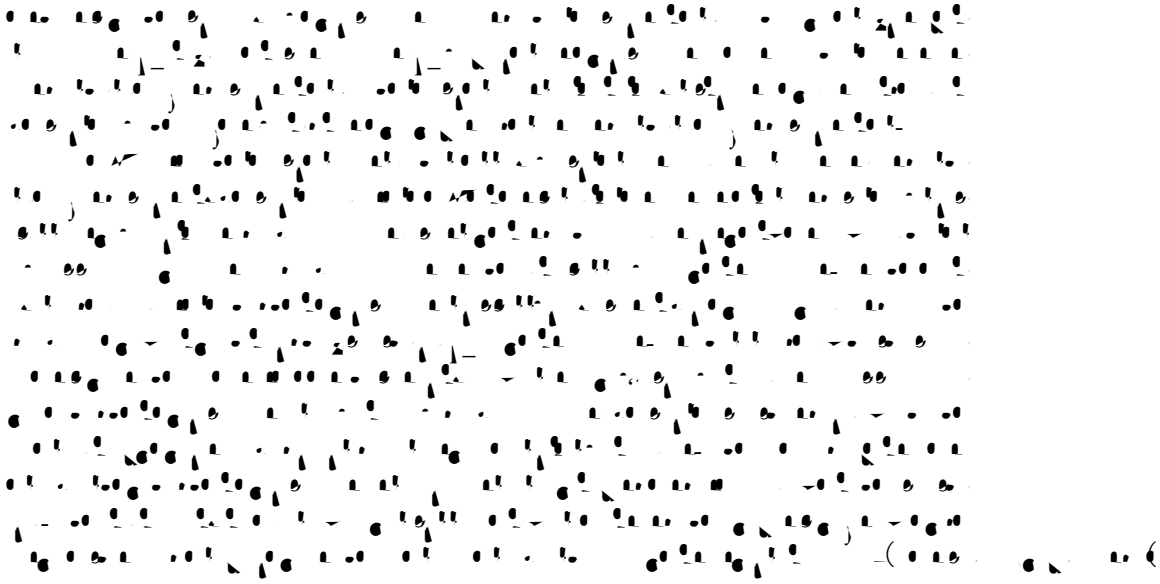


A Long & Wrong Road to Globalization: Why Have Japanese Universities Failed in “Catching Up” in the Twenty-First Century?

Takehiko Kari a

This essay examines how universities in non-Western, non-English-speaking countries respond to global competition in higher education, where English has become dominant due to “linguistic imperialism.” I pose critical questions about how these institutions can not only endure but thrive amid global competition, and whether intensified global competition has improved the quality of education. Focusing on Japan, I explore both successful and challenging aspects of globalization in its institutions of higher education. While Japan achieved success in adapting during the late nineteenth century, the emphasis on learning foreign languages, including English, diminished after World War II. The Japanese case illustrates the complex trade-offs between ensuring educational equity and global competitiveness, and highlights the evolving dynamics and challenges faced by universities as well as policymakers in non-English-speaking countries in the global higher-education landscape.

Globalization has become a dominant force in higher education, and universities in non-English-speaking countries are facing increasing pressure to adapt. This essay examines how these institutions respond to global competition, and whether intensified global competition has improved the quality of education. Focusing on Japan, I explore both successful and challenging aspects of globalization in its institutions of higher education. While Japan achieved success in adapting during the late nineteenth century, the emphasis on learning foreign languages, including English, diminished after World War II. The Japanese case illustrates the complex trade-offs between ensuring educational equity and global competitiveness, and highlights the evolving dynamics and challenges faced by universities as well as policymakers in non-English-speaking countries in the global higher-education landscape.



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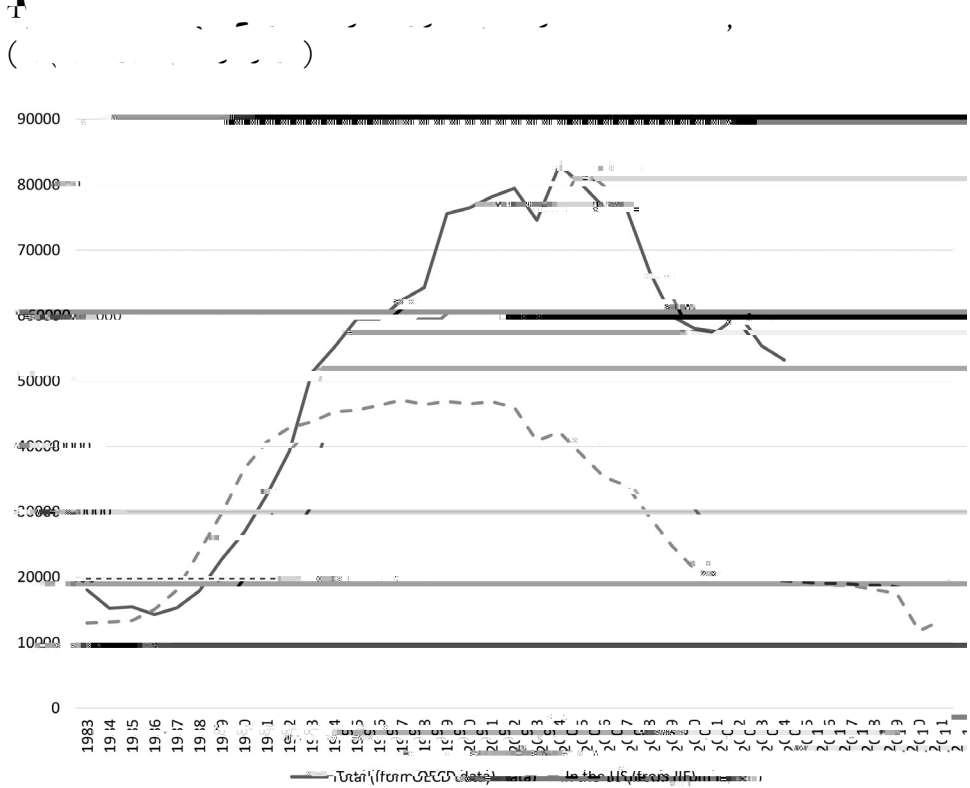
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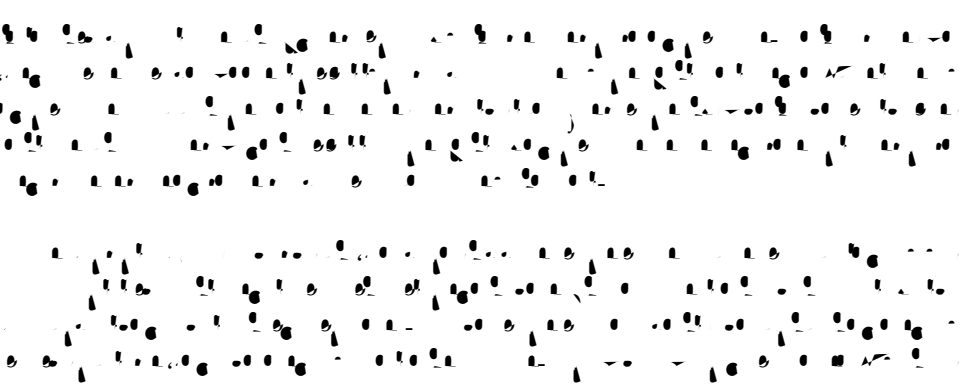
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A Long & Wrong Road to Globalization

Figure 2



Education at a Glance
Open Doors



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The lag in globalization of universities is a critical situation. Universities are expected to create new knowledge based upon accumulated knowledge and become the core

initiators for social changes by taking on the unprecedented challenges Japan is facing. The revitalization of Japan's universities into places of continuous challenge and creativity is one of the major pillars for the "Rebirth of Japan," in which Japan will once again become more competitive in the world and regain its luster.²²

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ENDNOTE

1. See, for example, *Education, Equality, and Meritocracy in a Global Age: The Japanese Approach* (Ed. by Shiro Goto, 2000), *Journal of Education Policy*, 15(1) (2000).

2. See, for example, *Linguistic Imperialism* (Ed. by Robert D. Levine, 1998).

3. See, for example, *Japanese Education in a Global Age: Sociological Reflections and Future Directions*, ed. by Shiro Goto, 2000.

4. See, for example, *Journal of Education Policy*, 15(1) (2000).

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