

Divided by the Mean of Networking: Perception of State University Undergraduates on Link Language Literacy

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Abstract – In the backdrop of rapid globalization, most of the state universities are gradually adopting the English language teaching (ELT) as a compulsory, partial component of undergraduate studies while encouraging the shift from trilingual teaching to English medium teaching (EMT). Though English has already become the language of higher education, the undergraduates studying in state universities show a strong reluctance and a division between English medium undergraduates (EMUs) and Sinhala medium undergraduates (SMUs). Thus, study attempts to examine the perception of state university undergraduates on English language literacy. The study aims to identify the nature and causes behind the attitudes towards EMT in higher education. Primary qualitative data was collected through in-depth interviews from 20 purposively selected social science SMUs of state universities. According to the findings, SMUs possess discriminatory sentiments towards EMT. Urban-rural resource gap is brought as a strong justification to said resistance while pointing that the majority of EMUs represent the urban/ suburban schools. The hostile attitude is further widened by the belief that SMUs are considerably excluded from the availability and access to literature, scholarship opportunities and later in job market as well. As stated, the EMT poses a decisive barrier in obtaining knowledge and reaching higher grades as well. SMUs adopt a system blame approach as they believe that the link language literacy holds an utter importance in their professional career growth in fast growing information age. It can be concluded that the English language literacy which is supposed to enhance social mobility is operative being a new mean of social division.

Keywords: Link language literacy, System blame approach, Social mobility