

such opportunities. It is not mobility itself that should be sustained, but the students' experiences gained from the change of academic and social environment provided by mobility.

MOVING FORWARD

Korea has undoubtedly become a regional education hub, as it produces and furthers knowledge about Korean culture and language that incoming international students ask for. Although this strategy may bring more profit to HEIs, English-driven internationalization strategies will also remain important. Not only do they provide a valuable learning experience for domestic students, but English is the academic language of the current era.

For the hybrid model to become sustainable, we need to make it more inclusive and help international students not only to feel satisfied during college but also to thrive after graduation. Students should gain something long lasting and meaningful for the money and time they invested in the program. As a result of their diplomas, have they become more tolerant toward cultural differences? Moving forward, are they able to utilize such attitudes at work and in daily activities? When adequately addressing these limitations, the model can serve as a complement to the English-driven internationalization model popular in non-English speaking countries. ■

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6017/ihe.2019.96.10788>

National Policies and the Role of English in Higher Education

XINYAN LIU

Xinyan Liu is a master's degree student in the International Higher Education program at Boston College, US. E-mail: liupm@bc.edu.

This essay is based on a study with the same title, commissioned by the International Association of Universities (IAU) in Paris, and accessible at [HYPERLINK "mailto:liupm@bc.edu"liupm@bc.edu](mailto:liupm@bc.edu).

As the impact of globalization widens and deepens, higher education worldwide has been actively responding by internationalizing tertiary institutions. The use of English as medium of instruction (EMI) has been one among many initiatives undertaken. That is partially attributed to the status of English as the current lingua franca of the aca-

demical community in research, publishing, and teaching.

The status of local language(s) in non-English-speaking societies is sensitive to the introduction of English as the main language of knowledge production, especially in regions or countries that have faced various forms of oppression. The preservation of the language and culture of minority groups or of the main national group can be impacted, depending on how English-medium policies are implemented. The use of EMI cannot be analyzed independently from the broader national language policy. With responsibilities to ensure both equity and access, and to contribute to global knowledge in a visible way, many non-English-speaking countries are facing a dilemma.

The applicability of EMI varies greatly depending on the general development of higher education.

Past research and debate have mostly focused on northern European countries, as they were among the first to introduce EMI. With English spreading globally with unmatched momentum and speed, it is crucial to examine the impact of the phenomenon on a larger scale. In this article, we broaden the discussion by including a diverse group of countries including Brazil, France, Malaysia, South Africa, and Spain. The two key aspects discussed here concern existing national policies regarding language in higher education in the target countries and the role of English in their respective higher education systems.

LOCAL LANGUAGES VS ENGLISH

In relation to the development of EMI, some themes are consistent throughout the five countries of the study, but there are also significant differences. The fact that fluency in English boosts employability considerably has become a strong incentive for higher education institutions, since they are responsible for educating the workforce for a knowledge-based labor market. In particular, employability also implies mobility, in step with rising global trade relations and collaborations. South Africa shows higher employability rates for graduates who are proficient in English. In Malaysia, students *feel* that English proficiency is essential to find a job or get a promotion.

While this might be an evident conclusion to draw, research finds considerable value in maintaining local languages in South Africa, Malaysia, and in the Catalan and Basque regions in Spain. Local languages serve as an im-

portant national/regional solidarity symbol and are necessary to access public service positions. In addition, a strong command of one's mother tongue facilitates learning a second language.

In the five countries of the study, how the government chooses to address EMI in the national education system greatly influences attitudes toward language, access, equity, and the effectiveness of the policy. South Africa is linguistically diverse and the government claims to promote progressive policies regarding multilingualism. Yet the lack of resources and the sensitive connection of the issue with racism are significant obstacles. Malaysia has a multiethnic population among which the national language is well accepted as a unifying tool, but who gets to learn English depends on social class. France counts several regional languages, with French as the national language; a particular challenge nowadays is the rise of a number of immigrant languages, and it is unclear how the government will institutionalize multilingualism going forward. In Spain, minority languages also have considerable political presence in the regions where they are spoken, and the population is trying to adapt to English.

These societal realities bear on the populations' attitudes toward languages, which could translate into the successful acquisition of a language or in abandoning one. Regardless of the policy direction, if individuals do not identify with a certain practice, trying to enforce a policy will not be effective. For example, if people in South Africa feel that Afrikaans carries colonial connotations, or if people in Catalonia feel that Castilian (standard Spanish) is a symbol of a central government with which they no longer identify, the status of these languages may become threatened. Education plays a strong role in promoting diversity and teaching tolerance, and the practice of multilingualism at higher education institutions could serve as a good example for the larger society.

APPLICABILITY OF EMI IN HIGHER EDUCATION

The applicability of EMI varies greatly depending on the general development of higher education, how many resources the government is able to put forth, and how much the population is prepared to invest in learning. Among the five countries of the study, Spain and France have mature higher education systems. Under the EU umbrella, their status as developed countries guarantees financial security and political support; local languages are strongly prevalent and introducing English is a successful endeavor. The situation is different in Brazil, Malaysia, and South Africa. These are former colonies, which has an impact on the current state of national economic development. Local languages could be pushed into the periphery if the use of English is

further promoted, with all of the benefits it brings. In South Africa and Malaysia, introducing English is not a new policy. The struggle lies in whether it is a good idea for the system as a whole to accept the potential traumatic baggage that comes with extensively using a colonial language and recognizing it as an indispensable tool in the world today, at the expense of the effort to indigenize and reclaim a culture and a social order that was lost.

These three countries are also confronted with a higher level of social inequality. In Brazil and Malaysia especially, where foreign language education in the public system is less than adequate, the wealthy can afford English language courses and succeed in university or on the job market. Inequality is perpetuated. In South Africa, the interaction between class and race is magnified, given the history of apartheid.

There are no simple solutions to any of the obstacles mentioned above when introducing EMI. Furthermore, the process needs to be constantly reviewed with a critical eye for its potentially long-lasting impact on the higher education and knowledge system. Each national context comes with a unique set of historical and societal factors that influence stakeholders differently within the system, which makes it valuable to conduct global comparative research on this topic, to encourage learning from each other's victories and mistakes. ■

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6017/ihe.2019.96.10792>

Malaysia's National Language Policy and Graduate Employability

VISWANATHAN SELVARATNAM

Viswanathan Selvaratnam is the former director of the Regional Institute of Higher Education and Development (RIHED) and a former higher education specialist at the World Bank. E-mail: selvaratnam432@gmail.com.

Malaysia's public-private higher education providers graduate over 200,000 candidates yearly. One in five remains unemployed—the equivalent of 35 percent of the country's youth. The National Graduate Employability Blueprint, 2012–2017, highlights that over 50 percent of the graduates are below par in terms of competency in subject knowledge, languages (English in particular), communication and writing skills, and work attitude. The 2013