

## **Local vs. Global: Teaching and Publishing in a Globalizing East Asia University**

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### **Abstract**

This presentation offers a contemporary examination of current innovative practices of East Asia professors in a leading Taiwan institution. Key findings are based on a problem-centered interpretive case study guided by the following question: What are the views, strategies, dilemmas, and practices that participants adopt in response to teaching and publishing in an institution affected by the globalization and internationalization of higher education? Interviews were conducted with 30 professors who held positions from assistant to full rank as well as deans, heads of departments, and center directors. Nearly all argued that the forces of globalization led to their diminished capacity for academic freedom in research and publication. Participants explained that they were required to publish and present their research in ISI English journals as one avenue for increased global recognition of the University. The increasing population of international students in participants' classrooms represented a signpost of the success of reform efforts and internationalization as well as a shift in the complexities of teaching across nationality and language backgrounds. Participants noted English Medium Instruction (EMI) courses that included international students were useful to provide exposure to the different styles of English spoken in the world. All in all the traditional structure of participants' courses were challenged to meet international standards of instruction and evaluation in higher education; participants noted that with the passing of each year their courses were becoming increasingly diverse from the traditional standard of Taiwan universities. Participants reported that the threads of English in classroom settings and within the campus community created a paradox; for international students EMI was an oasis from the struggle of courses instructed in Mandarin. For Taiwan students and some of the participants EMI was a confrontation – pressure to transfer or apply a grammar-based foundation of English to authentic use within the academic community. English presented negative consequences for those who struggled to bridge the domains of English in the classroom against language use in everyday life.

**Keywords:** Globalization and internationalism of education, 21st century education, English medium instruction, East Asia higher education, EFL, international students, ISI publications

### **1. Introduction**

This presentation is based on research conducted while serving as a Fulbright lecturer and researcher at a university in Taipei Taiwan. As a Fulbright lecturer I taught doctoral courses with a research component exploring the entity of higher education, as both mediator and reactor to contemporary processes of globalization and internationalization. The combined research efforts between students and myself offered a unique discourse composed of diverse theoretical and political currents that, nevertheless, had commonalities. Nearly all learners in these courses were international doctoral students from various Asian nations other than Taiwan. As researchers, we defined ourselves as outsiders and guests in Taiwan and within the University community.

The study detailed in this presentation was conducted in concert with student research projects. It details a case study profiling the concepts, contributions, and challenges of professors engaged in teaching and publishing within a Taiwan institution impacted by the globalization and internationalization of higher education. Two areas of focus include 1) the accomplishments, problems and dilemmas professors encounter with newly established expectations to publish in leading international journals and 2) professors' engagement with a shifting pedagogical environment defined by increasing numbers of international students and the use of English as the medium of instruction.

### **2. Engaging the Discourse**

Administrators of leading East Asia universities have initiated significant restructuring to enhance competitiveness and hierarchical positioning within both national and global spheres (Burbules & Torres, 2000; Mok & Welch, 2003). In Taiwan new programs administered by the Ministry of Education and the National Science Council have enhanced global competitiveness through a renewed financial commitment to expand university infrastructure and invigorate academic research (MOE Taiwan, 2007). These programs endorse worldwide trends regarding the government and core activities of contemporary research universities (Marginson, 2000; Anderseck, 2004).

In view of this, leading universities in Taipei Taiwan are committed to course offerings and programs using English medium instruction (EMI), expansion of global markets to attract increasing numbers of international students, and sustainment of faculty incentives for publications in international Social Science (SSCI) and Science Citation (SCI) indexed journals (Song & Tai, 2007). The wide range of international projects developed and offered by Taiwan universities are facilitated through campus based international centers dedicated to providing opportunities and support for faculty exchanges along with recruitment of international students in Europe, the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, India, South Africa, Korea, China and Latin America. As a result of these efforts, the population of foreign professors and international students is increasing in many Taiwan university undergraduate and graduate programs (Roberts, Chou, Ching, 2010).

Knight (2003, p. 2) suggests that internationalization is changing the world of education and globalization is changing the world of internationalization. As such globalization and internationalization can be viewed as distinct processes that impact both individual universities and systems of higher education in all parts of the world. Globalization is defined and shaped by events beyond the control of education institutions; these events include the interconnectivity of world affairs specific to the global economy and the flow of communications technology, knowledge, people, values, and ideas across borders (Altbach & Knight, 2007). Scholars agree that processes of globalization are unalterable while those of internationalization are fluid and changeable (Mok, 2006).

The overarching processes of internationalization are defined by policies and initiatives to increase international student populations, provide target courses in English as well as offer EMI programs. These internationalization initiatives also encompass financial incentives to academics for publications in leading journals as well as for teaching courses in English. In the context of Taiwan, the ongoing development of EMI has been instrumental in attracting both local and international students (Chen, 2010). A major driving force of EMI policy in Taiwan is that teaching content courses in English promotes local students' interest and motivation to acquire English, and hence improves proficiency, while at the same time facilitating academic performance and increasing competitiveness in the job market.

Mok (2007) suggests that in the East Asia region, internationalization efforts should be distinguished in terms of policy learning and policy copying. Noting that policy copying without proper adaptation and careful contextualization leads to recolonization (p. 438). In this line of reasoning scholars speculate that the professorate of East Asia institutions is committed to contemporary trends in order to raise the quality of higher education; others argue that as academics they are victims of an inescapable hegemony encapsulated in contemporary processes of globalization and internationalization (Altbach, 2003). Both camps suggest assimilation in terms of shaping the teaching and research responsibilities of professors toward standards of leading transnational universities of the United States and Europe.

### **3. Research Design**

The research was designed as a problem-centered interpretive case study guided by the following question: What are the views, strategies, dilemmas, and practices that participants adopt in response to teaching and publishing in an institution affected by the globalization and internationalization of higher education? The primary data sources included upkeep of a field log, transcriptions of one-to-one interviews with all participants, bi-weekly focus group sessions with some participants, and ongoing review of university media documents along with local and national current events.

One-to-one voice-recorded interviews were conducted with 30 professors who held positions from assistant to full rank as well as deans, heads of departments, and center directors. Participants ranged in age from 36 to 65 years and were spread across faculties of the social sciences and the humanities. All participants had at least one foreign degree, most commonly a PhD from the United Kingdom, North America, Japan, Germany, or Australia. Participants were identified through snowball sampling emanating from professional and social network contacts during the academic year.

### **4. Results: Business of International Publications**

Participants reported that they were under pressure to publish in the highest ranked international journals, which they interpreted as a requirement to publish in English. Many participants noted that the quality of research in Taiwan universities is on a par with western countries, yet getting manuscripts accepted is difficult due to alignment with Standard English. Nearly all participants traveled extensively for their research, lived in various countries at some point in time, speak two or more languages and were trained in English speaking countries. As such they were accustomed to using English for academic purposes. Yet those who published in the leading

international journals reported that writing in English required an exhaustive commitment and extra expense to hire professional English editing services for about USD 350 per 25 paged manuscript.

Participants suggested that publishing in international journals also coincided with conformity to paradigms purported by the United States standard of excellence. Participants argued that Eastern and Western academia represented paradoxically opposing discourse communities (Swales 1990). This point is aligned with scholars suggesting that patterns of research in social science and humanities are bound by national structures, policies, and scientific institutions as well as the respective languages and specific empirical worlds (Taylor 1985; Barnes 2001; Johnston & Sidaway 2004). Participants cited a number of contextual (social, political, economic, and cultural) reasons why the publishing practices of social science research was heterogeneous, context dependent, and linked to the Mandarin language. That said, participants reported that the trade-off for publication records in international journals was disengagement with local-national issues; editors and reviewers of international journals would not recognize or validate their research and manuscripts grounded within East Asian paradigms.

In sum, participants articulated commitment to an intellectual life adaptable to the changing and globalized world of higher education. That said they noted that their traditional vision of the central university mission – teaching and research within the context of Taiwan society – was in process of redefinition. Participants explained that on the one hand, local scientific and educational research needs to conform to the standards of international publication and, on the other hand, that the application of knowledge derived from another time and space can contribute to advancing scientific knowledge from elsewhere.

#### **4.1 Results: Impact on Professors' Work**

Recent curricular reform of higher education in Taiwan has focussed on further development of student-centered learning, interdisciplinary, IT literacies, cross-cultural competencies, interactive pedagogies and most importantly EMI. With this in mind, participants were asked to describe a typical class they recall teaching previous to the contemporary reform efforts. Participants reported that they relied exclusively on the lecture method and students seldom participated in the instructional process. As professors they entered class and gave lecture without interruption. The class was over when the lecture was completed. Some participants reported that, even though opportunities for students to speak during class were provided, few would do so.

Due to the impact of curricular reform, most participants revised courses to accommodate EMI with an integrated international dimension. Participants used local events with direct application to the international sphere. In the beginning stages of reform many participants reported that due to large class size, limited class time, and students' limited English writing and speaking abilities they usually just encouraged (rather than require) students to speak English in class and to answer test questions in English. This alleviated or at least reduced student anxiety. The intent was to apply the practical use of English within the classroom and to internally motivate students to further develop their English capability for use in their professional and personal lives. A case in point, participants observed that students perceived English as a tool as opposed to the experience of taking English as foreign language courses from native English-speaking professionals. Indeed, many participants reported that students viewed their study of English as useful, if solely for getting good scores, which would inevitably lead to better job opportunities.

Participants defined themselves as agents in the internationalization of curricula given their efforts to shift instruction and incorporate the use of English. Through their day-to-day teaching, they viewed themselves as mediators of Mandarin language classroom settings as well as facilitators of EMI. The increasing population of international students in participants' classrooms represented a signpost of the success of reform efforts and internationalization as well as a shift in the complexities of teaching across nationality and language backgrounds. Participants noted that classrooms represented exclusively by Taiwan students was no longer the norm or standard.

In all that participants reported that they were dedicated to addressing and understanding the different needs of Taiwan and international students. Some participants articulated this issue in terms of the need to incorporate the Western or American style of instruction with all EMI courses, popularly referred to as the Americanization of teaching. For participants this style included preparation of syllabi, a strong discussion component, field trips, and guest speakers. In contrast the conventional Mandarin-style courses included whole-class instruction and relaxed course evaluation. All in all the traditional structure of participants' courses were challenged to meet international standards of instruction and evaluation in higher education; participants noted that with the passing of each year their courses were becoming increasingly diverse from the traditional standard of Taiwan universities.

Participants reported that the threads of English in classroom settings and within the campus community created a paradox; for international students EMI was an oasis from the struggle of courses instructed in Mandarin. For Taiwan students and some of the participants EMI was a confrontation – pressure to transfer or apply a grammar-based foundation of English to authentic use within the academic community. As such English presented negative consequences for those who struggled to bridge the domains of English in the classroom against their language in everyday life. As innovative professors, participants intervened by bridging communication, not by privileging English over the use of Mandarin, but by supporting all students to engage with contemporary discourses.

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