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Language Policies in Higher Education

A Comparison of Europe and Southeast Asia

Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg



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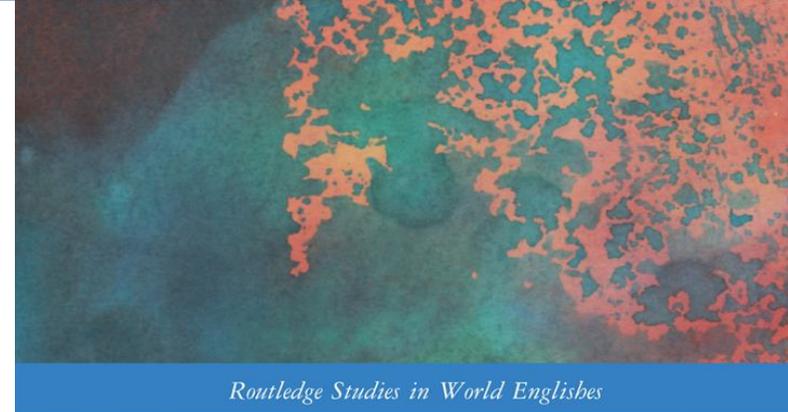


Language Policies at the LERU member institutions

Bernd Kortmann



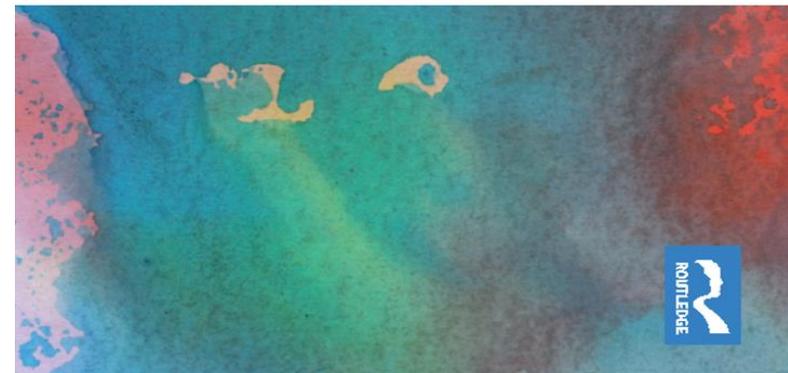
Briefing Paper No. 4 - November 2019



ENGLISH IN SOUTHEAST ASIA AND ASEAN

TRANSFORMATION OF LANGUAGE HABITATS

Azirah Hashim and Gerhard Leitner



EU vs. ASEAN: Possible questions for the discussion



- LPs in HEIs: normal or exception?
- **What is the driver?**
 - wish for multilingualism?
 - keeping in check the role of English?
 - securing the quality of English in HEIs for all relevant groups?
 - **securing a key role for the mother/national tongue(s) (e.g. in academic writing)?**
 - **securing the role of the regional language(s)?**

International Mother Language Day

21 February



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21 February

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Toddlers in Bangladesh are introduced to the alphabet.

PHOTO: © UNICEF/BANA2014-00573/Mawa

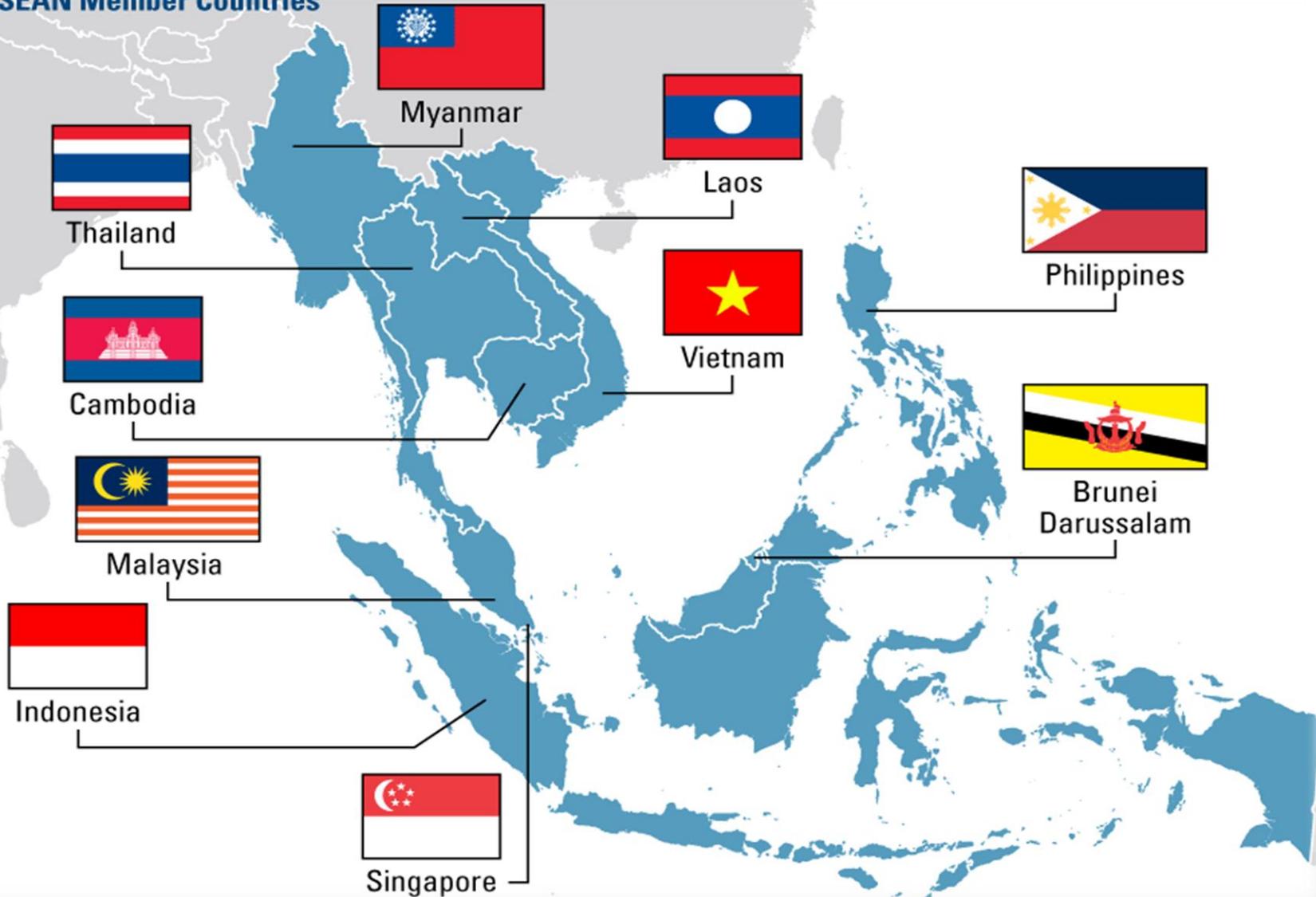
- **Who** is the driver?
 - politics?
 - institutional leaderships (-> ILPs as part of internationalization strategies)?
 - **language experts (e.g. language centres, linguists, linguistics associations)**
 - others (e.g. societal groups, civil society, NGOs)

- What is **the role of English** (inside and outside of Higher Education)?
 - in the EU?
 - in ASEAN?

I. The view from ASEAN & SE Asia



ASEAN Member Countries



Background to ASEAN



- The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) – formed in 1967 with the signing of the Bangkok Declaration
- Original members - Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand
- Later included: Brunei (1984); Vietnam (1995); Laos and Myanmar (1997); and, finally, Cambodia (1999)

ASEAN, national languages, English and multilingualism



- ASEAN - pressure to promote the national language and have a pragmatic second or foreign language policy with English as the most important language promoted widely.
- Conflict with the multilingual realities that exist.
- Debate with regard to language education policies that allow for multilingualism and respect for the mother tongues.

- The founding of ASEAN in 1967 added pressure to maintain/strengthen English in the education system; introduced a new dimension for policies
 - English was sanctioned as the “working language of ASEAN” in Article 34 of the ASEAN Charter in 2009
 - The global language of aid in all international institutions such as the UN, the IMF, and the World Bank whose presence/position is strong in the region
 - The language of diplomacy among all the ASEAN member states- intraregional trade and mobility that contribute to the nations’ growth
- The academic environment in higher education - which language should be the Medium of Instruction (Moi), university management, pedagogies and social interactions

- Internationalisation of education and the spread of English have impacted the educational systems in the region
 - English is the key to developing a global community; thus, to be able to communicate in English is crucial for the creation of an ASEAN community
 - Similar to the Bologna Process, English facilitates mobility and credit transfers across universities
 - Kirkpatrick (2014): three driving forces behind the use of English as MOI:
 - (a) international campuses in ASEAN,
 - (b) international partnerships and cooperation with English-speaking countries, and
 - (c) the set-up of regional universities to cater for diverse student market

- Regional and global mobility - inter-institutional exchanges across national boundaries.
- Government policies towards international students.
- A focus on encouraging domestic students to study in the region rather than going to traditionally popular destinations such as the UK, the US and Australia.
- A common higher education space.
- The ASEAN University network (AUN) - student exchanges as well as the ASEAN International Mobility for Students (AIMS) programme - students from ASEAN countries experience education in another ASEAN country for a semester or two.

1. All countries have developed *national* language and educational policies



- Not much provision for the teaching of the national language of a neighbouring country.
- E.g. Thai or Filipino are only taught in their own country but rarely, in Malaysia, Cambodia, Vietnam or Laos.
- Only dominant or politically relevant languages are selected such as Mandarin or Tamil.

2. All countries have promoted a local language as national language



- Countries differ quite a lot as there are many local languages that could have been selected but are not for their minority status.
- Indonesia is an exception as Malay was not the largest language when it was selected.
- As all policies propagate the selected national language - a form of bilingualism with English and a marginal consideration of other local languages.

3. All countries include in their policies the issues of media of instruction and the choice of foreign languages



- The normal solution to the media of instruction is the choice of the national language.
- But other (larger) languages may be selected in some regions (as Malay is in southern Thailand) or for some ethnic (and language) minorities such as the Chinese and Indians.
- English is a very frequent choice for the belief that it guarantees participation in the socio-economic domain, access to jobs and access to knowledge.
- Normally restricted to some subjects like mathematics and sciences in schools but has become predominant at university level.

4. Regarding the status of English all countries have taken different paths on the basis of some widely shared attitudes



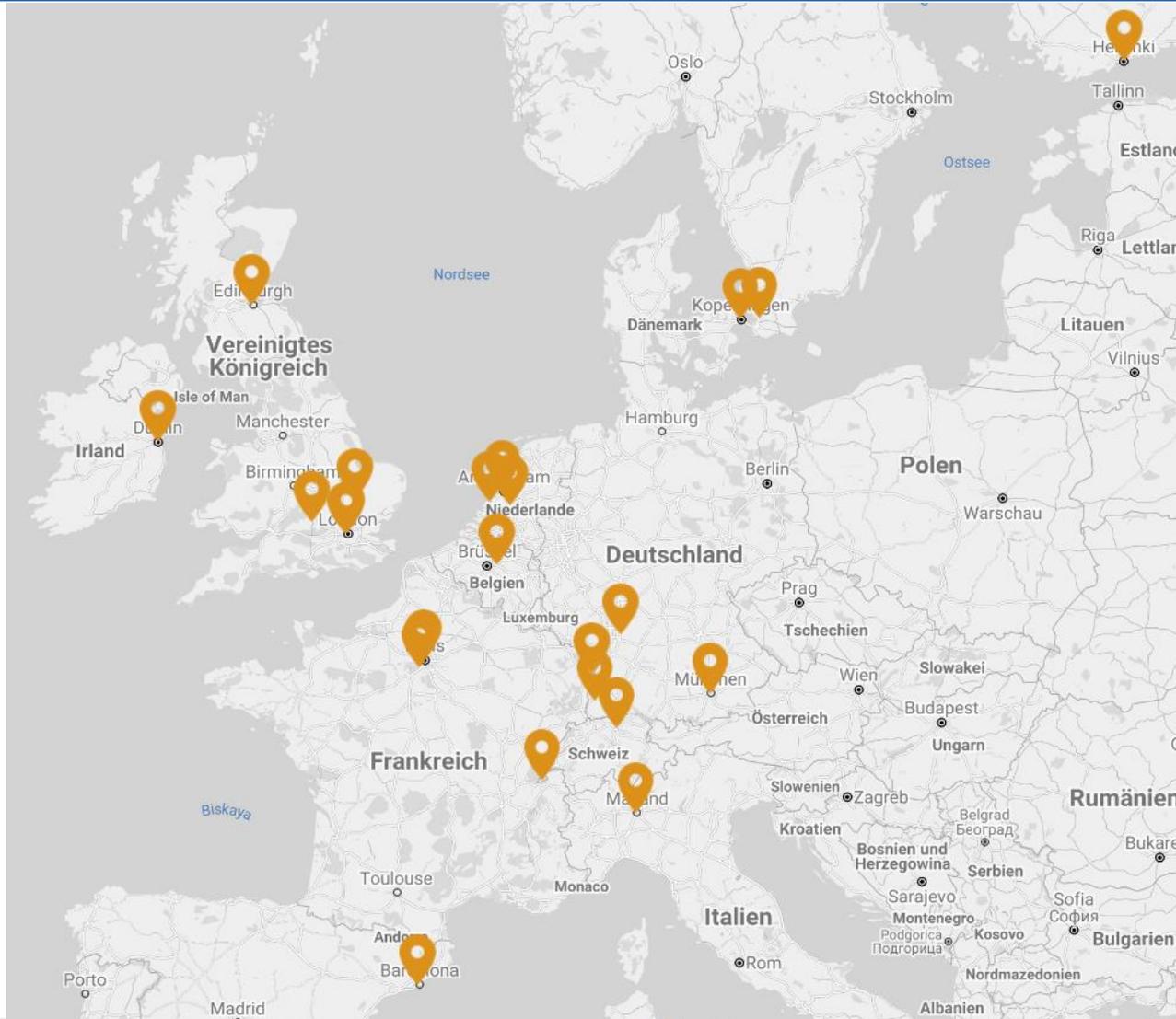
- Three of the five founding members, i.e., Malaysia, Singapore and the Philippines, were former Anglophone colonies, Thailand was never colonized, and Indonesia was a Dutch colony.
- The early post-independence language policies favoured a local national language, i.e., Malay (in Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia), Tagalog (in the Philippines), Thai (in Thailand) but Singapore made English the most important official language; Malay, Tamil and Mandarin were “Mother Tongues”.
- Others chose the national language, but struggle about the status and use of English, especially in education.

Language policy and planning in HEIs



- The status of English has to be addressed in language policies to ensure the balance of languages *vis-à-vis* English in its diverse societal functions
 - May be practical in Singapore, Malaysia, Brunei and the Philippines
 - A major change in the former Indochina/CLMV countries
 - An economic policy discourse which usually neglects the rights of all other languages in a national habitat
 - A multilingual environment

II. The view from Europe and LERU



Recent relevant publications



- Hettiger, Andreas. 2018. *Sprachenpolitik an deutschen Hochschulen. Grundlagen und Perspektiven.* Hohengehren: Schneider Verlag.
- Hochschulrektorenkonferenz (HRK). 2019. *Institutionelle Sprachenpolitik an Hochschulen – Fortschritte und Herausforderungen.* Berlin: HRK.
https://www.hrk.de/fileadmin/redaktion/hrk/Sprachenpolitik_Publikation_Web.pdf
- Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen. 2017. *Nederlands en/of Engels? Taalkeuze met beleid in het Nederlands hoger onderwijs.* Amsterdam: KNAW.
https://www.knaw.nl/en/news/publications/nederlands-en-of-engels/@_@download/pdf_file/20170711-verkenning-Taalbeleid-Nederlands-en-of-Engels-web.pdf

- Gregersen, Frans et al 2018. *More parallel, please!: Best practice of parallel language use at Nordic universities: 11 recommendations*. Copenhagen: Nordic Council of Ministers. <https://doi.org/10.6027/TN2018-523>.
- Henriksen, Birgit, Anne Holmen and Joyce Kling. 2019. *English medium instruction in multilingual and multicultural universities: academics' voices from the Northern European context*. Oxon/New York: Routledge.

Helpful guidelines



- CercleS. 2013a. *Focus group on language policy: Guidelines for defining a language policy for institutions in higher education.* <http://www.aks-sprachen.de/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Guidelines-for-a-Language-Policy-Model-CercleS.pdf>
- CercleS. 2013b. *Position statement on language policy in higher education in Europe.* https://www.ecml.at/Portals/1/CercleS%20Language%20Policy%20Position%20Statement%20revised%20Nov%202011_2011_11_04final.pdf?ver=2012-02-08-161928-943
- Lauridsen, Karen M. (CEL-ELC Working Group). 2013. *Higher education language policy.* European Language Council. http://www.celelc.org/activities/Working_groups/Concluded-Working-Groups/Resources_Working_Groups/HE_Language_Policy_-_Final_2013_w_summary.pdf

Three major goals of language policies at European HEIs



- Supporting proficiency in (academic) English
- Encouraging foreign language learning
- Strengthening the (professional) use of regional languages



Bernd Kortmann



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23 LERU members



- Ireland
 - Trinity College Dublin
- United Kingdom
 - Imperial College London
 - University College London
 - University of Cambridge
 - University of Edinburgh
 - University of Oxford
- Belgium
 - KU Leuven
- Netherlands
 - University of Amsterdam
 - Universiteit Leiden
 - Utrecht University
- Germany
 - University of Freiburg
 - Universität Heidelberg
 - Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München
- Switzerland
 - Université de Genève
 - University of Zurich
- Denmark
 - University of Copenhagen
- Sweden
 - Lund University
- Finland
 - University of Helsinki
- France
 - Sorbonne University
 - Université Paris-Saclay
 - University of Strasbourg
- Italy
 - University of Milan
- Spain
 - Universitat de Barcelona

Major aims of this LERU paper (2019)



- stock-taking & evaluation of
 - (i) the status of ILPs among LERU members
 - (ii) specific objectives of the individual ILPs
 - (iii) their target audiences
 - (iv) best practices

Structure of the paper



1. LERU Language Policies in their National Contexts
2. LERU Questionnaire Report
3. Recommendations for Institutional Language Policies

Official language policies of LERU universities



Official language policy

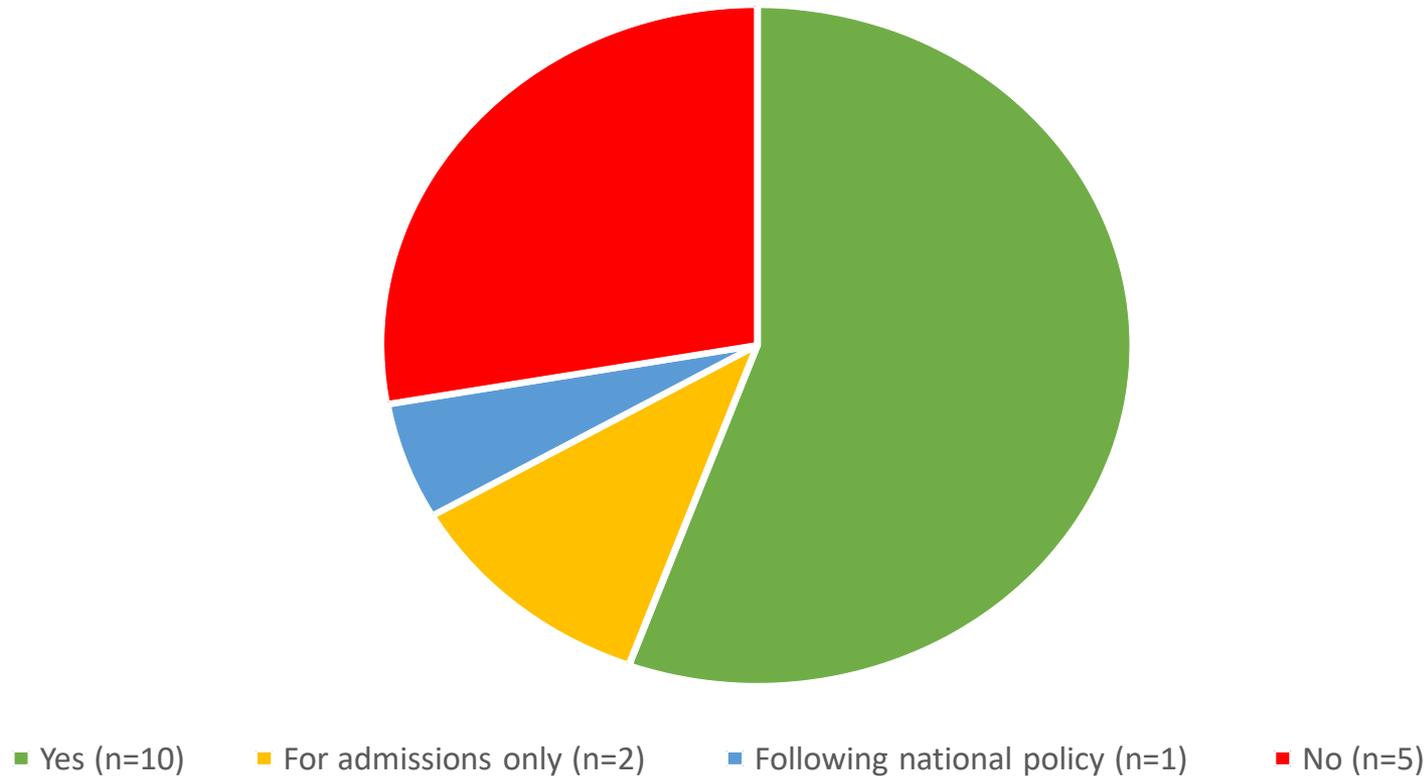


Figure 1: LERU universities with/without official language policies

Evaluation of existing LERU language policies



- 13 LERU members have some kind of official ILP, **10 of these a fully-fledged one**
- all in line with overall trends at European universities (e.g. with a pioneering university like Pompeu Fabra U, Barcelona)
- also in line with the national context and/or regional language politics (e.g. Finland, Sweden, Spain, France)
- nothing radically new

LERU language policies in their national contexts



- ILPs at HEIs typically part & parcel of internationalization strategies: international marketing, competition for the “brightest minds”, being prepared for the increasingly multicultural classroom
- Who tends to have ILPs?
 - HEIs located at national borders
 - HEIs in states with 2+ national languages (e.g. Sweden, Finland, Switzerland)
 - HEIs in states with strong regional minority languages and cultures (e.g. Ireland, Spain)



University of Barcelona

<http://www.ub.edu/web/ub/en/sites/lengues/presentacio/index.html>

Trinity College Dublin

<https://www.tcd.ie/about/policies/assets/pdf/tcd-irish-language-policy.pdf>

University of Geneva

http://www.unige.ch/rectorat/static/politique_langues.pdf



- overall: very advanced, in some respects pioneering, in the European context: pro ILPs; emphasizing **the need for a continued role of the relevant national languages in academia**; propagating **parallel language use**
- Sweden: Swedish Language Act stipulates that **Swedish must be used in the public sector** -> puts limits to English as parallel language to Swedish
- Finland: U Helsinki the only officially bilingual university of Finland; support services for teaching and publishing **in both national languages**

Official language policies of LERU universities



University of Copenhagen

The University of Copenhagen's language policy is stated in the University's strategic plan STRATEGY 2016.

<https://www.e-pages.dk/ku/623/>

Lund University

<http://www.staff.lu.se/sites/staff.lu.se/files/lund-university-language-policy.pdf>

University of Helsinki

<https://helda.helsinki.fi/handle/10138/160446?locale-attribute=en>



- overall: strong presence of English in degree programmes (EMI): about 25% of all Bachelor & 50+% of all Master programmes
- recent policy initiatives of Dutch government:
 - (i) restrict teaching in English at Dutch universities to where there is **a clear added value** for the respective study programmes & where quality of English guaranteed, and
 - (ii) there must be **a sufficient amount of Dutch language programmes** on offer

University of Amsterdam

<https://www.uva.nl/binaries/content/assets/uva/en/education/20190508-uva-taalbeleid-sc-eng.pdf>

Leiden University

<https://www.organisatiegids.universiteitleiden.nl/en/regulations/general/language-of-instruction>

-> express wish to preserve the national language as a research language (alongside English)

Utrecht University

https://www.dub.uu.nl/sites/default/files/attachments/93/16-115_university_language_policy_uu.pdf

- Over the past 4-5 years: growing awareness for use / necessity of ILPs
- HRK Survey 2017: about 25% of 139 HEIs had sth. like an official ILP (among them only one large comprehensive university, and many LP measures only applying to selected domains)
- 85% of HEIs lacking an ILP signal interest in developing such policies
- key concerns: role of E vs. G (also in administration), role of other languages, multilingualism
- none of the German LERU members has an ILP

Recommendations for institutional language policies: central elements



- overall aims of the university (e.g. implementation of bi-/multilingualism, parallel language use)
- sensitivity to the relevant national context and regional/governmental politics
- two very good models for ILPs: **U Helsinki, Lund U**;
BUT notice: for both universities no evaluations yet on the success of the language policy implementation

IMPORTANT lesson learnt:



- not just (individual or institutional) language experts should drive the institution-internal discourse on formulating and implementing an ILP

(e.g. not just language teachers or linguists; language centres, linguistics or language departments)

III. Take-home messages: SE Asia



- at the very beginning of the ILP process (at best)
- in balancing English and national language(s), it is important to acknowledge the differences concerning the national and societal functions of English among the ASEAN countries

Take-home messages: Europe / EU



- ... far more advanced in the ILP process, BUT
- strong differences between countries/larger regions:
 - advanced: e.g. Scandinavia, NL, B, Catalunya
 - at the very beginning of the ILP process: e.g. Germany
- **HOWEVER:** even in advanced ILP countries / regions, we see the need for ILPs to include policies securing or strengthening the position of the national language(s)

Role of the national language(s)



... especially vis-à-vis English -- examples:

- in the teaching of degree programmes, especially at undergraduate level
- securing the minimal level of academic writing (academic German/Dutch/Danish/etc.)
- in outreach to the public (science communication)
- basic communicative competence for international students, doctoral & postdoctoral researchers
- communicative competence for international staff / faculty (and their partners / families)

Prediction for Europe / EU & role of linguists



- Soon an institutional language policy will no longer be nice to have, but better to have.

Advice for us in the profession:

- Linguistics associations like the DGfS and, above all, their members (together with other language experts) should play a role in this process on a national scale and, especially, in their individual HEIs.
- BUT caution: in our HEIs, we **need to team up** across disciplines and status groups, and should by no means be the sole drivers of the ILP process.