

WORLD education NEWS & REVIEWS

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TRENDS

The Language Trap

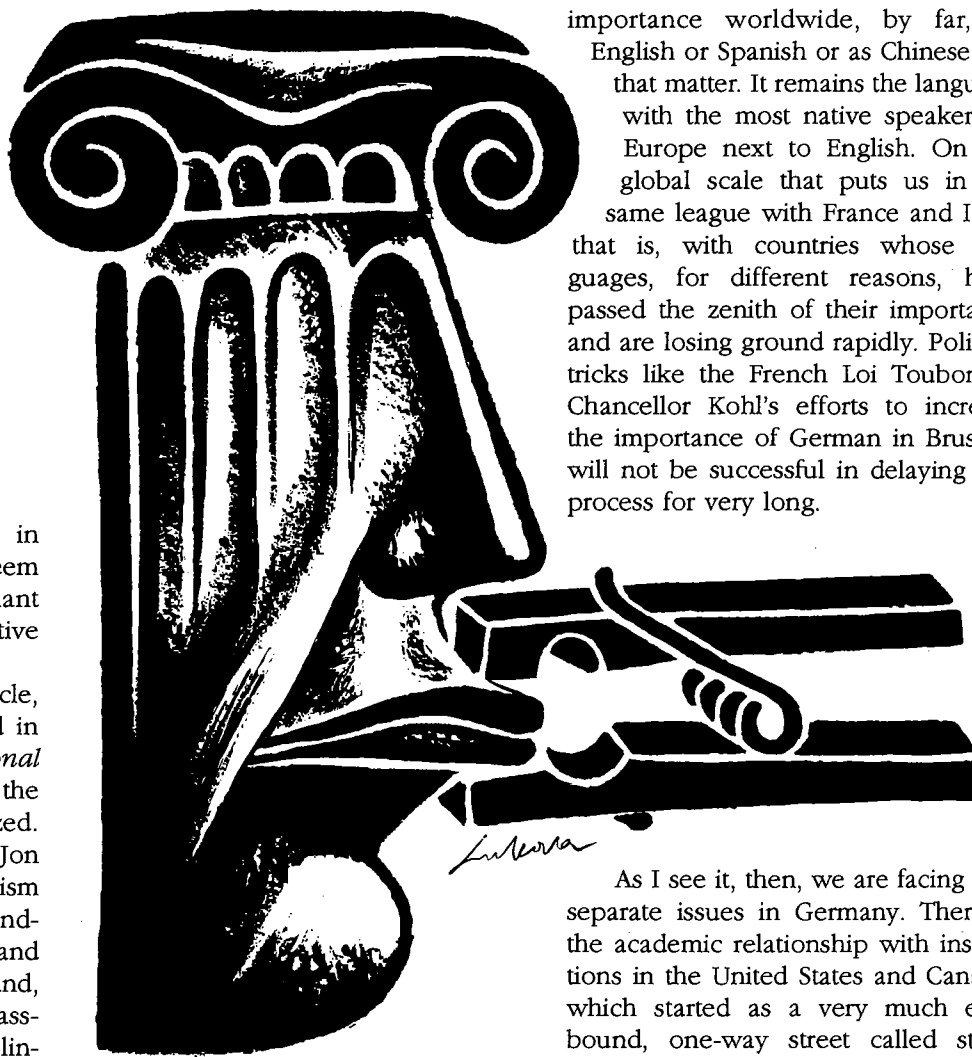
by Axel Markert

Should we all start teaching in English, we whose languages seem less important than the dominant idiom, or should we stick to our native languages, whatever the cost?

In Jon Heise's thoughtful article, *Nur auf Englisch?*, which appeared in the Fall 1995 issue of *The International Educator*, the American side of the issue at hand is carefully scrutinized. There are two sides to this coin, Jon says: on the one hand, monolingualism is a "voluntary and unbecoming handicap to international cooperation and understanding." On the other hand, countries not using English in the classroom will become "increasingly linguistically isolated as the rest of the world continues to embrace English."

Let me try to throw light on this

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importance worldwide, by far, as English or Spanish or as Chinese, for that matter. It remains the language with the most native speakers in Europe next to English. On the global scale that puts us in the same league with France and Italy, that is, with countries whose languages, for different reasons, have passed the zenith of their importance and are losing ground rapidly. Political tricks like the French Loi Toubon or Chancellor Kohl's efforts to increase the importance of German in Brussels will not be successful in delaying this process for very long.

problem from a German vantage point. German is not (yet) one of the languages which the EU euphemistically calls "less-spoken," like Finnish or Greek. But it does not have the same

As I see it, then, we are facing two separate issues in Germany. There is the academic relationship with institutions in the United States and Canada, which started as a very much east-bound, one-way street called study abroad and has gradually become a reciprocal affair named student exchange with substantial numbers in both directions. After a post-reunification boom, the interest in the German language seems to have dwindled

Continued on page 17

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The Nasty Debate

This issue of WENR is special because it is about attracting more international students. We have recently heard nothing but a lot of anti-foreign and anti-immigrant sentiment from many politicians. The current debate about immigration, with its nasty undertone, is particularly disconcerting because it comes so quickly after the fall of the Berlin Wall, which stood for decades as a physical and mental prophylactic against any outside influence. The kind of immigration policy proposed by some politicians for the US draws on the same fears and is nothing short of absurd in a world made borderless by communication technology.

What is important now is for us to ensure that study in the United States remains attractive to foreign students. They could choose to go elsewhere. The danger in the current climate is not nearly as much from any legal measure that would come to pass as from small acts of nuisance—all perfectly legitimate—by bureaucrats in government and at academic institutions. That would surely make this country and our institutions inhospitable and unattractive. It is those attitudes that we must fight and defeat at every turn unless we want to see what we have worked to achieve in the past several decades become unraveled.

We are not alone in that fight. It was a pleasure and a great relief to see the business community force a retraction of some of the measures originally proposed in the Simpson immigration bill. It is comforting to know that there are greater powers at work in trying to keep this country open and engaged with the rest of the world.

Mariam Assefa

CHINA

New Vocational Education System Planned

The Ministry of Labor plans to set up a vocational education system to improve industrial workers' professional skills for the market economy.

The new system will not only train workers, but also ensure that wages will be directly related to both worker training and abilities.

The ministry also will set up a minimum wage for students who graduate from technical and vocational schools, and standardize the advancement system based on skill evaluation.

Professional skills education has faced some opposition. Some officials claim skills learning is a temporary activity that has little impact on worker ability. Workers also are reluctant to improve their skills since proof of their practical abilities has not been a factor in determining their wages and benefits to date. But the shortage of financial support for professionals skills education and out-of-date educational equipment and methods can seriously affect the development of human resources, said Wang Jing, vice-director of the Department of Developing Professional Skills.

China currently has 4,430 technical schools teaching various trades and enrolling nearly two million students. There are also 2,600 employment training centers which train three million workers each year.

During the Eighth Five-Year Plan (1991-1995), China established an organized system of professional skill development, including professional classification, professional skill training, appraisal and certification of training.

Now the government is considering new legislation which will consolidate and promote vocational education and training, guaranteeing funding by the State.

China Daily 1/23/96

CUBA

Rejoining the Fold

Education ministers of Spanish-speaking countries who met recently in Quito, Ecuador, have accepted a membership application from Cuba to join the Andres Bello Agreement.

The agreement, established 25 years ago, promotes the educational, scientific, technological and cultural integration of the member countries. Originally consisting of Bolivia,

Peru and Venezuela, it was later joined by Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, Spain and Panama.

Cuba's membership application is seen as an important step in Cuba's reintegration into the Latin American fold.

Although formal approval will only be given at the next meeting, scheduled for May 1997, Spanish education minister Jeronimo Saavedra revealed that the ministers had reached a "consensus" approving Cuba's eventual admission and had so notified the Cuban authorities.

Times Higher Education Supplement 12/29/95

INDIA

JEE Format Revised

The Joint Entrance Examination/JEE for admission to Indian Institutes of Technology/IITs, which will be held May 4 and 5, has been revised.

The entrance examination will consist of three papers in physics, chemistry, and mathematics counting for 100 points each instead of 60 points each.

All Indians and foreign nationals studying in the 10 plus 2 system in India will be admitted only through the JEE. However, foreign nationals studying abroad will be able to seek admission under Direct Admission to Foreign Nationals/DAFN. Indian nationals who have studied in 10 plus 2 or its equivalent abroad and have been abroad for at least five of the last seven years also may seek admission under Direct Admission of Students from Abroad/DASA.

University News 10/16/95

ISRAEL

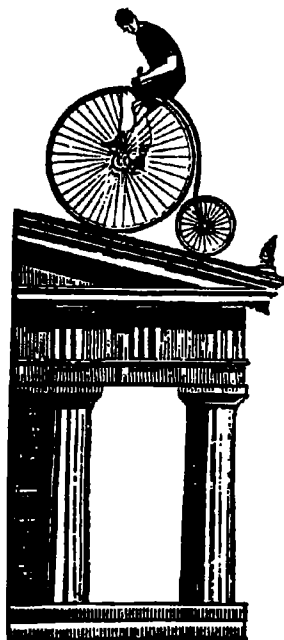
Establishment of Arab University Opposed

The number of Arab applicants to Israeli universities is expected to double over the next three to five years. Top education officials remain opposed to an Arab university and want to see those students absorbed by existing institutions.

The establishment of a college or university where Arabic, rather than Hebrew, would be the language of instruction, and where Arab students and faculty members would be in the majority, has long been advocated by the political and educational leadership of Arab citizens in Israel.

Their argument has been that Arab students and scholars are at a disadvantage at Israel's existing universities because, among other things, they must study and teach in a language that is not their own.

In a recent speech, Israel's Education Minister, Amnon



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Rubinstein, said he opposed the establishment of an Arab university, worrying that "The graduates of such a university would not receive equal treatment in the Israeli job market. We don't want to head toward segregation but toward cooperation, bringing people together, and fully equal rights."

According to Israel's Council of Higher Education, which distributes government funds to institutions, of the 29,495 applicants for undergraduate programs at the country's universities in academic 1992-93, 3,392 or 11.5 percent were not Jewish. Of the 84,990 students enrolled in Israel's universities last year, 4,500, or 5.3 percent, were not Jewish. Almost all of the non-Jews are Arabs, officials said.

Majid Al-Haj, the head of Haifa University's Center for Research and Development of Arab Education, and the highest-ranking Arab academic at an Israeli university, said that while the country's Arabs had made considerable gains in higher education in recent decades, they still face serious problems. He noted that only 21 percent of the country's Arab high school students pass their final diploma examinations, compared to 42 percent of Jewish students. He also noted that only about a third of Arabs who apply for university admission are accepted, while the rate among Jewish students is nearly twice as high.

Chronicle of Higher Education 1/12/96

JAMAICA CAST Renamed

The College of Arts, Science and Technology/CAST was renamed last year. The institution's new name is University of Technology, Jamaica. CAST has been authorized to award degrees since 1986. The institution can be reached by fax at 809 977-4388 or 809 927-1925.

Correspondence of 12/95 from UT, Jamaica.

JAPAN Truancy on the Rise

A truant student in Japan is a child who has stayed away from school for more than 30 days without either a physical or mental illness. Truancy used to be attributed to selfishness, lack of self-control and sociability. But that view began to change in 1991 when the number of truants topped 66,000. Since then, truancy figures have continued to increase and the Ministry of Education has been finding other causes.

In 1993, 14,769 school age children, or .17 percent of all

children of elementary school age, were truant. In Junior high school, the figures were 60,039, or 1.24 percent.

Because school education suppresses individuality, one Japanese psychiatrist familiar with truancy, Takashi Watanabe, has written a book *Futoko no Kokoro* (Mind of Truants) which says that children who have recognized their "self" often find it difficult to go to school.

Japanese schools prefer the "team player" to individualists. As the old Japanese proverb "a tall tree catches much wind" indicates, "groupism" prevails at school, in business, and everywhere in Japanese society.

The child who has accompanied his parents on an overseas work assignment and been educated abroad for any length of time may find it impossible to fit back into Japanese schools.

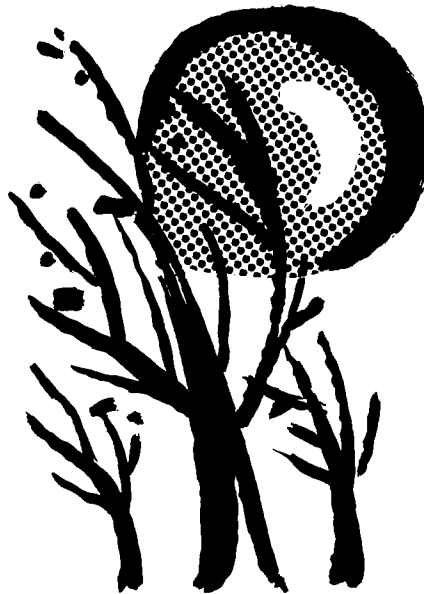
Bullying (*ijime*) by other students is another cause of truancy. Reported incidents of bullying rose 2.6 times in 1994, or more than 56,600 cases. Even this number of incidents is considered underreported. Several victims have committed suicide, resulting in the recent establishment by the Education Ministry of a special headquarters to deal with the problem. One counselor says that bullying occurs almost inevitably when children form a group, but says that today's bullying is different and not easily understood by parents. For some students, bullying is a way to relieve pent-up stress over the test-oriented system. Children nowadays also develop fewer social skills than children had in past decades because they have few opportunities to play.

Yet another cause of truancy is the threat of corporal punishment from teachers. In 1994, 386 public school teachers were reprimanded because they resorted to corporal punishment. One incident resulted in the death of a 16-year-old girl whose head was smashed into a concrete pillar by her teacher. At the trial, the teacher presented a petition for leniency signed by 75,000 people, who believed it was a simple case of "tough love" taken too far and who still supported corporal punishment. *Japan Times 2/5-11, 12-18/96*

KENYA Students Go on Rampage

Kenyatta University closed indefinitely late last year following riots. More than 5,000 students went on the rampage for two consecutive days, raiding kitchens and damaging property.

The unrest occurred only 12 days after the university opened for the 1995-96 academic year. Riots were triggered by complaints over a new loans scheme, food prices and accommodations. The University is the largest pedagogical institution in the country, with places for 6,000 students.



George Eshiwani, university vice-chancellor, denied that the riots were sparked by food and accommodation issues. He says students just wanted to cause chaos and were politically motivated. After an investigation, the university hopes to reopen early this year.

Many questions about how new loans were dispersed to students remain unanswered. Some students from rich families were awarded loans, while poor students were denied.

Opposition politicians also claimed that students from opposition zones were not given loans. The Higher Education Loans Board said appeals could be made, but that the process would be time-consuming because of insufficient staffing.

Starting from this academic year, students have to pay about \$460, compared with \$46 in the past. This money is either paid directly by the students who do not need loans, or must be paid by loan applications from the Higher Education Loans Board.

Statistics indicate that ordinary workers and farmers are unable to send their children to public universities without government support. The average annual income is about \$98. Even if a student could obtain the maximum loan of about \$328, each student now would have to pay an additional \$132, forcing many to drop out of college. The policy of full cost recovery in higher education was urged by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

Times Higher Education Supplement 1/5/96

MALAYSIA

Doors Opened to Foreign Campuses

Malaysia's education market was opened to Australian institutions in January after the two governments signed a memorandum of understanding in Kuala Lumpur.

Monash University will establish a campus in Kuala Lumpur in conjunction with the SungeiWay group, which owns SungeiWay College, Malaysia's premier private university. The agreement will provide for degree courses in science, business, economics, health sciences, computing and engineering. Other Australian universities interested in applying for branch campus licenses include Sydney, Adelaide, and the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology.

The memorandum gives Australia the edge over British and North American institutions in competing for the limited number of licenses to be made available.

Campus Review 1/18-24/96.

MEXICO

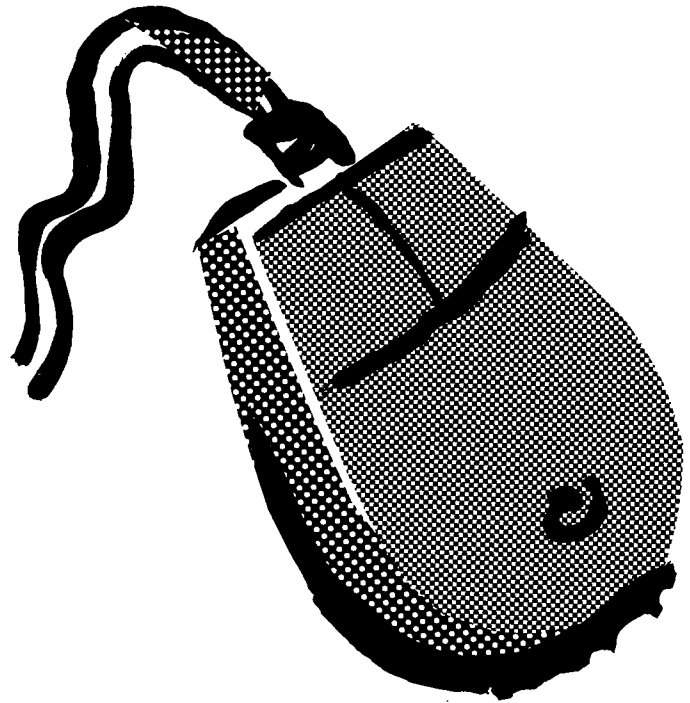
Academics Striving to Maintain International Links

Educators in Mexico are trying to keep up their participation in international academic exchanges, despite the country's nagging economic troubles.

The economy, however, clearly has made it more difficult for Mexicans to study abroad. Helping to overcome this hurdle are trilateral exchanges, which enable students to enroll at an institution in either Canada or the United States, but pay the tuition required by their own university. Even with the 40 percent devaluation of the peso, this allows Mexicans to study abroad for only what it would cost to attend their home institution.

This is the approach taken by the North American Regional Academic Mobility Program, now in its fourth year. The program—for students of business, engineering, and the environment—has been so successful that the number of institutions participating has increased, even though some of its original financing has run out.

The new Program for North American Mobility in Higher Education will make three-year grants to a consortia of institutions from all three countries. As many as 72 insti-



tutions will be involved, along with an estimated 420 students in agriculture, architecture, business, engineering, and the environment. The transferability of academic credits earned by participants is guaranteed.

Internationalism is fast becoming an integral part of Mexican higher education. Olga Hernandez Limon, director of the Center of Excellence at the Autonomous University of Tamaulipas, said the institution had established Mexico's first doctoral program in international education. It will require candidates to spend their summers studying at institutions in Canada and the United States.

Internships are helping to attract foreign students to Mexico.

Since the devaluation of the peso has made it more dif-

difficult to study abroad, Mexican academics are looking to technology as another way to expand international lines. The Interactive Education System via Satellite, a program developed by Monterrey Tech to help their professors continue graduate studies without having to travel, is now being used to help bring foreign teachers to Mexican classrooms. Classes taught by the best professors in the Monterrey Tech system are now broadcast via satellite from the studios of the institute's two major campuses, Monterrey and Mexico City. Students at other locations have monitors at their desks and get feedback from the professors via e-mail. Classes also are imported from several American universities, including Carnegie Mellon and the University of Texas.

Sylvia Ortega, president of the association for international education since its founding three years ago, said Mexican universities have rapidly gone from having minimal communications, even among themselves, to a point where they now are busy expanding international contacts. She warned, however, that it is too soon to assess the impact that devaluation is going to have.

The Chronicle of Higher Education 11/17/95

NORWAY

University of Trondheim Name Changed

The University of Trondheim/UNIT was officially renamed the Norwegian University of Science and Technology/NTNU from January 1996 by order of the Norwegian parliament (*Stortinget*).

UNIT consisted of the Museum of Natural History and Archeology, the Norwegian Institute of Technology, the College of Arts and Science, and the Faculty of Medicine. In addition, the Trondheim Academy of Fine Art, the Music Conservatory, the Technical University Library of Norway, the Medical Library, and the former University Library of Trondheim are now integrated into NTNU.

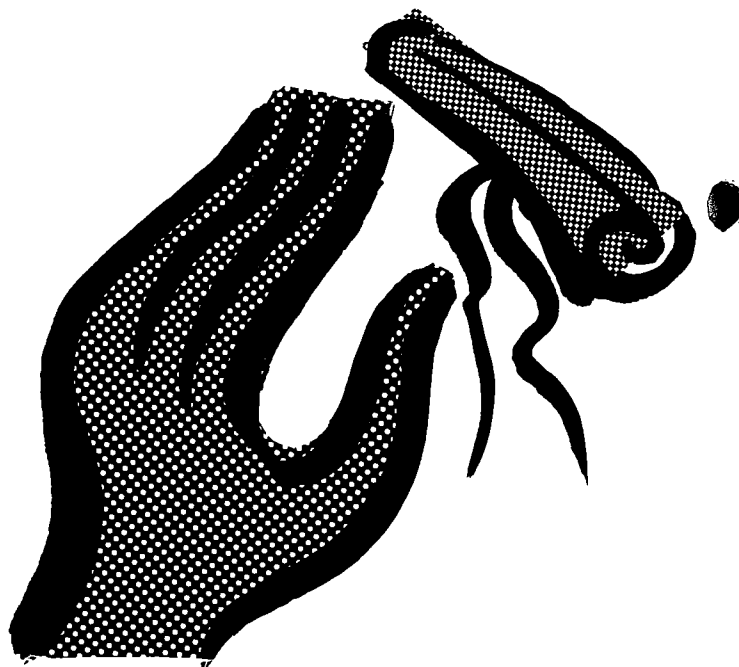
No radical changes are planned. Students close to finishing their education will in most cases receive diplomas with their former school names until this summer. Work is now in progress to give NTNU students a common platform with a joint introductory course than can be accepted as an *examen philosophicum*. The course will focus mainly on the interaction among technology, nature, society, and culture. In the long run, the new organization will make closer collaboration among disciplines more feasible.

Correspondence from the National Academic Information Center, Norway of 2/96.

SOUTH AFRICA

Demand Rises for Higher Education

More than half of the total population is under the age of 24 years, and approximately 300,000 persons enter the labor market every year, while available job opportunities in



the formal sector decline by approximately 130,000 per year.

Only 16 percent of people have at least two years of postsecondary education. Of this figure, black people account for only 26 percent, mainly concentrated in the nursing and teaching professions.

In 1991, black, Indian and colored people accounted for only 18 percent of the total science and engineering work force. In engineering, medicine, higher education, the sciences, and managerial and executive positions, whites outnumber blacks by as much as 20:1.

The demands for higher education are enormous, but there are signs that South Africa is facing up to the challenges.

One of the issues is the baggage of the past. Race, gender and class inequities must be reduced and a new democratic society created, says Namane Magau, South Africa's Divisional Manager responsible for the Human Resources Development Policy Program. "Higher education must equip and prepare students to succeed in this continuously changing world," she said.

Another major challenge will be to broaden the funding base of higher education through appropriate partnership arrangements with the donor community and the business sector.

Girls are especially disadvantaged by choosing subjects to study which reflect societal expectations, limiting them to low-paid, low status and low-skilled jobs.

Dr. Magau says, "We cannot afford this waste of talent. It is necessary to intervene with regard to how average women think. A good place to start will be to change the curriculum for primary school teacher training to make teachers more gender-sensitive.

"It is also time to research affirmative action drives regarding women. We need more information on how to impact on institutional cultures, and whether affirmative