Language Policy in an era of Globalisation: Some recent Research from the Higher Education Sector in the Republic of Ireland

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Abstract

Far from being weakened by the inexorable spread of English in this era of globalisation, the case for institutional language policy is actually strengthened. Indeed, a recent study conducted in the Republic of Ireland provides evidence to support this argument. The Institutes of Technology (IoT) are an interesting case study in this regard. Recent empirical research conducted throughout the IoT sector suggests that institutional policy i.e. a clearly articulated position regarding language matters, is not only being recommended at official EU policy level, but also supported at grass roots level by both students and lecturers. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected over a three year period to gain an in-depth understanding of this complex, multifaceted issue. The findings reveal that there is a demand across all academic disciplines for a broadening of language provision; furthermore, it has emerged that this demand is not currently being met. The expressed desire for greater provision implies the need for institutional language policy. This research substantiates and reinforces the findings of previous studies and reports, stating that institutional support is needed to empower, enlighten and motivate language learners. In the absence of an explicitly articulated institutional position regarding language, it is probable that an implicit default to a monolingual, monocultural, anglocentric status quo will prevail.

Keywords: *Language Policy; Globalisation; Spread of English; Higher Education*

1. Introduction

The predominance of English as a *lingua franca* in this era of globalisation has been the subject of many scholarly investigations in recent times (Phillipson, 2004; Dörnyei, et al., 2006; De Swaan & Phillipson, 2013). At one end of the spectrum, the worldwide appetite for English is perceived as an uncontrollable phenomenon; a tidal wave, overpowering and all-encompassing. On the other, the spread of English is perceived as some kind of covert

conspiracy, a subtle manoeuvring of the powerful over the weak and powerless. This article will consider both perspectives in an effort to understand what role language education might have to play in all of this. If the global spread of English is such that it supersedes all other languages, there is a temptation to abandon the acquisition of other languages as a wasted effort. The apathy associated with this school of thought certainly mitigates against the case for multilingualism and indeed multiculturalism, both fundamental pillars of official EU policy. The significance of this debate for the Republic of Ireland, which will soon be the one of only two anglophone countries in the EU in the wake of Brexit, should not be overlooked. Recent research into the impact of language policy on attitudes in the Institute of Technology sector would suggest that explicit institutional policy is needed to promote and support second language education, particularly in the context of the homogenisation of global cultures (Carthy, 2010). In the absence of explicit policy, an implicit default to English and anglocentrism is likely.

2. EU Policy and the spread of English

Let us firstly consider the EU context and the official policy put forward of a multilingual union which thrives in diversity; the reality is, however, that there is a growing trend to conduct most intercultural transactions through the medium of English. The shift from French to English in recent years, where it is estimated that two-thirds of EU drafts are currently written in English, certainly poses a threat to the ideal vision put forward in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (Phillipson, 2009). The ambivalence among scholars surrounding the linguistic diversity is nowhere more apparent than in the lively debate between Phillipson and de Swaan at the conference on Multilingualism in the Netherlands (De Swaan & Phillipson, 2013). De Swaan has dismissed EU plurilingual ideals and goals as much ado about nothing and claims that English is already the *lingua franca* of Europe. With regard to the growing number of members and languages in the EU he has stated ironically, "the more languages, the more English" (De Swaan 2001, Chapter 8). According to de Swaan's global language system, languages are merely hypercollective goods. Choosing to learn a language is an investment; the more users, the greater the investment. De Swaan measures the importance of a language in terms of its Q-value. This gives an indication of its prevalence (the number of people within a language community who speak it) and its centrality (the number of people knowing another language who can use it to

communicate). German has the most native speakers within Europe, so that its prevalence is high, but English, with fewer native speakers, has the most second language speakers, which makes its centrality high. This notion has been used to explain the decline of minority languages (e.g. Irish in the context of Ireland) on the one hand, and the spread of dominant languages (e.g. English in this context) on the other. The value of a language is determined solely by its number of users: the more users, the more valuable. The limitations of de Swaan's global language system have been highlighted by Grin (2009), nonetheless, as it defines language as a tool for communication alone. Most sociolinguists agree that language should not be perceived as a tool of communication alone and occupies a more complex space in society than this (Grin, 2009). De Swaan's narrow definition of language as an economic good fails to acknowledge the crucial role it plays on a social and cultural level.

Phillipson, on the other hand, puts forward a convincing case for plurilingualism, while acknowledging the forces of globalization and the threat they represent to the EU vision of multiculturalism. He criticizes those who regards multilingualism as a barrier to European integration and warns about the risks of de Swaan's *laissez-faire* attitude towards language policy. Without language policy clearly articulating the benefits of linguistic and cultural diversity, the market forces of globalization could lead European societies in the direction of monolingualism and monoculturalism. Admittedly, English has the 'sharpest beak' at international gatherings, when it comes to the pecking order of languages, Phillipson observes, but this trend only serves to perpetuate the prevailing injustice where a privileged minority are able to communicate, negotiate, trade, and be culturally productive in their mother tongue whereas others have to use a second or foreign language (Phillipson, 2009). Phillipson argues for a more level linguistic playing field, where the rights and integrity of all European cultures are respected. While de Swaan's model goes further than Phillipson's in describing how English spread and how market forces operate on the linguistic playing field, it fails to put forward any vision as to how languages can be managed in order to avoid inequalities and injustice occurring between various linguistic communities. De Swaan's model appears to suggest that, regardless of what policy makers might do or say, English will continue to spread. The striking similarity between de Swaan's *laissez-faire* approach and that of the founding fathers in the USA of the *Declaration of Independence* has been highlighted: the best policy is no policy, language issues are best left alone (Carthy, 2016). Many examples

cited in that article show that a *laissez faire* approach to language policy can often lead to cultural and economic impoverishment.

Resignation and apathy in the face of the spread of English is criticized elsewhere by the critical theorists (Bourdieu, 2001). The acceptance of globalization, and with it the hegemony of English, as a *fait accompli* , over which individuals have no control is described by Bourdieu as a mask for an insidious process to universalize the particular tradition of the economically and politically dominant powers. This subtle process disempowers the weaker and empowers the stronger, as it 'extends to the entire world the economic and cultural model that favours those powers most, while simultaneously presenting it as a norm, a requirement, and a fatality, a universal destiny, in such a manner as to obtain adherence or at the least, universal resignation' (Bourdieu 2001, p.84). The injustice associated with the hegemony of English in American educational settings has been highlighted elsewhere by the critical theorists; in doing so, they wish to raise awareness about the need for change (Lippi-Green, 1997; McCarty, 2004).

2.1. Republic of Ireland

Within this EU context, the Republic of Ireland's sociolinguistic landscape will now be considered. With both Irish and English enshrined in its constitution, Ireland has most in common with Canada, which is also officially bilingual. What distinguishes Ireland from Canada, however, is the dominance of English since the late 19th century, in spite of years of top down official policy to maintain the indigenous language, Irish. Today, even though Irish is officially the first national language, it is only spoken on a daily basis outside the education system by 1.7% of the population, while 30% claim that they are capable of speaking the language (CSO 2016). In de Swaan's terms, Irish's Q-value is low. Since the mid-nineties, Irish society has undergone enormous changes, with the most recent Census recording 11.6% of the population as non-native speakers of either Irish or English: the 'new Irish' come from over 200 nations (CSO 2016).[1] The vastly changed demographics deserves to be acknowledged at policy level, considering that 612,018 Irish residents speak languages other than English or Irish at home, an increase of 19% since 2011. O'Laoire's analysis sets out the challenges facing policymakers in the context of the new linguistic diversity in the Republic of Ireland (2008a). Will the presence of so many ethnic groups and languages be seen positively

as a resource, or negatively as an extra drain on scarce resources? Will the exposure to the 'new Irish' engender a curiosity about other cultures and spark off a renewed interest in the local heritage and history? It remains to be seen whether Ireland's transition from bilingualism to multilingualism has any effect on the mindset of the indigenous population (O'Laoire, 2008b). The diverse mix of ethnic backgrounds brings with it great opportunities for Irish society to develop tolerance and acceptance of other cultures and, in doing so, become more aware and appreciative of their own unique cultural heritage and language. How all these new minority languages will fit with the local indigenous language remains to be seen. The creation of inclusive language policies, clearly articulating a positive way forward, celebrating linguistic diversity would surely help create a new space for citizens of all ethnic backgrounds to engage in a rich intercultural dialogue (Singleton, et al., 2013).

It is reasonable to expect that Ireland's official bilingualism could be used to promote positive attitudes to language learning; however, historically, the reverse is true. Numerous studies have highlighted the failures of official policy in relation to the promotion of Ireland's indigenous language Irish (Hindley, 1990; MacMathuna, 1990; MacNamara, 1971; O'Laoire, 1996) Why do the Irish rate so poorly at modern languages? Ireland's unique sociocultural dilemma is complex. In one sense, Irish citizens have a major advantage over their mainland European counterparts by possessing the 'linguistic capital' of English. In another sense, however, this knowledge of English is perceived by some as a substantial barrier to the acquisition of other European languages. Not surprisingly, the 'advantage' of having the *lingua franca* of English may have led to a certain complacency with regard to language learning on the part of the Irish: "One of the paradoxes of speaking a world language in Ireland is that it has narrowed not broadened our world view" (Cronin, 2011). In a major longitudinal study exploring the impact of sociocultural changes in Hungary on the motivation of students to learn foreign languages, Dörnyei and Csizer concluded that the appetite for English increased, but to the detriment of most other modern languages. In their analysis, the authors describe the challenges facing English-speaking societies in their efforts to encourage learning languages other than English as a "losing battle" (Dörnyei, Csizer, et al., 2006, p. 455). Some years earlier, Eric Hawkins used the analogy of "gardening in a gale" to describe this dilemma; the gale of English relentlessly blowing away all feeble efforts to cultivate and develop foreign language learning (Hawkins, 1999, p. 131). It would certainly appear that the challenges facing

anglophone societies are greater than those of non-English-speaking societies when it comes to promoting foreign language learning. Nonetheless, effective language policy which is carefully tuned to the local linguistic ecology should be able to meet these challenges. Given the difficulties facing individual language learners, surrounded by the powerful gale of English, institutional support and encouragement would certainly go a long way towards creating positive learning environments.

The recent launch of the Irish government's *Foreign Languages in Education Strategy* 2017–2026 certainly helps to prioritise language education at both second and third levels.[2] The Strategy aims to improve the linguistic skills of Ireland's workforce, thereby preparing the country for the economic challenges of Brexit. It sends out a clear message that English is no longer enough, and that second language education and linguistic diversity are an important part of Ireland's future. What impact this Strategy will have on language provision in the IoT sector remains to be seen. Falling numbers in language programmes has led to redeployment of language teaching staff across the sector (O'Shaughnessy, 2011).

3. Recent empirical Findings

The findings of a recent nationwide investigation would certainly suggest that the global spread of English is an important consideration in the complex higher education landscape of today's Ireland. This study aimed to explore the impact of institutional language policy on attitudes toward learning languages in the Institute of Technology sector. The 14 Institutes of Technology distinguish themselves from the traditional universities with the applied nature of their programmes. They were established originally as Regional Technical Colleges from the 1970s until the early 1990s, in order to provide practical training programmes required to equip students for the workplace (Mulcahy, 1981). Today, the sector is in a state of upheaval, as the institutes merge into clusters called Technological Universities. Given the changing landscape, it is interesting to investigate how language education is perceived at institutional level and whether it is being prioritised. The rigorous multimethod approach adopted in this study included both quantitative and qualitative research tools, enabling a deeper understanding of this multifaceted situation. The quantitative phase collected data from both students and lecturers by means of an online questionnaire circulated electronically to all IoTs. This was followed by the qualitative phase, consisting of semi-structured interviews with

a representative sample of respondents (both students and lecturers) from the quantitative phase. Before launching into a description of the data below, it will be necessary to explain some of the categories used to differentiate between the various datasets. The 'yes/no' datasets were formed on the basis of respondents' support (or lack thereof) for institute-wide language provision. The A and B categories were formed on the basis of a short questionnaire that was circulated to all IoT Registrars upon completion of student and lecturer data collection. On the basis of the feedback received, each of the fourteen IoTs (numbered to protect their identity) was categorised as either A (institutionally aware) or B (institutionally unaware). Significant for the overall investigation was the fact that there are considerably more qualitative data from IoTs with institutional discussion around policy than those with none, suggesting that policy raises awareness.

In some cases, the qualitative data simply reinforced the quantitative findings. This is particularly evident with regard to the expressed desire for language provision in both lecturer and student data, as the chart below illustrates:
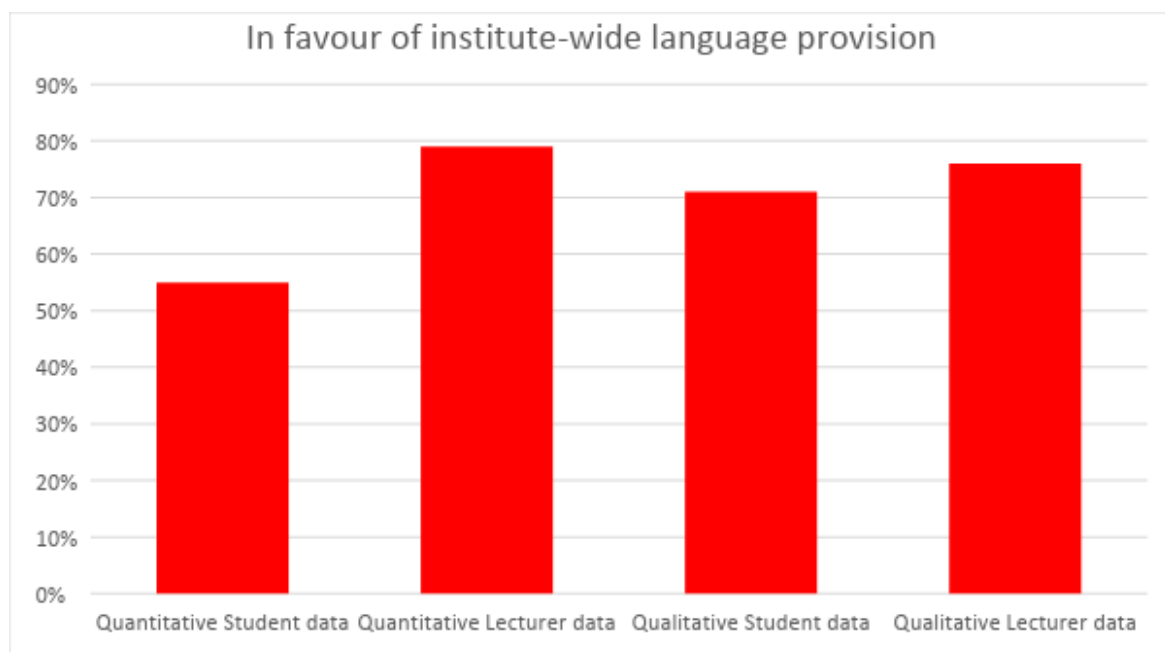
Figure 1: Students and lecturers in favour of institute-wide language provision

The quantitative data revealed that 55% of students from all disciplines would opt for a language module and 79% of lecturers were in favour of having institute-wide language modules. This finding was substantiated by the qualitative findings where 48 out of 69

students and 52 out of 68 lecturers interviewed were in favour of institute-wide language provision. Both students and lecturers highlighted the need for curricular scaffolding to support, encourage and motivate language learning on an institute-wide basis. This grass roots demand for language teaching is not currently being met, unfortunately.

In other cases, however, the qualitative phases enabled certain salient issues to be explored in greater depth. More specifically, some of the obstacles mentioned at the quantitative stage were investigated further at the qualitative stage. One of these emerged from questions 13 and 9 in the student and lecturer questionnaires respectively. Both questions collected data about lecturers'/students' lack of motivation to support institute-wide language modules. In both cases, just over half of respondents in the 'no dataset' had strongly agreed or agreed that the global spread of English had a demotivating effect of the learning of other languages. This quantitative finding provided a signpost for further investigation at the qualitative stage.

4. Student Interview Data

The qualitative research tool also enabled a greater understanding of the sociolinguistic complexities surrounding the spread of English. In total, 34 (over half) interviewees (including 'yes' and 'no' datasets) mentioned the spread of English as being an important aspect of the Irish language learning dilemma. This is a significant amount of data, when compared with the quantitative findings regarding English as a *lingua franca*, where just over half of respondents in the 'no' camp ticked the spread of English as being the reason for not taking a language module (i.e. only 20% of the total number of respondents). This would suggest that these attitudes exist at a subtle level which was not immediately apparent at the quantitative stage, due to the nature of the research instrument. It highlights the need for the qualitative research tool, as it enables a more in-depth understanding of this complex dilemma. It is clear that the views expressed here are deeply entrenched and may be part of a cultural default to English and monolingualism. In the absence of an explicitly articulated policy to the contrary, this default could be part of an implicit policy. As the graph below illustrates, these perceptions exist in both 'yes' and 'no' datasets:
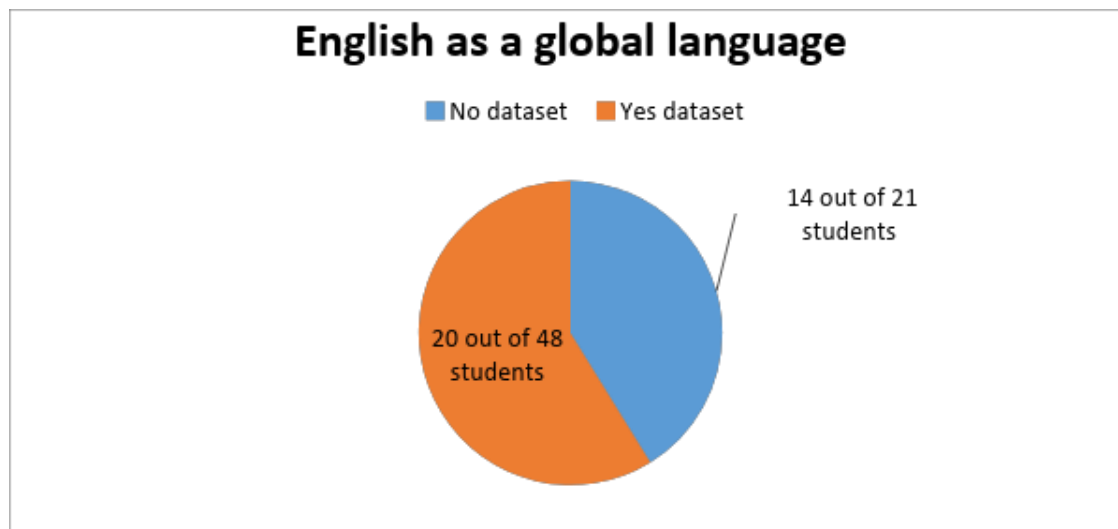
Figure 2: Qualitative data about English as a global language

4.1. Student Interview Data: Criticism of Anglocentrism

The table below illustrates the IoT and academic backgrounds of those interviewees who were critical of anglocentrism (please note that 'yes' and 'no' datasets have been combined, with 'no' data highlighted in red):

Students who were critical of Anglocentrism			
IoT A	**Programme**	**IoT B**	**Programme**
2	Heritage	7	Business Studies
2	Event Management	7	Business Studies
2	Hospitality	7	Nursing
3	Music	7	Computing
3	Business	7	Computing
4	Fine Art	8	Computing
4	Hospitality	12	Computing
6	Digital Media		
6	Criminal Justice		
6	Veterinary Nursing (2)		
3	Computing		
4	Computing		

4	Chemistry	
5	Engineering	
6	Veterinary Nursing	

Table 1: Students who were critical of Anglocentrism

The students listed above were critical of anglocentric attitudes in Irish society, with laziness and complacency being the most commonly cited reasons for students not choosing to study languages. The prevailing perception was that Irish students fare badly at modern languages because they already speak English and are reluctant to put the effort into acquiring other languages. Moreover, the view that the Irish are complacent around the acquisition of other languages was also expressed. Four students from IoT 7, two from Business Studies, one from Nursing and one from Computing had similar views. One of the Business students believes that the Irish take a back seat when it comes to learning foreign languages, as there is an expectation that English will be spoken in most countries. The other Business student, while she herself feels that language learning is worthwhile, feels that, in general, the Irish are lazy about language learning because they think English is widespread. The expectation that others will acquire English is there and that no matter where they go, English speakers will be found. The table shows clearly that both IoT Group A and B are represented.

4.2. Spread of English – Apathy

Other students were more resigned and apathetic about the sociolinguistic dilemma in which the Irish find themselves. As mentioned above, the critical theorists regard the spread of English and the forces of globalisation as often leading to disempowerment and disengagement by individuals. The idea of globalisation as a *fait accompli* was explored by Bourdieu in his criticism of prevailing attitudes towards this phenomenon. This notion will be used here to describe the attitudes expressed by students around this issue. Already having English is perceived here as being a disincentive to learning other languages, due to its global spread. Interestingly, all of these interviewees were in IoT A Group: the table below lists their IoT and academic backgrounds:

Students who were apathetic about English as a *lingua franca*	
IoT A	**Programme**
1	Financial Services
3	International Hospitality
3	Leisure
4	Human Resources
4	Mechanical Engineering
4	Culinary Arts
4	Information Technology
4	Business Studies
6	Digital Media
6	Fire Safety
6	Engineering
6	Digital Media
6	Information Technology

Table 2: Students who were apathetic about English as a lingua franca

A Financial Services student from IoT 1 believed that the fact that we speak English as a global language is actually holding us back. Far from being critical of Irish students for not performing better at language learning, this cohort empathised with their plight. A Croatian student of Human Resources at IoT 4 observed that Irish students have little incentive to learn other languages, as the default language is always English. Interestingly, this perception was prevalent among those with some experience of international mobility. A Digital Media student from IoT 6, who has had an opportunity to travel, believed that English as a global language is very widespread in the countries he has visited. A Fire Safety student at IoT 6, who acknowledged the need for the local language in order to experience cultural nuances, explained that he could do an Erasmus semester in Sweden as part of his programme, without ever having to learn Swedish, as all the lecturing is done through English, and you could certainly survive without Swedish in the workplace.

Upon closer inspection of these data, it emerges that criticism of anglocentric attitudes is apparent in both IoT A and IoT B Groups, i.e. across the sector, whereas there is clear evidence of apathy and resignation among those students in IoT A Group. The wide spectrum of diverse academic programmes listed would also suggest that these perspectives are not related to disciplines. This would suggest that institutionally aware IoTs need to address and challenge these perceptions in their existing/emerging policies. While students in IoT B Group attributed the bad performance of Irish students in languages to laziness and complacency alone, students in IoT A Group were more likely to empathise with the Irish dilemma (the new Irish included) and acknowledge that learning languages is an uphill struggle for them, due to the spread of English. These perceptions reveal a deep seated sense of powerlessness and apathy, there is clearly a need for institutional leadership and vision to reassure individuals that their efforts to acquire other languages apart from English are worthwhile and appreciated. The global spread of English reinforces the case for institutional policy to clearly and unequivocally articulate the case for multilingualism, creating the necessary environment and supports for second language acquisition and intercultural dialogue to take place. In its absence the apathy and resignation will continue to grow.

5. Lecturer interview data

A similar picture emerged in the lecturer interview data. Interviewees were divided as to how they perceived the spread of English as a *lingua franca* and how it impacts upon the motivation of Irish students to learn other languages. Some were critical of anglocentric attitudes and felt strongly that English is not enough; others were more resigned about the spread of English and apathetic about of the plight of the Irish and indeed other anglophone societies in their efforts to promote language learning. The table below gives an overview of IoT and academic background of both cohorts (please note that 'yes' and 'no' datasets have been combined, with 'no' data highlighted in red).

Lecturers who were critical of Anglocentrism		Lecturers who expressed resignation about English as a *lingua franca*	
IoT A	**Academic background**	**IoT A**	**Academic Background**
2	Engineering	1	Business studies
3	Physics	1	Business Studies
3	Engineering	1	Psychology
4	Computing	1	Law
4	Spanish	2	Engineering
5	Computing	3	Engineering
6	Business Studies	3	Engineering
6	Accountancy	4	Computing
6	Science	5	Engineering
6	Sports	6	Nursing
6	Engineering	6	Veterinary Nursing
6	Design	6	Design
6	Science	6	Engineering
IoT B	**Academic Background**	**IoT B**	**Academic Background**
7	Computing	7	Language
8	Business Studies	9	Marketing
12	Language	9	Veterinary Nursing
12	Social Care	10	Engineering
12	Engineering	12	Sociology
13	Management		
13	Nursing		

Table 3: Lecturers' views of English as a global language

This table clearly shows that there is an equal amount of data from both cohorts; on the one hand, those who are critical of anglocentrism and the other, those who are more resigned to the predominance of English on the Irish linguistic landscape. Apart from the fact that there

is more data from IoT A Group, there does not appear to be any striking finding with regard to the impact of policy on attitudes; 13 interviewees in institutionally aware IoTs are critical of anglocentric attitudes and 13 are more resigned to the spread of English. What is quite significant, however, is the number of interviewees in IoT 1 (4 out of 13) in the 'resigned' '*fait accompli*' cohort, and the absence of any interviewees from this cohort in the left hand column of Table 3. This is all the more startling, considering that IoT 1 is the only IoT (at the time of research) with a recently approved Language Policy. Once again, this suggests that the existence of institutional Language Policy is not currently preventing anglocentric attitudes and presents a challenge for institutionally aware IoTs to articulate unequivocally that anglocentric narrow-mindedness has no place in an institution which thrives in multilingual diversity.

Lecturers from both IoT A and B Groups felt strongly that this monolingual perception can lead to complacency and laziness, even though English has been a huge advantage to the Irish economically. The linguistic capital of English had given the Irish the feeling that 'we're already ahead' and not needing to learn other languages. This monolingualism was also associated with arrogance and narrow-mindedness, as it closes people off to other cultures; some felt it was rude not to try to learn other languages. Culturally speaking, the Irish may have inherited a certain arrogance from their British neighbours with the view that, no matter where you go, there is a certain expectation that English will be spoken, because it is the dominant language of business. Learning other languages shows respect for other cultures, and opposes the imperialist view that we expect others to speak English. Finally, it was felt that globalisation and the internet has contributed to the spread of English and the death of many of the world's indigenous languages e.g. Maltese and Welsh.

Other lecturers were more apathetic and resigned about the dilemma in which the Irish find themselves in relation to language learning. Ireland's cultural alignment with other anglophone societies was mentioned by several respondents. Irish society was more culturally in tune with Boston than Berlin; this means the Irish have to work harder at language learning. In addition, the geographic location and insularity of Ireland on the edge of Europe gives rise to a sense of psychological peripherality—all of which has a negative impact on motivation to learn other languages; an island mentality prevails where people feel

they can get by with English. Some referred to deep-seated cultural and societal issues which go beyond the remit of the IoT sector and need to be addressed more holistically. This cultural alignment with other anglophone countries makes it difficult for the Irish to identify themselves as Europeans. Ireland's complex colonial history was also referred to, i.e. the fact that English was superimposed onto the indigenous Irish by the dominant ruling class. This eventually led to the abandonment of native Irish in favour of the linguistic capital of English. The deep-seated cultural and historic facets of this dilemma have helped to shape the perceptions of lecturers who are aware of the complex nature of the Irish sociolinguistic landscape; institutional policy does not currently appear to be having any impact on them.

Interestingly, those with experience of international mobility were also acutely aware of the inexorable spread of English and how difficult it can sometimes be to get exposure to other languages. An Engineering lecturer from IoT 3 believed that it was an uphill struggle for anyone wanting to practice their language at international events, as the default language is invariably English. He described how Germans used to love practicing their English on him while he was abroad. Similarly, a marketing lecturer from IoT 9 believed that, because English is the language of international business, there is a growing trend for mainland European colleges to offer their programmes through English, in order to attract as many students as possible. He claimed that those who do go abroad are practised upon as native English speakers. Indeed, a nursing lecturer from IoT 6, while she doesn't agree that English is enough, has just returned from a visit to Norway where she had delivered lectures in English. A Veterinary Nursing lecturer from IoT 6, who had worked in Saudi Arabia for some months, had picked up some basic conversation in the local language, but found that most people defaulted to English. A Business lecturer from IoT 1 believed that some Irish people display a fundamental lack of confidence and, at worst, an inferiority complex about learning other languages. An Engineering lecturer from IoT 5 observed that Irish students do not even apply for jobs that require languages, as they do not believe they can compete with native speakers who are already competent in English. This sense of powerlessness is evident in both institutionally aware and unaware IoTs; if anything, there is more data from IoT A Group.

6. Conclusion

The European Language Council has urged Higher Education Institutions to create their own policies (Lauridsen, 2013). The failure of many IoTs across the sector to respond to this recommendation is hard to fathom; at the time of data collection, 8 of the 14 IoTs had no institutional awareness of language policy. In the absence of explicitly articulated policies, individuals are left to fight the 'losing battle' against the 'gale of English' without institutional support. Furthermore, the lack of explicit policy suggests an implicit default to English as the *lingua franca*. This default is not merely linguistic in nature, but is inextricably linked to a cultural mindset which is fundamentally anglocentric in nature. The expectation is that non-anglophones are obliged to learn English, but there is no onus whatsoever upon anglophones to learn other languages. This expectation is simply unacceptable, given the changing demographics in Irish society and is clearly out of step with official EU policy. It reveals a deep cultural connection with other anglophone societies outside the European Union.

It is clear that the ambivalence in the scholarly articles, described in the opening paragraphs, is reflected in the findings presented here. On the one hand, the resignation and apathy among both students and lecturers in relation to the dominance of English as global language emerges from the qualitative data collected throughout the IoT sector. This cohort expressed a sense of powerlessness about the dilemma in which Irish citizens, along with members of other anglophone societies, find themselves: even those who are committed to learning other languages and have experience of international mobility can struggle to get exposure to their target language, due to the global spread of English. On the other, there is evidence of disapproval among both cohorts in relation to an anglocentric mindset among the Irish in relation to learning other languages. Lecturers and students in both A and B Groups were critical of anglocentric attitudes and believed that the poor performance of the Irish at learning other languages was simply due to complacency and laziness.

What conclusions can be drawn for policymakers? Second language acquisition of languages other than English is hugely challenging in today's globalised world. The demotivating effect of English as a *lingua franca*, not only in Irish society where it is the mother tongue of the vast majority of people, but also across Europe, as the most widely spoken second language in the EU is evident in the data. It could be argued that language policy can do little to stem the

inexorable spread of English; however, it certainly has a role to play in providing opportunities and supports to those who are willing to engage in the learning of other languages. This would certainly be a positive step in the right direction, and would help to dispel the sense or resignation and apathy so prevalent in the qualitative data gathered.

The evidence of apathy among both students and lecturers in relation to English as a *lingua franca* is an interesting finding in the light of the debate between de Swaan and Phillipson mentioned above. De Swaan's view that the spread of English in Europe cannot and should not be managed by language policy is counteracted by Phillipson's insistence that language policy is required to promote EU plurilingual ideals (De Swaan and Phillipson, 2013). It is likely that a proactive approach, similar to that recommended by Phillipson is needed, in the form of a clearly articulated policy in relation to English as a *lingua franca*: this could help dispel the apathy and resignation prevalent among students and lecturers and provide support and encouragement for those who take on the challenge of learning languages other than English. The alternative approach, De Swaan's *laissez-faire* view of English as a *lingua franca* would probably lead to an implicit default to monolingualism and, at worst, monoculturalism. In the absence of explicitly articulated language policies, there is a strong temptation to default to a monolingual, anglocentric worldview.

Admittedly, some scholars are sceptical about the dilemma facing anglophone societies. 'Englishisation', as coined by Dörnyei in his longitudinal study of Hungarian second level students, is postulated by him as being the explanation for unsuccessful strategies to promote second language learning in societies which already have English as a native language (Dörnyei, et al., 2006). Undoubtedly, there is significant empirical evidence in this study to support Dörnyei's postulation. Dörnyei's scepticism is not shared by the critical theorists, however, who aim to expose the inequalities of the spread of English and, in doing so, inspire people to bring about change (Lippi-Green, 1997; McCarty, 2004). Likewise, there is significant qualitative evidence in this investigation to support this perspective, as some lecturers and students believe that the spread of English should not be used as an excuse to opt out of learning other languages. As already mentioned above, the prevailing mood of resignation and apathy in relation to the spread of English would certainly suggest that an institutional position needs to be more clearly articulated in this regard.

Given the recent prioritisation of linguistic diversity at national level, with the new *Foreign Languages in Education Strategy*, the IoTs should fall into step with new momentum that is being created for a new globally competitive Ireland. Institutional language strategies, clearly articulating the importance of language education as a core skill for future graduates, could certainly enhance the reputation of IoTs as they prepare to reinvent themselves as technological universities. Far from being an excuse to opt out of learning other languages, the spread of English strengthens the case for it, as monolinguals will clearly be left behind in the workplace. In the absence of language policy, the forces of globalisation/Englishisation will continue unchecked and the likelihood of a default to English will be quite strong.

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[1] The most recent Census figures are available at: http://www.cso.ie/en/csolatestnews/presspages/2017/census2016summaryresults-part1/

[2] More information at: https://www.education.ie/en/Press-Events/Press-Releases/2017-Press-Releases/PR17-12-04b.html