Internationalization of universities
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Chapter 1
Introduction

1.1 Problem Statement

Educational system is one of the many systems in the society. Therefore, the relations with the influence of various variables in that society exist. Structures and objectives of the educational system should then be affected by the main school of thoughts of the society. For example, in ancient Greek history 400-500 BC, Plato found an educational institute called “Academy” and Aristotle also found an institute called “Lyceum”. The curriculum then seemed to rely solely on the teacher. However, the main interest of the era was to quest for the knowledge which brought about a better noble life. In the Middle Ages, universities arose in Italy first then in France (Paris), followed by Oxford University and Cambridge University in England. These universities resembled the Middle Ages’ professional associations which were arranged in the form of solidarity or association among teachers and students. In Paris, the professors are the cores of the universities, which retains their solid structure until today despite the changes in many aspects. For Oxford and Cambridge, they are related with the religious since the beginning so the emphasis of study was on religious and creating the leader for the societies.

Furthermore, the universities in the Middle Ages were internationalized using Latin as communication language so that students from various nations could study together. In the Middle Ages, Europe was not nationalized and religious empire had Rome as a center which was European universal internationals. Later when Europe was developed into nations, the universities then started using their own languages of the nations. Internationalizing began to diminish but the influences of Greek and Latin and also the Greek and Roman philosophers retained the impact upon the educational system until the 20th century. In conclusion, structures and objectives of educational system should be related with other factorable variables in the society. But what variables will they be depended on whether those variables are the main impacts of that society (Tonsiri, 1995).

According to Barnett (1990), the idea of higher education had to be understood in terms of their own history and culture and the social interests they represent. The education of the Greek philosopher-kings, the formation of a clerkly stratum in medieval Europe, the response of the unOiversity in the nineteenth century to industrial society, and the contribution that the university could make to social reconstruction following the twentieth-century world wars: contrasting historical contexts such as these are bound to generate a view of the university which is each partly culturally specific. Looked at this way, it may seem that the idea of higher education cannot be pinned down, that it is in reality no single idea but a number of different ideas reflecting the age in which they are formed. However, Barnett said that such conclusion would be premature. For what is striking about the different conceptions is their degree of consensus.

For today society, a globalization phenomenon with efficient communication systems, transportations and trades enables simultaneous knowledge around the world for everyone. The ease of communication among individuals somehow seems to make the
world smaller, and globalized causing each nation unable to stand alone. Interrelation among earth population has become unavoidable causing the competition between people and societies and simultaneously interdependent constantly. Learning about the others has also become an unavoidable matter. Internationalization of universities is a necessity of the world in this era and will become a routine procedure for the world in the coming era as well. This situation might be the turning point or changing point effects in the change of the university system of universities across the world.

Since the last decade, activities for internationalization of universities have been widely supported in universities across the world. The distinct activities which have been materialized are the student exchange programmes among European universities, for example, ERASMUS and TEMPUS. There are also professor exchange programme, co-research programmes and the international conferences. One of the consequences is that the host universities have to arrange an international course for the students and professors from foreign countries, some universities adopted the whole programme of the international curriculum, where as other universities constructed only specific subjects and integration with the current curriculum for some others. As for the language being used for instruction, some use their native languages, some apt for international languages. For example, the foreign students in France -even in the short period exchange programme- must use French, The students going to Italy must use Italian, Japanese for Japan and of course English for the students to England. For smaller nations even with their own languages, but for the convenience of the students and the feasibility of the exchange programmes, have to utilize the international languages especially English as an educational communication. In concurrence with the present situation, English has become the world language which is mostly used around the world geographically, therefore, English has been the most accepted as educational communication in international programmes within universities globally. There is also the trend that education in English in the universities will gradually rise.

However, the cases where education in English in the universities whose English is not the native language remain debatable. For instance, in the Netherlands, the Minister of Education and Science announced that he wanted to introduce more teaching in the English language in Dutch universities. This idea was criticized and protested from several groups. Most commentators found it a ridiculous idea (Dronkers, 1993:295). Similarly in Malaysia, when the prime minister, Dato' Seri Mahathir Mohamed, suggested that universities and institutions of higher learning should teach some technical subjects in English, the idea was opposed by many groups of the society (Pillai, 1994:5). In Thailand, a former permanent secretary of the Ministry of University Affairs, Wichit Sri Sa-an, suggested the idea that to internationalize Thai universities, the bilingual policy must be established, i.e. Thai is the first language and English is the second. This idea received both supports and protests, however, such policy was not happening yet.

In practice, despite the controversy, the international programmes in English in many countries keep increasing. As far as the researcher has the direct involvement such as the universities in the Netherlands and Thailand, this is to respond to the policy of internationalization and to support the increasing number of foreign students, especially, the ones who have short term study and could not master the host university language. This calls for the education in English. For other aspect, this will open up the chances for the native students who have no opportunity to go abroad to join in the activities for internationalization as well. The emerging consequent problem is that what is the boundary of education in English within those universities? From the review of
documents and related studies, up until now, no research could give answer to this question. However, education in English is a consequence of the internationalized development, thus to quest for the answer of this question perhaps we have to look back at the goals of the university internationalization- Why do we have to internationalize? What is the boundary and how to obtain it? As mentioned above that this could be the turning point of the universities across the world.

To develop the universities into internationalized, there are several groups of personnel involved starting from policy level through execution level. There are, for instance, international, national and regional government, the private sector, institution, faculty and student. The ideas and the goals of internationalization differ vastly depending upon the roles and perspectives of each group of people mentioned which may be harmonized or in conflicts. Knight and de Wit (1995:9-14) divided rationales and incentives used for the internationalization of higher education into two main groups: economic and political rationales, and cultural and education rationales (see more details in the following chapter).

Policies and activities of university internationalization that occur in this time are mostly of type top-down policy which were specified by policy level personnel then passed along to the execution department (in universities, they are academic staffs and students) to process. As started above that each group has different perspectives about university internationalization, academic staffs and students may have different perspectives from the management which today’s researches involved in this case are at minimum. In order for the policies of university internationalization to succeed, great corporations from the academic staffs and students are required because they are directly involved in various activities. Furthermore, the culture of universities namely the academic freedom prevents management by order but the consensus method yields the best results. Therefore, the study of the opinions or perspectives of the academic staffs and students about the university internationalization and the consequences is a necessity. This is to gather information and adapt to coincide with the needs of the management which then results in the success of the university internationalization policies.

This research intends to study the opinions of the academic staffs and students about the university internationalization and the consequences. Discovery of such opinions is useful in particular to the management who may utilize the information to improve the internationalized policies for better fit with the needs of the performers - the academic staffs and students. Moreover, the other purpose of this research is to cross-country study thus widen the data platform and discover the perspectives of the academic staffs and students from different nations. The social differences could be one of the reasons that caused different opinions. Therefore, the results from this research will help understand the others by the comparison study of the similarities and dissimilarities. As a result, this will bring about understanding each other and healthy relations among the nations in the future.

The selected countries for this research are smaller countries that have their own languages which are not English or other international languages. The reason being is to study the opinion about the influences of English upon these countries which are the consequences of the internationalizing activities (that remains the case of major controversy), for instance, offering more international curricula, the more use of English for instruction and the need for everyone to master English. Another point in case, the selected countries are from West Europe and Southeast Asia which may be called inter-continents. The reason for selecting these two continents because in the past, most
information spread in one direction. This results in a one-way received information in the east, by the same token the west has little information about in the east especially, in terms of education. This research will produce the information from both directions in the same subject which is useful for the present internationalization that should be in the form of mutual exchange -knowledge exchange for each other rather than one-sided.

1.2 Research objectives

From the incidents and the essentials of the aforementioned problems, this research has the following objectives:

Objective 1: To study the opinions of the academic staffs and students on the university internationalization.

Objective 2: To study the opinions of the academic staffs and students about the influences of English upon the education in the universities as a consequence of internationalization.

Objective 3: To find out the factors which influenced the opinions of the academic staffs and students on the university internationalization.

1.3 Research questions

Based on the research objectives, thus follow the general questions and specific questions of the research as follows:

Research question 1: What are the opinions of the academic staffs and students on the university internationalization?
   a. What are the goals of internationalization?
   b. What are the impacts of internationalization?

Research question 2: What are the opinions of the academic staffs and students about the influences of English upon the university education which as a consequence of internationalization?
   a. What are the boundaries of teaching in English?
   b. Is it possible for the English language to become the common language used for communication among scholars across the world?

Research question 3: What are the factors that affect the differences in the opinions of the academic staffs and students?
   a. Do social backgrounds have influences upon the opinions of the academic staffs and students?
   b. Do fields of study have influences upon the opinions of the academic staffs and students?
c. Do other factors, such as status as teachers and students, sex, experience in internationalization and efficiency in English, have influences upon the opinions on internationalization?

1.4 Definition of terms

Many phrases involving in the internationalization are often seen, such as internationalization of higher learning, internationalization of higher education and internationalization of universities. The differences are the boundaries of the words, for example, higher education and higher learning have the meaning coverage wider than university because they include any education beyond high school level. In this research, the phrase internationalization of universities will be used to specify the boundary of the study which devotes solely to the universities.

There are several definitions of the term internationalization of universities but for this research it means the development process of universities into a more global aspect.

Universalization dimension means the viewpoint that the internationalization of universities should aim at serving the international learning community.

Nationalization dimension means the viewpoint that the internationalization of universities should aim at serving the nation’s purposes.

English domination means the viewpoint that English is the predominant language in the present world situation.

Academic staffs means personnel in the universities who are responsible for teaching and researching or teaching alone or researching alone.

Students means university students who are studying in the universities.

English proficiency means the self perception about the proficiency in the English language of oneself.

International experience means experiences in activities concerned with foreign education, i.e. studying abroad, visiting the university abroad, co-research with foreign researchers and international conference involvement.

European universities means the universities included in this research which are located in Europe, i.e. University of Amsterdam and Katholieke University of Leuven.

Asian universities means the universities included in this research which are located in Asia, i.e. Chulalongkorn University, University of Malaya and the National University of Singapore.

1.5 Outline of this study

The remainder of this book consists of eight chapters. In the next chapter, the goals and consequences of the university internationalization are discussed and consequently formed the theoretical framework of this research. In chapter 3, the research methodology and the data collection process are described. Data analyses and results are in Chapter 4 to 7 where as Chapter 4 presents the results of dimensional analysis of the opinion about the university internationalization. Chapter 5 presents the comparison results of the opinion among sub-sample groups and the factors that affect their opinion. In Chapter 6 and 7, the qualitative data of the University of Amsterdam and Chulalongkorn University are
analyzed respectively. Finally, Chapter 8 presents the issues proposed for internationalization policy formulation.