Language, Knowledge Exchange and Higher Education

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Overview

• Higher education is concerned with the generation, preservation in dissemination of knowledge.
• Communication and interaction is central to the education process
• Mobility has always played a key enabling role
• So has language
• History suggests that education – and most specifically higher education needs a “lingua franca”
• Explore implications for the future of international higher education
“Study the past if you would define the future”
(Confucius)
The origins of international education and the Hellenic world

- Mobility of scholars (no hard distinctions between learner and teacher)
- Brahmanas, Sramanas and other “wandering scholars” in ancient India, Han China – the Shih (traveller persuaders)
- 5th century BCE – Greece and the Mediterranean
- The Sophists (the first example of fee paying education?)
- Plato’s Academy and Aristotle’s Lyceum
- The Library of Alexandria – a magnet for scholars from the Hellenic world
- Greek as the medium for scholarly activity
The internationalisation of knowledge

- The emergence of Islam
- The Abbasid caliphate and the central position of Baghdad
- Preservation and translation of the Greek intellectual tradition
- Libraries, observatories, hospitals
- Home to scholars regardless of faith
- Arabic as the language of science and education
- Importance of trade and ease of travel – scale of geographical coverage
The Middle Ages

- Evolution of the university as an autonomous body – limited numbers of study locations encouraged mobility
- Common curriculum and common language
- Greek to Latin via Arabic

- Ibn Battutah travelled from Morocco, throughout Asia to China in pursuit of knowledge
- Jewish philosopher Maimonides, exiled from his native Spain, studied at University of Al-Karaouine in Morocco
- William of Tyre travelled from Jerusalem to study liberal arts and cannon law at Paris, Orleans and Bologna.
“Empire” and International education

- The Colonial Era – and the British Empire
- Common language to manage trade and administration
- Educating the elites in colonial countries – home institutions
- Building domestic education capacity – schools and Universities
- Metropoles and networks in the development of research capacity
The rise of English as a global language I

- Colonialism and its legacies – the impact of the British Empire
- English as national language (Australia, US, Caribbean)
- English as language of authority (India, Hong Kong, Malaysia)
- Emergence of the US as a superpower post WWI – economic, political, scientific and technological dominance
- Governments see English as important for growth and development
- Government legitimises – official language, dominant language, taught in school – 100+ countries it is the dominant foreign language, compulsory in many
The rise of English as a global language II

- Globalisation – need for a common language (languages) for business and diplomacy
- The Internet
- The talent wars – non-English speaking countries looking to attract foreign students
- HEIs teaching in English – especially the private
- TNE – courses being taught overseas in English
- Research and publications (with added consequences of league tables) – citations for English language publications higher
- The proportion of English language journals may be declining but the high impact ones are still in English.
“The most reliable way to forecast the future is to try to understand the present”

(John Naisbitt)
Motives for teaching in English

ACA Survey on developments in Europe

• Growth in number of institutions offering programme taught in English
• Post graduate particularly popular
• Diversity of Motives
• Internationalising the institution
  – Aiding partnership development
  – Building competences for domestic students
  – Brain gain (of particular importance in relation to research)
• Recruitment Focused
  – Attracting international students by reducing language barriers
  – Addressing declining domestic demand
ACA – Use of English in 2014

HEIs - Programmes taught in English

- Institutions Offering
- Proportion of Programmes
ACA – Changes over time

Growth in HEIs with English taught Programmes

- Nordic
- Baltic
- C West
- C East
- S West
- S East

2007
2014
What About Asia?

- 25% of the 6000 plus languages are in East Asia
- Significance of colonial legacies – Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka,
- Growth of private HE – with associated widespread use of English
- Thailand – 600+ programmes taught in English
- Extensive in Malaysia, Singapore, Malaysia, Brunei, Philippines
- Emerging in Indonesia and Vietnam – private sector driven, post-graduate
The numbers of internationally mobile students is growing

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics
Some shifts away from traditional English destinations

• Signs that share of students in traditional English destinations is falling, but slowly
• Increase appears to be other OECD (Europe)
• Non OECD stable in aggregate, but shifts between countries

![Share of International Students by Destination](chart.png)
Source countries for international students (excluding China) and the legacies of “empire”

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“Because things are the way they are, things will not stay the way they are” (Brecht)
or
“Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose” (Karr)
“The Shape of Things to Come” (British Council)

- Global tertiary enrolments to increase by 1.4% per annum (compared with 5-6% in previous decade)
- Little change in outbound mobility ratios
- China, India, South Korea, Germany, Malaysia, Turkey and Nigeria expected to be main source countries for international mobility
- Mobility destinations to be dominated by US, UK, Canada, Germany, France and Japan.
- But anticipating growth in mobility to Asian economies
- Asia and Middle East/Gulf to remain key hosts for TNE (depends on tertiary demand and institutional factors) with English medium key to their operation
Other Anglophone perspectives

- International Education Advisory Council (Australia)
  - Importance of English speaking destinations
  - Growing importance of Asia-Pacific as source but also destination (New Colombo Plan)
  - Significant potential for TNE
- Advisory Panel on Canada’s International Education Strategy
  - Highlights market growth potential – 6.4 million internationally mobile students by 2025
  - Australia, US, UK and NZ seen as key competitors (view of the future of mobility consistent with BC)
The growth of regionalism

- Higher education and regional competitiveness
- The emergence of regional trading blocs – following the experiences of the EU
- Policy agendas to harmonise key features of education and facilitate intra-regional mobility.
- Encouraging research co-operation
- APEC and the Vladivostok Declaration (not harmonisation but encouraging greater levels of mobility – students, researchers and institutions)
- ASEAN and AIMS (underpins AEC - harmonise, build competitiveness, challenges of credit transfer – systems and language)
Summary and conclusions
Conclusions

• Knowledge generation and dissemination dependent on communication – both physical presence and ability to interact
• Mobility and language both matter
• Technological change has spurred growth in the scale and scope of mobility (travel and communications costs reduced, virtual engagement increased)
• Historically, there has always been a dependence on a “lingua franca” – english is the most recent.
• There may be limitations on growth of physical mobility – certainly for students (perhaps less so among researchers)
Conclusions

- Other educational trends (TNE, online) drive need for a common language
- Dynamics of research and publication create significant inertia in favour of English
- Student preference of anglophone countries remains reasonably stable
- Dominance of English reinforced by adoption in non traditionally anglophone countries
- Challenges around building capacity for effectively delivery
Thank You!

Questions and Comments please