Globalization and its Impact on Higher Education: The Case of Colleges of Technology in Oman

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Abstract
The main aim of this paper is to explore the impact of globalization processes on higher education institutions, with a particular focus on Colleges of Technology (CsoT) in Oman. To achieve this aim, this paper first defines and illustrates the concept of globalization and then draws upon the World Systems Theory and Dependency Theory to contextualize Oman in terms of its global position. Through the lens of these theories, the paper explores the consequences of implementing English as a medium of instruction (EMI) policy at CsoT. The findings reveal that English language is still considered a foreign language, yet EMI is implemented at higher education. Moreover, despite the challenges faced by students, some exhibited a positive attitude towards the implementation of the EMI policy. For instance, many students perceived learning and using English as a means of endowing them with high international status, referencing its utility in relation to global communication, development, and employment. Such an impact is arguably linked to semi-colonialization. A link is then made to the concept of memorization, which is historically associated with the Islamic culture of Oman. The paper explains how the memorization strategy could be misunderstood. The paper contends that memorization is the first step in learning and understanding, not a substitute. A link is also made to the EMI policy, in which the low levels of achievement among students at these colleges have driven them to memorize and does not reflect a lack of critical thinking skills.

Keywords: Colonialization, dependency theory, English as a medium of instruction, globalization, memorization, periphery, world-systems theory, Omani colleges of technology

Introduction

The aim of this paper is to shed light on how globalization processes have impacted higher education institutions in Oman, particularly through the use of English as the medium of instruction (EMI) and the concept of memorization. It also presents and explores several examples from Colleges of Technology (CsoT), local higher education institutions, through the lens of World Systems Theory (WST), Dependency Theory (DT), and the processes of globalization.

Colleges of Technology were seven branches in Oman, but the Royal Decree No. 76/2020 calls for establishing the University of Technology and Applied Sciences. The seven colleges of technology and the colleges of applied sciences have been merged under the purview of this university. However, this paper explores CsoT; henceforth this will be used throughout this paper. CsoT provide programs in engineering, IT, pharmacy, and business. All these programs are taught in English language. Students are taught by lecturers from various nationalities, such as British, American, Indians, Syrians, Sudanese, and Filipinos.

This paper will first define the concept of globalization and provide insight into its role in shaping higher education. WST and the notion of dependency will then be expounded upon to illustrate their linkages to education in Oman within a global educational system. The concluding section will then recap the main points.

Literature Review
Globalization

Globalization is a complex concept that has been defined in various ways according to the field, context, and perspectives of different researchers and stakeholders. For instance, Held, McGrew, Goldblatt, and Perraton (1999) defined globalization as:

> A process (or set of processes) which embodies a transformation in the spatial organization of social relations and transactions—assessed in terms of their extensity, intensity, velocity, and impact—generating transcontinental or interregional flows and networks of activity, interaction, and the exercise of power (p.16).

Alternatively, Roland Robertson defined globalization as "a concept [that] refers both to the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole" (Steger, 2017, p.15), which refers to the world becoming smaller as a result of globalization.

These definitions firstly show that globalization is a set of processes, such as the hegemonic bloc installed by the US and the "movement of physical artefacts, people, symbols, tokens, and information across space and time" (Held et al., 1999, p.16). These processes have created and are still creating networks (e.g., social networks) through which traditional political, economic, cultural, and geographical boundaries are being erased. Secondly, they show how globalization is expanding and extending social relations, activities, and connections around the globe. Thirdly, these definitions depict the intensification and hastening of social exchanges and activities connected to globalization, which facilitate increased communication. An example of social networking is the use of applications such as Facebook. These social media applications enhance

communication and have not only become a platform for education, but they also constitute everyday routine activities.

To understand the impact of the processes of globalization on education, a number of researchers, including Portnoi (2016) and Harber and Davies (2005), have drawn on the notion of dependency within the WST, which will be discussed and explored in the following sections.

Theoretical framework

This section focuses on the notion of dependency within the WST, that is developed by Wallerstein (1984). It will elucidate the position and situation of the higher education system in Oman within the wider global education system.

World Systems Theory and Dependency Theory:

Portnoi (2016) explained that WST "expands and builds upon dependency theory" (p. 65) and thus they share common themes, although the latter differs from the former in its focus on 'exploitation'. He claimed that WST and DT are used interchangeably, although other scholars have challenged this view as can be seen in the following quote:

> …unlike dependency theory, world-system theory portrays international power relations as constantly changing. For instance,… the United States, currently a dominant core nation, has already entered a period of decline such as that experienced by previous core powers. As a result, world-system theorists do not assume, as do dependency theorists, that contemporary periphery nations are permanently locked in dependency relationships with a contemporary core. (Clayton, 1998, p.480)

WST and DT both divide the world into core (e.g., the USA) and peripheral states (e.g., Nigeria and Pakistan) in which the latter are less developed, often as a result of colonialism, a point that will be elaborated upon later. When DT was expanded upon by WST, a semi-peripheral zone was added (Portnoi, 2016). This houses nations and regions that do not necessarily fit into the more concrete descriptions of developed and least developed nations. According to Skocpol (1977), "semiperipheral states act as buffer zones between the core and periphery and have a mix of the kinds of activities and institutions that exist on them" (as cited in Lozny, 2011, p. 35). This division will help us understand where Oman fits within the overall global framework.

WST suggests that certain regions of the world, particularly the United States, Western Europe, and even current day China, are the primary drivers of global society in terms of economics, politics, and cultural influence. To attain higher levels of development, other regions of the world are compelled to be financially and politically dependent upon these nations, which can result in their exploitation (Portnoi, 2016). Global organizations such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the World Health Organisation, and the United Nations play a highly influential role in determining the progress and stability of the least developed nations. However, these international organizations are largely financed and managed by a small circle of economic and politically powerful nations; hence researchers have incorporated the full extent of this relationship into DT (Portnoi, 2016). It is worth noting here that the notion of dependency within WST continues to be relevant to this era and, furthermore, "the world-system theory is still

relevant as long as unequal relations between parts of the world persist" (Van Hamme & Pion, 2012, p. 68).

According to Hoogvelt (1997), Olatunji (2018), and Ghosh (2019), dependency represents an unequal or 'asymmetric' relationship between two sets of countries: the core of developed capitalism (The Global North) versus the periphery or underdeveloped countries, the latter of which are "mainly those in the postcolonial Global South" (Portnoi, 2016, p.65). Dependency is also considered a mechanism by which the causes of development and underdevelopment can be understood. Underdevelopment is due to 'apoplexy' in the core countries and 'anemia' in those that are less developed (Ghosh, 2019). Some researchers argue that development and underdevelopment are two sides of the same coin (Friedmann & Wayne, 1977; Olatunji, 2018), constituting phenomena "which could be explained through material history of the two kinds of the societies – the colonialists and the colonized" (Olatunji, 2018, p.143). Jreisat (1997) mentioned that "for the dependency paradigm, domination [or dependency] is rooted in the structure of the world economy" (p. 9).

DT explains the power of central capitalism in controlling, dominating, and shaping the society and economy of periphery countries. Scholars of DT asserted that its primary concern is with the impact of imperialism and neo-colonialism on the economy, society, and educational practices and systems of underdeveloped countries. They also contended that DT is able to explain the worldwide control of the capitalist system throughout the neo-colonial age by referring to underdeveloped countries (Ghosh, 2019; Olatunji, 2018).

Some researchers elaborated further on the relationship between the core countries and the periphery. This relationship indicates that powerful countries drain physical and human resources away from countries in the periphery and semi-periphery, while in return, these countries receive what is called a 'backwash' (Ghosh, 2019; Portnoi, 2016). These effects should be favorable and should stimulate new growth with respect to technology, market, demand, and so on. However, as a result of domination, exploitation, unequal exchange, and serving the interests of the Global North, they become poor and underdeveloped (Harber & Davies, 2005). This is because peripheral countries depend on the core countries for technology, economic and financial aid, and export markets of goods and raw materials (Ghosh, 2019; Portnoi, 2016). This dependence has created a widening inequality between the core and periphery countries. The power core countries exercise enables them to control the terms of trade in goods and services (Harber, 2014; Tikly, 2004). For instance, they buy raw materials below the market value and draw a surplus from peripheral countries (Ghosh, 2019; Clayton, 1998); their exploitation and domination of which can be seen in providing them with lower value goods. Portnoi (2016) also contended that "global governance organizations are part of the process of prescribing a hegemonic set of values for the rest of the world" (p. 66). The actors that constitute global governance organizations are International Organizations (IOs) such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. These serve to prescribe education policies that diffuse a global culture of schooling. In terms of a link to dependency on education, Harber and Davies (2005) explained that:

> because of the power of world languages such as English, developed countries' publishers are able to sell textbooks and educational resources at competitive rates… The textbooks

and the Northern examining boards drive the curriculum and local assessment, and schools become more locked in a cycle of neo-colonial education which may not fit the cultures or needs of their people. (p. 86)

Although some have criticized DT and WST "for their emphasis on the material and economic dimensions of their explanatory model, as well as for the seemingly deterministic nature of the explanations of development processes" (Hout, 2016, p.30), Ghosh (2019) summarized the following ways in which underdeveloped countries depend on powerful countries: policy dependency, financial dependency, market dependency, human resources dependency, consumer dependency, bio-dependency, environmental dependency, military dependency, academic dependency, and cultural dependency. The final two are now elaborated on further as they relate directly to the scope of this paper.

Academic Dependency

In peripheral countries, the education system, comprising the curricula, knowledge, thinking processes, evaluation processes, and problems and suggested solutions, are all dependent on the Western educational system. Mechanisms identified by Dale (1999) such as harmonization, dissemination, standardization, and imposition function as external globalization processes that affect education in peripheral countries. These mechanisms can be linked to the shaping of educational policies in Oman through the notions of academic imperialism and dependency.

To elaborate on these mechanisms, 'harmonization' occurs when regional organizations initiate a regional level policy. 'Dissemination' takes place when policy agendas, indicators, and targets are set and diffused through publications, guidelines, and conferences, or through agencies such as the World Bank. 'Standardization' refers to Western educational norms and standards that are disseminated throughout the globe, demonstrated, for instance, in the concept of 'a universal curriculum'. Finally, 'imposition' refers to the process by which donor agencies such as the World Bank force 'recipient countries' into adopting a specific policy (Le Mat, Altinyelken, Bos, and Volman, 2019; Tikly, 2001). The educational systems in several countries, Oman included, continue to largely follow the structure of the British colonial era (Troudi & Jendli, 2011). These educational systems are maintained because their citizens aspire to live in Europe, or they wish to establish Western quality in their own academic institutions. The cultural norms of more dominant societies also play a role in developing the educational infrastructure that is dominant across the world.

These mechanisms shed light on how the education system in Oman relies on the Western education system to standardize it by transferring, imposing, and/or adopting policies and practices. An analysis of existing literature on Colleges of Technology (CsoT), that will highlight the implications of such mechanisms within notions of imperialism and dependency, will be based on Carnoy's (1999) analysis and framework.

Carnoy (1999) presented five terms in which to analyze the impact of globalization on education: 1) financial terms, 2) labor market terms, 3) educational terms, 4) information technology, and 5) globalized information networks. Educational terms center around the argument that the quality of education is globally paralleled or standardized across the world

(Carnoy, 1999). This results in an increasing focus on the math and science curriculum, and English language as a foreign language (EFL). There is also a primary concern with standards and testing. This paper will focus on the use of EFL and link it to the EMI policy. This will be followed by a discussion of cultural identity with specific reference to the memorization concept, in which Troudi's (2009) analysis will be followed. The following will discuss cultural dependency.

Cultural Dependency

Cultural dependency, which can be linked to academic dependency, explains the cultural dualism and identity crises that arise in peripheral countries as they depend on powerful Western countries for guidance in socio-cultural ways of life and values. Tikly (2001) highlighted "the importance of education in spreading Western cultural forms during the colonial era… [with which it] provided an important mechanism for the consolidation of Western hegemony during the period of contemporary globalization" (p. 167). With reference to Golding (1977), Al-Garni (2000) stated in his study of the Saudi context (another Gulf country) that "cultural dependency and imperialism analysis is predicated on the interrelatedness of economic (including technological) structural relations, and ideological-cultural relations, between advanced capitalist or industrial societies and those of most of Africa, Asia and Latin America" (p. 40).

In support of Al-Garni's (2000) argument, Tikly (2001) stated that cultural identities are reshaped through "processes of migration, diaspora formation and cultural hybridization [which] have transformed individual and group identities and created 'new ethnicities' based on fluid rather than fixed identities" (p. 167). The creation of these "new ethnicities", which are less stable, has made such countries more vulnerable to the influence of Western cultural identities. In which case, its significance lies in the fact that it increases dependency. Moreover, according to Reeves (1993) and Al-Garni (2000), neo-colonial or neo-imperialism denotes the phase when ideological-cultural impacts are extended across indigenous classes through the transnational corporations of powerful core counties. A key assumption of the imperialism/dependency model is that indigenous cultural identity is overthrown and demoralized, leading to adoption and imposition of the values and cultures of powerful Western countries (Al-Garni, 2000; Reeves, 1993). This seems to have been the case in Oman. The following sections will show how Oman fits into this theoretical framework.

The Case of Oman

According to Ferrante-Wallace (2008), Oman is situated in the semi-periphery economic zone. However, the author would place Oman within the periphery zone (Piana, 2006). To make it more straightforward, Ferrante-Wallace's (2008) allocation was based on his definition of semi-periphery economies and referred to the economic situation in Oman in 2008. He argued that semi-periphery economies are "moderately wealthy and diversified but have extreme inequality. They exploit peripheral economies and are in turn exploited by core economies" (p. 215). Ferrante-Wallace defined all Gulf countries (e.g., Qatar, the UAE, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Oman) as semi-periphery as their core economy relies on oil and they depend or rely on the labor of the periphery. Indeed, the economy in Oman was strong in 2008.

However, Ferrante-Wallace's allocation might no longer be accurate. For instance, Oman is highly dependent on oil and gas revenues, the price of which in 2020 was 31.38 USD compared to 101.1 USD in 2008 (Ministry of National Economy, 2010; Oman News Agency, 2020). Second,

Ferrante-Wallace (2008) indicated that within a semi-periphery, there is extreme inequality, which is not fully accurate in Oman. Arguably, there are inequalities within the country, but not extreme (Feighery, 2012; Brandenburg, 2013). Hence, both factors (i.e., economy and extreme inequality) suggest that Oman is not one of the semi-periphery countries.

Placing Oman within the periphery zone might, however, link it to a 'colonialist' history, although Oman was never colonized. This might be termed 'semi-colonialization' because although the military and administrative role of traditional colonialism is lacking, there has been a strong influence of British culture, understanding, and institutional practices. Nevertheless, the UK has been involved in several aspects of Oman's history, including its education system (Al-Busaidi, 1995). In fact, core countries, mainly the UK and the US, have also controlled, shaped, and affected the economy, politics, education, and culture of Oman through the processes of globalization.

Within the scope of this paper, the author will elaborate on some historical factors that caused English spreading in Oman. Prior to 1970, and even onwards, Oman depends on expatriates, mainly those whose Arabic is not their mother tongue. Those predominating labor force use English for communication; in fact, English was their official language (Abdel-Jawad & Abu Radwan, 2011). Migration is another factor in which "the return of Omanis to Oman from East Africa resulted in a major increase in the use of English in the labour market" (Al-Busaidi, 1995, p.95), who then became in leading positions in many sectors such as education and oil companies. Another factor is the entity of Indians in Oman, perhaps since the 16ᵗʰ century (Al-Busaidi, 1995). They roleplayed as local representatives between Europeans and the Arabs due to their technical and linguistic knowledge of English language, but more importantly their roles in education and other English media means (Albakri, 2017). A major factor that the UK plays part in is after 1963, when oil was discovered in Oman. Up to now, one of the major companies working in oil in Oman is British Petroleum, where British were dominantly working there, and those who speak fluent English (mainly Omanis who came from East Africa). This is part of the business relationships that Oman has been developing, in which English was the language used in communication.

The other goals within the philosophy of teaching English language in Oman are: globalization and Omanisation. Globalization as "Oman was facing the challenge of preparing its nation for life and to enter a global workforce created by the modern global economy; therefore, it was important to provide them with the relevant skills and languages" (Al Abrawi, 2018, p.7). Omanisation as Oman's goal is to educate its nationals for aiming to decrease dependency on expatriate workforce (Al Abrawi, 2018). Overall, English language is seen as a crucial source for the country's development and thus received a great attention in the Omani context, and education notably.

Discussion
Globalization's Impact on Higher Education in Oman
In this section, the impact on CsoT, along with the processes of globalization, will be examined based on Carnoy's (1999) analysis and framework and Troudi's (2009) analysis.

EFL and EMI

As a consequence of globalization processes, English has become the dominant language across the world (Pennycook, 1998; Harber, 2014). This has led to an international transformation of policies in which English has been used as a lingua franca or as an official language, as is the case in India (Trudgill & Hannah, 2008). In Oman, English language is still considered a foreign language (Al-Jadidi, 2009). In its public schools, English language is taught as a subject for approximately 35 minutes a day and is rarely practiced or used outside the classroom (Al-Jardani, 2012). Conversely, in its private and bilingual schools, most of the subjects are taught in English. The author, therefore, argues that globalization processes have made it easy for those who are wealthy and live near private and bilingual schools to access the opportunity to undertake higher education. The motivating factor in this respect is that students at these schools will gain access to global networks and will have better opportunities in higher education: for instance, the government will offer them scholarships abroad. Thus, globalization has arguably created a level of inequality in which poor people and those who live in rural areas are not afforded the opportunity to learn and use the English language.

All graduates of Omani public, private, and bilingual schools are required to learn their subjects in the English language when they join higher education institutions in Oman, except for a small number of specializations that are taught in Arabic. In CsoT (the focus in this paper), EMI is implemented in all subjects (Albakri, 2013). The EMI policy thus refers to the policy of implementing and using the English language when teaching and testing subjects at higher education institutions (Albakri, 2013). The author also argues that because the intakes of these CsoT primarily come from public schools, the implementation of this policy presents a challenge for these students.

Albakri (2013) investigated the perspectives and experiences of Omani students at CsoT in relation to EMI. She achieved this through 10 semi-structured interviews and 5 classroom observations. She found that students prefer to study in English rather than in Arabic as this, for instance, will enable them to pursue careers in global companies whose principal language of communication is English. Despite the challenges faced by students, the attitude of some of the students towards EMI was not ultimately negative. Many students perceived learning and using English as a way of endowing them with high international status, referencing its "role in global communication, development and employment" (Albakri, 2013, p.61). Some students also viewed speaking fluent English as a sign of being well-educated and an indicator of prestige and a superior social status. Arguably, such an impact could be linked to the role of the Omani government in politically, economically, socially, and legislatively supporting the English language as a "resource for national development and as a means for wider communication within the international community" (Ministry of Education, 1987, p.2).

However, the author would argue that this creates tensions between the status of the Arabic language serving local needs, which is potentially marginalized or considered 'educationally marginalized' (Troudi, 2009), and the English language serving global needs. Several researchers have reported this perceived threat to the Arabic language (e.g., Troudi, 2009; Albakri, 2013). For instance, Albakri (2013) mentioned that "if the national language such as Arabic is not seen as adequate for higher education, then, inevitably this renders Arabic to a lower status than English"

(p. 58). In Oman, the threat to the Arabic language can be seen in CsoT as Arabic has been increasingly replaced by the English language in the teaching of subjects. Globalization processes have, by contrast, made English the language of modernity, higher education, science, technology, and power, as has been noted by numerous researchers (e.g., Troudi, 2009; Troudi & Jendli, 2011).

It could be claimed that the thinking of policymakers in Oman may have been influenced or inspired by Western intellectual traditions such as Marxism or Modernisation (see Tikly, 2001). However, a large body of literature believes that such a situation mirrors colonialism (Troudi, 2009; Findlow, 2006) or, as previously noted in relation to Oman, 'semi-colonialism'. The use of the English language in Oman and the nature of the British identity could be linked to what Pennycook (1998) refers to as the neo-colonial mode, which is "the continuing relationship between English and the discourses of colonialism" (p.19). Nonetheless, Oman was not colonized by Britain, but it has had a strong relationship with and involvement in Oman since 1800 (Al-Busaidi, 1995). As stated previously, Oman's philosophy of teaching English language can be seen in the current discourses and policies, such as the one relating to EMI (Albakri, 2017). Shahjahan (2016) shows that it could also be linked to the influence of international organizations such as the World Bank. Alabri (2011) contended that the World Bank has influenced higher education policies, underlining how key elements of economic globalization have affected Oman. This could be a result of the country's autonomy and the limited and weak power of its government.

The colonial legacies illuminate the superior status of the English language over Arabic in the higher education context in Oman. Such legacies mean that, at a local level, policymakers in Oman copy and impose policies onto the Omani education system, as it seems they have done in CsoT, so that they can develop to a Western standard. Nevertheless, the author acknowledges that learning English increases the ability to access global networks (Tikly, 2001). This leads on to the following section, which explains how culture is impacted by the processes of globalization.

Cultural Issues and the Use of Memorization

Based on an understanding of colonialism (academic and cultural imperialism), and in line with the EMI policy of using EFL in Oman, the author argues in this section that the power of the West, exerted through political, economic, and epistemic tools as well as through globalization processes, has impacted on cultural aspects around the globe (Shahjahan, 2016). This impact can also be linked to the notion of "approved cultural norms", inherently Western, that are evident in the educational context (Findlow, 2006, p.22). With respect to the Omani educational context, particularly CsoT, the following section will focus specifically on the memorization aspect.

Brummer (2013) conducted her Ph.D. in one of the CsoT in Oman. She investigated how these CsoT prepare students for the transition from school to work with reference to globalization. As part of her research, she interviewed students, staff, and people from across the community. Students and staff also completed a questionnaire survey. The influence of approved cultural norms and the perceived legitimacy of the Western epistemology is evident in Brummer's claim that "adult Omanis were not exposed to learning culture as the West knows it" (p. 62). She explained that "Chinese traditionally believe an educated, civilized person can memorize the classics word for word as a way of showing respect (Chan 1999), and comparably, Muslims are expected to memorize Islamic religious scriptures at school" (Brummer, 2013, p. 23).

Although the author agrees with Brummer's (2013) claim to some extent, it seems she did not elaborate on and discuss it in terms of the history of Oman and past cultural influences on learning among Omani Muslims. Muslims generally memorize Islamic religious scripts (the Holy Quran) word for word as requested by the Prophet, as it was revealed to him by Allah [the God] to memorize in this manner (Boyle, 2006). They believe that "the Quran as the father of the other sciences, the element that could develop… [their] kids mentally physically, spiritually and intellectually" (Boyle, 2006, pp.487-488). Memorization has long been seen as a habit or a common effective strategy. However, "in Islamic education, memorization of the Quran is generally considered the first step in understanding (not a substitute for it)" (Boyle, 2006, p.488). In other words, memorization has thus been perceived as an effective and habitual means of learning within the Islamic culture. It is therefore unsurprising that this has been transferred to the context of education and the learning of English as a second language, even though this may be at odds with learning strategies globally accepted as optimal. It could be argued that memorization has been redefined and misunderstood, which is due to the impact of globalization processes in increasing the hegemony of the Western culture. Boyle (2006) warned that "a key source of this mis-understanding concerns the role that memorization plays in relation to knowledge, learning, understanding, and reasoning, all of which have nuances in Islamic education that do not inhere in Western conceptions of these words" (p. 480).

Albakri (2013) found that, in CsoT, memorization was utilised due to a language barrier or difficulty with content, which indicates the "linguistic imperialism that perpetuates the hegemony of English" (p.55). She further added that "this shift to a different approach to education was found by some students as challenging" (Albakri, 2013, p.64). She perceived the shift from schools, where Arabic is the medium of instruction for all subjects, to higher education institutions as contributing to the problems associated with the EMI policy.

Albakri (2017) also carried out her EdD thesis in the CsoT. This time she only collected data on students' perspectives, analysing data from 328 questionnaires, 14 interviews, and 14 classroom observations. Regarding memorization, she noted in one of her observations that students seem to be taught the skills of paraphrasing and summarising. However, she found that students continue to depend on memorization due to the difficulties they have faced since EMI was first implemented in these CsoT. This relates to the language barrier or content difficulty described earlier. Through her dialogue with the students, she revealed that students face difficulties in understanding the content. Hence, they were forced to memorize it in order to pass their exams. In her questionnaire, Albakri (2017) found that 62.8% (n = 206) of the students use memorization as a strategy to pass quizzes and exams. Similarly, she observed that "more than half of the interview participants indicated that they have to memorize the content written in the handout. The need to memorize was related to the limited ability to express ideas in English, especially during exams" (p. 149).

This underlines the difficulties such as students were experiencing in using English in line, presumably, with the neo-colonialist requirements of education. Thus, they resort to a tried and tested strategy for success that does not facilitate the deeper understanding they would acquire when using their own language.

Nonetheless, the author argues that we should appreciate and understand the intention of memorization in such an educational context. It is simply the first step in learning, understanding, and reasoning and is "ultimately meant to lead the student to greater knowledge of the world" (Boyle, 2006, p.494). However, the power behind the processes of globalization, "whose epistemology forms the basis" (Shahjahan, 2016, p.13), has led to memorization becoming misunderstood or "confounded in the West" (Boyle, 2006, p.480). In this sense, it can be argued that failing to comprehensively define memorization and to acknowledge the level of English language and knowledge of the participants (i.e., students), who were mainly graduates of public schools and thus received a low level of English language input, may have led readers to misunderstand this cultural aspect (i.e., memorization). In an environment where EMI is implemented, the outcomes and achievements of these students should be lower than those of private and bilingual school graduates. Another point to note is that the epistemes of researchers in peripheral states in general, and the researchers and policymakers in CsoT in particular, may have been academically imperialized and controlled (see Shih, 2010): in the words of Alatas (2003), they seem to be under academic neo-colonialism.

Conclusion

The aim of this study was to shed light on how processes of globalization have affected higher education policy and practice in Oman. It highlighted the use of EFL and the implementation of the EMI policy and their effects on students' learning and experiences. One of the impacts is that students face challenges due to the EMI policy, yet their attitudes towards learning in English language were positive. Students at CsoT consider those who speak good English as well-educated and have high prestige and a superior social status. Moreover, studies found that students at CsoT consider learning in English is important for their future, as it would enhance their employment opportunities.

The discussion also explained how memorization, a strategy used by a large number of students in CsoT, is understood within the implementation of the EMI policy. Due to this policy, students had to memorize, as they face language barriers and challenges with the content. Memorization, however, was criticized as it is not a critical-thinking skill. Yet, some researchers emphasized that memorization is the first step of learning and understanding. The students at CsoT used memorization, but the context matters and makes a difference, as these students were graduates of public schools, and they rarely had a sufficient and effective input of English language during their years in schools. English subject was taught for 35 minutes a day, and all the other subjects were taught in Arabic. Thus, when these students joined CsoT, where all subjects are taught in English, they had to memorize to pass their exams. A further study is recommended to deeply investigate the perceptions of the policymakers, academic staff and students on this EMI policy, and memorization as a strategy, as it could contribute to recommending solutions to enhance the learning/teaching processes at CsoT.

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