



CIHE
Perspectives
No. 10

Language of Instruction in Higher Education:

National Policies and the Role of English

Xinyan Liu



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The Boston College Center *for*
International Higher Education

CIHE Perspectives

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CIHE AND IAU FOREWORD

It is our great pleasure to present here the newest issue of *CIHE Perspectives*, a series of studies focusing on aspects of research and analysis undertaken or coordinated by the Boston College Center for International Higher Education (CIHE). This tenth issue in the series is the result of cooperation between CIHE and the International Association of Universities (IAU), based in Paris.

This report specifically showcases research undertaken by Xinyan (Sissi) Liu, a student in CIHE's Master of Arts program in International Higher Education. This program requires that all students participate in a course titled "Field Experience in International Higher Education." The course provides a framework for a 'real world' experience for students interested in international dimensions of higher education, in conjunction with an in-depth research project. This combination of practical experience with research is designed to give students an appreciation for the ways that the daily work of different kinds of organizations, such as the IAU, may be framed by questions and concerns that require the ability to undertake a significant exploration of information and ideas in order to inform policy and practice.

With a background in linguistics, Sissi was drawn to the question of how language—the tool that gives us perhaps our most unique characteristics as human beings—is playing out in higher edu-

cation institutions and systems around the world. The role of language in higher education is, indeed, complex.

Influenced by history and contemporary opportunities and imperatives, and connected intimately to matters of power, privilege, and identity, language carries with it strong emotions at a very personal and local level, as well as important implications in terms of national policy and international relevance. By exploring these issues across five unique country cases, this report sheds important light on a subject that deserves extensive and ongoing consideration. This is particularly so in an age in which the English language so effectively dominates the global landscape of politics, economics, and (crucially) highly cited research.

CIHE and IAU extend sincerest thanks to Sissi for her dedication to this project, which we hope lays the groundwork for future work on this topic by both organizations. Our thanks also goes to Salina Kopellas for her work on the publication's layout and design, and to Laura Rumbley for her editorial support.

As we move forward, may higher education decisionmakers the world over find the words and the will to make the best language policy decisions they can, thoughtfully and equitably.

December 2018

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INTRODUCTION

As the impact of globalization widens and deepens, higher education worldwide has been actively responding with internationalization of related institutions. Among the many initiatives undertaken in internationalizing higher education, there has been a movement toward the use of English as a medium of instruction at various levels and scales (Altbach, 2016). That is partially attributed to the status of English being the current lingua franca of the global knowledge and academic communities. The majority of academic journals that are of international relevance are published in English (Curry & Lillis, 2018). Furthermore, the publications in internationally prestigious journals and conferences play a part in the evaluation of researchers and, in turn, of the universities with which they are affiliated. The growth in prominence and influence of global university rankings and the desire by various national governments to develop world-class universities strongly motivate non-English speaking countries to transition into, or at least encourage, doing research or publishing, and increasingly even teaching and learning, in English (Altbach, 2016; Curry & Lillis, 2018). In addition to research output and prestige, more widespread incorporation of English in higher education also provides opportunities for global mobility of individuals, both attracting international students, which is a lucrative market, and being able to send domestic students abroad, thus boosting an international presence.

Unsurprisingly, the movement toward using English in more domains of higher education has posed challenges to non-English speaking countries in both creating policies and executing them through institutional practices. First, the implementation of English-taught programs at tertiary level requires a connection between secondary education and higher education, because it assumes a certain level of knowledge of English as students enter university. In addition to students' abilities, the practical resources needed for teacher training to achieve effective teaching and learning outcomes in English are

vast in terms of both time and cost. Secondly, the implications for English becoming the main language in the knowledge production of a non-English speaking society are very politically sensitive with respect to the status of the local language(s), especially in regions or countries that have faced various forms of oppression before. The preservation of the language and culture of minority groups or a national identity can all be impacted, depending on how carefully English-medium policies are implemented. With responsibilities to ensure equity and access, and to contribute to global knowledge in a visible way, many non-English speaking national contexts face a big dilemma.

Past research and debate in relation to this topic have mostly focused on northern European countries, as they were among the first non-English speaking systems to consider the use of English as an instructional language (Brock-Utne, 2007). These developments sparked large controversies, particularly in the Netherlands, and the debates continue today (Wilkinson, 2012; de Wit, 2018; Salomone, 2018). These conversations are so heated and important because language policies, and how education intersects with language, are determining factors in promoting the stability and vitality of languages, which are vehicles of human knowledge and creation (Massini-Cagliari, 2004). Therefore, with the status and utility of English spreading globally with unprecedented momentum and speed, it is crucial to examine the impacts of this phenomenon on a larger scale.

The present research is born out of a curiosity to explore a range of national contexts, looking into what is stated in the national policy documents regarding language of instruction in these various countries; why such policies have been constructed in particular ways, notably in relation to specific historical and sociolinguistic environments; and what role English plays in the higher education systems of these national contexts. This paper aims to broaden the topic by discussing a diverse group of coun-

tries, including South Africa, Spain, Malaysia, Brazil, and France. They are presented in this report in a purposeful order; i.e., from the national context with the most amount of research available on this topic to the least. There are several factors contributing to the varied availability of research on this topic in different countries. For example, it is not coincidental that more research on language of instruction and English influence is available from South Africa than from France. This is a reflection of the amount of time that this topic has been of relevance in a given national context, the scale of impact on each of the national higher education systems, the presence of debate or controversy surrounding the issue, and the overall significance of this trend. Additionally, it is also likely that much literature on this topic has been written in local languages, rather than English, which the research conducted for this study could not encompass. A report on this topic could reveal many more perspectives if information surrounding the debate, in all languages, were equally represented.

Research Question

This study was guided by two key research questions:

1. What are the existing national policies regarding language in higher education in the sample countries?
2. How does English play a role in the sample countries' higher education systems?

Five countries were chosen for this study: South Africa, Spain, Malaysia, Brazil, and France. South Africa and Malaysia are countries previously controlled by colonial powers, where one sees heavy impacts from the language of the colonial era on the current sociolinguistic scene, with indigenous languages also claiming a considerable presence. Brazil also primarily adopts variants derived from a colonial tongue, but has few speakers of indigenous languages and is very secure in a national identity under Brazilian Portuguese. Spain is a multilingual country with strong regional languages of considerably high status and is facing a trilingualization agenda with the addition of English. France, also home to a

powerful language with a global presence through colonialism, is heavily invested in the French language as a symbol for national identity and unity, and is interested in seeing the success of Franco-phone universities worldwide.

All five countries have variously complicated relationships with English in the trajectory of their nation building efforts and in the development of their higher education institutions and systems. For each of the countries examined in this report, the approach taken is to provide information and analysis across the following three areas of consideration:

- Relevant historical and sociolinguistic context
- Language policy framework
- Role of English in higher education

Given the considerable differences across all five countries presented here, there is considerable variation across these three dimensions in terms of content and relevance. Examples of specific programs or institution are detailed as appropriate to provide further insight into the various national contexts and experiences.

Organizational Context

This research was undertaken on behalf of the International Association of Universities (IAU), supervised by the Manager of Higher Education and Internationalization Policy and Projects, Giorgio Marinoni. IAU is located in Paris, France, and housed within the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Founded in 1950, under the auspices of UNESCO, the International Association of Universities (IAU) is the leading global association of higher education institutions and organizations from around the world. IAU brings together members from more than 130 countries for reflection and action on common priorities, as an independent, bilingual (English and French), non-governmental organization (“IAU - International Association of Universities,” n.d.).

Internationalization is one of the four strategic priorities of IAU, along with leadership, sustainable development, and technology in higher education

“IAU - International Association of Universities,” n.d.). English as a medium of instruction (EMI) is an aspect of relevance to the phenomenon of internationalization of higher education, as the global academic community has de facto used English as the lingua franca in academic and scientific publishing for decades (Bamgbose, 2003). The research present in this report is of interest to IAU in light of the fact that EMI has been a relatively recent development in many national contexts, but is spreading very rapidly and carrying with it deep implications. This report serves as a pilot study for a further exercise focused on creating a typology or database of national language policies and expanded efforts to understand how English fits in the dynamics of the internationalization processes at higher education institutions around the world. The research was conducted under remote supervision by IAU over a period of approximately six months, with support from the Center of International Higher Education at Boston College, the researcher’s home university.

Methodology

This study primarily involved desk research and drew on a wide range of sources of relevance to inform the analysis, including documents published by governments or ministries of education, official websites of specific institutions, reports published by international organizations, academic journal articles, and blog posts. The research process involved not only gathering information, but more importantly, evaluating the various sources and discerning what to include and why. There are multiple layers of analysis involved in answering the project’s two guiding research questions. As such, the research must consider a wide range of evidence—including policies, practices, degrees of implementation and effects on target audiences, as well as available statistics and analyses—along with stakeholder perspectives, reactions, and attitudes. All of these factors and sources of information are relevant to constructing the reality of each country’s specific situation. Government frame-

works and policy documents can speak to the ideology under which the society is organized and the role that language plays. However, the reality of implementation is highly dependent upon funding sources and the commitment from leaders of various sectors. Practices may be more evident on the level of institutional policies and programs. Journal articles often provide empirical results of such policy implementations and in-depth analyses of individual programs at institutions. However, due to the fact that the EMI phenomenon is relatively recent, many cases of implementation have yet to be scientifically researched or published. Therefore, various blog posts can be valuable in the absence of academic publications to provide some perspectives in the assessment of policy implementations, and how they are received by those impacted by the policies. All of the above-mentioned resources can play a useful role in understanding these complex dynamics around language policies and higher education.

Not all information uncovered during the research is included in this paper, however, and as such, the potential bias of the researcher is to be taken into consideration when evaluating the findings. Also, as mentioned previously, not all national contexts offer equal amount of research to draw from. This could be a reflection of certain priorities and the backgrounds of individuals in the academic community in relation to this research topic. Furthermore, the researcher in this case does not have the full linguistic capability to review or include writings written in the languages relevant to the sample countries, other than English and Spanish. Recognizing that opinions and commentaries are likely to be written in other languages, it is important to keep in mind that significant points of views of the larger conversation may have been excluded from this paper.

Literature Review

In a time of globalization, higher education institutions are expanding their internationalization efforts to ensure their own survival and international relevance in the midst of an incredibly globalized period

of knowledge production (Rumbley, Altbach, & Reisberg, 2012). One of the signature strategies of internationalization has been incorporating the use of English, and more recently, English as a medium of instruction (Bamgbose, 2003). This literature review aims to explore this facet of internationalization of higher education through, first, a consideration of language policies that are relevant to education and, secondly, an examination of how the English as a medium of instruction (EMI) phenomenon has grown around the world.

Language policies are often charged with high tension and may have wide-ranging consequences. Tsui and Tollefson (2003) go so far as to argue that language of instruction policies need to be constructed as sociopolitical processes on a broad scale, rather than playing out on an individual or institutional level. When a language is adopted as a medium of instruction, it becomes the most effective method to revitalize and/or maintain this language because language is often an embodiment of identity, values, and cultures. There are immense sociopolitical implications, as we see that language of instruction decisions parallel the priorities of society and can, in turn, marginalize certain groups of vulnerable populations who speak languages other than the dominant language (Tollefson & Tsui, 2003). Therefore, when encountering discussions on medium of instruction, one needs to approach these with great sensitivity to the larger cultural and political contexts, instead of simply considering the pragmatic or operational dimensions.

Furthermore, in the context of higher education, language of instruction can determine who has access to higher learning and who can succeed in that context. Students want to go to university in the same language they have used to complete secondary school (Cenoz, 2012). When students coming from certain backgrounds or regions simply do not speak the language of instruction of the university system, their entry is barred; and even if they enter, their chance of succeeding is much lower than those who come from the dominant linguistic tradition.

Some regions and nations have decided to implement multilingual practices. In the Basque Autonomous Community of Spain, Basque is the

official language of government (Vega-Bayo & Mariel, 2015). The one public university in the Basque Country adopted Basque as a language of instruction as a means to preserve its use. The government invested substantially in corpus planning and providing support to faculty and staff at the university to elevate the status of Basque to an academic language. The percentage of students taking classes in Basque over Spanish has been steadily growing. More recently, as Europeanization and the increase of student mobility occur, the Basque Country is pursuing a trilingual language policy to both internationalize and secure the liveliness of the Basque language (Cenoz, 2012).

Bamgbose (2003) appropriately called English *a recurring decimal* in the discourse of language planning, stating that it exhibits many major factors for a language's prominence such as "population, functionality, and nationalism" (p. 420). Ota and Horiuchi (2018) argue that there is a positive cyclical system for institutions built around the use of English: having faculty who publish in English leads to a global reputation, which leads to a higher level of internationalization, which leads back to greater incentives to expand the use of English even more widely. Coleman (2006) used the term "Microsoft effect" to describe a similar circle that is essential to the growth of English: "once a medium obtains a dominant market share, it becomes less and less practical to opt for another medium, and the dominance is thus enhanced" (p. 4). Although English came to its prominence through colonialism just like French and Spanish, it is also closely tied to the rise of United States in world affairs and increased economic dependence among countries. The impetus of globalization propelled the use of English, expanding its use further in postcolonial states and in other largely monolingual countries in the East (Cenoz & Jessner, 2000).

There is no denying that moving into EMI has become a common theme running through many non-English speaking countries' educational strategies and lived realities. Ota and Horiuchi (2018) present two reasons for such developments. First, English is seen as a symbol of internationalization in non-English speaking countries. Secondly, the in-

ternational student market has grown substantially in recent years, with institutions wanting to make themselves accessible to international students; offering courses in English is helping to expand this market (Ota & Horiuchi, 2018). However, in more recent decades, resistance has grown internationally, as language death is occurring at unprecedented rates and people recognize the spread of English as having played a major role in that process (Coleman, 2006). Decisions about medium of instruction further create implications with respect to individuals' rights to their language and culture, thus raising ethical questions. On the other hand, higher education institutions are increasingly being run like corporations and there is a pursuit of high rankings, high levels of student mobility, and international relevance that propels forward the use of English for their survival and growth (Coleman, 2006).

In Europe, specifically, the main drivers for EMI have been the Bologna Process, culminating in the creation of the European Higher Education Area to improve degree recognition and student mobility among the participating European nations (Sin &

Saunders, 2014), as well as the Erasmus program—Europe's signature student exchange program, created by the European Commission in 1987 (European Commission, n.d.). According to Coleman (2006), in countries with national languages that are rarely taught or spoken elsewhere, EMI has become the most common way to make bilateral exchange of mobile students possible. English further facilitates international research opportunities and collaborations, and successful partnerships lead to higher prestige and rankings. From the teaching perspective, students with English proficiency are generally considered to be more employable, which boosts university rankings, as well (Coleman, 2006). For these reasons, it is no wonder why the move toward English is occurring at unprecedented scale and speed. But there is real variation across national contexts. Individual countries are at different points of transitioning to EMI or debating its values and risks. The five countries profiled in this study reflect a range of such realities.

SOUTH AFRICA

Relevant Historical and Sociolinguistic Context

South Africa suffered from centuries of Western colonial rule and, as a result, colonial languages have remained the languages of instruction in higher education. On one hand, colonialism and the apartheid regime have left strong imprints on what languages are de facto socially dominant in South African society today. On the other hand, the government is also hyperconscious of neocolonialism and strives to help its historically marginalized communities regain power and dignity. Thus, the promotion of multilingualism has become a vehicle of these efforts. However, complexities and challenges remain in a context where progressive policies in favor of multilingualism, practical realities at universities impacted by a history of oppression, and the

opportunities and imperatives of modern-day globalization often conflict with one another. The original indigenous group living in the land was the Khoesan people, whose languages have gone entirely extinct today. Bantu-speaking people migrated to some of the lands inhabited by the Khoesan, interacted with them, and inherited some of the Khoesan languages and cultures (Mesthrie, 2002). However, European colonizers disrupted this peaceful exchange. Official European settlement in South Africa started with the Dutch in Cape Town in 1652, although preceded by some visits to the region by Portuguese and English speaking people. Other people and languages, like German and French, also had a sizable presence as well. Mainly, Dutch became a strong language during the colonial era and eventually developed into Afrikaans, which finds most of its roots in Netherlandish-Dutch (Mesthrie, 2002), a local variety of a colonial language (Smith, 1952). Afrikaans was further elevated after the South

African War, also known as the Boer War, that ended in 1902, when people began to identify it with local culture and values. It became recognized as an official language in 1925, over a hundred years after its original emergence. Afrikaans thus replaced Dutch in the South African context and was on par with English (Mesthrie, 2002).

The second significant wave of settlers was the British in the early 1800s, with English gradually taking over Dutch as the language of government and law (Mesthrie, 2002). The apartheid government of the 1940s used language as an ethno-racial point of separation. It intended to impose a linguistic hierarchy. Afrikaans was the only language that had any potential to rival English. The Department of Bantu Education—which was responsible for ensuring uniformity of the discriminatory education provided to black students in South Africa under apartheid—insisted on the use of both languages, fearing that if only one was selected to remain, it would be English. Therefore, both languages became compulsory in early secondary education for children who spoke neither (Mesthrie, 2002).

A main challenge for using either language in education today is related to the colonial and apartheid legacies of racial division. Afrikaans and English are spoken as a first language by Whites at a rate of 60.8% and 35.9%, respectively. For Black Africans, the percentages are 1.5% and 2.9%, respectively. Just over three-quarters (75.8%) of people who are classified as “Colored”, which means of mixed racial background, speak Afrikaans as a first language. Among Indians or Asians, 86.1% speak English as a first language. For Black Africans, 50% speak IsiXhosa or IsiZulu as a first language. The population of Black Africans is also almost ten times that of Whites and of Colored people (Statistics South Africa, 2011). Whites and individuals of mixed race in South Africa, while they are a minority in number, are the majority who speak the languages of prestige and power. This is not to say that people’s first language stops them from learning and speaking other languages well. However, it may be assumed that those who speak English and Afrikaans at home enter higher education with considerable advantage. Furthermore, questions may be legiti-

mately advanced as to what extent education is succeeding as a reparative act for a continuously racially divided and unequal country.

Language Policy Framework

In the 1990s, postapartheid South Africa employed one of the most progressive language policies when it comes to promoting African languages. Eleven languages—Afrikaans, English, IsiNdebele, IsiXhosa, IsiZulu, SeSotho, SeSotho sa Lebowa, Setswana, SiSwati, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga—were recognized with official status. The Constitution urged the states to make progress toward elevating and advancing the use of these languages (Nudelman, 2015). Furthermore, the Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB) was established to help facilitate this process. For example, many efforts have been dedicated to the translation of educational materials (“Pan South African Language Board,” n.d.). Language of instruction across educational institutions became a crucial point of application of multilingualism. In principle, this work represents an important opportunity to elevate African languages but it also poses immense challenges in implementation.

In 2002, the Ministry of Education published the first iteration of a *Language Policy for Higher Education*, which recognized every student’s right to live a life in their culture and language of choice. In section 3.1.2, the policy urges institutions to take into account 1) equity, 2) practicability, and 3) the need to redress the results of past racially discriminatory laws and practices (Ministry of Education, 2002, p. 3). This document is also vocal in recognizing language as a central sociopolitical and cultural element. The policy promotes multilingualism, while recognizing that no institution has fully implemented multilingualism in practice. The policy does not refer to any financial commitment in relation to the achievement of the stated aspirations (Ministry of Education, 2002). However, the fact that multiple policy documents, research reports, and committee recommendations have been drawn up shows a strong concern from the government concerning the issue of language (Council on Higher Education, 2001; “Pan South African Language

Board,” n.d.). Sixteen years later, a revised *Language Policy for Higher Education* was published, recognizing that many of the goals set forward by the 2002 document had not been reached (Republic of South Africa, 2018). Many language departments and programs at universities have since closed. There have been very few resources directed towards developing African languages. The various relevant policy statements encourage people to learn and use African languages but they do not provide tangible incentives or channels to do so. It is unclear to what extent the policies effectively enhance a multilingual reality, how they work to address access and equity issues as related to students’ first languages, and what exactly the purposes of multilingualism are. The stance on multilingualism, however, remains unwavering, and additional reports have been drawn up in the meantime (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2015, 2017).

Role of English in Higher Education

Practices at institutional levels have reflected a clear move toward the use of English. The University of Pretoria is a historically Afrikaans institution. It will adopt English as the language of teaching and learning starting in January 2019. The principles of the university’s language policy include aims to promote multilingualism, facilitate equitable learning, see to Sepedi being developed as an academic language, and promote inclusiveness (Office of the Registrar, 2016, pp. 1–2). At the same time, the institution has clearly stated that English is the language of teaching and learning (Office of the Registrar, 2016, p. 2). The use of Sepedi and Afrikaans, although in principle encouraged and protected, are only required for ceremonial usage and within university communications (i.e., emails and statements are to be sent in all three languages). The policy also calls for faculty members to immediately turn in revised teaching plans that adjust to the projected use of English (Office of the Registrar, 2016).

The University of Stellenbosch published its revised language policy in 2016, stating a commitment to the use of both Afrikaans and English throughout university’s teaching and learning activities. Like the University of Pretoria, it also pledges

to promote multilingualism and addresses IsiXhosa as an emerging academic language that the university will help support (Stellenbosch University Council, 2016).

Both universities were under fire and received mixed reactions for publishing these policy documents, criticized by Afrikaans rights groups for turning their backs on Afrikaans as an academic language. Both institutions have spoken publicly about their commitment to multilingualism, and the promotion of equity and inclusivity as justification for these new policies. However, the inclusion of Sepedi and IsiXhosa appears to be more a symbolic gesture, given the focus on using these languages only in ceremonial contexts and university communications. It is unclear what purpose these efforts serve, if the wider community is already expected to be able to function in Afrikaans or English to participate in higher education at all.

While the University of Pretoria, in principle, still upholds Afrikaans as a language of scholarship, the spokesperson for a student group known as the Economic Freedom Fighters Students Command, celebrated the decision to drop Afrikaans as a medium of instruction. They referred to this move as “a sweet victory” for them and also urged the university to change its name to University of Tshwane, both measures seen as a battle against “institutionalized racism” (Makoni, 2016). This seems to suggest that there are certain public conceptions that English is more acceptable as a symbol for equality.

The two iterations of the language policy documents recognize multilingualism and the importance of the national and regional identity that is rooted in language. We see in the above examples of only using indigenous languages in aspects of the higher education enterprise that are arguably peripheral and low-stake (i.e., in university communications and ceremonies). Although it is not explicitly stated, the decisions to adopt English or to continue using English both point to a desire to participate in the global network of knowledge and academe. This will increase opportunities for internationally mobile students and scholars to interact with South African higher education institutions and counterparts, and help the system grow its international profile.

However, it does not address the majority of domestic students' needs to learn in their mother tongue. Meanwhile, the situation is further complicated by the fact that there are strong voices coming from domestic students who wish to be educated in English in order to enhance their employability (Klapwijk & Van der Walt, 2016).

English is arguably dominant in South African higher education. All major documents released by universities and government are published in English. The English language is used across a wide realm of activities and its use is only going to spread further in the foreseeable future. If the government or South African higher education institutions are serious about developing local languages, they must start by developing the academic literature, the corpus, which may involve committing significant resources for translation activities. They must also install leadership whose members have a personal stake in and real understanding of the indigenous language preservation and/or multilingualism. Without question, prioritizing these efforts will be a challenge as long as English remains the global academic language.

Summary

Language issues and language of instruction policies in South Africa have garnered substantial attention for several reasons: 1) a recent colonial past and its overtly racist regime are symbolized through the social power of Afrikaans and English, dynamics that are still relevant today; 2) there is immense linguistic diversity native to the country; and 3) the pressures exerted by globalization and internationalization are felt in both the higher education sector

and the labor market.

While the government is intentional and explicit in creating policies and guidelines with a multilingual orientation, implementation of these policies has not proved to be fruitful at the institutional level. English is being introduced as a language of instruction at an even earlier age (Grade 8), abruptly following African language instruction (Desai, 2016). Casale and Posel (2011) found that "African men with postsecondary education are estimated to earn approximately 90 percent more if they are also English language proficient" (p. 392). Interestingly, high English language skills are also positively correlated with high African language skills. This finding is consistent with the idea that high language skills in one's mother tongue is significantly beneficial to learning a second language (Casale & Posel, 2011).

There are many more studies that look at specific universities attended by a majority of African students or university programs that are experimenting with bilingual courses or translanguaging practices in the classroom, which are representative of the diverse voices in the debate on language in education in South Africa (Desai, 2016; Ngcobo, 2014; Nudelman, 2015; Wildsmith, 2013; van Wyk, 2014). Ultimately, the debate and the narratives that accompany it can be multifaceted, as the population and stakeholders across this complex country are so heterogeneous. Policies should draw purposefully from empirical research and address the issues from multiple angles, relevant to regional contexts within South Africa and different kinds of higher education institutions, in long-term pursuit of quality and equity in relation to language in South African higher education.

SPAIN

Relevant Historical and Sociolinguistic Context

Spain is a multilingual country with one official national language, Spanish. Multiple official regional languages are used co-officially with Spanish by the various autonomous regions. Spain is a member of

the European Union and participates in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA, formerly the Bologna Process). Among other objectives, the EHEA is concerned with improving degree mobility and standardizing degrees and accreditation to encourage student mobility (Sin & Saunders, 2014). A uniform medium of instruction can be considered exceedingly useful in the pursuit of such aims.

The Council of Europe defines minority languages as “languages that are traditionally used within a given territory of a state by nationals of that state who form a group numerically smaller than the rest of the state’s population and [are] different from the official language(s) of that state” (Council of Europe, n.d.). At different phases in history, in the various autonomous regions of Spain, local language and cultures were oppressed in favor of Spanish as the only language, especially during the dictatorship of Francisco Franco in the period 1939-1975 (Lasagabaster, 2017). Today, as much as 41% of the population lives in officially bilingual areas where the so-called minority languages are the language of instruction and government.

Since the Constitution of 1978 was instituted, six out of Spain’s 17 regions have had the regional language and Spanish as co-official languages (Lasagabaster, 2017). These bilingual regions have guaranteed that both Spanish and the regional language, and increasingly, English, will be taught at school and university. Because of a history of linguistic and cultural repression in these regions, people hold the tie of language and identity close and continue to elevate the status of the regional language to the point that these societies have transitioned from diglossic¹ to solidly bilingual contexts, where it is not clear which language is more prestigious or powerful (Lasagabaster, 2017). Still, language tensions and conflicts in these regions remain salient, particularly with the rise of linguistic nationalism, which tends to replace Spanish with the local language instead of promoting bilingualism, and the force of globalization that brought English on the scene.

Some regions have succeeded in securing high utility of the regional language. Sustained effort to use the minority language in more domains of the society is more apparent in these contexts than in others, where Spanish plays the dominant role. For the regions that have functional bilingualism, the Europeanization of higher education, which relies

heavily in practice on student mobility in Europe, is putting these bilingual institutions in a precarious trilingualization process in which English is also taking a strong role.

Role of English in Higher Education

Hernandez-Nanclares and Jimenez-Munoz (2017) conducted an outcome-based comparative research project at the University of Oviedo over a two-year period, in a course called “World Economics.” The University of Oviedo offered bilingual tracks in the Department of Business Administration, Economics, Accountancy and Finance beginning in 2010 and for this research, only first-year students were recruited. A hundred and seventy-two students were taking the class in English compared with 482 Spanish-taught students.

While the eventual result of content learning did not differ tremendously and the English-taught students even outperformed the other group overall, the start of the program was considerably more challenging for the English-taught students. On average, students overestimated their English level both before and after the course. The difficulty and complexity of English-medium instruction (EMI) exceeded students’ expectations. However, the researchers were confident that both groups would graduate with similar competency and the English-taught students are projected to move closer to having English as an academic asset instead of a hindrance to learning (Hernandez-Nanclares & Jimenez-Munoz, 2017).

While this research shows positive results, in the sense that using English does not necessarily impede learning for Spanish-speaking students, it is important to keep in mind the tremendous amount of resources that poured into the construction of the bilingual track, as well as the highly prepared lecturers who, although non-native English speakers, have been trained extensively in CLIL (Content and Language Integration Learning) and EMI. In very few large-scale contexts can institutions afford the time

1. A diglossic situation is when there are two (or more) varieties that coexist in a speech community but occupy different domains. The High variety is more prestigious and serves in formal situations, whereas the Low variety is used more informally (Schiffman, 2017).

and funding to hire or prepare instructors to reach the level that ultimately contributed to the high achievement among both of this study's cohorts, regardless of language of instruction.

Most universities in Catalonia already employ two languages of instruction: Spanish and Catalan. In recent years, however, the Catalan government has joined the Europeanization movement in Europe by instituting a foreign language that is "preferably English" (Sabaté-Dalmau, 2016). The government actively funds the universities that have trilingual plans, ensuring the protection of Catalan and Spanish and introducing English. The implementation has been careful and slow, as Catalan is not officially recognized in the European Union (EU) and is still recovering from the period of intense repression under the Franco regime (Sabaté-Dalmau, 2016). More recently, the independence movement in Catalonia has also sparked many discussions around the question of language as a tension between Spanish and Catalan is projected to rise (Nougayrède, 2017). Increasingly, English has been envisioned as a democratizing lingua franca that increases employability and mobility, although it is also viewed as a "politicized threat to linguistic diversity" (Sabaté-Dalmau, 2016, p. 263).

The University of Barcelona is an exemplar of committing both in policy and practice to multilingualism. As evident on the university website that details the "language resources," "the UB's language policy," "language and internationalization," etc. (Universitat de Barcelona, 2009), a clear picture emerges that the university has invested many resources, carefully considered this question, and expects its incoming students to share multilingual interests. Catalan is indisputably the "specific, official language" for administrative and institutional purposes, whereas Catalan and Spanish are both used in teaching. The policy states a clear commitment to "multilingualism," citing support for several other minority languages in Catalonia. However, English is not explicitly mentioned or emphasized in that commitment. Where English is explicitly mentioned is in an extensive list of courses that are offered in "Catalan, Spanish, English or other languages." The wording of the University of Barcelo-

na's strategy of excellence states: "[UB] promotes knowledge and use of international languages" for a variety of purposes (Universitat de Barcelona, 2009). The website does not provide a definition for what qualifies as an international language but it seems that the University of Barcelona is very conscious of the wording that promotes use of multilingualism instead of use of English, at least in the discourse of the policy. It is a stark contrast to the institutional examples provided in South Africa.

Summary

Spain is not typically known as a multilingual country because of the strong political dominance of the national language, Castilian, or Spanish. However, the fierce promotion of Catalan and Basque in their respective regions has brought attention to the autonomous regions where the national language and regional language are leveling in power and usage. Significant sentiments and pride are tied to the use of regional languages, as they were historically oppressed. These regions evidence an acute awareness of the prominence of English globally, but are delicately balancing efforts to both protect localization and advance internationalization, as English is often seen as a threat to the regional language (Lasagabaster, 2017).

English proficiency in Spain is still among the lowest in the European context even though an Education Reform Act was passed in 1993 establishing the teaching of English in schools from age 8 (Lasagabaster, 2017). Ensuring that students and teachers acquire a level of English proficiency appropriate for effective teaching and learning is essential to incorporating EMI into an educational system. Spanish higher education operates under the larger umbrella of the European Higher Education Area, and trends connected to Europeanization more broadly. There is a certain level of encouragement and accountability in relation to matters of language that can come from participation in a larger movement.

Furthermore, it seems that various Spanish higher education institutions have been able to afford the resources to create and enforce multilingual practices. This is definitely related to the fact that

Spain is a developed country with a well-developed higher education system where the society and people can afford to protect their linguistic diversity for its own sake. This stands in contrast to the case in South Africa, where there are many other competing demands in need of resources and attention; in that context, development of local languages cannot be prioritized in the same way. However, the recent

political tensions within Spain, namely, the Catalonia independence movement, are sure to impact language attitudes among the population and in turn, motivations to learn them. Will English be a neutralizing medium or one that further divides? Will a multilingual ideology in policy and practice be upheld through this time?

MALAYSIA

Relevant Historical and Sociolinguistic Context

Malaysia has had a history of being colonized by multiple European countries at different times since the 16th century. The early Portuguese and Dutch colonial rule did not influence the dominant position of the Malay language. However, the British colonizers, beginning in the early 19th century, changed the linguistic and demographic landscape dramatically when they introduced English-medium schools and recruited people from China and South India to meet the demand for manual labor in Malaysia, where the local landowners refused to work in the lower sectors. These developments created stratification in the society, where European elites, wealthy Malaysians, and wealthy Chinese were educated in English-medium schools and had the opportunity to work in prestigious jobs in the British administration.

Effectively, from 1824 to before Malaysian independence in 1957, there were four main language varieties: the Malay language, various dialects of the Chinese language, Tamil, and English (Yaacob et al., 2011). Since gaining independence, the Malaysian government instituted Bahasa Malaysia, also referred to as Bahasa Malay, or Malay, as the official national language as a means to reclaim a national linguistic identity rooted in the indigenous language, both to unify the multiple ethnic groups and to act in reverse of a colonial history symbolized through English (Gill, 2003, 2005; Yaacob et al., 2011).

Present day Malaysia remains a multiethnic and multilingual country with a population in 2017 of 32.3 million (Malaysia, 2018). According to the *Population Distribution and Basic Demographic Characteristic Report* published in 2010 (data are collected for this report every ten years), Malaysia had a population of 28.2 million, 67.4% of whom were of Malay descent, 24.6% of Chinese descent, 7.3% of Indian descent, and 0.7% had other backgrounds (Malaysia, 2011). Bahasa Malay has been cited as a language that plays a role in unifying the different ethnic groups in Malaysia (Yaacob et al., 2011). However, over the past decades, because of the development of business and various private sectors that are directly impacted by globalization, English is regaining a role in the larger society as a language of high utility and prestige. Proficiency in English is considered one of the key advantages for employment among young university graduates (Yunus & Hern, 2011).

Language Policy Framework

With respect to language use in the education sector, the 1957 reform did not clearly state where Bahasa Malay is required other than in communication with the government. In reality, on the level of primary schools, Chinese and Indian schools proceeded with using their own languages. In secondary schools, English and Malay instruction both existed but English was favored due to its sole usage in higher education. Such inequality and inconsistency persisted until a race riot broke out in 1969 (Yaacob et al., 2011). The National Language Act 1963/1967 was put forth, enforcing Malay as the official language in all proceedings with allowances for using English where deemed fit (and this decision was left mostly

up to the Yang di-Pertuan Agong, the monarch of the country, who holds extensive powers). Today, the Malay language is to be the sole medium of instruction in public universities and it serves as an essential tool for the cohesion and unity of the country (Commission of Law Revision, Malaysia, 2006).

Since the National Language Policy act, several developments in language policy and practice have taken place. In 1971, a new National Education Policy was published to ensure the firm position of Bahasa Malay as the language of instruction across all levels. Use of the English language in general society in postindependence Malaysia continued to seriously decline in usage and visibility (e.g., in the realms of government and public discourse) (Yaacob et al., 2011). At the same time, due to the fact that no policy restricted language use in the private sector, which has been the most affected by globalization, English was quickly rising to an important position in the job market (Gill, 2003), resurfacing primarily in urban areas as a global language of commerce, distinct from the older idea of a forced colonial language.

The prime minister of Malaysia from 1981 to 2003, Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, delivered a working paper in 1991 at the inaugural meeting of the Malaysian Business Council (Mohamad, 1991). That paper is known today as Vision 2020. It puts forward the plan for Malaysia to become a developed country by 2020. Although this document did not directly articulate policies related to education or language, it stated clearly the importance of education for developing a population with competency in science, technology, and the humanities (Mohamad, 1991, p. 20).

As a result, in 2003, the government introduced a new policy called Teaching and Learning of Science and Mathematics in English, known by its acronym PPSMI. This policy was fully implemented in primary and secondary schools by 2008; tertiary education also followed suit but at the pace established by each institution (PPSMI) (Tan & Chan, 2003). This policy was meant to foster the economic development of the country to achieve the goals put forward for 2020. However, it was quickly discovered that the implementation of English as medium of

instruction throughout the system created large issues in terms of equity and access. There were also not enough teachers that could teach using English nor sufficient resources to train them, so this program experienced significant pushback from the general public, especially in non-urban regions where exposure to English was low (Romli & Aziz, 2015). On the macro level of national planning, use of English is highly encouraged but very few institutions have been completely successful in implementation (Ali, 2013; Gill, 2008).

Role of English in Higher Education

The case of Malaysia, or any country that was forced to use a colonial language, highlights the dilemma of having experienced English as the colonial tongue as well as recognizing its increasing utility today as a global academic and commercial language. The significance of the language is directly evident in that research finds that graduates who do not know English well might be less competitive when seeking a job or less likely to move up in rank once they have a job (Yunus & Hern, 2011)

Reviewing Malaysia's ambition to become a developed nation by 2020, regardless of the extent to which that goal is achieved, the highly globalized economy will continue to grow and the importance of English will increase with the demand of the labor market. Higher education must respond to such demands; interestingly, it appears that language attitudes already reflect similar thoughts. For example, Yunus and Hern (2011) surveyed 60 undergraduate students at a public Malaysian university regarding their attitudes towards bilingual education. Forty-four out of 60 students expressed that English is "a must in their field of study" and 54 out of 60 students would like to see English becoming a medium of instruction alongside Malay. On the other hand, Yaacob et al. (2011) surveyed 382 first year and final year undergraduate students at a public Malaysian university using Malay instruction regarding their language attitudes toward Malay being a language of unity. Results showed that 72% of these students wanted Malay to be the symbol of national unity through compulsory usage. Some 79.1% were confident that using Malay would ease tensions between

ethnic groups and 76% thought Malay strengthened university unity. While this study did not address the role of English directly, and is limited in scope, it demonstrates a strong commitment from the students to Malay's immense cultural and sociopolitical value, upholding its position at the institution, which may not have to be in complete opposition to introducing or using English academically.

Gill (2008) described that although 2005 was supposed to be the first year that students had their courses in English following PPSMI, which was a large-scale switch to English in very little time, blog posts and other public opinion pieces written by parents showed that implementation did not actually reflect the policy (Gill, 2008).

Summary

Language of instruction policies in Malaysia experienced dramatic transformations in a relatively short period of time. English was once completely dominant due to the British colonial presence. The sweeping establishment of Bahasa Malay as the national language after independence, as an instrument of

national unity, eventually took strong hold after some ethnic conflicts.

As Bahasa Malay settled in to be the dominant language in education, globalization of the business sector created incentives for English to be of high utility and importance again. Sentiments towards English have changed from resenting it as a colonial tongue to appreciating it as a skill that increases employability and mobility. On the policy level, EMI is being embraced and promoted. However, in implementation, resources are still lacking to make it a reality at the institutional level. Furthermore, social class differences determine who has access to English language learning opportunities, which in turn has implications for being better prepared for success in higher education programs that incorporate EMI. As such, this presents a threat to equity.

Overall, Bahasa Malay as the national language or language of instruction does not appear to be overly threatened by English at this moment in time. The bigger concern is how to effectively incorporate English in ways that would boost Malaysian higher education on the international stage.

BRAZIL

Relevant Historical and Sociolinguistic Context

Brazil is the only country in the Americas that speaks Portuguese and it is often perceived as being a monolingual country, with Brazilian Portuguese as the only official national language (Massini-Cagliari, 2004). With vast land and a large population of over 200 million, it is hard to imagine the country being entirely linguistically homogenous; indeed, many linguists have been writing to debunk this myth (K. Finardi, Leão, & Pinheiro, 2016; K. R. Finardi, 2016; Massini-Cagliari, 2004). Brazil has actually always been a multilingual country, home to various indigenous tongues and languages of immigrants (over 200 in total) (Massini-Cagliari, 2004). However, since 1757, the "Directory of the Indians" established Portuguese as the one and only language of Brazil,

banning the use and teaching of other languages. The spirit of this law still resonates to a certain degree today in that some consider the studying or implementation of other languages a threat to national unity (Finardi et al., 2016).

Moreover, the belief that Portuguese is widely spoken worldwide is common in Brazil. Such dominant regard for the Brazilian Portuguese language has a number of implications, including the oppression of, and discrimination against, other languages in the country, and the sense among many Brazilians that there is little need to acquire other languages. Indeed, there is a general resistance against the acquisition of other languages. A majority of the population lacks the opportunities and incentives to realistically understand the linguistic landscape of their country or to make changes to incorporate more (Finardi, 2016).

In Brazil, the acquisition of other languages is seen as an extracurricular activity instead of a

requirement or responsibility of public education. Foreign language education occupies an insignificant space in the curriculum. Therefore, private English as a Second Language (ESL) courses are only accessible to those of a higher social class who can afford them. Given the limited reach of English language proficiency in the country, the acquisition of English elevates the employability or international mobility of those who speak it, further privileging social elites in the country. The stratification of social classes is reinforced through the lack of English for those who can only afford public schooling (Massini-Cagliari, 2004).

Language Policy Framework

The dominance of Brazilian Portuguese guarantees that it is the language of higher education in Brazil. Although EMI has become increasingly common in Europe since the late 20th century, similar practices did not emerge in Brazil until a few decades later. The most comprehensive studies of EMI in Brazil are as recent as 2010 (Martinez, 2016). The policies relating to language reflect a divide within the education sector. Foreign language education is enforced starting in primary school, whereby students must study a foreign language from 5th grade on. However, it is up to the individual school to decide which foreign language to teach. The Brazilian Law of Education, on one hand, wrote that schools are free to choose the language of their foreign language education, but, on the other hand, explicitly encouraged the teaching of Spanish as an example (K. R. Finardi, 2016). More schools are moving toward teaching English, but it is still conceptualized as a foreign language instead of an international language (Massini-Cagliari, 2004). However, in higher education, the status of English is undoubtedly more elevated than any other foreign language. The government is more invested in the acquisition of an international language such as English, than a foreign language, but the discrepancies in policy between basic education and higher education create divergence instead of convergence (Finardi et al., 2016).

There is also a divide between public and private universities, as the student populations enrolled in

these sectors come from very different backgrounds. Public universities have free tuition but only admit the top quarter of students. Therefore, the majority of students attends private universities. Finardi (2016) makes the case for difference in motivations between the two sectors: public universities are motivated to participate globally in academic communities and gain international recognition, whereas private universities are more interested in economic gain. And since there is no shortage of recruitment from among domestic students in Brazil, private universities are not as interested in recruiting globally. As such, private universities are not very engaged with the question of English language usage.

Role of English in Higher Education

The government of Brazil created the program of Science Without Borders in 2011 as a purposeful internationalization effort. Although first suspended in 2015 and definitely ended in 2017, this was a program that provided scholarships for Brazilian students of science and technology to study abroad. Outbound mobility increased because of this program but it became evident that students lacked the language skills to succeed in English-speaking contexts, which undermined the success of the program as a whole (K. R. Finardi, 2016). As a response to this problem, almost exactly a year later in December 2012, the government launched the program English Without Borders to aid the development of English proficiency. Specific actions include private English lessons for university staff, professors, and students; online English courses; and access to a Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) proficiency test, all free of charge (Finardi, 2016). English appears to be at the center of internationalization efforts in Brazil, which is boosting outbound possibilities for students, increasing their numbers and success. Class issues continue to be a problem as mentioned above, however. These dynamics prevent the system from generating large numbers of students who are proficient enough in English to make more widespread EMI in higher education feasible. On the other hand, Finardi (2016) also concluded that both EMI programs in Brazil and Portuguese language education worldwide need to grow in order

to boost the inbound mobility of international students to Brazil.

Summary

Brazil has fully embraced Brazilian Portuguese as its national language and many Brazilians think of their country as deeply monolingual. This attitude has discouraged the recognition of indigenous languages in the country, and undermined adequate acquisition of Spanish or the acquisition of English as an international language. Learning English is seen as an extra-curricular activity, accessible only to those with financial resources, which is similar to the class issues evidenced in Malaysia.

In general, higher education in Brazil is in its infancy stage in terms of incorporating English, but

the uptake of English is growing quickly (Martinez, 2016). It is important that the government identify the problem at its roots and undertake reform with the entire system (including basic education) in mind, instead of attending only to problems at the surface. Facilitating mobility without the tools to succeed will not yield fruitful results. Programs like Science Without Borders and English Without Borders are pioneers that have exposed some major problems, on the basis of which the government has begun to grapple with the complexity of internationalization in important ways. Recognizing a multilingual reality might help create a discussion on access and increase the population's openness toward the presence of more languages and cultures.

FRANCE

Relevant Historical and Sociolinguistic Context

Historically, there have been multiple languages and dialects in the country of France and influence by other tongues of neighboring countries. As early as 1790, the need for a unified language became an important agenda emerging through the French Revolution. The patois, variants of French, and other languages with presence were eradicated because “a language of the free people must be one and the same for all” (Bell, 1995, p. 1405). Nationalism and the cultural fact of language became inseparable concepts. Language was seen as the “sign of full assimilation into a community created based on political will” (Bell, 1995, p. 1406). This ideology of nationalism carried on to influence many other nationalist movements that have focused on the identity of speakers rather than on questions of geography or citizenship. It is no wonder that the colonies of France were forced to adopt the French language because they were considered by the French government to be French.

The French language continues to be held in high regard by the government and it is evident

through the maintenance of the Académie française, which is an organization created to define and regulate the use of the French language since 1635 (“Académie française,” n.d.). Nowadays, French is the fifth most spoken language in the world (France Diplomatie, n.d.), spoken not only in France, but in a wide range of countries around the world and its global presence continues to grow. The colonial legacy of the French-speaking world theoretically provides a good base for the growth of French-speaking universities. Promoting the use of French in general is also one of the priorities of the French government in foreign diplomacy (France Diplomatie, n.d.).

In more recent years, France has loosened its ideal of “one language, one nation” as the agenda of Europeanization becomes more of a priority. In fact, in 2002, France recognized its linguistic diversity for the first time by no longer claiming, in writing, to be monolingual (Hélot, 2003). At the same time, a reform was undertaken to strengthen foreign language education from kindergarten to university. While there is still considerable inequality of social perceptions between immigrant languages and other European languages, this is still undoubtedly a turning point for language policy in France (Hélot, 2003).

Role of English in Higher Education

Within the French-speaking world, higher education in France stands out due to its position within the European Union and the European Higher Education Area. The shared language of higher education across Europe that makes mobility and standardizations possible is English. This reality makes it difficult to prioritize the expectation of promoting French. Therefore, as much as the French government wants to uphold the status of French, English is increasing in importance both within French society and within Europe. Germany's approach to increasing EMI is one of the main reasons that it has surpassed France in international student numbers (Coleman, 2006). France has started to recognize English as a lingua franca. In a survey conducted in 1999-2000 by Ammon and McConnell (2002), there were 72 higher education institutions in France and 38 of them provided programs taught in English (Ammon & McConnell, 2002), which placed France in the top 5 of the 23 European countries surveyed, in terms of percentage of institutions offering English-taught programs.

France's current president, Emmanuel Macron, in an address during Ambassadors' Week in 2017 mentioned repeatedly the necessity for France to internationalize by attracting more international students and by increasing the attractiveness of the French language. He urged the larger French-speaking world to send more students to pursue advanced degrees in France. He did not mention the use of English during his address, but emphasized heavily the significant position of higher education as a platform to internationalize, both as an economic market and as a means of talent acquisition (Macron, 2017).

There was considerable difficulty in uncovering in-depth information on this specific topic in the case of France for several reasons. First, France is very embedded in the European context as a whole. Research often treats the EU as one single subject of research, and in many cases, France is mentioned as an example instead of the center of the analysis. Secondly, the presence of French in the rest of the Francophone world is both significant and politically

sensitive, given its history as a colonial language. Much of the research involving French as a language of instruction discusses its role in the context of other, postcolonial French-speaking countries. Thirdly, the fierce monolingual ideology of French nationalism has also minimized the presence of other languages in the French education system. Higher education is among the first sectors to feel the wave of change. Lastly, the researcher does not have the capacity to conduct research in the French language to uncover literature and additional sources of information written in French to understand a broader perspective. Hopefully, the impulse of internationalization and the ongoing dynamics of immigration will inspire more research into the reality of linguistic diversity in France.

Summary

France has historically occupied a significant political space on the international stage and has left long-lasting impacts through colonialism in many regions of the world. In addition, the ideology of French nationalism places special focus on the role of the French language, thus creating a very strong tie between language and identity. The existence of the Académie française is also evidence that the French language is held to a high standard. At the same time, English has surpassed French in status as an international language in recent years, and France has come around to incorporating EMI, as the Bologna Process and other Europeanization developments have come to the fore.

The French government seems interested in promoting both Francophone universities and EMI programs, as both have strong implications for student mobility and international partnerships. Unlike other languages, French has long been a language of scholarship and academe. As such, in France, the transition to using more English would not be as high stakes as in contexts where such a move could undermine the development of the local language. Overall, research on this topic (in English, at least) has been sparse in the French context. It would be interesting to explore case studies of EMI programs and examine whether language attitudes have changed since more English was introduced.

COMPARISONS AND CONTRASTS

Several themes emerge consistently through the five national contexts concerning the development of EMI, as well as significant differences.

Employability

The fact that proficiency in English is a huge factor in employability has become an influential incentive for higher education institutions to engage with English, as higher education bears a significant responsibility for preparing graduates for the labor market. Furthermore, employability also implies mobility due to rising global trade and collaboration. Research in South Africa shows higher employability for graduates with English proficiency (Casale & Posel, 2011). Research in Malaysia shows students feel that English proficiency is essential to finding a job or getting a promotion (Yunus & Hern, 2011). At the same time, research also finds tremendous value in maintaining mother tongues in South Africa and Malaysia, as well as in Catalonia and the Basque Country, in the case of Spain. Not only does the local language serve as an important solidarity symbol and provide access to public service positions, having strong mother tongue skills also appears to facilitate better second language learning.

Diversity

All five countries are comprised of heterogeneous societies in some way and to different extents. The degree of diversity and how the government chooses to address this in the education system greatly influences language attitudes, access and equity, and effective implementation of policy. South Africa is very linguistically diverse and the government has advanced very progressive policies regarding multilingualism, but the lack of resources and the confounding factor of racism are big obstacles for substantive multilingualism to flourish. Malaysia has a multiethnic population, where the national language is well accepted as a unifying tool, but class issues impact who has access to learn English. Brazil is similar to Malaysia in terms of having a multiethnic population and a well-accepted national

language, but with a much smaller indigenous voice. France, while proudly monolingual, is also home to many immigrant languages today and it is unclear how, or if, the government will institutionalize multilingualism going forward. Spain is in a unique position, where minority languages also have considerable political presence in their regions and the population is trying to adapt to including English in a relatively positive light.

All of these societal realities bear on the populations' attitudes toward language, which could translate into the successful acquisition of a language or the abandonment of one. Regardless of the policy direction, if individuals on the "frontlines" of education do not identify with a certain practice, implementation of policy will not be effective. For example, if people feel that Afrikaans still carries colonial resentment in South Africa, or if people feel that Castilian (Spanish) is a symbol of a central government they no longer identify with in Catalonia, the positions of these languages might be threatened. If education plays a strong role in promoting diversity and in teaching tolerance, functional multilingualism in higher education institutions might serve as a good example for the larger society.

Development and Equity

The applicability of EMI varies greatly depending on the general development of higher education, how much attention or resources the government is able to dedicate to it, and how much the population can invest in learning English in order to be able to take advantage of EMI. Among the five countries considered in this study, Spain and France have rather mature higher education systems and advanced economies. They both also benefit from particular financial supports and political frameworks that come with membership in the European Union. These factors imply a level of security for local languages and a level of likely success in terms of students' English language acquisition. Brazil, Malaysia, and South Africa are in much more precarious situations.

First, they are former colonies, which is a major reason for their current state of economic development. Local languages could be pushed to the periphery if the presence of English is further elevated, with all of the benefits it brings. In South Africa and Malaysia, English is not a brand new factor. In fact, the populations in these countries may have known English more as the norm than other languages in use in the society. 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 a colonial language, while recognizing that the colonial language offers linguistic advantage in the world today. Figuring out how to leverage the benefits of the colonial language, while not sacrificing processes focused on indigenizing and reclaiming a culture and a social order that was lost, is complex and politically fraught. Furthermore, whether it is possible for change to happen at all within a structure where English is the status quo is a key question.

Secondly, developing countries are faced with a higher level of social inequality. Especially in cases like Brazil and Malaysia, where public foreign language education is less than adequate, the wealthy can afford English lessons and succeed in university or the job market. Social inequality is thus perpetuated. The interaction between class and race is magnified in South Africa, given an apartheid history and differing language skills between races.

There are no simple solutions to any of these obstacles. Furthermore, the incorporation of EMI always needs to be reviewed with a critical eye for its potentially long-lasting impacts on the higher education and knowledge system. Each national context comes with a unique set of historical and societal factors that can influence stakeholders within the system differently. At the same time, there is still value in global comparative research on this topic to encourage mutual learning from others' success and mistakes.

DIRECTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Several research instruments and databases would greatly aid the review of literature and research on this topic. There is a need for a database of policy documents. It is clear that the importance and centrality of language varies depending on countries' specific histories and current contexts. The absence of a language policy document should also point to salient political realities. Therefore, creating a catalog of all past and current policy documents as related to language and language in education would be tremendously helpful to understand trends, do comparisons, and connect themes.

For example, there is a tension between English being a colonial language and English being a global academic language. Both are true statements and do not have to be mutually exclusive. However, prioritizing one or the other understanding of English can shape policies connected to the use of English in higher education very differently and show how languages and peoples are positioned in relation to each other. South Africa and Malaysia are countries with a

colonial history and their language contexts are massively complex because of the strong presence of the colonial languages. The colonial languages have also played a role in the disconnect between secondary schools and higher education institutions, where the question of access and equity is heavily implicated. It would be interesting to compare and contrast how EMI is conceptualized in countries with or without colonial histories.

Furthermore, the process of collecting policy documents makes a promising case for global collaboration, due to the linguistic limitations of individual researchers. The language in which a given document is written is a meaningful indication of policy orientation and grounding, and clearly points to who is intended to have access. Translation practices of such documents can also take place on the terms of the speakers of the original language of publication of such policies. There might be value in moving away from an English-based typology, as well, perhaps as a means to break the cycle of

English dominance; at the same time, it is worth debating what ends such a break intends to achieve. An international database of language policies relevant to education would greatly contribute to research across disciplines including, but not limited to, history, sociology, linguistics, education, and political science.

Secondly, also for the benefit of research looking at the role of English in education, perhaps there is a need to collect data on how many institutions have switched to using English for teaching and/or research, and in what fields of study, with what justification, at what education level, etc. Arguably, different degree levels (i.e., bachelor, master's, doctorate) serve diverse functions in society, so collecting this information and relevant statistics can help us better predict and explain the characteristics of various age groups, the labor force, and the production of the knowledge economy in different national contexts.

Developing these databases and large-scale data collection could help us develop relevant research and literature that employs a set of relatively uniform terminology with which to engage in meaningful conversation at an international level. However, it is important to make room for diversity, as regional and national contexts can be quite different, and degree mobility may only be feasible in selected geographic areas. As evidenced by the European Higher Education Area, we see that a certain level of uniformity has benefitted a large portion of the European student body; they have been able to take advantage of educational opportunities across Europe, while also becoming the backbone of the European economy. The global workforce benefits from the contributions of individuals with a certain level of international experience and intercultural competency. However, with the rise of xenophobia and nationalism around the world today, the commitment to internationalization, student mobility, and intercultural competency within the higher education sector might be influenced by these and other factors that are outside of higher education's locus of control.

Thirdly, because EMI is still a relatively recent phenomenon and requires an enormous amount of

resources to implement, only a small portion of institutions can realistically afford to make the transition to English-taught programming on a relatively large scale. At the same time, little attention has been paid to the outcomes and assessment of these programs, degrees, or institutions. Qualitative and empirical assessments are generally lacking and it is unclear how applicable individual case studies can be to wide-ranging policy decisions. A combination of surveys, case studies, and analysis of large data sets—especially in the areas of language attitudes, teaching and learning outcomes, employability, social mobility, and language and identity—could be of extremely high value, and could meaningfully inform the further development of national policies, institutional policies, or even departmental policies.

In this process, it is important to cast a critical eye on English, and to question why internationalization is symbolized through this language and whether these reasons are indeed justified. There is no lack of researchers interested in studying policy implementation in the world and policy evaluations have been conducted in many contexts. The problem lies in the fact that the results of these evaluations have not really been reflected in higher-level decision-making. The uptake of research and evaluation in the policy-making process is another important discussion to have under the umbrella of national politics and academic freedom, in general.

Lastly, there is an undeniable link between English and globalization, and perhaps EMI and internationalization. However, internationalization of the curriculum should not solely be focused on the simple change of a language of delivery, but incorporate content as well as intercultural competency across formal and informal curricula in the institution (Stellenbosch University Council, 2016). The extent to which using EMI actually internationalizes the curriculum, in its fullest sense, should be investigated. The superficial solution to internationalization using English implies gross oversight of matters relating to changes in attitude and the incorporation of authentic intercultural exchange.

CONCLUSION

It is true that knowledge of English gives access to a large portion of what has been coded as global knowledge, and to the people who make up the global community of expertise in many domains. At the individual level, proficiency in English allows for the achievement of certain professional goals, greater employability, and social mobility, or having the pleasure of connecting with many others in all regions of the world. However, in certain national contexts, for example, South Africa, opportunities for a small portion of people of a particular ethnicity interferes heavily with access and equity by a majority, and perpetuates social justice problems in that society. Communication can be rooted not in a particular language, but rather in the idea of language. Intercultural competency and global exchange are not grounded in any specific vehicle of communication, but rather in the willingness and desire to communicate and connect.

One simple piece of evidence in support of this point is that institutions in English-speaking countries are not automatically internationalized, even if they might have an advantage in an English-speaking global context. Without utilizing that advantage and taking responsibility to comprehensively reevaluate how their curricula and student services can be more broadly and interculturally conceptualized, internationalization is a moot point. This should signal to any university system that changing the language of instruction to English can be a superficial step; one taken at the expense of local languages' chances to develop into scientific and academic languages, and at the cost of the speakers of the local languages becoming marginalized or being excluded from international mobility opportunities.

While changing the language of instruction to English or offering English-taught programs are quick ways to attract more international students or train young graduates to have English proficiency in preparation for the job market, stakeholders must consider the longer-term consequences. The division between local knowledge and “global knowl-

edge” will widen and solidify across linguistic barriers and stratification within knowledge could occur. In addition, globalization's progress to date has resulted in a situation where vast quantities of knowledge already exist in English, a process that is only accelerating. As the literature review for this study pointed out, English is in a positive cycle of growth in the world. Once any policy enforces a switch into English, it will most likely become irreversible. The world of higher education could move toward homogenization instead of becoming more capable of representing and expressing diversity.

The argument is not against creating shared communication. Instead, as English spreads as an international language and as the numbers of second language learners of English continues to grow (Coleman, 2006), so should our awareness and education with respect to multilingualism. The impact of multilingualism is not simply about accessing information or being able to communicate; it is also related to the inescapable reality that all of us have multiple identities and we should all have the tools to understand this about ourselves. Learning English and taking pride in being a speaker of the local language(s) are not mutually exclusive positions. However, it takes critical planning, major cultural shifts, and purposeful education to make possible greater understanding and acceptance of our complex linguistic realities.

We must conceptualize knowledge as being rooted in multilingualism. If the global world of knowledge is painted with the broad brushstrokes of English, is that not by design reductionist and positioned against diversity itself? Lasagabaster (2017) introduces the concept of linguistic cosmopolitanism, defined as “getting along across ethnolinguistic boundaries by accommodating the other groups' linguistic preferences or at least being open to doing so” (Lasagabaster, 2017, p. 586). Language of instruction plays a part in constructing and affirming identity (Lasagabaster, 2017), and seems inextric-

ably linked to helping citizens make their way coherently through complex societies.

If languages can be understood as resources, as sources of multiple selves and not simply as tools, perhaps we could cultivate societies that celebrate multilingualism. A global language like English can be learned with high motivation but should not occur at the expense of home languages. If we understand higher education as an institution that promotes knowledge and equality, transforms lives, lifts people out of negative circles, and asks questions that humanity is concerned with, then the discussion of language of instruction should never stop as we continue to understand language more

deeply and fully and what it means to humanity and society. The inevitable rise of English does not have to occur at the expense of other tongues. Ultimately, we must thoughtfully advance global and local conversations about national language policies, critically reflect on the justifications made for incorporating English into largely non-English speaking contexts, cultivate a greater sense of responsibility among native English speakers to broaden their linguistic horizons, and consider carefully the role of multilingualism for the societies of today and tomorrow.

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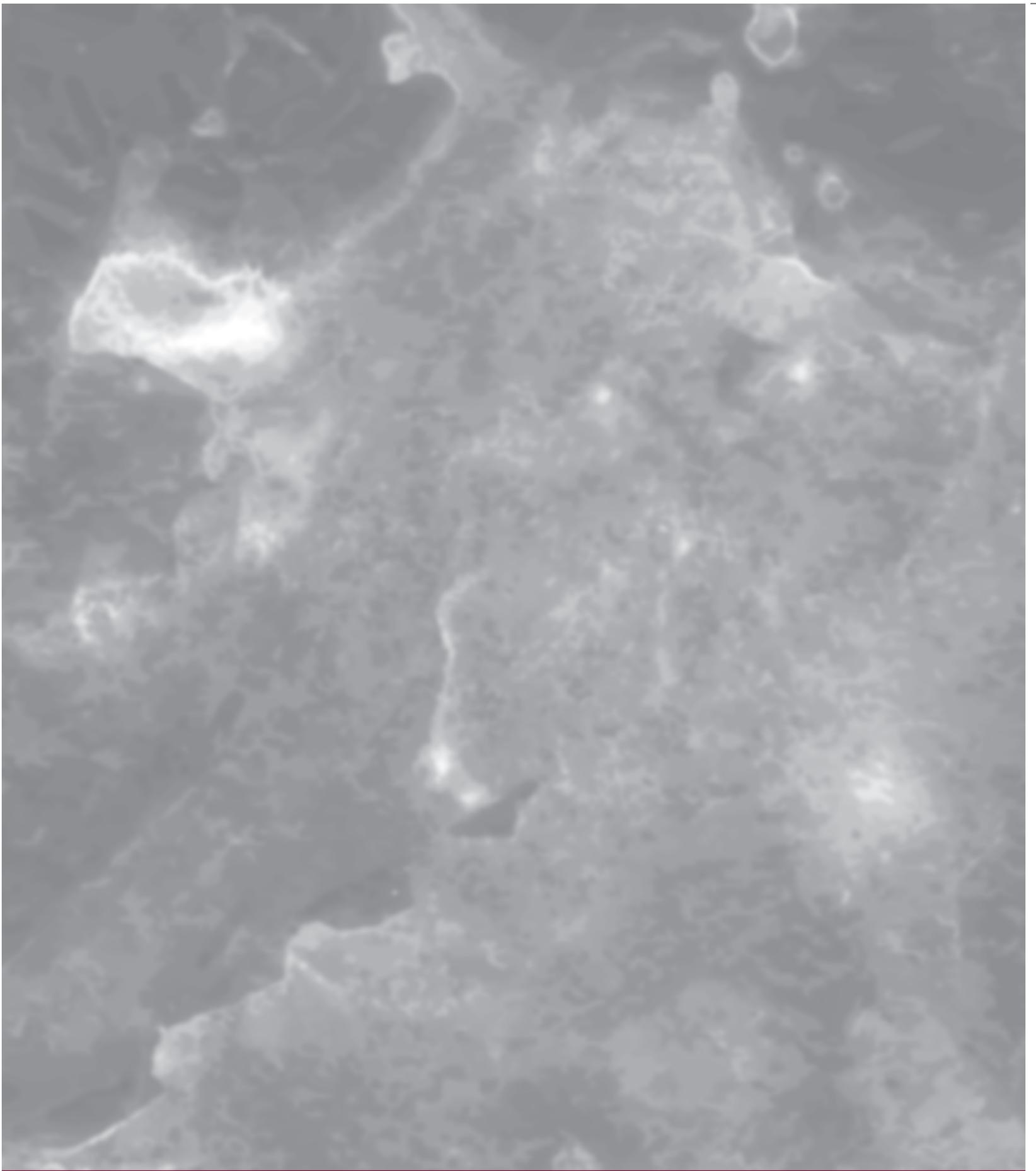
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