

Examine Students' Attitudes and Preferences Towards Sole English Medium Instruction (EMI) In Social Sciences

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The objective of the present study is to examine the students' attitudes and preferences towards sole English medium instruction (EMI) in Social Sciences. The nexus of University education to employment is crucial. It is a direct cause for the surge of unemployment and underemployment mainly among the graduates in the Arts stream (Kottahachchi, 1992). In Social Sciences the authorities have made EMI optional, those who wish to learn their subjects in English medium continue their education in English medium. Yet, the undergraduates who chose the vernacular face a major crisis in their future career. The study is based on mixed method, both qualitative and quantitative data. For this retrospective study, primary data was collected through interviews and questionnaires selecting Sabaragamuwa University. Interviews were conducted with 8 selected members of the academia and questionnaires were given to 100 undergraduates from Sinhala and English mediums. Data was analyzed by thematic analysis. The findings suggested that the students are indeed generally in favor of using English exclusively in this setting, and their preference is positively related to their own English proficiency. Although some students came up with certain issues, most of them expressed their high interest and preference towards sole EMI. Indeed the effect of EMI on the learning of subject content remains unclear; most of the students surveyed agreed that English instruction will help them improve their English language proficiency. The results also revealed that Core English courses ought to concentrate on providing English for Academic Purposes rather than general purposes. Finally through this study it was observed that there is a possibility for sole English medium instruction in Social Sciences. And through such a transformation it will positively affect the undergraduates' future career.

Keywords: *English medium Instruction, optional, language proficiency, Core English courses, English for Academic Purposes*

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