English Medium Instruction Programs in Private Universities in Mongolia－Rationales and challenges

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Abstract. This study explored the rationales for English medium instruction in private universities in Mongolia and investigated the challenges they face. Through a qualitative case study design, this study examined the programs taught in English in two private universities. Data were generated via 20 interviews with senior and junior administrators and faculty members. The results of this study indicate that the rationales for implementing programs taught in English are grounded in: (1) a desire to raise their international profile, with a focus on, (2) increasing the number of international students, and, (3) fostering the international competencies of graduates in the global job market. Administrative, managerial, and institutional challenges were found to be the most severe obstacles to program implementation at the case study universities.

Keywords: English medium instruction, higher education, private universities, EMI programs, case study, Mongolia

Introduction

English medium instruction (EMI) programs are spreading throughout the non-Anglophone academic world. With increasingly mobile student, faculty, and researcher populations, English is used as an international language of communication, called "the academic lingua franca," and can be seen as an indispensable tool for any education system or higher education institutions (HEIs) that want to remain globally competitive (Dearden, 2015). As Coleman (2006, p.4) claims, the main reasons for HEIs to introduce programs and courses taught through EMI are internationalization, student exchanges, teaching and research materials, staff mobility, graduate employability, and the market in international students. In other words, foreign language learning, in and of itself, is not the reason why institutions adopt English medium teaching.

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As Walkinshaw et al. (2017) summarize, several reasons exist behind the growth of EMI in the Asia Pacific region: (1) the role of English as the main language for trade, commerce, diplomacy, and scholarship; (2) the growth of the higher education sector in the Asia Pacific; and (3) policy actions of governments in the Asia Pacific in relation to internationalization. As for the first reason, English has become the lingua franca of many trade and economic cooperative organizations, such as the Association of South-East Asian Nations and Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation. The entries of Asian countries, including Cambodia, China, Laos, Taiwan, and Vietnam, into the World Trade Organization has also increased the demand for English language competencies in the present and future workforce. Secondly, the expansion of the higher education sector in the Asia Pacific has created an explosion of domestic enrolments in universities over the last few decades. Universities in Asia have also begun to actively promote themselves as higher education destination markets. Thirdly, many countries, such as China, Indonesia, and Japan, are implementing policies for EMI expansion. China requires 5-10% of undergraduate courses to be taught in English, while Japan is pushing its top universities to the top tier of world university rankings using EMI. In this pursuit, Japan aims to increase the ratio of foreign faculty and international students, and the number of courses taught in English.

There are several definitions of EMI. However, these definitions are too general, and they do not specifically differentiate academic subjects and whether English language learning is included. Therefore, this study applied Madhavan's (2014, p.2) definition: "EMI essentially refers to the teaching of a subject using the medium of the English language, but where there are no explicit language learning aims and where English is not the national language."

Conceptual framework

According to Maxwell (2013, p.39), a conceptual framework is a "system of concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs, and theories" that supports and informs research. It helps the researcher to approach the study as well as guiding the research, informing the research questions, data generation, and providing structure for analysis. The two practical constructs that guide this study are commonly accepted rationales for EMI (Sonia, 2014; Knight, 2004; Hultgren et al., 2015), and a typology of implementation challenges facing EMI derived from studies by Tsuneyoshi (2005) and Bradford (2015). These rationales are drawn upon in this study to formulate the data generated and guide analysis of the reasons given by program implementers for why they are conducting EMI programs. As for challenges, the typology of the challenges is applied in this study as a construct through which to generate data and apply systematic categorization to support further analysis. In short, these two constructs sensitize the researcher to concepts to help both the data generation and interpretation.

Drivers of EMI

As Hultgren et al. (2015) outline, drivers of EMI may be conceptualized as being situated in various levels, from the global to the classroom. At the global level, the General Agreement on Trade in Services has influenced member states to consider higher education as a service to be traded. As a result, higher education is viewed as a commodity, and universities increasingly compete for students. Therefore, HEIs strive to offer more EMI programs. Regionally, the main motivation for the increase in EMI programs in European HEIs was stimulated by the 1999 Bologna Declaration (Kirkpatrick, 2017). The Bologna Declaration was designed to promote intra-European mobility and make Europe a competitive player in the global knowledge economy (Phillipson, 2009). At the national level, various policy decisions by governments are contributing to EMI (Hultgren et al., 2015). Government policies have been placing considerable emphasis on internationalization, such as the recruitment of international students. At the institutional level, HEIs have considered EMI as a way to prepare their domestic students for a global job market (Knight, 2004). At the departmental level, departments may make decisions other than their institution. As Airey (2014) argues, departments (natural sciences to humanities) may problematize university-wide language policies and may decide their own language use. At the classroom level, English is often chosen as lingua franca when there are no students who have the local language as their first (Hultgren et al., 2015). Sonia (2014) identifies six main reasons for offering EMI programs based on her studies at the institutional level. These are: (1) sharpening of the international profile of the institution, (2) the abolition of language obstacles for the enrolment of foreign students, (3) improvement of international competency of domestic students, (4) compensation for shortages of the institution, (5) brain gain, and 6) altruistic motives.

Challenges in implementing EMI

Tsuneyoshi (2005) identifies three types of challenges that EMI program implementers may face, including linguistic, cultural, and structural challenges. Bradford (2013; 2016) re-examines these three challenges and divides the structural challenges into administrative, managerial and institutional. Accordingly, the four types of challenges were applied to organize the analysis of this study.

Linguistic challenges concern the English proficiency of faculty members, academic staff, and students. As numerous researchers (Chapple, 2015; He & Chiang, 2016; Doiz et al., 2011; Belhiah & Elhami, 2014; Costa & Coleman, 2013) identify, the greatest difficulties in implementing EMI programs include the lecturers' insufficient English competence, the differing English ability level among students, and the limitations of the academic staff's linguistic competencies.

Cultural challenges are associated with the increased use of English in academia. When HEIs adopt EMI, they receive a diverse pool of international students and teachers with different academic cultural norms and expectations. These differences lead to challenges for teachers when they develop

internationalized curricula, adopt more inclusive practices, and promote reciprocal cultural understanding in the classroom (Bradford, 2015).

Administrative and managerial challenges are related to the administration and management of EMI, the recruitment of teaching and administrative staff, assessment policies for administration and graduation, and acceptance or buy-in for EMI programs (Bradford, 2016). Institutions face challenges in finding international faculty who can cope with the pressures of adopting English and working with a diverse student population (Tsuneyoshi, 2005). Recruiting and retaining these faculty members may require extra payment, but they are not always available for long-term teaching contracts (Bradford, 2013).

Institutional challenges are those related to structural intransigence, branding and marketing (Bradford, 2015, 2016; Tsuneyoshi, 2005), the recruitment of high-quality students (Lassegard, 2006; Badamsambuu, 2005), the recruitment and retention of international faculty members (Ammon & McConnel, 2002; Tsuneyoshi, 2005), insufficient financial resources, lack of accreditation (Wächter & Maiworm, 2014), and administrative and academic support for EMI students and faculty (Ammon & McConnel, 2002; Choi, 2013).

Although research on EMI is growing, a small number of studies focuses on higher education in the Asia region. As Walkinshaw et al. (2017) argue, the EMI phenomenon took its initial form in Europe when the 1999 Bologna Declaration created a European Higher Education Area. Therefore, the earliest major reports on EMI have focused on the European context. In addition, comparative studies have tended to focus on EMI policy in national or publicly funded universities that have partnership agreements with universities in Anglophone countries (Rinehart & Goodman, 2017). However, EMI policies of *private* HEIs at the national and institutional levels have not been studied in comprehensive comparative ways. Macaro et al. (2018), who reviewed 83 studies of EMI in higher education, found that a high proportion of the studies were 'case studies of one institution using mixed methods' and comparative studies amongst institutions and/or amongst countries lacked.

Therefore, using a qualitative case study design, this study asks the following research questions:

(1)   How do administrators and faculty members perceive the rationales for the adoption of EMI in their institution in Mongolia?

(2)   What challenges do they face in the implementation of EMI?

Country profile

Mongolia is a landlocked country occupying over 1.5 million square kilometers of land area (ADB, 2019). The total population of Mongolia is 3.3 million, and the per capita gross domestic product is 4.3 thousand USD as of 2019 (World Bank, 2021). The history of higher education in Mongolia dates back to the communist period that existed from 1924 to early 1990. The first national higher education institution, the National University of Mongolia, in Ulaanbaatar, was established in 1942 with three

faculties: medical, pedagogical, and veterinary (Gantsog & Altantsetseg, 2003). These faculties were the foundation of other national universities. Since the 1990s, a large number of private HEIs have been founded as the government of Mongolia ceased most of its funding for national HEIs. Another reason is that, when the government of Mongolia legalized the establishment of private HEIs, a number of private professional training institutions offering mainly foreign languages, business courses, and non-degree programs were reorganized into private HEIs. This was the beginning of the rapid expansion of private HEIs in Mongolia.

Mongolian higher education was entirely free until 1993 when a student fee structure was introduced. The total number of students studying at the tertiary level amounted to 148.6 thousand in 2020, when 95 HEIs, including public, private, and international branches, were operating in Mongolia (MES, 2020).

English education

After the 1921 Independence Revolution, as a newly formed communist country with strong ties to the Soviet Union, the Mongolian education system, by policy decree, taught only Russian as a foreign language (Gundsambuu, 2019a). During the socialist period, it was mandatory for all students, regardless of their fields of study, to learn the Russian language for a period of three to four years continuously and take a state examination in Russian.

English teaching in Mongolian HEIs began in earnest when the first English language department opened at the National University of Mongolia in 1956 (Munkhbayar, 2016). In the 1990s, when Mongolia expanded its foreign relations with other countries, the nation needed more professionals who were able to communicate in English. Therefore, more HEIs started to teach English. However, there were not enough English language teachers. From 1990-1995, with the support from United Nations Development Program and ODA-British Overseas Development Agency, a specialized English language institute was founded to retrain hundreds of Russian language teachers as English language teachers (Altan-Od & Khongorzul, 2012).

English is not an official foreign language in Mongolia. However, documents regarding the English language in the past two decades show that English is treated as the main foreign language of Mongolia. In 1997, the Minister of Enlightenment (Ministry of Enlightenment, 1997) passed an order to teach English as a foreign language in all levels of education starting in the academic year of 1997-1998. Later, an order by the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Sciences (2006) indicated that the main foreign language in bachelor's level programs would be English.

EMI

The Mongolian Sustainable Development Vision－2030, enacted by the Mongolian Parliament in

2016, set an ambitious goal to have at least four Mongolian national universities recognized internationally for research in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields. It indicated that the country would:

> Build a science and technology cluster and park in accordance with priority development areas and ensure that no less than four Mongolian universities are ranked among Asian top universities (Partnership for Action on Green Economy, 2017, p.28).

To this day, this goal pushes national universities to intensify their research, launch numerous projects for internationalization, and submit all necessary documents to popular international university ranking agencies for assessment purposes. However, as of 2021, there is no presence of Mongolian HEIs in the popular ranking systems, such as Times Higher Education and QS World University Rankings. Despite this, Mongolia's government still encourages its national universities to prioritize the rankings since the use of English is still a major advantage, both in the rankings and academic research as a whole. It should be noted that the government did not include private HEIs in the strategy.

The term EMI was first used officially in the 2007 Comprehensive National Development Strategy of Mongolia in its Millennium Development Goals (World Bank, 2008). Strategic objective 2, under Education Development Policy, indicates the need to "…provide financial support to high schools, vocational schools, and universities which use English as the medium of instruction" (World Bank, 2008, p.19). This document addressed the importance of English, formalized the goal of making the English language a major foreign language in Mongolia, and set a goal to have civil servants be competent in English by 2021. The National Program on English Education (Government of Mongolia, 2008, p.5) highlighted the importance of "creat[ing] a system/mechanism pushing the need and use of English as the main tool for education, for communication, information access, and business…."

Currently, national and private HEIs in Mongolia offer, in total, around 385 EMI courses (Gundsambuu, 2019b). However, despite a handful of private HEIs, opportunities to earn academic degrees in English are limited. At the graduate level, opportunities to gain degrees in English are available in joint and dual degree programs (mostly master's degrees) at major national and private HEIs.

In the Mongolian context, Gundsambuu (2019a) identified that HEIs in Mongolia implement EMI for increasing the employability of domestic graduates, promoting international collaboration, generating more income, and increasing domestic and international profiles.

Methods

Research design

This study adopted a qualitative multiple case-study approach, using semi-structured interviews, to explore program implementers' perceptions on the implementation of EMI programs. As Baxter and Jack (2008) state, when a study includes more than one single case study, a multiple case study is needed. The evidence that is generated from a multiple case study is strong and reliable (Baxter & Jack, 2008). In other words, multiple-case studies are considered more robust than single case studies and the analytic findings that arise independently from multiple cases are more powerful than those coming from a single case (Yin, 2009).

According to Baxter and Jack (2008), in a multiple case study the researcher studies multiple cases to understand the similarities and differences between the cases. Therefore, this study attempts not only to investigate EMI in the private HEIs in Mongolia, but also in the hope that these cases will lead to an in-depth and thorough understanding of the phenomenon more generally.

Research settings and participants

Two social science-focused private universities were selected for comparison in order to increase the validity of the study by following an information-oriented strategy. In addition, these private universities were chosen with an intention of rich data collection. The universities selected had a more extended practice of offering EMI courses and degree programs compared to other private universities in Mongolia.

Three criteria were applied to define an EMI program, according to Wächter and Maiworm (2008). Programs had to be undergraduate and had to be taught 100% in English. This excluded 'mixed' programs taught predominantly, but not entirely, in English. Programs in which English is (part of) the object of study were excluded. Thus, programs in English language and literature or American studies, to name but two examples, were not eligible as EMI programs. This study selected EMI programs which included business studies.

Participants in this study included 20 staff who were involved in the implementation of EMI programs. Of these, eleven were from University A, and the remaining nine were from University B. The participants were categorized into three groups according to their role at their university. Of the 20 participants, four were senior administrators, four were junior administrators, and 12 were full-time faculty members who taught at least one course on the EMI program. Senior administrators selected were the heads of EMI programs, while the junior administrators were the administrative staff of the EMI program. Participants were selected using snowball sampling (Patton, 2002).

This study omitted participants' job titles and academic fields of study to protect their anonymity. Of the 20 participants, seven were male, and 13 were female. In terms of nationality, 16 were Mongolian nationals and the remaining four were from the United States, Bangladesh, South Korea, and China. Of the 20 participants, seven had obtained a doctoral degree or equivalent. To protect the identity and institutional affiliation, participants were given pseudonyms, which allow them to remain

anonymous. In addition, participants were assigned 'FM' (that denotes faculty member), 'SA' (senior administrator), and JA (junior administrator) depending on the role.

Data collection and analysis

Semi-structured, one-on-one interviews were held between April and September 2018 via Skype or face-to-face. The semi-structured interview had 20 questions: four on personal background information and experience, four on experiences in teaching in the EMI context, four on the perceptions of rationales for the introduction of EMI at their institution, six on the challenges they face and solutions for the challenges, and the last two on conclusion and recommendations. Interviews were voice-recorded and transcribed. The language for the interview process was either English or Mongolian. Most interviews lasted between 40-50 minutes. However, some lasted more than one hour. The interviews conducted in Mongolian were translated by the researcher into English.

The interview data were analyzed following the strategies of 'describing, classifying and connecting' (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996) to portray a comprehensive picture of the context of EMI at the institutional level. Since this is a comparative study, two stages of data analysis were undertaken in this study: within-case analysis and cross-case analysis, analyzing each case first comprehensively before the cross-case analysis. The computer-aided qualitative data analysis software program, NVivo 12, was used to support the analysis. The data were analyzed through content analysis as proposed by Creswell (2011). First, the data were read several times to obtain a general sense of the data, and then the data were coded according to categories relevant to the research questions.

Findings

The themes that emerged from the interviews were hierarchically organized based on the research questions. It starts with the context of the EMI program in each university and then findings on program implementers' perceptions related to the implementation of the EMI program.

Case study of the EMI program at University A

University A is one of the reputable and oldest private universities in Mongolia that was established at the beginning of the 20th century. University A has expanded to encompass one professional undergraduate and graduate school and eight faculties. The university focuses on undergraduate education, with about 3800 of almost 6000 students (as of 2018) enrolled in undergraduate programs (MECSS, 2019). This study focused on one undergraduate EMI program which is located in the internationally-oriented professional school. The EMI program in the professional school at this university began in 2006.

<u>Rationales for the EMI program</u>

Program implementers at University A described three main reasons as to why the EMI programs have been implemented at their institution: (a) to become an internationally recognized university, (b) to attract international students, and (c) to prepare globally competitive graduates.

Program implementers unanimously agreed that the first rationale for implementing an EMI program was to become an internationally recognized university. They believed that University A wishes to become a leading academic and research university that is recognized internationally. One faculty member described:

> Our mission is to become a leading university in Asia at first. Behind this goal, of course, there is a policy to recruit international students. Foreign universities conduct courses in English to attract international students and to come into the international market. There is no way to go for internationalization through Mongolian language instruction. (Sukhbold, FM)

As one senior administrator described, University A regards international accreditation as one of the potential ways to approach the university's goal to become an internationally recognized university. She stated:

> University A has received international accreditation from the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs, and this means that the university's quality, especially EMI program quality, is good, and it is aligned with the university's mission. (Tsetseg, SA)

Program implementers talked about attracting international students as the second reason for introducing the EMI program at their university. One faculty member described the reason for implementing the EMI program in terms of the limited domestic educational market. He went on to clarify:

> Mongolian population is three million. If we consider the number of students who finish their secondary education and advance to higher education in the fields of business and management, we can see there is a small number. If we want to develop, the only way is the international market. (Zorigt, FM)

To attract international students through EMI programs, University A is focusing first on two neighboring countries, the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China. A junior administrator stated:

> Within its policy and strategy, the university is taking measures as much as possible to recruit international students from Tuvan and Buryatia in the Russian Federation and Inner Mongolia and Tianjin in China. Currently, we do not have many international students. However, the

number of international students from the countries tends to increase at both undergraduate and graduate levels. (Sarnai, JA)

A similar voice was added by one junior administrator who emphasized the need to increase the number of international students in order to approach to the university's goal to become an internationally recognized university. She went on to say, "we conduct EMI courses for international students. Although there are few international students, the university still keeps conducting the number of EMI courses" (Zaya, JA).

As one international professor described, the country is facing some financial challenges. This has affected the recruitment of domestic students. In particular, he shared, "the university is still required to expand its market in a different country. If so, they will be able to attract international students" (Bold, FM). Program implementers explained the university is targeting the two neighboring countries, Russia and China, to attract students.

Program implementers described the preparation of globally competitive graduates as the third reason. A senior administrator explicated:

Many companies from other countries are pouring into Mongolia. What they need is a good quality workforce who is equipped with high English and communicative skills. I believe this university's EMI program has greatly contributed to produce global citizens in Mongolia. (Tsetseg, SA)

Another professor shared a similar view:

Many international organizations that are operating in Mongolia make their reports in English following international standards. They need, for example, accountants who have high English proficiency to prepare the reports in English. So, there is a market demand for graduates who finished the school. (Enkhmaa, FM)

There is a high demand for companies to cooperate with foreign partners and implement joint projects. For this kind of business, English language skills are highly required. One professor said, "we have opened the EMI program foreseeing that professional qualifications are crucial to the foreign-invested companies when they hire employees from Mongolia" (Zorigt, FM). His view was reinforced by another faculty member:

The Mongolian labor market is small. In this small labor market, it is not easy for youth to pursue their career and build up their life as they wanted. In order to compete in the world market, for example, the nearest market in Singapore or Hong Kong, we will need English language skills. Thus, we are implementing EMI programs for producing the workforce. (Bat, FM)

<u>Challenges in implementing the EMI program</u>

Program implementers at University A described a number of challenges that they and their institution face in implementing the EMI program. Their concerns related to (a) the quality of students, (b) the quality of faculty members, and (c) the lack of financial resources.

Implementers reported that they find it difficult to teach students whose English proficiency is very low. One faculty member elaborated why such students enroll in the program by saying, "in some cases, students whose English proficiency is below intermediate level join the class" (Sukhbold, FM). Another faculty member was uneasy about the students' English skills and expressed his opinion: "international students have no problem taking EMI courses, while a few domestic students struggle to understand the content in English. Some students said the content is too hard for them" (Zorigt, FM). Other faculty members also noted the lower English proficiency of students who enrolled in their EMI courses.

Implementers also worried about the difficulties that their students face in the job market after graduation. A junior administrator explained that the graduates who are hired by Mongolian companies encounter problems translating professional terms and terminologies into Mongolian. Although they are proficient in English and are able to explain the words in English, they feel less confident in Mongolian. This is one of the side effects of the EMI programs, as the implementers explained.

Additional challenges to EMI implementation occur within the EMI classroom. Some faculty members shared their views on the attitudes of students. Their classrooms are usually dominated by Mongolian students who are of different ages. When Mongolian professors teach, Mongolian students tended to speak in their native language, and it challenges the professors to have them speak in English. When an international professor takes the role, their attitude is entirely different. Some young faculty members felt frustrated because their students reacted with a lack of respect once they found out that the faculty members are much younger than they were. A faculty member complained that some of her students have "acted more like a friend" (Suren, FM).

Another challenge to the implementation of the EMI program is related to the quality of faculty members. One faculty member briefly described his hesitation about the quality of international faculty members: "although they are native English speakers, some do not qualify the requirements. Some lack classroom experience and intercultural communication skills. Plus, recruiting high-quality international professors puts a financial burden on the university" (Sukhbold, FM). A similar opinion about hiring highly-capable professors was shared by an international faculty member who described:

> My university does not have an appropriate hiring policy. An appropriate hiring policy is missing. I do not know exactly who the right person is in doing the job. It is a very difficult thing. Because I think defining the right person is not being developed well. (Mike, FM)

A lack of capable faculty members was cited as a challenge for the university. Senior administrators described the situation of hiring capable professors as looking for a needle in a haystack. Teaching courses in English is a new practice for many Mongolian professors. They have never experienced this before. In fact, few faculty members are able to deliver content courses in English. One senior administrator noted, "we will need more qualified faculty members who can teach courses in English" (Michid, SA). One professor added to the discussion about existing faculty members' English proficiency: "our school's faculty is good at writing and reading in English. However, their speaking and communication skills in English is a problem! This is the biggest challenge!" (Zorigt, FM).

To tackle the lack of faculty members who are capable of teaching courses in English, inter-departmental collaboration has been established. However, faculty members from other departments feel a lack of confidence and have little experience delivering EMI courses. As directed by the university administration, existing faculty members in the EMI program tried to co-teach EMI courses. Program implementers believed that the idea would allow the faculty members to learn from each other and share their best practices. However, it did not go well. As one faculty member (Suren, FM) described, faculty members from different departments had limited English proficiency, were unwilling to teach in EMI context and, most importantly, they were struggling to understand the textbooks in English.

Many of the challenges were rooted in a shortage of financial resources. The small number of international faculty members available for the EMI program in the whole university is largely due to the costs involved. One professor said, "hiring international faculty requires lots of money for accommodation, utilities, and others" (Suren, FM).

Program implementers emphasized the importance of financial resources for the improvement of the EMI program. Two faculty members (Enkhmaa and Suren, FM) commented on how the university did not accept their proposal to open a new computer lab for their EMI students to help them prepare for international examinations and to provide an online learning environment. One faculty member described what happened: "Our international examinations tended to be computer-based. Our students are required to reserve the only existing computer lab at the university for two or three days in advance. Sometimes, the timetable does not work for them. That's why we have proposed to establish a new computer lab in our school" (Enkhmaa, FM).

This section discussed the rationales for introducing the EMI program and the challenges program implementers face when implementing the program at University A. The following section describes the EMI program in University B.

Case study of the EMI program at University B

University B is located in the capital city, Ulaanbaatar, and is one of few private universities that offer

all programs in English. The university was established at the beginning of the 2000s and has been home to many international students since its establishment. The university has about 800 students in both undergraduate and graduate degree programs and employs over 200 faculty members and staff. Out of 11 EMI undergraduate programs, Business was the focus of the study. More than 90% of faculty members are international, and over 30% of students enrolled are international.

Rationales for the EMI program

Program implementers described three overarching reasons as to why the EMI programs have been implemented at their institution: (a) to become an internationally recognized university, (b) to attract more international students, and (c) to prepare competitive graduates.

One of the senior administrators explained, "University B's mission is to provide world education in Mongolia and educate and develop future leaders in Mongolia and Central Asia who are equipped with English skills" (Altai, SA). Another junior administrator concurred, adding, "the university's goal is to educate global leaders. When the university was established in the 2000s, there were several other international universities with English programs in Mongolia. However, the university is unique in its specialized programs, such as biotechnology, renewable energy, and environment technology" (Maral, JA).

Program implementers viewed international accreditation as playing an important role in becoming internationally recognized. As they said, University B is in the process of receiving an international accreditation for its international business program and is hoping that the program will be accredited by the Accreditation Council for Business School and Programs. One faculty member described the process, "this is the fifth year since we have applied for international accreditation. We have been waiting for the decision by the accreditation agency" (Sarah, FM).

The second primary reason for implementing an EMI program was to attract international students. The presence of international students is an important factor in becoming an internationally recognized university, as program implementers highlighted. A senior administrator said, "the university's mission is to make equal the percentage of international and domestic students. If half of the students enrolled are international, the university could have accomplished its mission. Currently, 34% of students are international students" (Altai, SA). According to one senior administrator, University B has recruited international students from 14 countries, and it has planned to increase the number from other countries. She described the current policy: "the university is focusing more on three countries: Russia, China, and South Korea, to recruit more international students" (Altai, SA).

It seems that the first and second reasons for implementing the EMI program are intertwined. As the program implementers described, the university will be able to increase its international reputation and ultimately reach the status of 'internationally-recognized' after increasing the number of international students to 50%. To do so, one professor suggested, "the presence of international faculty members and lower tuition fees would be a positive image for recruiting international students" (Gerel,

FM).

The third rationale for implementing an EMI program, preparing competitive graduates, aligns with the mission of the university. One professor explained that the university is "educating tomorrow's global leaders" (Misheel, FM), as it set in its mission. She further highlighted that in order to prepare globally competitive graduates, it is necessary to use "the medium of English!" She went on to explain,

Obviously, to communicate with the world, we will not do so through Mongolian. It has to be through an international medium, which is English. In order to educate the international body, we need English. So, and obviously if our students are equipped with the international language, they will become more competitive in the international market. (Misheel, FM)

Program implementers mentioned that University B is committed to "preparing globally competitive graduates" (Altai, SA), which is why "90% of the faculty is international" (Orshil, JA). They also emphasized the high importance of English skills for global leadership.

One faculty member highlighted that international and domestic employers' demands affected the domestic higher education market to open EMI programs across the country. Thus, the university is a provider meeting the nation's supply-demand. As a reward, the implementers claimed that more than 80% of their graduates find jobs right after graduation. Foreign companies operating in Mongolia contact the university to express interest in hiring its graduates. One faculty member put it simply: "for employment, the criteria of high English and communication skills are valued more than the university from which they have graduated" (Gerel, FM). This illustrates how important knowledge of and communicative skills in English are in students' aspirations to work for Mongolia's globally minded companies.

Challenges in implementing the EMI program

University B is experiencing a number of interrelated challenges in implementing EMI programs. The challenges were categorized into four groups: (a) the lack of financial resources, (b) the lack of capable faculty members, (c) the low English and Mongolian language proficiency of students, and (d) documentation-related issues.

University B has a budget shortage to hire competent professors. In other words, there are unable to offer a financial incentive for professors to come and work at the university. One faculty member described:

Mongolia has high-quality, capable faculty members who can teach content courses in English. However, those professors have no interest in working at this university. There are two reasons. First is the amount of salary that University B promises. It is very low compared to the salary that they get from their university. Second, highly capable professors demand more incentive for delivering courses in English. Unfortunately, University B has no budget for that. (Sarah, FM)

University B wants to fill the lack of faculty members by hiring international faculty members on a voluntary basis. This is described by a faculty member who said, "mostly, we have insufficient finances. Financial problems mean we have not many students, and we have no other financial sources" (John, FM). This faculty member revealed that the university is dependent on the tuition fees of the students.

The shortage of capable faculty members doubles the existing faculty members' work pressures. In other words, they are forced to teach other courses even though they do not have much expertise in the field. It makes them very busy preparing for the new course. Due to the work pressure, these faculty members spend less time focusing on their research.

A few professors expressed their concerns about the employment of retired international professors. One faculty member was not happy that retired faculty are hired to teach EMI courses. Although retired professors may have more experience than their younger counterparts, they cannot hold the high work pressure and are not active in sharing their time with students. In addition, some international faculty members commented on the English language proficiency of the retired international faculty members. An American professor questioned their English proficiency. He went on to conclude, "even though they [some Korean professors] are educated in the West, they have not taught in English before they come here. So, they struggle in the first semester to get their pronunciation" (Dave, FM).

As mentioned above, program administrators added that University B hires many international faculty members voluntarily. Such volunteer faculty members do not have the content knowledge to teach but are still permitted to do so. There are two main problems in the hiring of these professors. First, there is a limited number of faculty who are capable of teaching EMI courses. Second, University B needs more funding to hire new professors.

In addition to the problems regarding faculty, program implementers described the ways in which students face challenges. The first challenge for them is English language proficiency. University B seeks to admit students with high English language skills. However, students whose English language proficiency is lower are also admitted.

Program implementers were in doubt that most students are unlikely to follow the courses taught by international faculty members. International faculty members come with a high expectation that the students would be able to perform to a high level during their course. A junior administrator (JA_MGLB2) commented that most Mongolian students were unable to follow the course content when international faculty used teaching methods more commonly found in the professors' home countries, such as South Korea, the United States, or Japan. As a consequence, professors could deliver only 70-80% of the content in their courses.

Another concern related to their low English proficiency was that students found it difficult to understand the accents of some faculty members. Interestingly, this study discovered that several

students made requests to change their professors because of this difficulty.

Another challenge for Mongolian students is the proficiency of the Mongolian language. This, it was explained, is seen clearly when students become employees of Mongolian companies. A senior administrator described, "Mongolian students' Mongolian language proficiency deteriorates greatly when they study at the university. It is common that they know and understand what the terms or vocabulary mean in English, but they struggle to speak or explain them in Mongolian. Plus, their Mongolian writing skills look terrible!" (Altai, SA).

The documentation-related issues concern the preparation and translation of documents. The Ministry of Education requires every single document related to the operation, management, programs, and curriculums be prepared only in the Mongolian language as the senior administrator explained (Altai, SA). This contradicts University B's internal working language policy. The university's internal documentation is prepared in English. According to the senior administrator, the university translates all documents into Mongolian and explains them to international faculty members and other administrative staff. This takes a huge amount of time. One faculty member elucidated why the Ministry of Education requires the university to do so and criticized, "probably the Ministry has a pretty good number of people who can read English, but they still want it in Mongolian" (John, FM).

This section discussed University B's rationales for implementing the EMI program and the challenges they face. The following section combines the results of the individual case-study universities and presents themes that have emerged across all EMI programs in the study.

Discussion

The findings from each individual case study revealed that institutional rationales for implementing the EMI programs place emphasis on three important aspects. The two case study institutions focus heavily on desires: (1) to become competitive internationally, (2) to recruit international students, and (3) to prepare competitive graduates in the international job market.

Rationales for implementing EMI programs

The adoption of EMI in universities worldwide has been based on numerous rationales. One of the rationales for EMI includes the need to promote an international and globalized image of the university (Sonia, 2014; Cho, 2012). Program implementers in these case study universities believe that EMI can play a significant role in "raising the prestige or ranking of their university." This result is also reflected in Gundsambuu's (2019a) study that the most important rationale for EMI is "to increase the ranking of the university". Competition to become a prestigious university may lead to higher global and/or national rankings and increased reputation. Another study by Lehikoinen (2004) found that in Finland, EMI programs and English education helped to increase the visibility of Finnish

higher education within Europe. Likewise, the universities in this study also wish to do so with the additional goal to attract international students. Costa and Coleman (2013) found in their study of a questionnaire for 76 HEIs in Italy that the reasons for introducing EMI programs in national universities include improving the international profile and attracting international students.

Implementers at universities A and B explained how crucial it is to recruit international students in order to achieve their institutions' stated goal of becoming an internationally recognized university. They believe the presence of international students in their EMI programs will diversify and internationalize their institution. The findings of this study are supported by previous research (Gürtler & Kronewald, 2015; Coleman, 2006; Klaassen, 2008; Ẅachter & Maiworm, 2014). Gürtler and Kronewald (2015) found that respondents at (15%) HEIs in Germany believed their institutions' top motivation for offering EMI included "attracting international students." According to the study undertaken by Ẅachter and Maiworm (2014), one of the strongest drivers for a majority of European universities to offer EMI programs was "brain gain" (Sonia, 2014): that is, recruitment of top international student talent to European institutions produce excellence in the future workforces within individual countries and the region, more broadly. Together, these studies make a persuasive argument that the recruitment of international students leads to the increased status of the international profile of an institution and enhances the employability of domestic graduates.

The third rationale for implementing EMI in this study closely reflects Knight's (2011) Human Resources Development and de Wit's (1999) need for a more global labor force. Previous studies show that EMI programs facilitate the country's participation in the global economy through human capital development (Yonezawa, 2014) and increase domestic students' English proficiency in preparation for entering the global market (Kang, 2018; Galloway et al., 2017). This study is in line with these studies to some extent. Both case study universities in Mongolia intend to equip students with high English skills so that they can better perform in the international job market. As a result, the case study universities anticipate that the high employability of the graduates in the international job market will contribute to their mission to increase their international profile and recruit international students.

Challenges in implementing EMI programs

This study applied a typology categorizing challenges as linguistic, cultural, administrative and managerial, and institutional derived from Tsuneyoshi (2005) and Bradford (2016). The two case study institutions faced these challenges to varying degrees as they implemented their respective EMI programs.

Previous research has discussed the linguistic difficulties that arise during the implementation of EMI programs. Challenges concerning students' insufficient English proficiency (e.g., Belhiah & Elhami, 2015; Costa & Coleman, 2013; Doiz et al., 2011; Choi, 2013), lecturers' insufficient English

language (e.g., Hu et al., 2014), and inadequate language proficiency of domestic students in their native language (e.g., Gundsambuu, 2019a), were all documented in this study. As faculty members reported, lower-proficiency students exhibited a wider range of linguistic challenges, which centered around a lack of both academic skills and language-related skills. Interestingly, domestic students' insufficient native language competence was cited as a problem after their graduation. However, program implementers claim that this is temporary and can be easily solved after some time working in the Mongolian environment.

When implementing EMI, HEIs recruit a diverse pool of international students and international faculty members with different academic cultural norms and expectations (Bradford, 2015). The findings of the study were consistent with the study by Wächter and Maiworm (2014). They found that insufficient English proficiency of both domestic students and international students appears to be the smallest language-related problem, while heterogeneity in command of English used by the students in the classroom is more of a problem. When EMI faculty members face a multilingual and multicultural group of students, it is clear that this group is more heterogeneous than a group of domestic students in terms of previous knowledge, skills, and educational experience.

As existing literature suggests, the challenges related to the administration and management of the EMI program seem to be problematic for implementing EMI programs. Challenges include those associated with the recruiting process of international students and increased teacher workload (e.g., Bradford, 2015; Kerklaan et al., 2008), and administrative support for international students (Ammon & McConnel, 2002). A small number of studies (e.g., Wächter & Maiworm, 2014) state that especially new EMI programs are forced to lower standards to be able to attract international students. Indeed, the findings of the present study revealed that due to the lowering of standards, many poorer-quality students, in terms of English proficiency and previous knowledge of the subject matter, enrolled in the EMI programs. This had both direct and indirect influence in increasing the workload of faculty members. In previous studies, lecturers in Portugal were unwilling to teach in English due to an increase in workload (Kerklaan et al., 2008) and lecturers in a Spanish university were reluctant to teach in English (Aguilar & Rodríguez, 2012). However, the reluctance to teach EMI courses was not mentioned as an issue by any of the implementers in this study. Rather, it was found that faculty members spend more time preparing lectures for the students in the EMI programs.

The findings of this study, relative to institutional issues, concur with those of Manh (2012), Bradford (2015), and Lassegard (2006). The greatest institutional challenges for universities A and B are insufficient funding and the need for capable human resources. Similar to those in Wächter and Maiworm (2014), the EMI programs in the case-study HEIs depend on students' tuition fees. It was also identified in this study that the EMI programs lack faculty members who are capable of teaching EMI courses. The reason behind this is related to insufficient funding and incentives. None of the faculty members in the two case-study HEIs received any incentive for teaching EMI courses. This appears to affect the development of EMI programs negatively.

Implications and conclusions

Several important implications can be derived from the findings of the present study. First, it is advisable that universities reassess the recruitment processes of students to make sure only those with sufficient English proficiency are recruited for EMI courses. Second, HEIs would be wise to establish language and academic support services, both for the sake of those who will need such support and in order for institutions to successfully accomplish the desired goals set out for their EMI programs. Finally, when implementing EMI programs, HEIs need to take into account whether there exist sufficient financial resources and a solid plan to approach their desired goals.

The rationales for implementing EMI programs at the case study HEIs were grounded in desires to increase competitiveness in the international higher education market, attract international students, and foster global human resources by producing competitive graduates in the international job market. Administrative, managerial and institutional challenges were found to be the most significant obstacles to program implementation at the two case-study HEIs. In particular, the HEIs in this study encountered issues relating to insufficient funding, insufficiently capable human resources and the need to recruit international students. Other types of challenges, such as linguistic and cultural, were seen as minor.

This study is important for several reasons. First, this study will provide administrators and policymakers with an understanding of the values and mindsets of the program implementers in Mongolia. In particular, this provides information on what might and might not work when considering policy initiatives that focus on EMI or other internationally-focused educational activities. Second, the results of this study will be of practical value to institutions that intend to embark upon or expand their EMI programs. Categorization of the rationales for, and characteristics of challenges in implementing EMI, will enable administrators and faculty members to make informed decisions about improving and developing existing and future EMI programs. Third, the study will contribute to the body of knowledge in EMI policy and its implementation in Mongolia. This is the first study that investigates EMI in depth; thus, it will add new findings in the literature on EMI in non-Anglophone countries.

This study has several limitations. This study included only participants who were administrators and faculty. Future studies should incorporate the perspectives of students in addition to other stakeholders' views. Second, the relatively small sample size of this study constrained the generalizations possible in the findings. Therefore, future research should include a greater number of HEIs and different types of HEIs (if available) in cities beyond Ulaanbaatar to better understand the phenomenon and determine the transferability of the results to institutions of various sizes with different funding sources.

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