

Degree Mobility in the Higher Education Context: Could the English Language be a Key Driver of Internationalisation?

Tuğba Elif Toprak Yıldız^{1*}

¹Izmir Democracy University, Faculty of Science and Letters, Department of English Language and Literature, Uçkuyular, 35140, Izmir, Turkey.
ORCID: T.E. Toprak-Yıldız (0000-0003-0341-229X)

Abstract

Nowadays, as higher education institutions strive for gaining reputation and increasing their visibility, the notion of internationalisation within the higher education systems continues to attract increasing attention. In particular, the influence of internationalisation on the linguistic landscape of European higher education appears to be far-reaching. Whereas the European Union policies have backed up the idea of multilingualism, the ambition of higher education institutions to draw more accomplished students has boosted the status of English as the lingua franca and medium of instruction. In a similar vein, literature on internationalisation has linked internationalisation to greater degree and credit mobility and extensive use of English as the medium of instruction. Competitiveness in the academic market, in particular, might have caused a considerable number of higher education institutions to associate the notion of internationalisation with Englishisation. While these pressures cement the position of English as the medium of instruction and scholarly activities, this article examines the possible relationships among internationalisation, degree mobility, Englishisation, and language policies in the light of the OECD 2019 and 2020 data. The article also considers several crucial implications for internationalisation that have become increasingly relevant especially during the Covid-19 pandemic period.

Keywords: Degree mobility, internationalisation, higher education, Englishisation, English-medium instruction (EMI).

1. INTRODUCTION

In the last decades, internationalisation has become a buzz word even though it has previously been considered as a fuzzy term in the relevant literature (Kehm & Teichler, 2007). According to Knight (2004), internationalisation can be defined as a process in which an international and intercultural dimension has been incorporated into the objectives, functions and delivery of educational, research-oriented and service-based activities. To date, higher education institutions all around the world have embraced diverse internationalisation policies in order to respond to the demands of the competitive international academic market, raise their visibility, and attract better-skilled researchers and students. For instance, according to performance indicators proposed by the Times Higher Education World University Rankings (The Times Higher Education, 2020), the indicator entitled international outlook comprises around 8% of all performance indicators. Similarly, the share of internationalisation related indicators is approximately 10% according to QS World University Rankings (2020).

Internationalisation has been increasingly associated with Englishisation (Curle, Jablonkai, Mittelmeier, Sa-

han, & Veitch, 2020), a phenomenon that refers to the influence of English over other languages and English Medium Instruction (EMI). It has been assumed that internationalisation has been a significant driving force behind the increasing popularity of EMI, which could be explained as the use of the English language to teach subjects in countries where English is not the majority language (Macaro, 2018; Macaro, Curle, Pun, An, & Dearden, 2018). In particular, the use of EMI has become increasingly widespread, and the number of EMI programmes has multiplied (Dearden, 2014; Macaro et al., 2018). The growth is especially quite evident in regions such as Europe, Asia and the Middle East (Arik & Arik, 2014; Fenton-Smith, Humphreys, & Walkinshaw, 2017; McMullen, 2014; Wächter & Maiworm 2008, 2014).

This outcome could be anticipated by taking the benefits that are associated with EMI both in the long and short run into account. Coleman (2006), for instance, proposed that EMI courses at higher education institutions could maximize students' chances of benefiting from international exchange programmes and better compete in the job market. The use of EMI in higher education has been extensively connected with a higher number of international students and academics, greater student and staff mobility through exchange programmes, and internationalisation of study programmes (Curle et al., 2020). Understanding possible links between EMI and student mobility is significant in that mobility has been regarded as one of the most leading indicators of inter-

*Yazışma Adresi / Address for Correspondence:
T.E. Toprak-Yıldız, Email: tugbaeliftoprak@gmail.com

Geliş Tarihi / Received Date: 08.02.2021
Kabul Tarihi / Accepted Date: 13.07.2021

Doi: 10.32329/uad.876946

nationalisation (Altbach, 2002; Curle et al., 2020). In the relevant literature, student mobility can be characterised as credit mobility and degree mobility. While credit mobility refers to a short-term study abroad experience during which students can accrue credits for their degree at their home university, degree mobility requires students to complete a full degree at a university abroad (Velliari & Coleman-George, 2016). In other words, degree-mobile students attend higher education institutions in the host country as regular students with the intention of completing a program and earning a degree (OECD, 2019). On the other hand, credit mobile students are temporary students at a host institution abroad, and they study in order to gain academic credit (OECD, 2019).

The present study focuses on the long-term degree mobility in the context of OECD (The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries. The aim of the present study is to discern possible links between degree mobility, a proxy for internationalisation, and EMI by examining the latest OECD statistics (OECD, 2018, 2019, 2020) on degree mobility, in particular, the number of international students and the direction of degree mobility.

2. INTERNATIONALISATION IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION

The notion of quality in higher education has grown increasingly in significance as evident by the number of higher education institutions on an international scale trying to climb the ranking charts and increase their visibility and reputation in various ways. One of the most critical issues influencing the success, reputation, and visibility of higher education institutions is, for no doubt, the notion of internationalisation. Policymakers, governments, and authorities in higher education institutions engage with various activities and implement relevant policies to boost the internationalisation efforts of higher education institutions. To date, the notion of internationalisation has been defined in different ways, and the scope and nature of these definitions have varied from one context to another. Nevertheless, what remains constant has been that internationalisation involves a set of activities and processes that bring an international and intercultural dimension in education, research and service roles of the institution of interest (Knight, 1994). It is safe to posit that these activities, procedures, and services are highly likely to influence higher education institutions' performance, rankings, and reputation. In particular, student and faculty member exchange programmes, collaborative research and development projects, field studies, intercultural education, extra-curricular activities, curriculum development, and innovation activities are assumed to contribute positively to the internationalisation process that takes place at higher education institutions (Knight & de Wit, 1995). It is not surprising that the internationalisation of higher educa-

tion institutions has emerged as a strong predictor and critical driver in the success of these institutions in all parts of the world (Llurda, Cots, & Armengol, 2014). For instance, while international outlook constitutes around 8% of the performance indicators of the Times Higher Education World University Rankings (Times Higher Education, 2020), internationalisation constitutes 10% of the total ranking score, according to the QS World University Rankings (QS World University Rankings, 2020).

Even though internationalisation does not have a strict definition, in the relevant literature, various definitions have been proposed to explain this phenomenon. To illustrate, Back, Davis and Olsen (1997) carried out a study on higher education institutions' internationalisation practices in the Australian context. Back et al. (1997) investigated these institutions regarding several features, including international study programmes, internationalisation of teaching practices, internationalisation of research practices, and the availability of organisational strategies for promoting internationalisation. In addition, Hughes (2008) elaborated on primary factors that could promote and facilitate internationalisation practices. These factors can be listed as student mobility, faculty and staff mobility, and off-shore delivery. Moreover, Knight (1997) came up with several strategies and activities that could help boost higher education institutions' internationalisation efforts. These strategies and activities can be summarised as establishing more international academic programmes (e.g., student and faculty exchange programmes, foreign language training programmes, and internationalised curricula), engaging with international research and scholarly cooperation (e.g., projects and scholarly publishing at an international scale), conducting extra-curricular activities (e.g., international student clubs, international and intercultural gatherings) and offering external services and relations (e.g., distance education, off-shore instruction, and community-based partnerships). Hence, it could be inferred that the presence of international study programmes, international research projects, and student/faculty mobility form a substantial part of internationalisation activities.

From a historical point of view, the cornerstone of internationalisation was set through the Bologna Declaration (1999), authorised by the representatives from 29 European countries in charge of higher education in June 1999. The Bologna Declaration launched the establishment of European higher education and cemented the idea of the internationalisation of higher education in Europe. The Bologna Declaration (1999) set out to create a more consolidated higher education organisation across the European countries and promote compatibility and transparency among the higher education institutions in the continent. Furthermore, it aimed to structure educational systems and programmes in close parallel with European countries' needs, and to boost graduates' employment rates. Since signing the Bologna Declara-

tion (1999), higher education institutions seem to have accepted the idea of internationalisation and considered internationalisation as a chance to better compete in the global education market, gain more respectability, and improve their economic benefits by attracting students outside the European Union zone (Garrett & Gallego Balsa, 2014). As a result of these initiatives, the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), a standard and central tool used in the European Higher Education area to make national courses and programmes more transparent and comparable internationally, has been put into effect (European Commission, 2015). ECTS enables students to move between higher education institutions across different countries and have their academic studies and qualifications admitted at these institutions. The adoption of ECTS has facilitated the implementation of exchange and mobility programmes (e.g., ERASMUS and Nordplus Higher Education Programme). The ERASMUS programme was launched in 1987 to promote cultural, social, and academic exchanges between European institutions and students. The introduction and adoption of the ECTS are essential in that the scheme enables exchange students to be recognised at other institutions and substitute the courses they take at their home institution.

Perhaps, one of the most critical indicators of internationalisation of higher education would be student mobility, which provides host countries with many benefits. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2004) groups these benefits into four main categories. These categories can be listed as the increase in collective understanding, migration of skilled labour, increasing income, and capacity building. In particular, capturing the attention of skilled international students could be a feasible way of promoting innovation and production, and eliminating the adverse effect of an ageing population, especially if these students stay permanently in the host country (OECD, 2016). Even though it might take considerable time to observe these benefits, the financial outcomes of mobility practices can be observed within a short time. To illustrate, the thematic report published by the Australian Productivity Commission (2015) revealed that the contribution of international educational services to the Australian economy was around \$17 billion in 2014.

3. THE LINKS BETWEEN INTERNATIONALISATION AND ENGLISHISATION

The Bologna Process (1999) has considerably shaped and guided the educational and language policies implemented in the EU zone. The influence of internationalisation practices on the linguistic landscape of higher education systems could be considered as highly profound. The EU policies have backed up the idea of multilingualism over the years, yet English-medium instruction has become

increasingly popular throughout the continent, notably in northern Europe (Kuteeva, 2014). Within the post-Bologna period, this popularity has grown so enormous that internationalisation has almost emerged as an equivalent term for Englishisation (i.e., a phenomenon that represents the increasing use of English and the influence of English over other languages) and EMI (Kirkpatrick, 2011; Phillipson, 2009). Consequently, the Bologna Process has reinvigorated the status of EMI throughout Europe. The need and impetus for internationalisation have brought about different language policies at a macro level, while higher education institutions' reactions have exhibited different patterns to some extent. Risager (2012) classified these policies into three categories which are a monolingual (only English), bilingual (national language plus English) and a trilingual (national language, regional language and English) language policy. According to Risager (2012), the monolingual English language policy has grown in popularity especially within the last decade.

Approaches posed by higher education institutions in adopting and implementing language policies seem to have varied considerably. To illustrate, on the one hand, some higher education institutions have opted for English-medium instruction. On the other hand, some other institutions have made slight or drastic changes to already ongoing programmes; one workable alternative has been increasing the number of EMI courses (Smit & Dafauz, 2012). It might be inferred that these changes can positively affect particularly the short-term mobility practices considering that exchange students would have more course alternatives to pick when they study at a programme abroad. The relationship between English medium instruction and internationalisation was also emphasised by Coleman (2006), who asserted that the existence of EMI courses and programmes at universities would give students more opportunities to participate in exchange programmes, help attain an advantaged status in the community, and better compete for financial sources. Given these circumstances, it is no wonder that the number of institutions providing EMI programmes and courses has spiked in the last decades. This drastic increase has been quite apparent in several parts of Europe, notably in the Nordic countries (i.e., Sweden, Finland, Norway, and Denmark) where the share of EMI programmes in the number of overall programmes is the highest. A decade ago, the number of higher education institutions in the German, Dutch, and Scandinavian context was about 2,400 (Wächter & Maiworm, 2008). This number is reported to have proliferated over the last decade (Wächter & Maiworm, 2014).

In addition to its role as the medium of instruction, English has transformed into the lingua franca in the modern age and serves as the medium of scholarly communication and research (Seidlhofer, 2011). This situation has also increased the popularity and spread of English

in academia. For example, English has taken on the status as the language of scholarly publishing, especially in the Scandinavian higher education institutions since the 1950s (Kuteeva & Airey, 2014). Besides, since English has assumed the role of lingua franca among the EU member states, it is highly probable that the expanse of English would not become slower but would increase momentum when compared to other languages (de Swaan, 2001). Other reasons for the widespread and increasing popularity of English could be the greater mobility, the availability of international study and research programmes, and students' desire to participate in such programmes. For instance, even though the ERASMUS programme was launched to promote students' educational and cultural experiences, it seems that it also has added weight to the status of English as the lingua franca throughout Europe. This trend is evident in the steady rise in the number of students that have visited English-speaking countries or countries that offer English medium instruction over the years (Anonymous, 2019; Cots, Llorca, & Garrett, 2014; Mackiewicz, 2001). The following section offers implications related to possible links between student mobility, internationalisation, and Englishisation based on the most recent OECD reports (OECD, 2019, 2020) on student mobility in higher education.

4. INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND MOBILITY: EVIDENCE FROM OECD 2019 AND 2020 REPORTS

The reasons students want to go abroad for study purposes or participate in exchange programmes may vary at the personal level, yet according to OECD reports (OECD, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020) students tend to opt for such programmes thinking that international experiences may present them with increased opportunities for receiving a quality education, help them extend their skills to obtain higher returns both in education and labour market, and improve their language and intercultural skills. Hence, it is not surprising that the number of international students joining tertiary education prog-

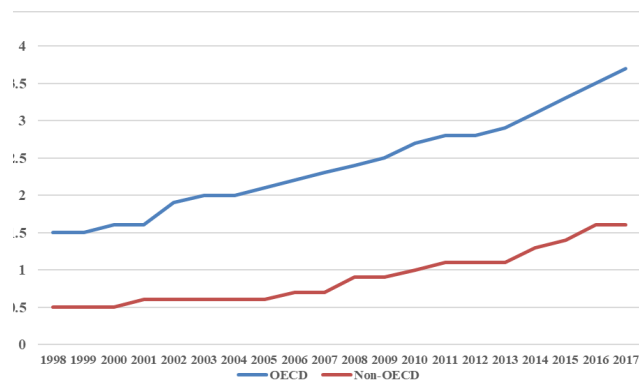


Figure 1. The Number of International or Foreign Students Enrolled in OECD and non-OECD Countries between 1998-2018

Note: The graph is prepared based on OECD data (2019), *Education at a Glance 2019: OECD Indicators*

rammes has grown in number, from two million in 1999 to five million in 2016. The number of international or foreign students for study purposes was estimated to be around 3.5 million in the OECD area in 2016 and 3.7 million in 2017 (OECD, 2018, 2019) (See Figure 1).

Note that the label international students is used to indicate individuals that depart from a home country and move to another country for pursuing their studies. In accordance with country-specific immigration laws, mobility agreements (e.g., unrestricted mobility of individuals within the European Union and the European Economic Area) and data accessibility, international students can be defined as students that are not permanent residents of the host country, or as students who received their previous education in a different country (OECD, 2019). On the other hand, the label foreign students is used to refer to individuals that are not citizens of the country in which they are enrolled in a higher education institution and the data are gathered. Even though foreign students are regarded to be internationally mobile, they may be long-term residents in the host country where the higher education institutions in located (OECD, 2019).

Table 1. The Share of International or Foreign Students by Level of Tertiary Education

	Total tertiary	Short - cycle tertiary	Bachelor/ equivalent level	Master/ equivalent level	Doctoral/ equivalent level	Number of international students in thousands
AU	21	20	14	48	32	381
AT	17	1	19	21	30	74
CA	13	13	11	16	33	210
CL	0	0	0	2	8	5
DK	11	15	6	19	35	34
FR	10	5	7	14	40	258
DE	8	0	5	14	10	259
HU	10	1	7	17	15	29
IS	7	28	5	8	29	1
IE	9	3	7	19	29	20
JP	4	7	3	8	18	164
LV	7	2	6	17	10	6
LU	47	9	26	76	85	3
MX	1	0	0	1	7	25
NL	11	3	9	17	43	96
NZ	20	23	16	28	49	53
NO	3	1	2	5	21	9
PL	4	0	4	5	2	46
PT	6	3	4	8	27	22
SI	4	2	3	5	9	3
ES	3	1	1	10	18	65
SE	7	0	3	11	35	29
CH	18	0	10	29	55	53
UK	18	4	14	34	42	436
US	5	2	4	13	26	985

Note: Based on OECD (2019), *Education at a Glance 2019: OECD Indicators*. Abbreviations of country names refer to Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Japan, Latvia, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States, respectively.

The 2019 OECD statistics indicate that there has been a constant rise in the number of international and foreign students between 1998-2018. There were 1.5 million international students in the OECD area in 1998, while the recent number reached almost 4 million in 2018. This constant increase is expected to continue in the future. The urge and desire to keep up with the innovation-based economies, rising wealth in the emerging economies, technological developments, and the spread of English as the medium of instruction and communication seem to impact this increase considerably (OECD, 2019). Although the increase in the number of international students seems to be steady and has expanded massively over the years, these students' concentration on particular countries might hint at the attractiveness of these countries for study purposes. Table 1 shows the share of international students across OECD countries at all levels of higher education.

Statistics reveal that English-speaking countries remain the most attractive study locations, with four Anglophone countries (the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Australia, and Canada) receiving more than 40% of all international students in the OECD area (OECD, 2019, 2020). The OECD 2019 results reveal that other attractive destination areas for international students include France and Germany. Results also show that the number of international students is 985.000, approximately a million, in the USA, 436.000 in the UK,

381.000 in Australia, 259.000 in Germany, 258.000 in France and 210.000 in Canada. Based on the 2017 OECD data, the United States remains the top study destination for international students. Of the 3.7 million international students, 985.000 attend degree programmes in the United States, which alone accounts for 22% of the OECD area's total market share. The international market share for the United Kingdom, Australia is around 10%, while Canada accounts for 5%.

These numbers demonstrate that the Anglophone countries (e.g., the US, the UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand), where English assumes the official language status, are the most attractive degree mobility destinations for foreign and international students. Furthermore, non-English speaking countries such as Germany and France seem to draw the attention of a considerable number of international students. This might have to do with the fact that the number of institutions providing English medium instruction in these countries has been reported to be on the rise (Hughes, 2008). To illustrate, in their comprehensive analysis of the provision of EMI in non-Anglophone countries in Europe, Wächter and Maiworm (2014) revealed that the numbers of identified EMI programmes went up from 725 programmes in 2001, to 2,389 in 2007 and to 8,089 in 2014. Moreover, Wächter and Maiworm (2014) reported that the absolute number of EMI programmes was 1,078 in the Netherlands, which was closely followed by Germany (1,030).

Table 2. Distribution of International and Foreign Students by Region of Origin

	Asia	Europe	Africa	Latin America & Caribbean	North America	Oceania	Unknown
Australia	86.51	3.44	2.27	3.70	1.33	0.78	1.96
New Zealand	78.50	5.46	1.38	1.90	5.94	6.82	(0.00)
United States	76.91	6.84	4.83	7.99	2.72	0.71	0.00
Turkey	70.59	14.93	13.11	0.25	0.53	0.09	0.50
Canada	64.31	12.40	10.87	5.86	4.35	0.38	1.82
United Kingdom	54.10	31.55	6.14	2.26	5.36	0.58	0.00
Ireland	46.47	24.64	4.19	2.00	16.83	0.71	5.16
Finland	37.75	29.35	8.32	2.34	2.47	0.34	19.42
Hungary	36.43	50.57	8.45	1.81	2.57	0.10	0.08
Germany	36.27	38.86	9.11	5.05	3.05	0.46	7.20
Italy	33.97	42.45	12.90	9.18	0.95	0.09	0.46
Norway	31.10	48.44	9.50	3.88	4.57	0.58	1.94
Sweden	29.39	38.73	4.60	2.89	2.57	0.35	21.47
Estonia	26.33	58.60	9.66	2.46	2.62	0.23	0.11
France	22.24	17.19	49.82	6.26	1.90	0.19	2.40
Poland	19.56	75.48	2.28	0.57	2.04	0.08	0.00
Netherlands	14.86	57.27	1.41	2.26	1.49	0.13	22.58
Czech Republic	14.38	81.73	1.89	0.68	0.93	0.03	0.36
Switzerland	11.83	71.38	4.45	3.95	3.06	0.44	4.89
Luxembourg	10.98	78.20	6.72	2.62	1.40	0.09	(0.00)
Denmark	10.82	81.58	1.75	2.19	3.03	0.62	0.00
Austria	10.44	82.83	1.48	1.61	1.13	0.17	2.34
Spain	8.52	38.53	4.97	45.04	2.75	0.12	0.07
Portugal	8.08	17.26	31.20	42.32	1.05	0.11	0.00
Belgium	3.66	45.32	8.83	1.37	0.45	0.03	40.33
OECD total	56.98	22.70	8.21	5.86	2.82	0.56	2.87

Note: Based on OECD (2020), Education at a Glance 2020: OECD Indicators

Sweden was reported to have 822 EMI programmes, followed by France that was in fourth place (499). Note that these figures appertain to the year 2014. Considering the fact that the data were collected around seven years ago and the number of EMI programmes has been increasing exponentially in many parts of the world (e.g., East Asia, Middle East, Northern Europe) especially within the last decade, we could safely assume that the most updated figures would be substantially higher at present. Table 2 below reveals the OECD 2020 statistics (year of reference 2017) regarding the distribution of international students based on the region of origin and education level.

According to the OECD 2020 report, the four Anglophone countries have received nearly half of (40%) all international students in the OECD area, similar to the case in the OECD 2019 report. The US seems to have increased the number of international students since 2017, for the latest data indicate that of the 3.9 million international students, 987.000, almost a million international students, are attending US-based study programmes. While the UK hosts 452.000 international students, the number of international students has nearly doubled in Australia, increasing to around 445.000 students (OECD, 2020). The leading countries in the race for international students seem to remain the same, the US holding 18% of the overall international education market share, followed by the UK (8%), Australia (8%), Germany (6%) and France (%4). These countries also remain the importer countries that feature more students visiting the country for degree mobility than leaving for other countries to study. It is highly likely that in addition to language, students' study destination choices might be influenced by the perceived quality of education and reputation of the higher education institution (Abbott & Silles, 2016). However, the trends reflected in the international and foreign student mobility OECD data (OECD, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020) might also lead to the deduction that the majority of these students prefer host countries in which English is the majority language or EMI programmes are widespread. Considering the high tuition fees required by higher education institutions located in the Anglophone countries and the urge to be a competitor in the global education market, many non-Anglophone countries including the Nordic counties, Germany, France, the Gulf-states, the Baltic states, and several Asian countries seem to have adopted EMI programmes at both undergraduate and graduate levels (Fenton-Smith, Humphreys, & Walkinshaw, 2017; Hughes, 2008; Karakaş & Bayyurt, 2019; Kirkgöz, 2009; OECD, 2005; Wächter & Maiworm, 2008, 2014). At a global scale, the use of EMI is reported, in particular, to increase at the tertiary level when compared to primary and secondary education. For instance, in a large-scale study conducted to yield an overall picture of the rapidly growing phenomenon of EMI across the globe, Dearden (2014) revealed that out of 55 countries that were examined, only three countries were reported

not to allow EMI at both public and private universities. The remaining 52 countries were reported to implement EMI in various forms at both public and private universities, or either at public or private universities. Dearden (2014) also demonstrated that there were multiple reasons for the implementation of EMI at higher education institutions. These reasons included improving students' English language skills, fostering knowledge of the target culture, creating opportunities for students to study and work abroad, and introducing the home culture throughout the world. Moreover, in some countries, policymakers were reported to consider EMI as a mechanism for internationalising education, promoting international mobility, and increasing the competitiveness of students in a world market. These findings seem to be in line with the deductions from the OECD data featured in the present study.

5. THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON INTERNATIONALISATION AND CONCLUSIONS

Higher education institutions all around the world engage with various practices to boost their reputation and visibility in the international education market, and promote the human capital in their host countries by enticing skilled students and researchers (Llurda et al., 2014). The Bologna Declaration (1999), the development of the ECTS scheme and launch of the international exchange programmes such as ERASMUS + could be regarded as the outcomes of this increased interest in internationalisation. On the other hand, since studying abroad has also become an enriching and valuable experience for students in an increasingly multicultural world, student mobility, in particular, long-term degree mobility has been receiving more attention within the last decade. Apart from being one of the most critical indicators of internationalisation, degree mobility could be viewed as an opportunity to receive a high-quality education, welcome exciting job prospects in the international market, and improve intercultural and English language skills (OECD, 2019).

Relevant literature has demonstrated that student mobility can be significantly influenced by several contextual and personal factors such as the distance between home and host countries, economic circumstances, climate, and language (e.g., Beine, Romain, & Ragot, 2014; Findlay, King, Stam, & Ruiz-Gelices, 2006; Sánchez-Barrioluengo & Flisi, 2017). Among these factors, the language factor stands out since it has been shown that language has the potential to act as a facilitator or barrier when it comes to shaping students' destination choices (Beine et al., 2014). In a similar vein, the European Higher Education Area considers student mobility a feasible way to aid students in developing critical skills and competencies, such as foreign language skills and intercultural competence (OECD, 2018).

Based on the OECD data, the present study also reveals that the direction and concentration of student mobility are quite marked especially in countries where English assumes the official language role, or in countries that offer EMI programmes extensively. This popularity is most likely to increase in future due to relative advantages that EMI offers, such as internationalisation opportunities, job prospects, a privileged status and personal development (Coleman, 2006). Likewise, the use of EMI has been associated with an increasing degree of international student and staff recruitment, a greater number of cultural learning opportunities and transnational education (Curle et al., 2020). Apart from serving as the medium of instruction, we must also note that the English language has become the global language in academia where scholarly contributions are shared with other academic community members and society through English (Ha, 2013; Seidlhofer, 2011).

Considering the factors mentioned above, such as an increasing interest in internationalisation, the availability of exchange programmes, and EMI programmes worldwide, it could be concluded that the number of international students engaging with credit and degree mobility practices would continue to increase at a greater speed. To date, the trends reflected in the OECD data seem to confirm this claim under normal conditions. Nevertheless, the world has witnessed unprecedented changes since the COVID-19 outbreak, which affected millions of people irrespective of nationality, gender, financial status, and educational background. The pandemic has influenced all areas of life negatively, and higher education has been no exception. The pandemic has caused higher education institutions worldwide to close down their premises due to lockdown measures and consider workable solutions, including online education, to carry out their educational activities. A particular group that has been negatively affected by this situation has been international students. These students had to make several critical decisions about their stay and future in the host countries while dealing with visa issues at the same time (OECD, 2020). Apart from these problems, international students face losing other benefits of mobility, such as developing their language and cultural skills, networking, and job prospects. Since higher education institutions located in Anglophone countries usually demand higher tuition fees from international students than domestic students, and international students are faced with losing off benefits offered by these institutions during the pandemic, these students' perceptions about study abroad might be affected negatively (OECD, 2020). Considering these negative possibilities, higher education institutions should develop new schemes to meet international students' needs and evaluate and improve the existing online and distance education platforms. Previously, in a UK based study on international students, it was found that the main reasons for studying abroad

were experiencing other cultures, boosting job prospects and advancing English language skills (West, 2000). Hence, it could be hypothesised that the availability of high-quality EMI programmes might help non-Anglophone countries to attract better-skilled students and researchers and effectively compete and expand their share in the global education market as well.

REFERENCES

- Abbott, A., & Silles, M. (2016). Determinants of international student migration. *The World Economy*, 39(5), 621–635.
- Altbach, P. G. (2002). Knowledge and education as international commodities. *International Higher Education*, 28, 2–5.
- Arik, B. T., & Arik, E. (2014). The role and status of English in Turkish higher education. *English Today*, 30(4), 5–10.
- Australian Productivity Commission. (2015). *International education services, productivity commission research paper*. Canberra.
- Back, K., Davis, D., & Olsen, A. (1997). Strategies for internationalisation of higher education in Australia. In J. Knight & H. de Wit (Eds.), *Internationalisation of higher education in Asia Pacific countries* (pp. 33–46). Amsterdam: The EAIE.
- Beine, M., Romain, N., & Ragot, L. (2014). Determinants of the international mobility of students. *Economics of Education Review*, 41, 40–54.
- Bologna Declaration. (1999). *The European higher education area*. Joint declaration of the European Ministers of education convened in Bologna on the 19th of June 1999.
- Coleman, J. A. (2006). English-medium teaching in European higher education. *Language Teaching*, 39(1), 1–14.
- Cots, J. M., Llurda, E., & Garrett, P. (2014). Language policies and practices in the internationalisation of higher education on the European margins: An introduction. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 35(4), 311–317.
- Curle, S., R. R. Jablonkai, J. Mittelmeier, K. Sahan, & A. Veitch. (2020). English medium Part 1: Literature review in N. Galloyay (Ed.) *English in higher education*. London: British Council.
- De Swaan, A. (2001). *Words of the world: The global language system*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Dearden, J. (2014). *English as a medium of instruction— A growing global phenomenon*. London: British Council.
- Doiz, A., Lasagabaster, D., & Sierra, J. M. (2014). Language friction and multilingual policies in higher education: The stakeholders' view. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 35(4), 345–360.
- European Commission. (2015). *ECTS Users' Guide*. Publications Office of the European Commission.
- Fenton-Smith, B., Humphreys, P., & Walkinshaw, I. (2017). *English medium instruction in higher education in Asia-Pacific*. Cham, Switzerland: Springer.
- Findlay, A., King, R., Stam, A., & Ruiz-Gelices, E. (2006). The changing geographies of UK students studying and working abroad. *European Urban and Regional Studies*, 13(4), 291–318.
- Garrett, P., & Gallego Balsà, L. (2014). International universities and implications of internationalisation for minority lan-

- guages: Views from university students in Catalonia and Wales. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 35(4), 361–375.
- Ha, P. L. (2013). Issues surrounding English, the internationalisation of higher education and national cultural identity in Asia: A focus on Japan. *Critical Studies in Education*, 54(2), 160–175.
- Hughes, R. (2008). Internationalisation of higher education and language policy: Questions of quality and equity. *Higher Education Management and Policy*, 20(1), 102–119.
- Karakaş, A., & Bayyurt, Y. (2019). The scope of linguistic diversity in the language policies, practices, and linguistic landscape of a Turkish EMI university. In J. Jenkins & A. Maruranen (Eds.) *Linguistic diversity on the EMI campus* (pp. 96–122). Routledge.
- Kehm, B. M., & Teichler, U. (2007). Research on internationalisation in higher education. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 11(3–4), 260–273.
- Kirkpatrick, A. (2011). Internationalization or Englishization? Medium of instruction in today's universities. *Centre for Governance and Citizenship Working Paper Series 2011/003*. Hong Kong Institute of Education.
- Kirkgöz, Y. (2009). Globalization and English language policy in Turkey. *Educational Policy*, 23(5), 663–684.
- Knight, J. (1997). Internationalization of higher education: A conceptual framework. In Knight, J. & De Wit, H. (Eds.), *Internationalisation of higher education in Asia Pacific countries* (pp.5–19). Amsterdam: EAIE.
- Knight, J. (1994). *Internationalization: Elements and checkpoints*. CBIE Research No. 7. Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE)/Bureau canadien de l'éducation internationale (BCEI).
- Knight, J., & De Wit, H. (1995). Strategies for internationalisation of higher education: Historical and conceptual perspectives. In H. de Wit (Ed.), *Strategies for internationalisation of higher education: A comparative study of Australia, Canada, Europe and the United States of America* (pp. 5–32). Amsterdam: EAIE.
- Knight, J. (2004). Internationalization remodeled: Definition, approaches, and rationales. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 8(1), 5–31.
- Kuteeva, M. (2014). The parallel language use of Swedish and English: The question of 'nativeness' in university policies and practices. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 35(4), 332–344.
- Kuteeva, M., & Airey, J. (2014). Disciplinary differences in the use of English in higher education: Reflections on recent language policy developments. *Higher Education*, 67(5), 533–549.
- Llurda, E., Cots, J. M., & Armengol, L. (2014). Views on multilingualism and internationalisation in higher education: Administrative staff in the spotlight. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 35(4), 376–391.
- Mackiewicz, W. (2001). Universities need a language lesson. *Guardian Weekly*, 21–27 June, 1.
- Macaro, E. (2018). *English medium instruction: Content and language in policy and practice*. Oxford: Oxford UP.
- Macaro, E., Curle, S., Pun, J., An, J., & Dearden, J. (2018). A systematic review of English medium instruction in higher education. *Language Teaching*, 51(1), 36–76.
- McMullen, G. (2014). The value and attributes of an effective preparatory English program: Perceptions of Saudi university students. *English Language Teaching*, 7(7), 131–140.
- OECD (2004). *Internationalisation and trade in higher education: Opportunities and challenges*. Paris: OECD Publishing.
- OECD (2005). *Education at a glance: OECD indicators – 2005 Edition*. Paris: OECD Publishing.
- OECD (2016). *OECD science, technology and innovation outlook 2016*. Paris: OECD Publishing.
- OECD (2017). *Education at a glance 2017: OECD indicators*. Paris: OECD Publishing.
- OECD (2018). *Education at a glance 2018: OECD indicators*. Paris: OECD Publishing.
- OECD (2019). *Education at a Glance 2019: OECD Indicators*. Paris: OECD Publishing.
- OECD (2020). *Education at a Glance 2020: OECD Indicators*. Paris: OECD Publishing.
- Phillipson, R. (2009). English in higher education: Panacea or pandemic? *ANGLES on the English-Speaking World*, 9, 29–57.
- Risager, K. (2012). Language hierarchies at the international university. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 216, 11–130.
- Sánchez-Barrilouengo, M., & Flisi, S. (2017). *Student mobility in tertiary education: Institutional factors and regional attractiveness* (No. JRC108895). Joint Research Centre.
- Seidlhofer, B. (2011). *Understanding English as a lingua franca*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Smit, U., & Dafouz, E. (2012). Integrating content and language in higher education: An introduction to English-medium policies, conceptual issues and research practices across Europe. *AILA Review*, 25(1), 1–12.
- The Times Higher Education (2020, December 20). <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/world-university-rankings-2020-methodology>
- The QS World University Rankings (2020, December 20). <https://www.topuniversities.com/qs-world-university-rankings/methodology>
- Wächter, B., & Maiworm, F. (2008). *English-taught programmes in European higher education. The picture in 2007*. Bonn: Lemmens.
- Wächter, B. & F. Maiworm (2014). *English-taught programmes in European higher education: The state of play in 2014*. Bonn: Lemmens.
- West, A. (2000). *Reasons for studying abroad: A survey of EU students studying in the UK*. Edinburgh: Education-line.
- Velliari, D. M., & Coleman-George, D. (Eds.). (2016). *Handbook of research on study abroad programs and outbound mobility*. IGI Global.