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Title

Disciplinary differences in the use of English in higher education : reflections on recent language policy developments / Maria Kuteeva ; John Airey

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Abstract

In post-Bologna Europe, there has been a noticeable increase in English-medium instruction. In this article we take the case of Sweden as an illustrative example of the wider disciplinary issues involved in changing the teaching language in this way. By 2008 the use of English in Swedish higher education had risen to such an extent that it had to be regulated at the governmental level and through university language policies. Such policies have attempted to provide generalised pragmatic guidelines for language use across educational programmes. In this paper we argue that such general policies fail to take into consideration fundamental disciplinary differences and their potential impact on language use. We present a theoretical argument about the knowledge structures of disciplines, relating these to the disciplinary literacy goals of educational programmes. We then illustrate our argument using data from an extensive survey carried out at a major Swedish university. We conclude that the disciplinary variation in the use of English can be seen as a product of different knowledge-making practices and educational goals. This conclusion problematises 'one-size-fits-all'?

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language policies which only deal with general features of language use and do not allow for discipline-specific adjustments.(HRK / Abstract übernommen) Kuteeva, Maria, E-Mail: maria.kuteeva@english.su.se