *claim / ask / hedge*), then model an audience-first rewrite: “Thank you for the invitation. Our contribution is X; we can present Y; proposed slot: Z.”
- **Preserve L1 politeness off-channel.** The student keeps L1 politeness notes privately but sends the tightened English reply.

Outcome. The organizer upgrades the talk to a longer slot; the exchange remains cordial.

Analytic note. Dimensions: symbolic literacy (email as genre), positional reflexivity. Recognition signal: upgraded slot (status acknowledgment) and succinct restatement by the organizer. Aligns with genre-as-social-action (Lillis & Curry, 2010).

6.8 Conference Q&A rescue (real-time repair)

Context. A fast, multi-clause question derails the student mid-talk.

Intervention (EIC moves).

- **Two-option clarification.** “*To answer precisely*—did you mean X (sample size) or Y (effect stability)?”
- **Redirect to evidence.** “Let me point to Figure 2; the confidence intervals narrow post-intervention.”
- **Close the loop.** Paraphrase the answer in one line; offer a follow-up reference (“Spec is in Appendix B”).

Outcome. The questioner nods and asks a substantive follow-up; the audience returns to the argument.

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Analytic note. Dimensions: negotiation strategies, affective resilience. Recognition signal: clarified question plus evidence-focused follow-up. Classic interactional-competence repertoire (Dörnyei & Scott, 1997; Tarone, 1981).

6.9 Synthesis and evaluation guide

What changed in uptake? Track what interlocutors do next: (i) accurate restatement, (ii) shift to method/evidence, (iii) floor-time retention, (iv) consequential invitations (longer slot, pilot, demo).

Which EIC dimensions were exercised? Most vignettes blend two–three dimensions (e.g., symbolic literacy + negotiation strategies). Code the moves, then index recognition via independent signals (restatement, question shift).

What transfers? Swap in **local artifacts** (editor letters, award talks, CFP/aims-and-scope) and regenerate Context → Intervention → Outcome. Keep the focus on recognition signals, not on any one technique.

Why this adds value (evaluation). Vignettes operationalize EIC for design and assessment, specify observable indicators, and point to feasible moderation practices—without causal claims (Hyland, 2004; Lillis & Curry, 2010; Seidlhofer, 2011; Levis, 2020; García & Wei, 2014; Canagarajah, 2013; Black & Wiliam, 1998; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Kunnan, 2004; Messick, 1996).

VII. INSTITUTIONAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS (JAPANESE HIGHER EDUCATION)

Purpose. Internationalization agendas often target mobility and rankings, while everyday recognition is decided in meso-level events—defenses, lab meetings, reviews, and writing-support ecologies. An EIC lens treats recognition as the policy object: governance should align incentives, assessment, and support so that audience-first clarity, intelligibility, and ethical participation are what institutions reward (Hyland, 2004; Seidlhofer, 2011; Lillis & Curry, 2010; Levis, 2020).

7.1 Design principles for recognition-centered governance

- **Transparency over tacitness.** Make criteria explicit (what counts as contribution; how clarity and intelligibility are read), rather than relying on implicit native-like yardsticks (Hyland, 2004).
- **Intelligibility over mimicry.** Treat intelligibility/comprehensibility—not accent-likeness—as the language construct in high-stakes events (Seidlhofer, 2011; Levis, 2020).
- **Plurilingual scaffolds as means, not ends.** Permit bilingual tools where they improve precision and audience alignment; keep assessed products English-medium (García & Wei, 2014; Canagarajah, 2013).
- **Fairness by design.** Reduce construct-irrelevant variance and stabilize judgment via moderation with anchored exemplars (Messick, 1996; Kunnan, 2004).
- **Evidence of consequences.** Monitor intended and unintended effects as part of validity, not as an afterthought (Messick, 1996).

7.2 Institutional levers and minimal standards

2) 7.2.1 Oral defenses and milestones

Standard. Primary criteria = audience-oriented clarity and evidence navigation; language is scored as intelligibility (separate from accent).

Implementation. Circulate a one-page defense rubric in advance; require a 60–90 s claim-and-scope opener; allow brief metadiscourse in Q&A (“I’ll clarify scope...,” “Let me point to Figure 2...”). (Seidlhofer, 2011; Levis, 2020)

Indicator. Share of rubrics that list intelligibility (not “native-like accent”); distribution of committee comments (argument/evidence vs. surface form).

3) 7.2.2 Graduate writing requirements

Standard. Abstracts include an audience statement (target venue/readership) and, where appropriate, parallel abstracts or bilingual keywords with a 100–150-word rationale.

Implementation. Provide an abstract template with an audience/scope line and a rationale field; archive two exemplars per program; supervisors verify presence of the rationale at submission. (Hyland, 2004; Lillis & Curry, 2010)

Indicator. Proportion of theses with rationale-bearing parallel abstracts; shift in reviewer feedback toward contribution framing and scope clarity.

4) 7.2.3 University journals/workshops

Standard. Editorial policies prioritize argument/evidence before surface features; author guidelines specify stance/genre expectations; bilingual keywords optional where field-appropriate.

Implementation. Revise “Instructions for Authors” to separate content requests from **language polish**; add a response-letter template (gratitude → action → rationale). (Lillis & Curry, 2010)

Indicator. Editorial letters that clearly disaggregate content vs. language comments; acceptance letters that reference contribution rather than linguistic mimicry.

5) 7.2.4 Writing-center policy

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Standard. Two-layer feedback as default (Layer-1: audience/argument/evidence; Layer-2: language that blocks clarity); short audience rationales required with drafts.

Implementation. Booking form captures venue, audience, and claim-and-scope; consultants log L1→L2 sequence in notes; monthly 30-min calibration using an anchor pack (three anonymized samples with rationales). (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Hattie & Timperley, 2007)

Indicator. $\geq 80\%$ of consults show Layer-1 preceding Layer-2; portfolios display restructuring (earlier claim-and-scope, clearer evidence display) prior to line edits.

7.3 Staffing, hiring, and professional learning

Hiring criteria (language-focused roles).

Policy. Move from passport/phenotype proxies to evidence of capacity to (i) coach negotiation strategies, (ii) design recognition-oriented tasks, and (iii) moderate with anchors (Kunnan, 2004).

Evidence at hiring. Candidate-led micro-workshop using a two-layer feedback protocol; sample moderation notes with anchored rationales; short bias-interruption plan.

Indicator. Pre/post rater-spread reduction on shared samples; growth in Layer-1 comments relative to Layer-2; κ /ICC improvements on coded tasks (Levis, 2020; Lillis & Curry, 2010).

Professional learning.

Policy. Annual cycle of short, practice-based modules.

Core modules. (i) Raciolinguistic listening and bias interruption; (ii) designing EIC-aligned rubrics; (iii) 20-min micro-moderation on anonymized artifacts; (iv) feedback phrasing that separates intelligibility from identity performance (Levis, 2020; Lillis & Curry, 2010).

Indicator. Pre/post rater-spread on anchors; increase in Layer-1 share; $\kappa \geq .65$ / $ICC \geq .75$ in moderated assessments.

7.4 Quality assurance: a recognition audit

Aim. Move QA beyond syllabus checks to recognition audits that test what feedback and scoring actually reward.

Evidence bundle (each review cycle).

- **Artifacts:** 30 anonymized student excerpts (talk openers, rebuttal letters, abstracts) **with rubrics.**
- **Analytics:** (a) proportion of Layer-1 vs Layer-2 comments; (b) rater-spread before/after moderation; (c) center–periphery breadth in bibliographies with one-line justifications; (d) presence of intelligibility (not accent) in scoring language.
Decision rules. If Layer-1 < 60%, add a stance/hedging clinic; if rater-spread exceeds the pre-set band, schedule extra moderation; if bibliographies are homogeneous, integrate ethical-citation tasks (Messick, 1996; Kunnan, 2004).
Ownership/cadence. QA Office leads; program-level report each term; university roll-up annually.

7.5 EMI with a plurilingual backbone

Policy position. EMI specifies the language of assessed performance, not the exclusive language of process.

Allow. Short parallel abstracts, bilingual glossaries, early code-meshing—with brief **rationales** explaining audience alignment.

Boundary. Final assessed products meet discipline-specific English expectations.

Indicator. Uptake of scaffolds without drift to English-optional outputs; improved term **precision** in abstracts and talks (García & Wei, 2014; Canagarajah, 2013; Seidlhofer, 2011).

Risk & safeguard. *Risk:* tokenistic scaffolds. *Safeguard:* grade the rationale, not L1 prose; spot-check one non-trivial term decision per submission.

7.6 Partnerships and outward communication

External MoUs. Include clauses on inclusive editorial practice (transparent criteria; argument before surface form) and allowance for plurilingual scaffolds in joint projects when they aid precision (Hyland, 2004; Lillis & Curry, 2010).

Communications. Public materials model audience-first clarity; avoid stigmatizing accented speech; highlight successful multilingual outputs to signal institutional values.

Indicator. MoUs that reference recognition-oriented criteria; press/web stories that feature multilingual scholarship; partner feedback citing clarity/evidence rather than “nativeness.”

7.7 Risk register and mitigations

Risk	Why it appears	Mitigation	Monitor
“Standards drop.”	will Equating native-likeness with rigor	Make intelligibility + evidence explicit criteria; publish anchors	Defense/exam comment analysis (Levis, 2020; Seidlhofer, 2011)
Tokenistic plurilingualism	Scaffolds used decoratively	Require rationales for parallel abstracts/glossaries	Random checks of rationale quality (García & Wei, 2014)
Rater drift / subjectivity	Tacit norms vary by staff	Micro-moderation + discrepancy logs; anchored exemplars	Rater-spread bands (Kunnan, 2004; Messick, 1996)
Overfitting to one venue	Script mirrors a single journal	Rotate artifacts across venues; compare scripts	Venue-rotation record (Hyland, 2004)
Workload concerns	Calibration takes time	Time-box to 20 minutes; reuse anchor packs	Staff time audits vs. spread gains

7.8 Implementation roadmap (lightweight; 1 cycle)

Phase A—Set the frame (weeks 1–3). Publish defense rubric (intelligibility + audience clarity); brief staff session on two-layer feedback; assemble first anchor pack.

Phase B—Pilot (weeks 4–10). Pilot in 2–3 courses + 1 defense panel: parallel abstracts with rationales; moderated grading on one assignment; collect discrepancy logs.

Phase C—Review (weeks 11–12). Run a recognition audit; decide two concrete program changes (e.g., add stance/hedging clinic; rotate venues in genre archaeology).

Phase D—Scale (next term). Extend to neighboring courses/panels; refresh anchors; repeat audit. *Governance note:* keep the loop small, fast, and documented; treat each cycle as validity/fairness evidence (Messick, 1996; Kunnan, 2004).

Bottom line. A recognition-centered policy aligns what institutions say they value with what students are taught and scored on: audience-first clarity, intelligibility for meaning, strategic interaction, and ethical participation in disciplinary discourse. The levers above make those values visible, teachable, and auditable—without collapsing rigor into native-like mimicry (Hyland, 2004; Seidlhofer, 2011; Levis, 2020; Lillis & Curry, 2010).

VIII. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

8.1 Limitations

This article advances English as Intercultural Capital (EIC) as a conceptual and design framework. Three bounded limits remain.

1. **Programmatic, not causal.** The account is normative and design-oriented; vignettes are constructed to instantiate mechanisms and instructional choices, not to claim effects.
2. **Contextual scope.** The argument is situated in Japanese higher education. Principles are portable, but recognition scripts and uptake dynamics must be locally derived and tested (see §4.7–§4.8).
3. **Assessment proposals as rationales.** Proposed tasks and rubrics are aligned to argument-based validity/fairness but remain designs; **consequence evidence** (e.g., feedback shifts, reduced rater spread) requires implementation studies consistent with established validity/fairness frameworks (Messick, 1996; Kunnan, 2004).

Threats to validity to address in future work. Construct–measure circularity (teaching the move vs. evidencing recognition), assessor bias (prestige accent; processing-rate), and venue drift (overfitting to one journal). *Design mitigations:* independent indicators (restatement, question-shift), anchored moderation with κ /ICC, and cross-venue checks.

8.2 Research agenda: design blueprints

Feasible, low-burden studies that operationalize EIC while keeping this article conceptual. Each names unit, artifacts, measures, analysis, and bias control.

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8.2.1 Recognition trajectory (course-level, micro-longitudinal)

Unit. Student presentation episodes in an EMI/ESP course.

Artifacts. 90-second pitch + 2-minute Q&A at Weeks 3, 7, 12.

Measures. (a) Audience-first clarity (claim+scope within 60–90 s); (b) Intelligibility (“understood without strain”) recorded separately from accent preference; (c) Negotiation strategies coded (clarification/confirmation/redirect-to-evidence); (d) Ethical citation memo (100–150 words justifying at least one relevant peripheral source).

Analysis. Within-subject change across timepoints; report κ /ICC for codes; effect sizes for clarity and negotiation gains.

Bias control. Rotate raters; blind to timepoint; anchors include diverse but comprehensible accents to avoid prestige effects (Jenkins, 2000; Levis, 2005, 2020).

8.2.2 Moderation and fairness pilot (program-evaluation lens)

Design. Two comparable sections: **Moderated** (three anonymized anchors; 20-min consensus + discrepancy log) vs **Business-as-usual** scoring.

Outcomes. Rater-spread pre/post; share of **Layer-1** (audience/argument/evidence) vs **Layer-2** (language) comments; student fairness perceptions.

Interpretation. Increased agreement and a shift toward Layer-1 feedback are initial validity/fairness signals (Messick, 1996; Kunnan, 2004).

Bias control. Bias audit for prestige-accent and processing-rate effects; mid-pilot recalibration if thresholds are missed.

8.2.3 Discipline-specific recognition scripts (derivation + validation)

Procedure. Apply §4.8 across two departments; exchange scripts; test them on new artifacts; log where scripts anticipate reviewer requests and where they mis-predict.

Deliverable. A script bank with convergence/divergence notes that supports instruction without essentializing fields.

8.2.4 Parallel-abstract scaffold utility (instructional A/B)

Design. In a writing-intensive EMI course, half of groups produce parallel abstracts (English + strongest L1) with 150-word rationales; half write English-only.

Measures. Blind ratings of term comprehension and contribution clarity; student self-report of argument clarity; instructor time-on-task.

Expected pattern. Improved term precision and audience alignment without additional workload for scaffolded groups, consistent with translanguaging-as-resource (García & Wei, 2014; Canagarajah, 2013).

Bias control. Grade rationales, not L1 prose; require at least one non-trivial term decision.

8.3 Measurement and evidence: what counts as “recognition”?

EIC treats recognition as field-specific uptake. Research-visible indicators include:

- (i) accurate restatement of the focal claim by interlocutors;
- (ii) question shift toward method/evidence;
- (iii) reviewer focus shift from surface form to argument;
- (iv) expanded participation rights (turns, floor-time retention, chairing invitations).

Program-level triangulation. Portfolios compile tasks mapped to EIC dimensions, moderation notes (κ /ICC; discrepancy logs), and consequence evidence (movement from surface edits to argument/evidence; learner reflections on negotiation and stance). Report indicators separately from taught moves to preserve construct–measure separation (Messick, 1996).

8.4 Ethical considerations

Because EIC invites reflection on positionality and documents negative uptake:

- **Opt-in reflection** with non-penalizing prompts; allow private debriefs where needed.
- **Anonymize** peer-review materials; de-identify and seek permission for exemplars archived for moderation.
- **Consent in correction:** prioritize intelligibility-blocking issues; avoid identity policing; keep intelligibility separate from accent preference (Seidlhofer, 2011; Levis, 2020).

9. CONCLUSION

Reframing EMI/ESP through English as Intercultural Capital (EIC) shifts the pedagogical target from correctness and native-like mimicry to recognition—the teachable practices by which ideas become credible in field-specific events (Q&A, reviews, lab meetings). EIC integrates a Bourdieuan account of capital, raciolinguistic critiques of evaluative listening, ELF/pronunciation commitments to intelligibility, and academic literacies’ attention to genre and power.

This paper contributes three things. Conceptually, it specifies EIC and its six operational dimensions. Instructionally, it offers aligned designs—genre archaeology, plurilingual scaffolds, negotiation workshops, and ethical citation—that elicit independent recognition signals. Programmatically, it outlines a recognition-first assessment and governance stance (portfolios plus moderation) that ties validity, fairness, and consequences.

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For Japanese higher education—and, with adaptation, other EMI contexts—the payoff is practical and principled: classrooms that teach how recognition works; assessments that reward the moves that secure it; and knowledge-making that evaluates claims by argument and evidence, not by passports or phonology. The agenda ahead is clear: implement lightweight audits and moderation, monitor intelligibility-separated scoring, and study whether recognition signals (accurate restatement, question shift, floor-time) rise as programs adopt EIC-aligned practices.

IX. CONCLUSIONS

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