EMI: Researching a Global Phenomenon

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Overview

- What should be the ‘approach’ with regard to the phenomenon?
- What are the methodological challenges presented by EMI research ?
- Some initial findings from a survey of 54 countries (in part funded by the British Council)

Aims of EMI policy

- To internationalise universities?
- To facilitate learning of subjects by home students?
- To build/improve English language capacity of home country?
- A way of ensuring that home students can compete in a world market?

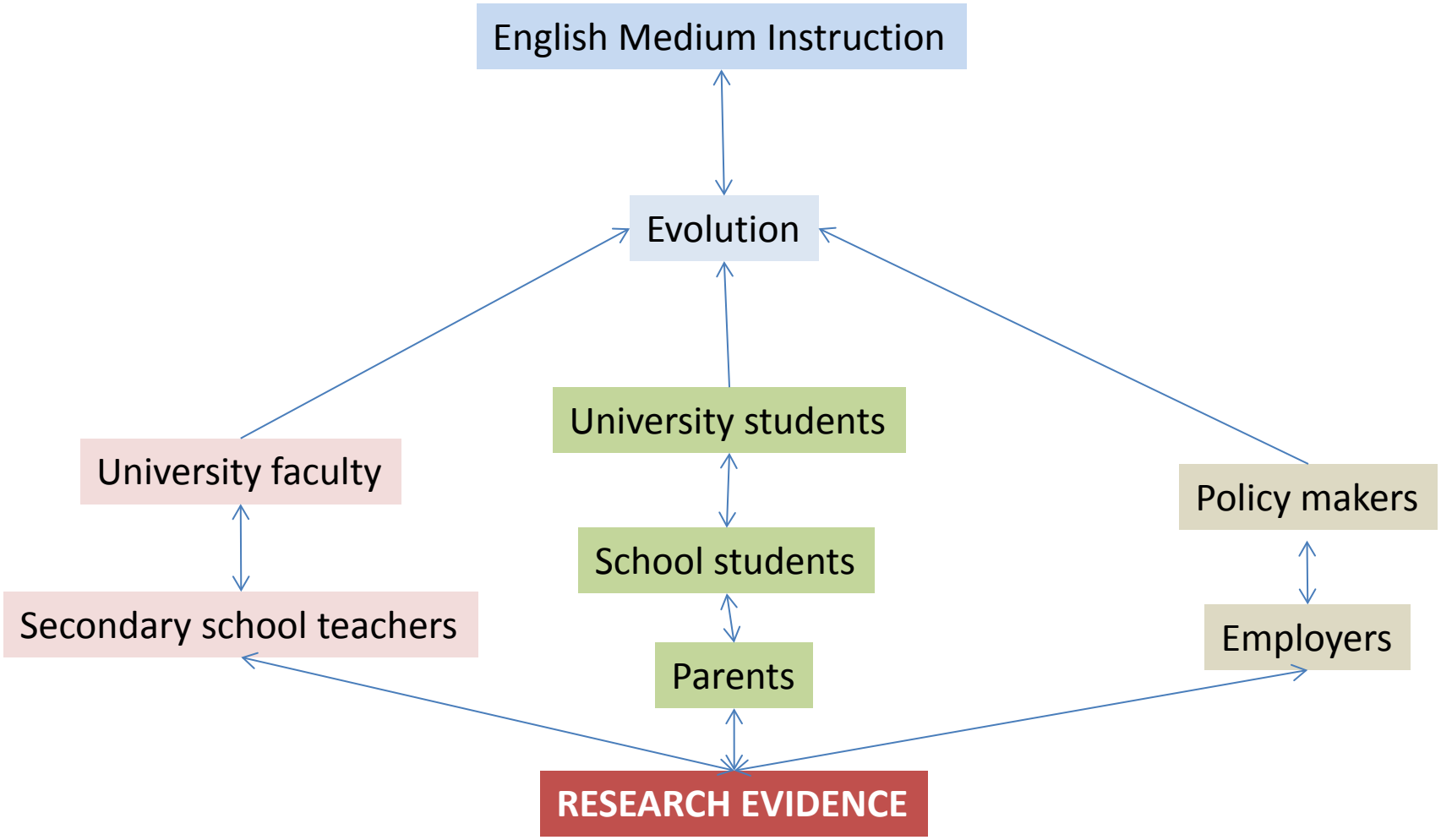
Are these aims shared by all participants?

Aims of EMI policy

- A new multilingual and multicultural tool for developing intercultural communication?
- Authentic language learning?
- A way of forcing change in HE pedagogy?

Are these aims shared by all participants?

End-user driven approach to EMI



Phase 1 of project

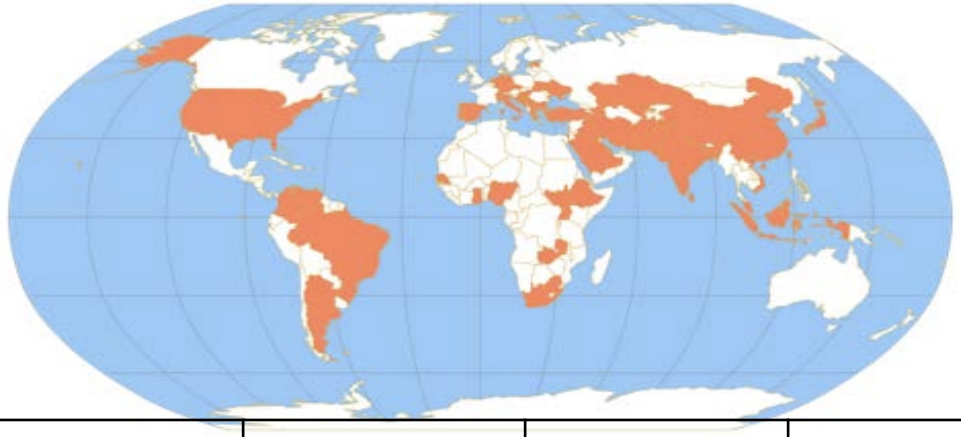
Aims:

- To map the current situation
- To identify future trends
- Phase 2: in depth analysis of smaller number of countries;
- Phase 3: online questionnaire investigating teacher attitudes to EMI in their subject

Phase 1 Method

- Open ended (essentially qualitative) questionnaire
- Sent to British Council staff in 60 countries worldwide
- Primary analysis of data
- Follow up request to plug gaps
- Secondary analysis of data: attempt to quantify
- Reliability of data

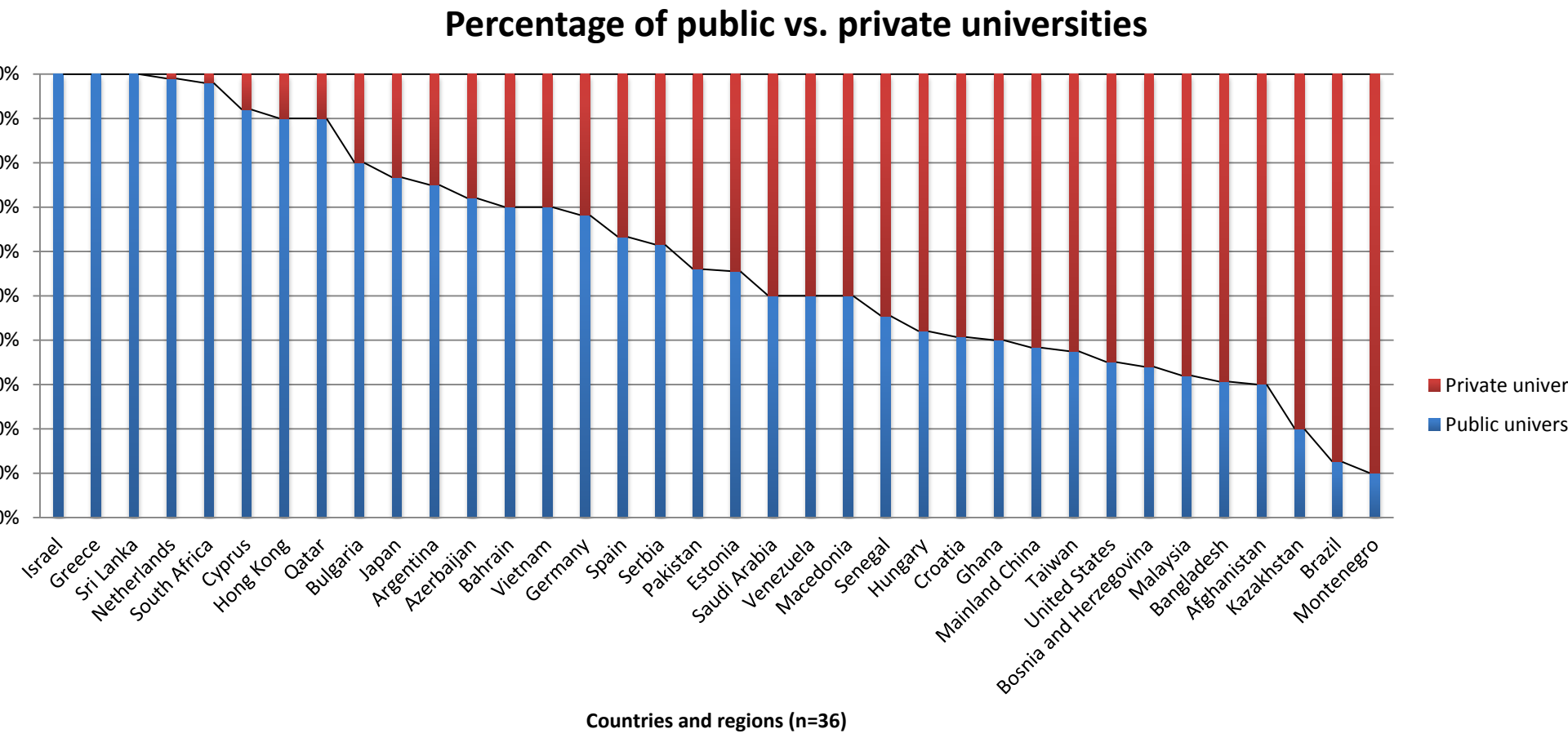
Enormous thanks to: Ting Zhao!



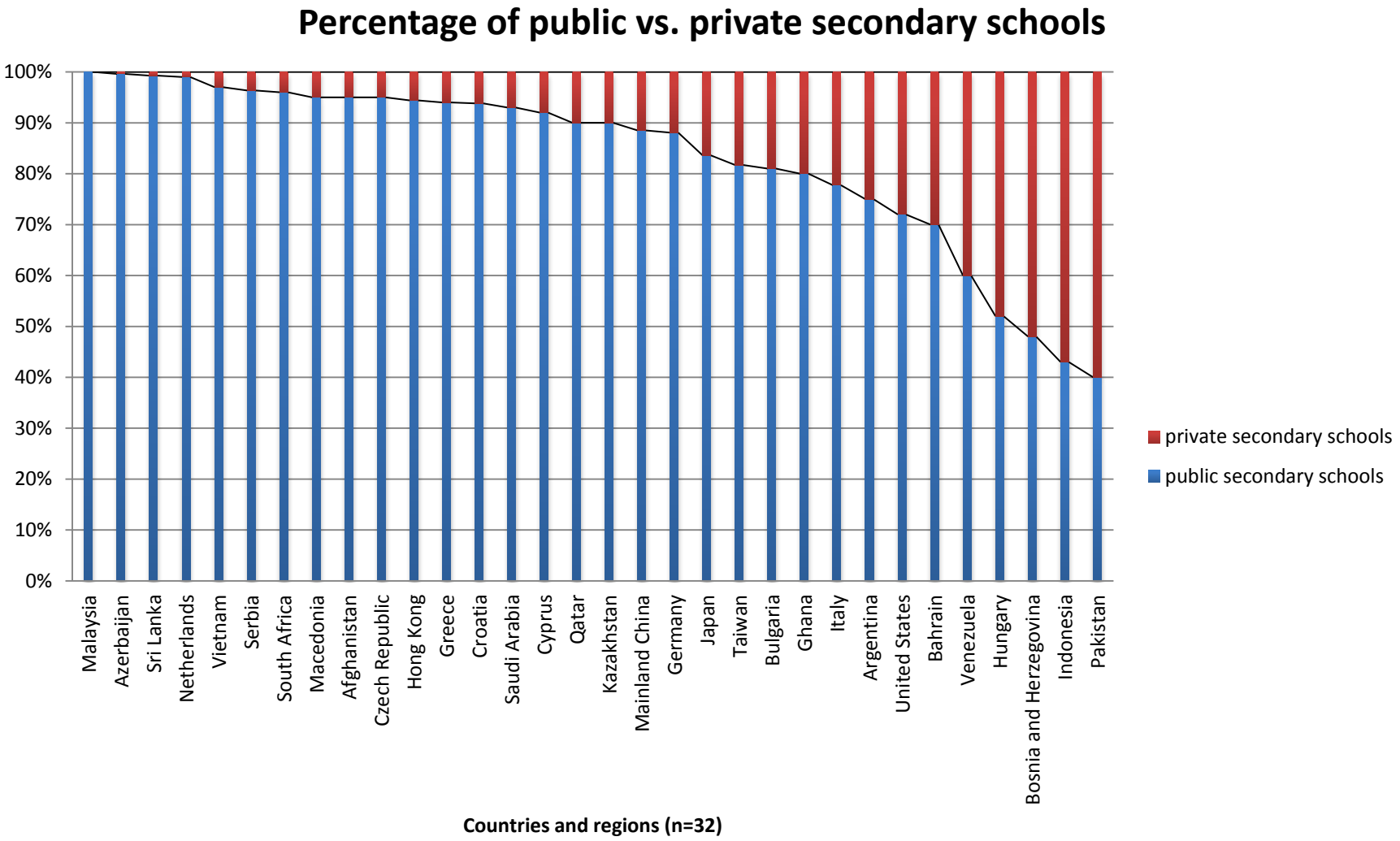
55 Countries

Afghanistan	Cyprus	Iran	Netherlands	Sri Lanka
Argentina	Czech Republic	Iraq	Nigeria	Switzerland
Azerbaijan	Estonia	Israel	Pakistan	Taiwan
Bahrain	Ethiopia	Italy	Portugal	Turkey
Bangladesh	Germany	Japan	Qatar	Uganda
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Ghana	Kazakhstan	Saudi Arabia	Ukraine
Brazil	Greece	Macedonia	Senegal	United States
Bulgaria	Hong Kong	Malaysia	Serbia	Uzbekistan
China	Hungary	Mauritius	South Africa	Venezuela
Colombia	India	Montenegro	South Sudan	Vietnam
Croatia	Indonesia	Nepal	Spain	Zambia

The Field: Public vs. Public Education



The Field: Public vs. Public Education



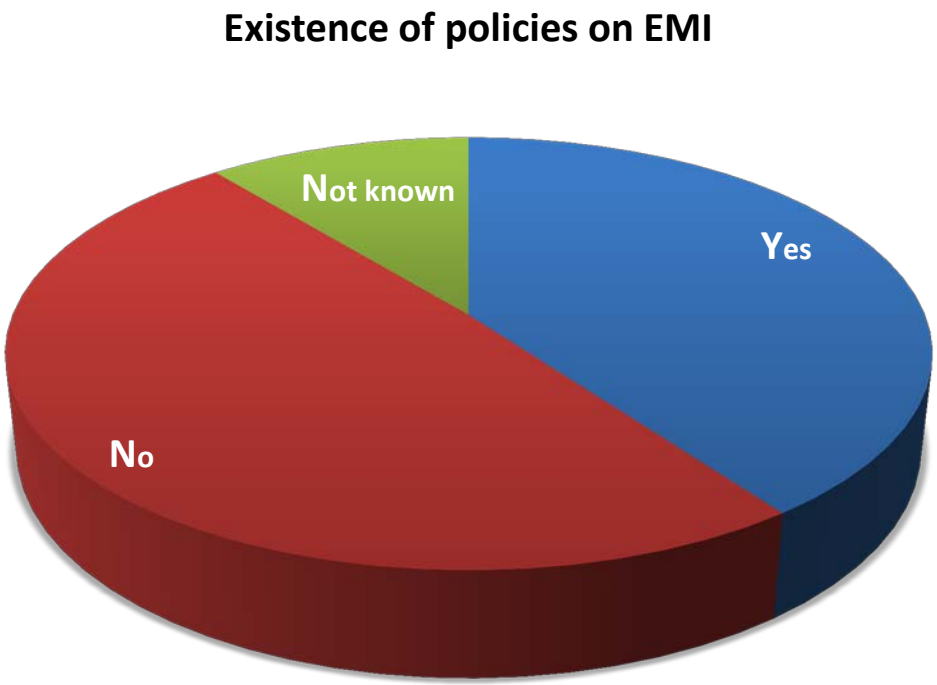
In ‘your country’, is EMI officially allowed in public sector?

Primary Education	n	percent
Allowed	29	**52.7**
Not allowed	21	38.2

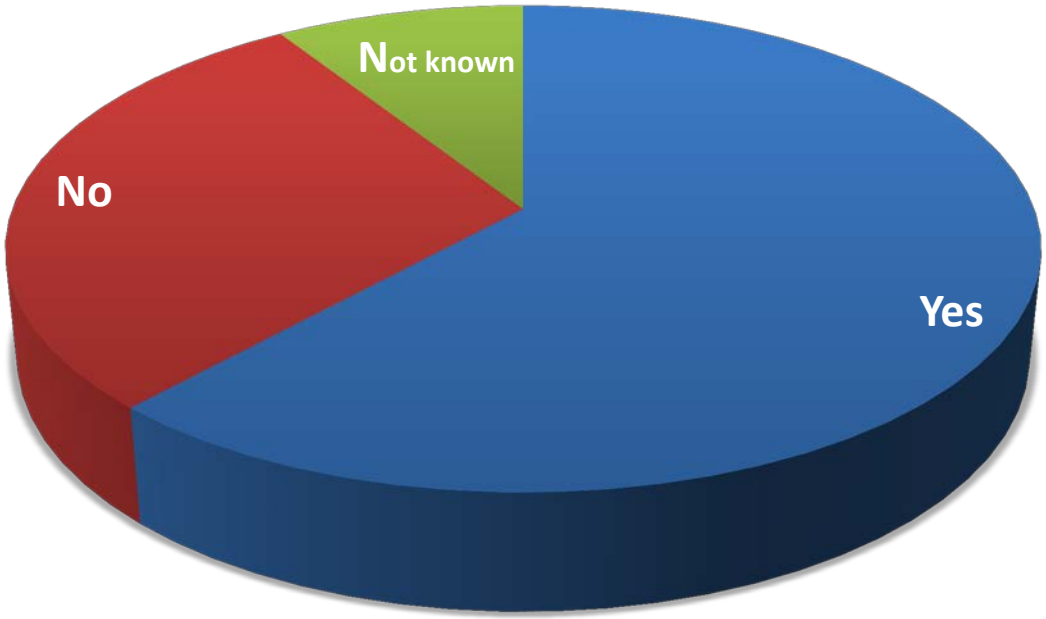
Secondary Education	n	percent
Allowed	39	**70.9**
Not allowed	13	23.6

Universities	n	percent
Allowed	43	**78.2**
Not allowed	10	18.2

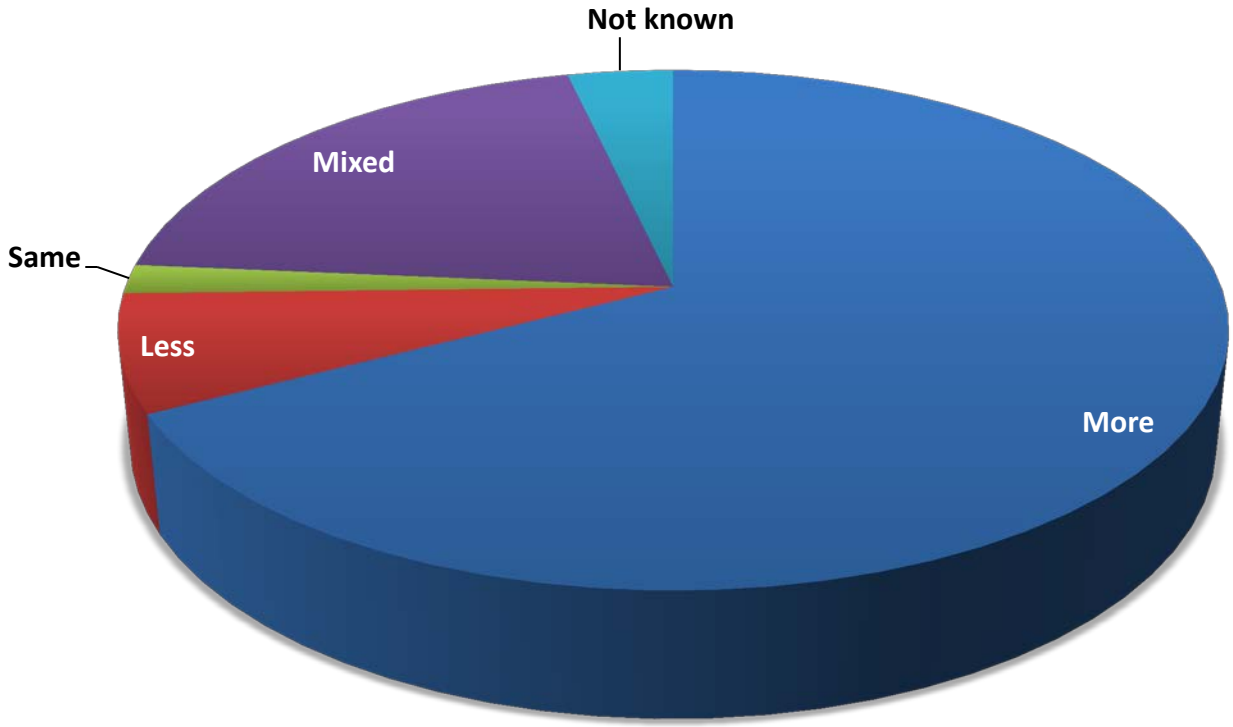
Do official policies or statements on EMI exist?



Policy Changes in Past 10 Years?



General trend in each country



Examples of “Mixed Trends”

Argentina	*“More, there is a trend towards increasing EMI at primary and secondary levels.* ***State schools have mostly stayed away from it****, despite some talks of including EMI in the city of Buenos Aires.”*
Azerbaijan	***“Public primary: less****; public secondary: the same; public HE: more.* ***Private primary secondary and HE: more. “***
Israel	*“More, universities want to teach more in English.* ***Schools are not moving in this direction.”***
Turkey	*“In HEIs, more. In state schools has become less with the abolishment of an initial year of EMI in the elite state Anadolu High Schools. The stated reason for abolishing EMI here is* ***that pupils were performing poorly in science and mathematics****.”*

Official backing for ‘trends’

- **Croatia:** “In the context of the Bologna Process and increased international mobility as one of its priorities, the Ministry [has] Action Plan for **the removal of obstacles and strengthening of the international mobility in education** … including the **increase** in the number of study programmes offered in **foreign languages”**

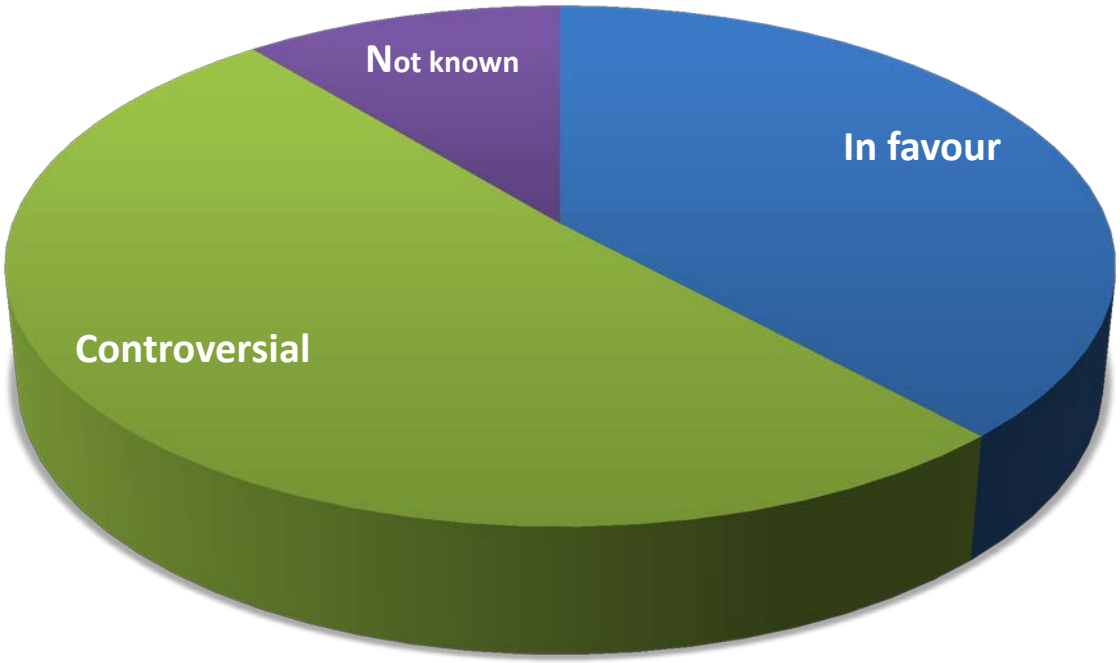
Official backing for ‘trends’

- **Uzbekistan:** The presidential decree of 10.12.12 encourages English to be taught, spoken, and used for business communication at all levels and at any institution of Uzbekistan be it journalism, economics or staff of a ministry.

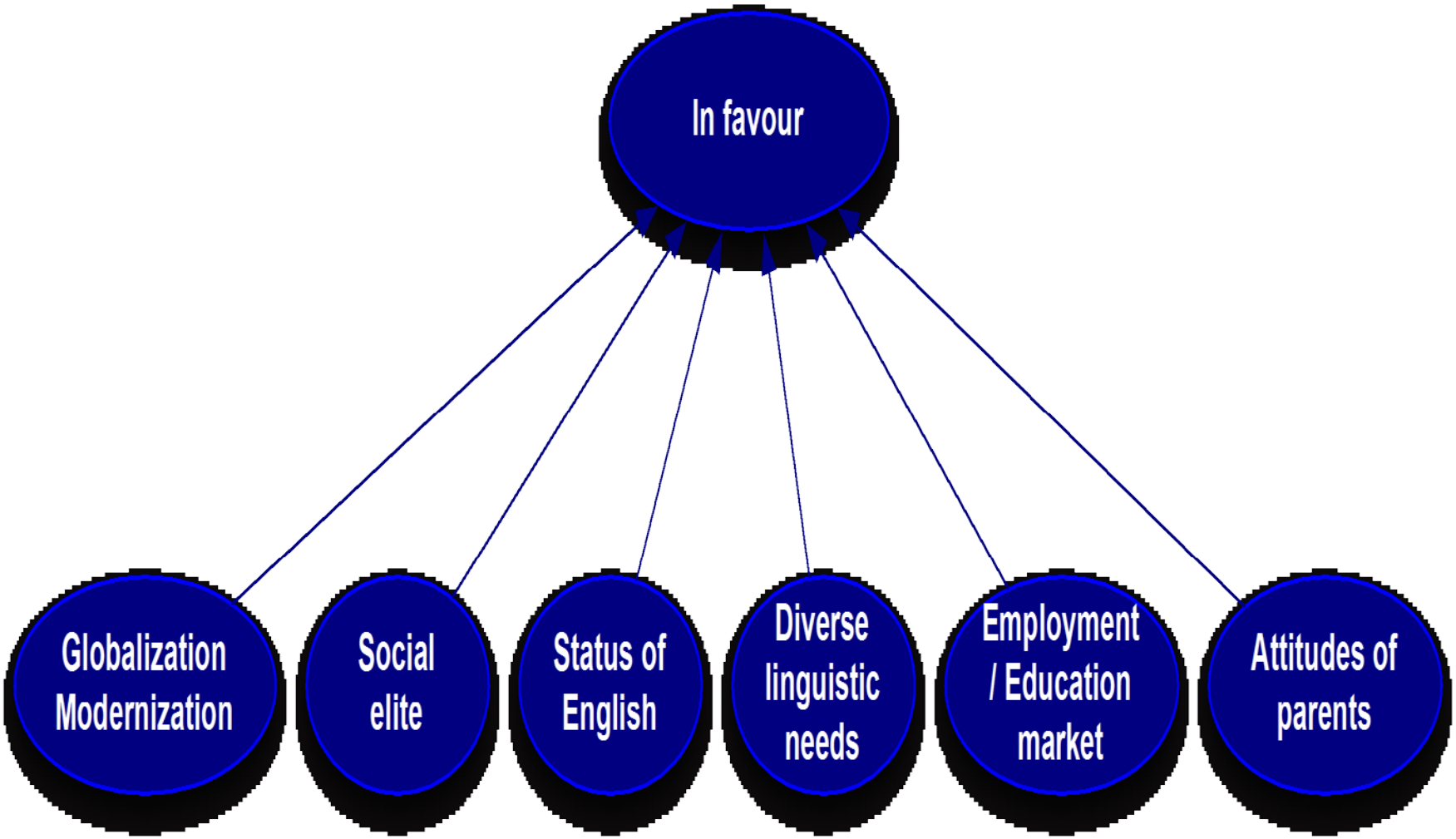
Equivocal official backing

- **Hungary:** Government recognises the efficiency of EMI programmes, ….however, it claims that **EMI affects only a small number of learners** (equal opportunities), and **it is costly to operate** (exams, qualified teachers including native speaker teachers, and materials and textbooks). New government's quality assurance measures might even **lessen the number of currently run programmes**.

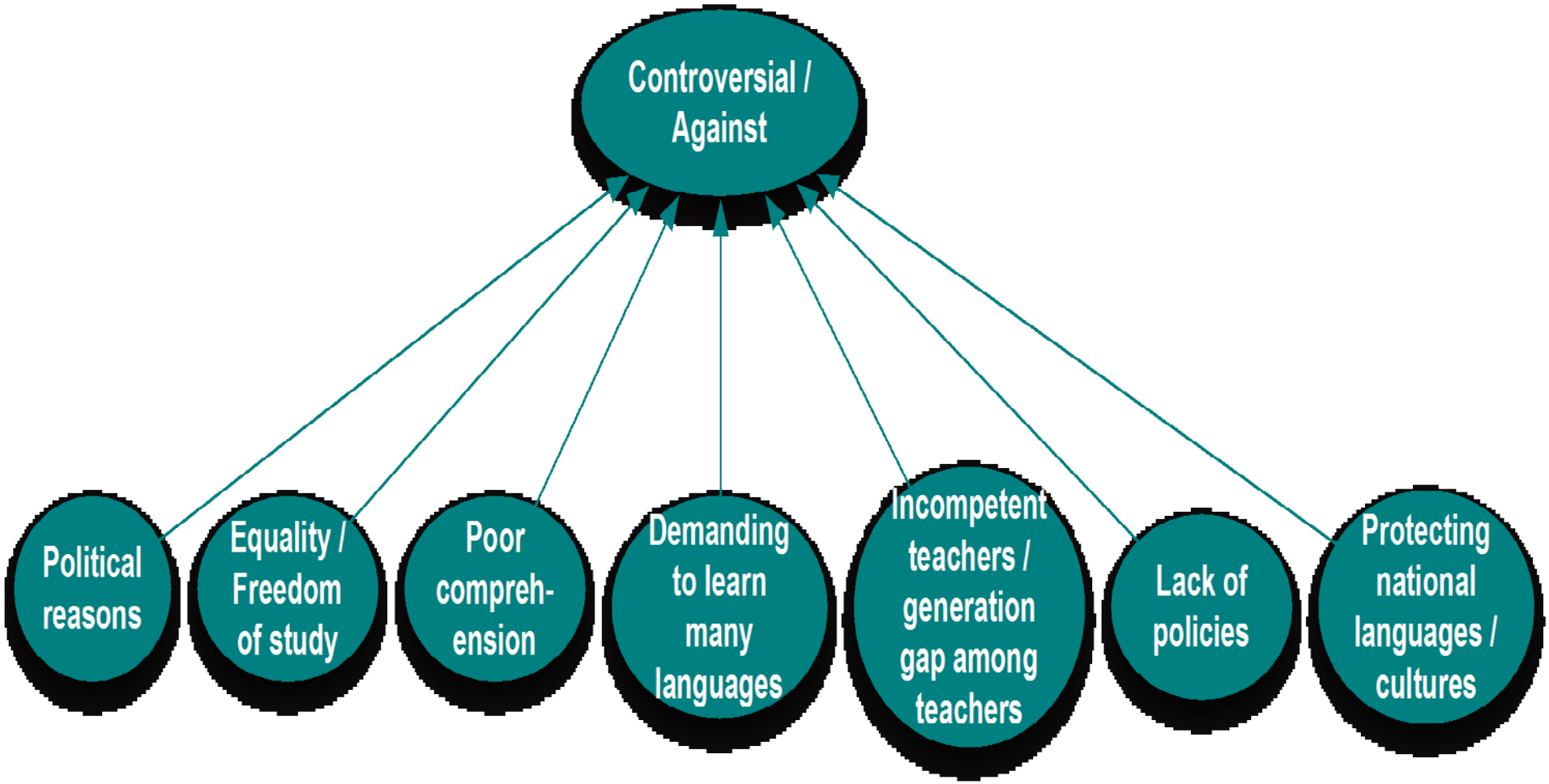
Public Opinion on EMI



Reasons for public opinion to be in favour

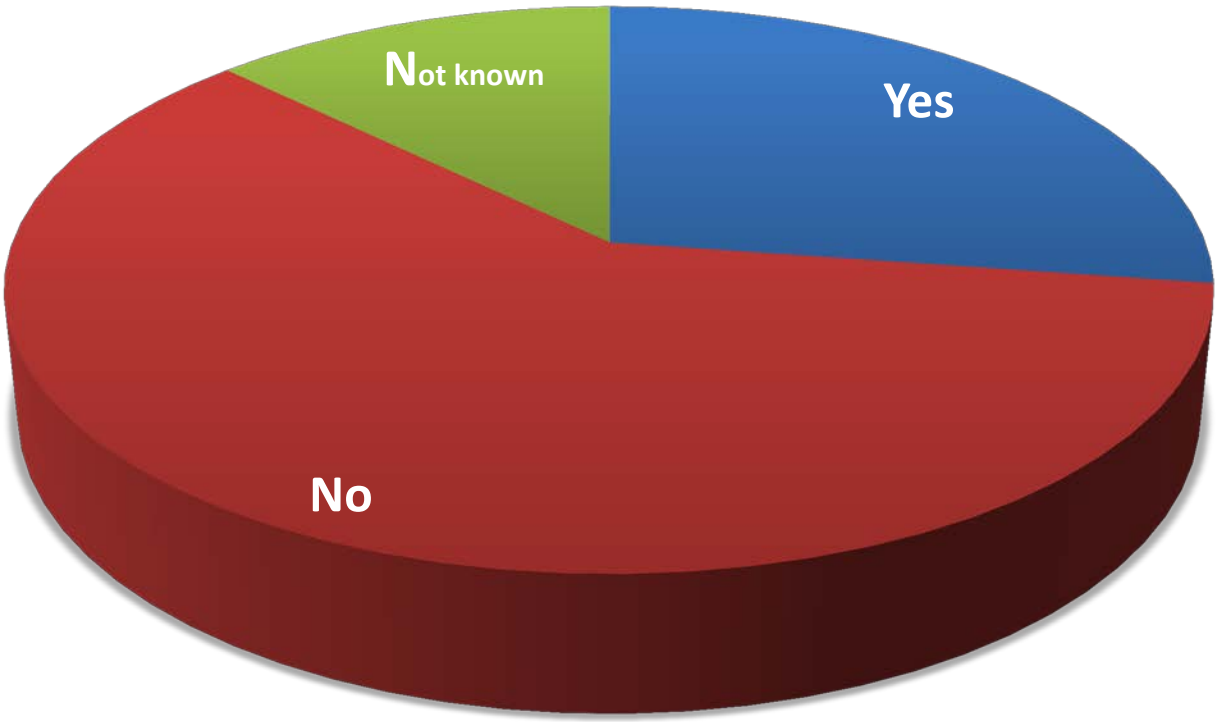


Reasons why public opinion is divided

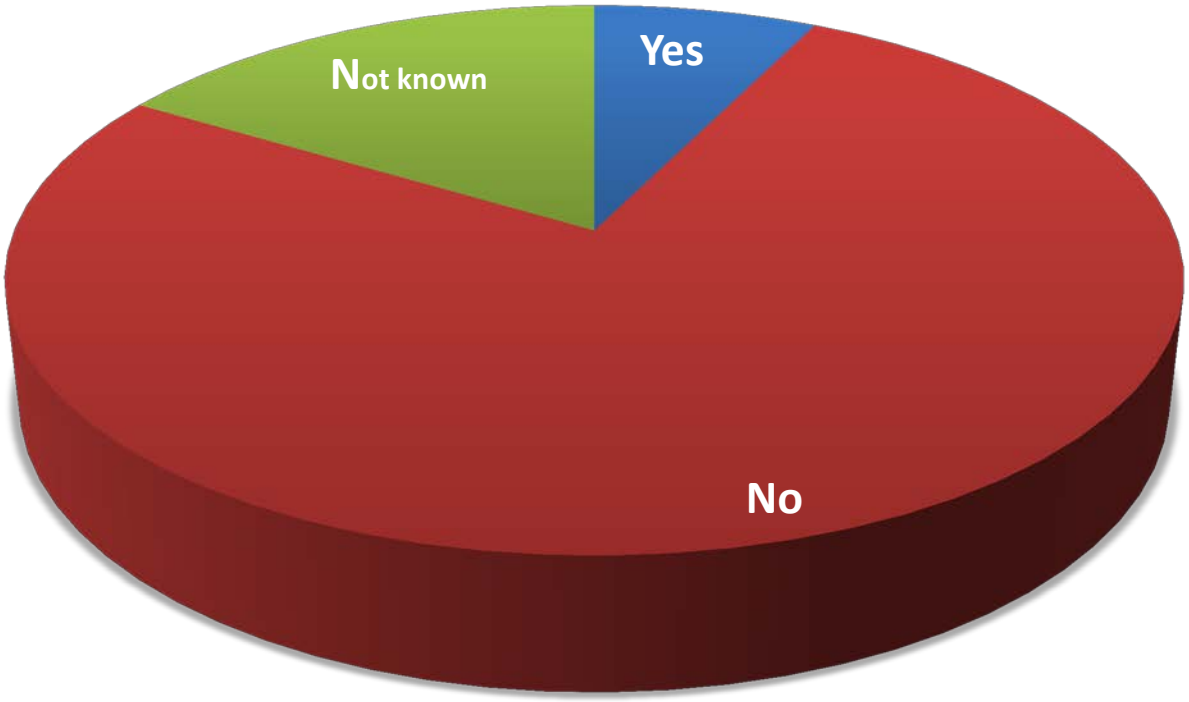


Are there enough qualified teachers to teach EMI?

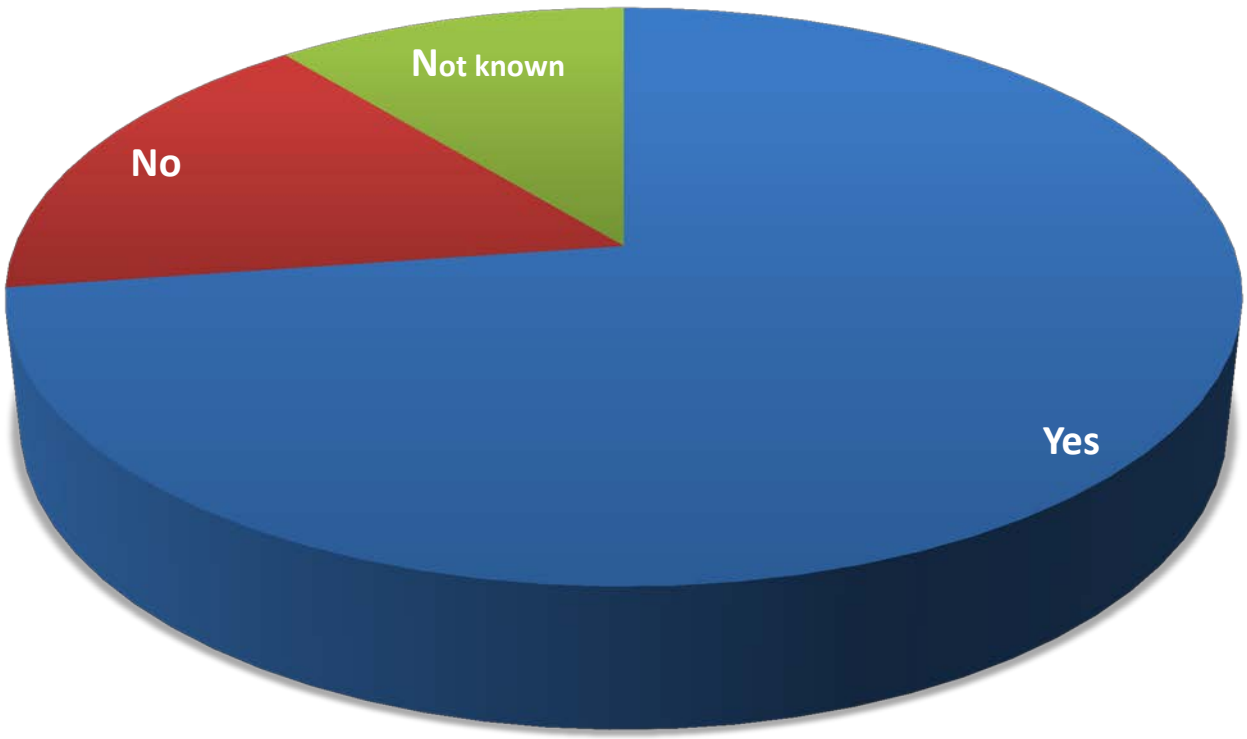
Are there any written guidelines specifying how to teach in EMI?



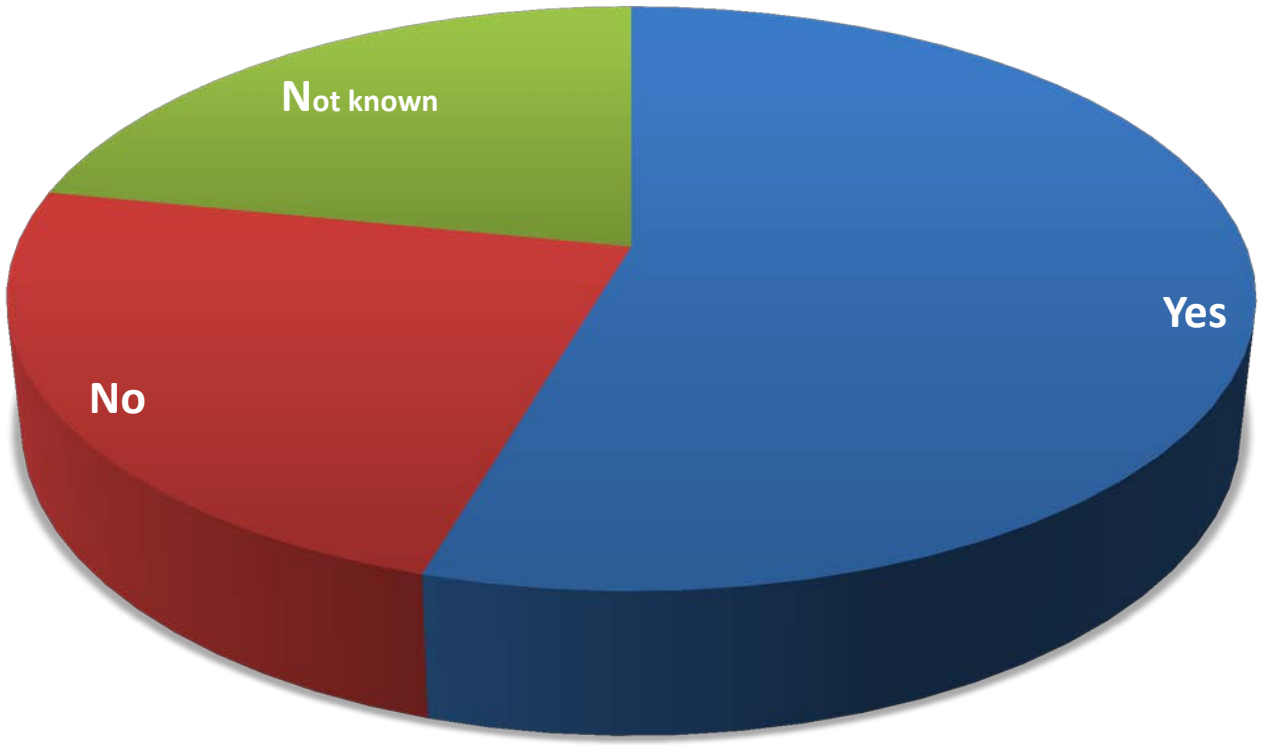
Are there any written guidelines that specify English-only or permit/encourage codeswitching?



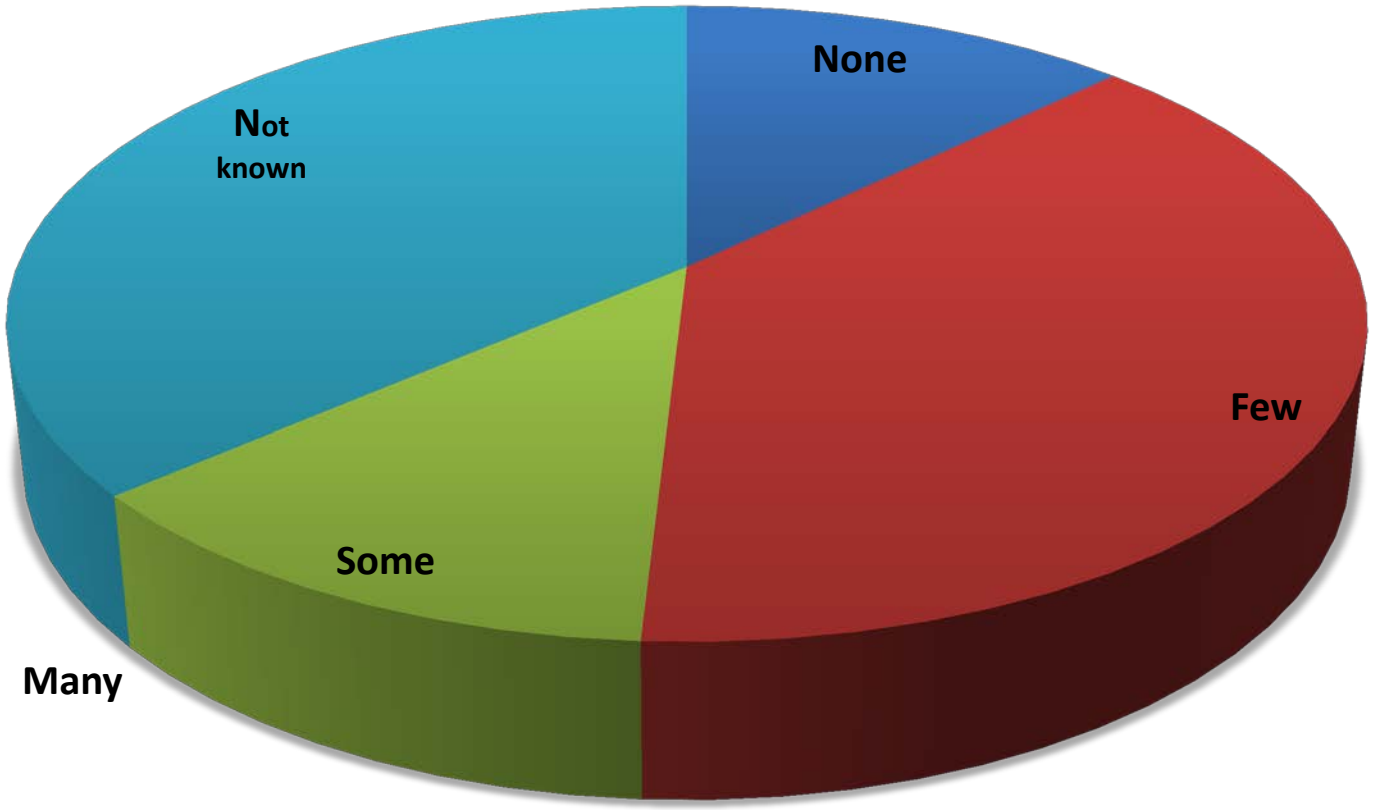
Are there large numbers of international students?



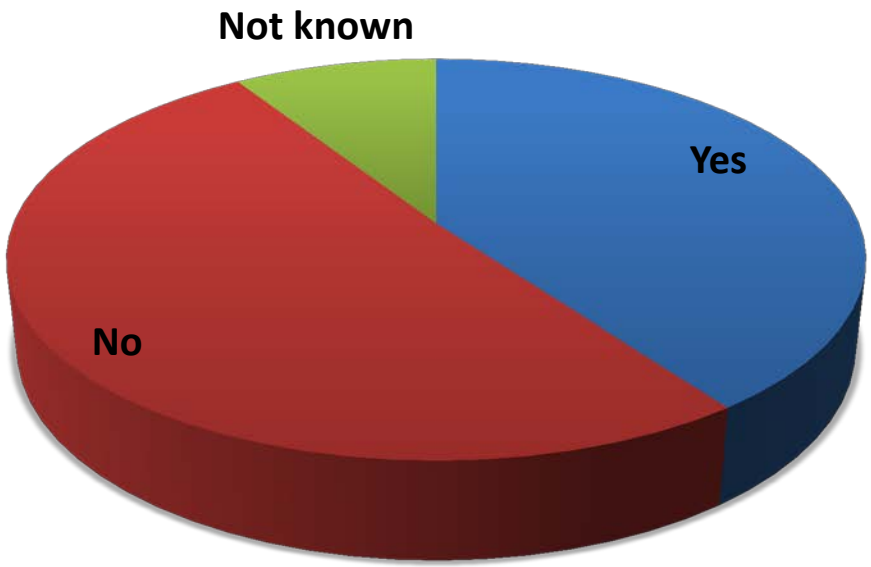
Are subject teachers bilingual?



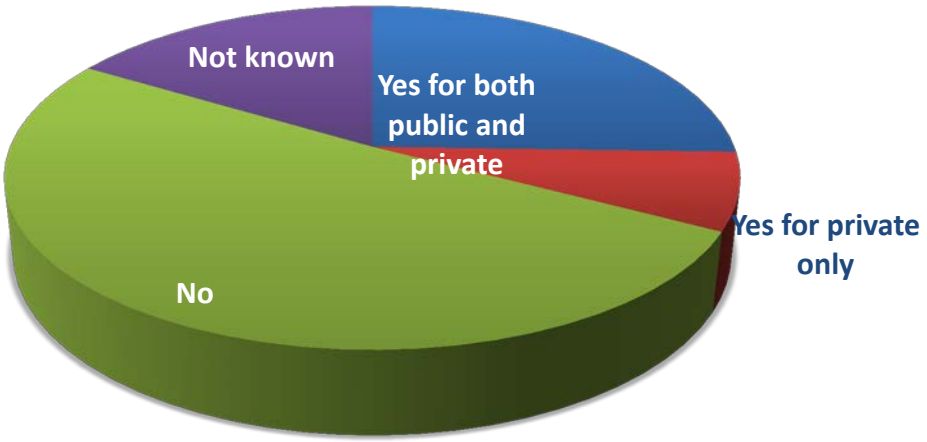
Numbers of monolingual English-speaking teachers



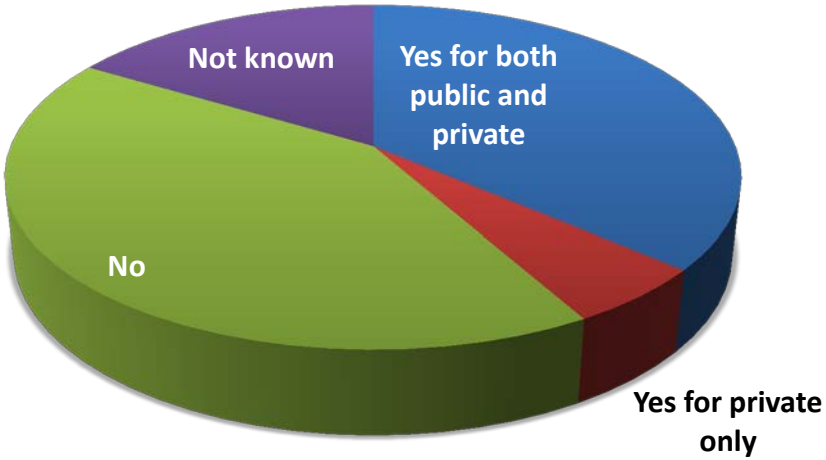
Any stated expectation of language proficiency to qualify as EMI teachers ?



Is there any provision for EMI on ITE?



Is there any provision for EMI on TPD?



Initial conclusions from Phase 1

- Long way from a ‘global’ definition of EMI and its purposes/objectives
- Need: a research-driven process approach which consults stake-holders
- Introduction of EMI in tertiary is opportunistic & instrumental: effect on secondary

Initial conclusions from Phase 1

- Trend is towards much more EMI
- There is official backing but with some ‘interesting’ exceptions
- Public opinion not wholehearted support: ‘controversial’ rather than ‘against’
- Concerns relate to: lack of qualified teachers; no stated expectations of English language proficiency; lack of structural or pedagogical guidelines; little EMI content in ITE and TPD courses

Some Caveats

- Overall resemblances between country profiles can mask contextual differences, for example:
  - Private schools are not always elite schools
  - Public opinion in favour of EMI can be pragmatic or it can be seen as a least worst solution
- Some problematic areas are
  - Trends in our data need to be considered in the light of the differences in populations between countries
  - The pattern of home language use in a country may have an effect on EMI policy and practice

Problematising the constructs: home language of learners

- Taiwan, and to a certain extent China: one main home language, + minority home languages
- Hong Kong: influx of Putonghua speakers into what was a majority Cantonese environment
- Pakistan: multiple home and official languages
- Sri Lanka: two languages, politically charged divisions
- South Sudan: 60 languages, no majority language, English the official language