

Mainstreaming Academic Literacy in English Medium Degree Programmes: Locating the Pedagogical Practices in Sri Lankan Universities

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Academic Literacy (AL) is not only the subject matter knowledge and the fluency of four English language skills in the context, but also the ways of behaving in particular disciplinary contexts that are acceptable within specific groups of people. Currently, AL is gaining wide attention in the global higher education context. The two main theoretical understandings of AL - autonomous and ideological - influence the AL practices in English Medium Degree Programmes (EMDPs). Mainstreaming AL which is ideological in its philosophy is well-known as the most advanced and influential practice in current global higher education. The main objective of this study is to find out the existing AL practices of nine faculties - science, management and social sciences/ humanities - of three state universities in Sri Lanka. A qualitative study design has been employed to achieve the objective and data collection has been done through lecturer interviews and official documentation in the form of curricula and pedagogical practices. The data have been analyzed through Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) and three major themes have been identified: teaching English as a discrete course in EMDPs, subject lecturers' pedagogy in EMDPs and signs of mainstreaming academic literacy. The first theme discusses the strong call for teaching English as a discrete course in EMDPs. The second theme converses the subject lecturers' pedagogy in English Medium Instruction (EMI) in the nine faculties. The third theme - mainstreaming academic literacy discusses the signs of mainstreaming academic literacy practices in EMDPs. This study concludes that the commonest practice of English language courses is the stand-alone English courses in EMDPs but this practice does not allow students to transfer their acquired English language proficiency into the particular disciplinary context as expected and serves little to develop academic literacy in EMDPs. Further, subject lecturers do not gain EMI-specific pedagogical trainings as part of their professional development and there are no prominent signs of mainstreaming academic literacy practices found in EMDPs in the nine faculties. Hence, this study calls for attention on academic literacy development in EMDPs through staff, student, curriculum and institutional development.

Keywords: *Academic literacy, Autonomous, English medium degree programmes, English medium instruction, Ideological influence*