

English as the Leading Language of Scholarly Publication has Contributed to the Expansion of English-Medium Higher Education

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ABSTRACT: One of the most prominent education trends in recent decades has been the rapid expansion of English-medium higher education. This trend is more noticeable in Expanding Circle countries where English has no institutional or social role and has traditionally been learned as a foreign language for international communication. Five major factors including scholarly publication, university ranking, acceptance of non-local students, academic capitalism and economic globalization have contributed to the expansion of English-medium higher education.

1. Publication of Journal Articles

Scholarly publication is one of the prominent factors which has contributed to the expansion of English-medium higher education. Since there has been a growing importance of English in research communication, according to Uzuner (2008), the case of disciplinary papers in areas such as mass media, the Internet, entertainment, business, the tourist industry, communication, and international trade, the dominance of English as the global medium of scientific research is often linked to globalization. His article mentioned that publication in English has become the only way a scholar's work can be disseminated. Medgyes and Kaplan (1992) also pointed out that if multilingual scholars want their work to have any influence on the world of science, they need to publish in English or otherwise, they cannot reach the larger community if that community is unable (or unwilling) to read the literature in any language not accepted as the dominant language of disciplinary communication.

Curry & Lillis (2006) mentioned the pressure to meet the demands of the "publish or perish" ideology is reported to be another reason for multilingual scholars' writing and publishing in English. I also learnt from his article that in today's academic environments, the number of one's publications, especially international ones, is used as a standard against which one's scholarship is judged. In this regard, publishing in a language other than English and publishing in local contexts other than global ones limits scholars' chance of future academic success since international publications are the determining factors for decisions about hiring, promotion, and employment.

For a non-English-speaking society such as Hong Kong, publication of journal articles also plays a significant role in English-medium higher education. Choi (2010) mentioned that universities here adopt the quantitative indexing systems for academic journals, such as the Science Citation Index (SCI) and the Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI), as a convenient, ready-made tool for the evaluation of research and publication capability. However, such systems do not take into account journal publications in languages other than English, English soon becomes the measure of academic capability. When English has been a dominant language in scholarly

publication, it will inevitably lead to the expansion of English-medium higher education.

2. University Ranking

University ranking is undoubtedly another significant contributing factor in the expansion of English-medium higher education. Students and alumni of the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) staged a protest against the administration for undermining teaching in the Chinese language and destroying the tradition of bilingualism (Choi 2010). However, the CUHK administration insisted on using English because the use of English served as a useful label, a sign indicating that this was a first class university. A professor in politics, Eliza Lee (CUHK) put forward her major argument that the use of English is pertinent to maintaining the quality of education of the university. The Vice Chancellor at CUHK also warned his students and colleagues of the danger of Hong Kong losing its competitiveness and being rapidly overtaken by up-and-coming Chinese cities and CUHK would then face the crisis of being marginalized when human and material resources and money were moved to other local higher institutions. In view of this, the Vice Chancellor urged a renewed emphasis on English, since this was the major medium of international academic exchange and thus teaching in English was undoubtedly the “universal trend” (Choi 2010). The Vice Chancellor also believed that without English and lacking a medium of international exchange, one would fail to attract the best scholars and the best students.

Improving national proficiency in English now forms an essential part of the educational strategy in most expanding circle countries as well. The ranking of the world’s universities provided each year by the Shanghai Jiao Tong University Institute has become a standard international reference. Graddol (2006) mentioned that around two-thirds of the world’s top 100 universities are in English-speaking countries. If an institution wishes to become a centre of international excellence, it needs both to attract teachers and researchers from around the world, and to encourage international students to enroll on its courses, enriching the university’s prestige, revenue, and intellectual climate.

The global university rankings in The Times Higher Education (2012), the top ten universities are however all in USA and the UK.

1 st	California Institute of Technology	United States
2 nd	Harvard University	United States
3 rd	Stanford University	United States
4 th	University of Oxford	United Kingdom
5 th	Princeton University	United States
6 th	University of Cambridge	United Kingdom
7 th	Massachusetts Institute of Technology	United States
8 th	Imperial College London	United Kingdom
9 th	University of Chicago	United States
10 th	University of California, Berkeley	United States

Source: <http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/world-university-rankings/2011-12/world-ranking>

A commentary in The Economist (2005) also stated that the top universities are citizens of an international academic marketplace with one global academic currency, one global labour force and, increasingly, one global language, English. In addition, Graddol (2006) mentioned that the standardization of higher education is intended both to facilitate greater movement of students within Europe and to make European higher education more attractive to students from other countries. Hence, the use of English makes it easier for non-language specialists to carry out all or part of their undergraduate or postgraduate study in another country. His book also mentioned that in 2003-04 an estimated 1500 Master’s programmes were offered in English in countries where English is not the first language. On the other hand, academics, like many other professionals, desire to gain international experience early in their careers (Sastry 2005). English as the global academic language facilitates the international mobility of young researchers as well.

3. Acceptance of Overseas Students

Global institutions in non-English-speaking countries are using English medium courses to attract international students and teachers. Graddol's article showed that USA and the UK together account for over a third of all international students in the world and the "major English-speaking destination countries" together account for around 46% and hence those universities dominate the international league tables. English-speaking countries have the most entrepreneurial universities, who seek income by marketing their courses to overseas students; and English itself is seen as a key educational investment. Because of this, countries like Singapore and Malaysia are establishing themselves as "education hubs" and attracting international students by offering courses taught through the medium of English. On the other hand, the Erasmus Mundus programme enables mobility by allowing students to achieve their entire degree abroad and gaining credits for the degree and the Bologna Process provides mutual recognition of qualifications released by universities in different countries. As a result, within the context of the Europe-wide Bologna Process, the international mobility of students is enhanced and English has therefore become the medium of instruction in education.

A similar situation can also be seen in Hong Kong. Choi's article revealed that the expanded use of English had arisen from universities' decision to increase the intake of non-local students. Together with the other local universities, CUHK had been strongly urged by the University Grant Committee (UGC) to expand their non-local student population. The Vice Chancellor at CUHK believed that increasing the intake of non-local students could broaden the international vision of students as they came into contact with people from different cultures. He also stressed the importance of promoting English ability so as to "broaden academic and cultural vision," and to improve career opportunity. (The Chinese University of Hong Kong 2005, 1 February). With most of the departments opting to take in non-local students, it was estimated by a CUHK professor that this would mean that over three-thirds of the courses would be taught in English, thereby upsetting the linguistic balance where the principal medium of teaching would be Chinese. (Hong Kong Economic Journal 2005).

Evans' finding (2010) also indicated that while local students have little need or desire to speak English among themselves, they are generally happy to use the language when communicating with international students for academic and social purposes. The growing presence of international students in the past decade has unsurprisingly stimulated the use of English as a campus lingua franca and the influx of non-local students has profound relevance to the expansion of English-medium higher education.

4. Economic Globalization

In globalized economies, a mastery of English is indispensable. Choi's article mentioned that globalization or more specifically, economic globalization also reinforced the dominance of English. There is a growing polarization between the multilingual elites, such as professionals and business people who speak English fluently under economic globalization and therefore English is the language which facilitates international trade and business. Choi's article also mentioned that in Hong Kong, a former British colony, English still remains the "power language", the usage of which signifies social and political power and status and this has not changed even after the return of sovereignty to China in 1997.

The Vice Chancellor at CUHK also reiterated that since English is widely used throughout the world, our society will become "international" or cosmopolitan if we adopt it in our schools and universities. English is often regarded as the language which facilitates international trade and business. That is why in the realm of higher education, English becomes a marker of success and excellence when parents and institutions aspire to its usage as the teaching medium. Another most striking argument in Choi's article is that whether education should be conducted in a foreign language which inevitably creates obstacles for most children, but which hopefully will provide learners with the means for upward social mobility. Munandar (2015) indicated that "apart from educational purposes, the learning of English worldwide has been found to have social and economic implication to its learners and it can be seen as "social and economical mobilizer". Therefore, English learners are often regarded as more educated and English proficiency is often valued by companies in recruiting their employees and this results in the expansion of English-medium higher education.

5. Academic Capitalism

Choi's article mentioned that academic capitalism and managerial culture is another influencing factor in the medium of instruction in higher education. With decreased state funding, public research universities began to expand more of their institutional and individual efforts on competing for external money tied to market-related research. Since there is a much keener sense of competition among and within institutions, a centralization of decision-making in universities has taken up greater surveillance of the academics.

Gareth (2006) claimed that university education was increasingly seen as a commodity rather than a public good serving the needs of society. In the Chinese University case, the president is now more a CEO than an academic leader with much more diverse concerns and broader vision than that of profit (Chan & Mok 2001). Therefore it is often argued that the language controversy in question is closely related to university management, the commodification and marketization of university education. A typical example in CUHK is that departments could choose to run parallel courses in both Chinese and English. However, this would mean extra resources to be put in by the departments themselves, while for those who chose to change their medium of instruction to English, the University promised extra funding (Choi 2010).

Evans' paper (2010) mentioned that the expansion of English-medium teaching has been driven by another global trend in contemporary higher education – massification (from elite to mass higher education). Evans' finding also indicated that the university management's insistence on English-medium teaching via admonitory memoranda to staff and the inclusion of items on the Student Feedback Questionnaire which require students to indicate the extent of their lecturers' use of English have a significant role in institutional language practice. Furthermore, English is also used when students give presentations, which is understandable as this work is generally assessed and thus falls within the ambit of the University's language policy. In this regard, most university lecturers insist on using English as the medium of instruction and this has further stipulated the use of English in higher education.

6. Conclusions

On the whole, there are a number of significant contributing factors for the expansion of English-medium higher education in Outer Circle and Expanding Circle countries and most of them are intricately linked. Some countries with no colonial tradition such as China and Japan, the use of English as medium of instruction is a recent phenomenon and this is often the result of the factors mentioned above. On the other hand, English-medium higher education is not a new idea in Hong Kong and other outer circle society, but it is rather an intensification of English in higher education.

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