

1.40 An analysis of the Effectiveness of English Medium Instruction at the University of Kelaniya

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ABSTRACT

Over the past decade, many Sri Lankan universities have shifted to offering English as a medium of instruction in their degree courses. Furthermore, several sub sections of these universities have made the English stream compulsory for all students. This paper will analyse how students have been affected by these shifts in policy, and whether these changes are helping advance the goals that were outlined when implementing them.

Research has shown that in many developing countries, a strong correlation exists between external funding and English language policy changes (Brock-utne, 2002), and that many of these shifts are often fueled by external pressure (Phillipson, 2001) and are made without a satisfactory understanding of the mechanics of language acquisition. This paper will examine the circumstances surrounding policy changes in the departments being studied, and compare the goals of these initiatives with the results they actually deliver.

Specifically, this paper will focus on the new English language policies of the Faculty of Commerce and Management of the University of Kelaniya, and attempt to analyse how effective they have been in helping undergraduates switch over to the English medium. In order to do so, this project will use both qualitative and quantitative research, including questionnaires, interviews with members of faculty and an analysis of student grades.