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Version: Accepted Version

**Book Section:**
Green, S (2023) Rethinking the Scaffolding of Academic Literacies in EMI Higher Education on the Arabian Peninsula. In: Wyatt, M and El Gamal, G, (eds.) English as a Medium of Instruction on the Arabian Peninsula. Routledge Studies in English-Medium Instruction. Routledge, London. ISBN: 9781032024936.

https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003183594

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**Title:** Re-thinking the scaffolding of academic literacies in EMI higher education in the Arabian Peninsula

This chapter will examine ways in which the construction of academic literacies by second-language speakers of English in English-medium instruction (EMI) higher education contexts in the Arabian Peninsula might best be scaffolded. What I mean by 'academic literacies' are the situated multi-modal communicative practices that students must master in order to construct and share disciplinary knowledge, and to participate as legitimate members of their academic communities (Wenger 2006, Swales 2016). Literacies are, at root, culturally defined *ways* of using language. As such they are not reducible to a core communicative language ability (Bachman and Palmer 2010) but they do depend upon it.

This is an issue of concern for higher education institutions (HEIs) throughout the region for two reasons. The first is a consequence of the fact that English is the dominant medium of instruction in a region where Arabic is the first language of almost all students. To function successfully within their academic communities and to achieve success in their disciplinary studies, students must achieve both a core proficiency in, and on that foundation, a mastery of discipline-specific ways of using, a language that is not their first. I would argue that this linguistic bifurcation is reason enough for the scaffolding of English-medium academic literacies to be problematised. However, there is a second reason, which is that across the Arabian Peninsula entrants to higher education typically have a core English Language proficiency a full CEFR band (Council of Europe, 2011) lower than that required of L2 English users in HEIs in the UK, North America, Australia or Northern Europe. This means that entrants to higher education in the region are faced not only with the challenge of learning to use a second language in the ways required by their institutional and disciplinary academic communities, but also of trying to so with a core English proficiency that is, arguably, insufficient for the task.

So in this chapter I shall do three things. The first is to outline the problem, and the second is to consider the approach to supporting EMI academic literacies most widely adopted in HEIs across the region. I shall indicate two key problems with this approach: problems of *authenticity* and *timeliness* of language and literacy support. The third is to suggest an alternative approach, based on a confluence of contemporary pedagogic currents, primarily Integrating Content and Language in Higher Education (ICL) (Gustafsson et al. 2011), Writing in the Disciplines (WID) (Clughen and Hardy 2012, Deane and O'Neill 2011), Sheltered Instruction (SI) (Echevarría, Vogt, and Short 2008, Short, Echevarría, and Richards-Tutor 2011) and Specially Designed Academic Input in English (SDAIE) (Cline and Necochea 2003). As an example, I shall discuss briefly how undergraduate academic literacies were scaffolded on a teacher education programme delivered in Oman for participants with low entry-level proficiencies in English (Atkins, Lamb, and Wedell 2009).

1. The problem: entry-level English language proficiencies across the region

This chapter addresses a localised question: how higher education institutions in the Arabian Peninsula can best support students to acquire the communicative skills and practices they need to participate successfully in their academic programmes. However, the challenge of supporting the construction of academic literacies is one faced by all HEIs around the globe. It is a significant challenge because as Lea and Street (2006) point out academic literacies are not sets of trainable, transferrable study skills, applicable across tertiary academic contexts.

I have argued elsewhere (Green 2020) that academic literacies are best understood as socially constructed, genred ways of using language, specific to particular academic communities (Wenger 2006,

Swales 2016). They enable the construction and communication of knowledge within those communities, at various levels of legitimate participation (Lave and Wenger 1991). As such academic literacies interweave *declarative* knowledge of disciplinary content (concepts, theories, methodologies), *procedural* knowledge of how that disciplinary content may be communicated in genred ways, and an understanding of the disciplinary and institutional *contexts* for this construction and sharing of disciplinary knowledge. The import of this is that sociologists, biologists, and civil engineers do not simply construct different kinds of knowledge, they communicate this knowledge in different, disciplinary *ways*. This disciplinary differentiation has long been evident at a professional level (Hyland 2000), but work such as Nesi and Gardner's (2012) corpus-based analysis of assessed written genres in UK universities has shown how much disciplinary variation there is in student writing. For this reason, although 'academic literacy' in the singular remains a valid generic concept, in practice we are always dealing with a particular literacy or literacies, which must be understood as the tacit or explicit preserve of disciplinary community *insiders.*

Academic literacies are culturally defined ways of using language. Although they are not reducible to language proficiency, they do depend upon it: it is impossible to construct an academic literacy without a certain level of general language proficiency. For this reason, the challenges of supporting the construction of academic literacies are especially acute in contexts where students study in a second language, especially where they move from secondary education in one language to higher education in another, as in much of the Arabian Peninsula. Students may lack both the foundational English-medium academic literacy practices that an EMI secondary education would provide and the core English language proficiency they need to *begin* to construct appropriate academic literacies and to cope with their first-year undergraduate studies. That this is the case, and on a global scale, is indicated by Macaro et al. (2018), a review of 83 studies of EMI from around the world. They report widespread concerns on the part of staff and students about the inadequacy for undergraduate study of students' English language proficiencies.

Regarding the Arabian Peninsula, I would argue that the language problem is both regional and structural. I think this may be indicated by comparing the English language proficiency requirements for direct entry to undergraduate degree programmes in the Arabian Peninsula with those in the US or the UK. In the latter, HEIs require second language English speakers to demonstrate a proficiency of B2 on the Council of Europe's CEFR scale (Council of Europe 2011), typically evidenced by an overall IELTS (IELTS, 2021) score of 6.0 or above. Although the evidence on the links between IELTS scores and language behaviour and academic performance is mixed (see for example Ingram and Bayliss 2007, Kerstjens and Nery 2000, Paul 2007), CEFR B2 does seem to indicate the level of English proficiency students require in order to participate in undergraduate studies, at least - to flag here the main point I wish to make in this chapter - *within current organisations of teaching and learning*. In the Arabian Peninsula, English requirements for direct entry are markedly lower. These vary across institutions and disciplines, and to some extent between state and private institutions, but they typically fall within the CEFR B1 band. Two Emirati universities may stand as examples. For the 2021-22 academic year, UAE University requires 5.5; Al Ghurair University, 5.0 or 4.5 depending on programme (United Arab Emirates University, 2021, Al Ghurair University, 2021). It has been estimated that learners need 180-260 hours of study to move from B1 to B2 (Knight, 2018), so there is a significant gap between the proficiencies with which students enter undergraduate studies and those required to cope successfully with them.

The consequences of this on student learning are both predictable and evidenced. The difficulties students face in coping with their studies because of English language limitations are widely reported.

Belhiah and Elhami (2015) report a survey of 500 students and 100 teachers in six universities in the UAE with regard to the effectiveness of EMI and found widespread disquiet about students' ability to cope with their studies because of their limited English, echoing the situation reported by Macaro et al. (2018). Of equal interest are the strategic responses of tutors. One widely reported response is translanguaging (Carroll and Van den Hoven, 2017; Ghobain, 2015). Ghobain (2015) for example, discusses a number of studies from higher education contexts in Saudi Arabia, and wider afield, all of them highlighting failures in EMI and showing how lecturers successfully used Arabic to scaffold students' understandings of course content, in many cases embedding English terminology in largely Arabic-medium pedagogic discourse. There are many good arguments for encouraging the systematic use of L1 as a scaffold to learning (Cook 2010), but there is an inevitable risk of L1 effectively replacing L2. This is problematic where the construction of English-medium disciplinary literacies, and thus the ability to participate in disciplinary discourse communities beyond the Arabian Peninsula, remains a curricular objective, as is the case in most HEIs across the region.

## 2. Institutional responses in the Arabian Peninsula: discrete English for Academic Purposes provision

Institutional responses to the problems posed by this linguistic gap vary across the region and between institutions but there are common patterns. Almost all HEIs maintain pre-undergraduate foundation studies programmes offering study-related subjects including, for example, Maths and ICT but generally emphasising General English and English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP) (see for example Oman Accreditation Council 2005). Such courses typically consolidate the English language instruction students received in secondary education and extend it through training in general academic literacy practices such as strategic reading and listening, note-taking, writing from sources, doing oral presentations and developing arguments in writing. Their overall aim is to ensure first year undergraduates commence their studies with a CEFR B1 proficiency. This, however, does not solve the structural problem, which is the discrepancy between CEFR B1 and the B2 level actually required for first year study. So most higher education institutions offer in-sessional English either as EGAP or some form of English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP) instruction, that is instruction oriented towards the written or spoken genres and the literacy practices characteristic of specific fields.

Such pre and in-sessional academic literacy instruction is typically designed and delivered by staff trained in English Language Teaching (ELT) working in or from discrete academic units variously designated as language centres, general requirements units, foundation studies departments, study skills units, writing centres or English departments. What they share is an institutional separation from the disciplinary departments they aim to serve. This separation of disciplinary teaching from language/literacy instruction is in fact a structural feature of HE across the Arabian Peninsula, as it is in the UK, the US and indeed around the globe. This separation is, in my view, a very large part of the problem.

I have argued elsewhere (Green 2016, 2020) that one of the consequences of this separation is the creation of an insider/outsider situation: the people tasked with scaffolding the construction of academic literacies typically lack the literacies their students need to acquire. An ELT-trained teacher tasked with designing an ESAP course for first-year civil engineers may well lack understanding of engineering concepts, of analytical and investigative procedures and tools, of the specific genres through which civil engineers communicate, and of both the international civil engineering discourse community and the specific institutional community of practice – the programme or school - in which the students must operate. This in turn creates two further problems.

The first is the difficulty of ensuring that academic literacy instruction is 'authentic' in the sense of representing the disciplinary literacy practices that students actually require. It is very difficult to see how the teacher above could design a course that accurately represented the civil engineering practices in use, nor have insight into the students' learning needs. Although there are well-established needs analysis procedures in EAP (Bocanegra-Valle 2016), and although many ESAP teachers can draw on the expertise and advice of disciplinary insiders to some degree, these alone cannot compensate for a fundamental lack of disciplinary understanding.

The second problem is to do with 'timeliness' (Green 2016, 2020). There are two dimensions to this. The first is a simple quantitative issue: if the time needed to move from CEFR B1 to CEFR B2 is roughly 180-200 hours, in-sessional language instruction programmes running alongside first year disciplinary teaching are unlikely to bear fruit in terms of significantly improved student proficiencies until close to the *end* of that year. The basic problem is that if students enter their first year with CEFR B1, no in-sessional programme is going to get them to B2 in time to support their first-year studies. The second dimension is rather different. This is to do with providing language and literacy instruction *when* students experience the need for it. As students begin their disciplinary studies and they start reading, attending lectures, trying to take notes, beginning to work on modular assessments and so on they begin to experience cognitive and rhetorical challenges. These difficulties may be experienced differently by individual students but as students move through their programmes over time there are likely to be common patterns i.e. appreciable numbers of students will be struggling with the same thing at the same time. Although a disciplinary tutor is likely to be aware of these emerging and unfolding challenges, an EAP tutor working outside the programme is unlikely to understand the rhythms of the programme nor the way literacy challenges emerge over time. As community outsiders, EAP teachers are not only ill-positioned to provide authentic input, but also to do so at the points in the students' studies when it is most needed.

## 3. An alternative approach: integrated content-literacy curricula and a language-aware pedagogy

I have argued elsewhere that there is an alternative to the model sketched out above (see Green 2020 for a fuller discussion). The approach is based on two principles. The first is that disciplinary and literacy curricula and instruction should be integrated as far as possible, so that curricular space may be given to 'making language visible' (Bond 2020), that is, making language a focus of discussion and instruction in the disciplinary classroom. The second is that disciplinary instruction should be enacted through a 'language-aware pedagogy' to facilitate comprehension of input. I shall sketch out this approach below and will then discuss an exemplary case from Oman (Atkins, Lamb, and Wedell 2009) to show how cohorts of Omani primary and secondary school teachers, with entry English levels at the low end of CEFR B1 (IELTS 4.5), were supported in their studies on a Russell Group university BA (Green 2020). Although the particular organisation of the programme reflected the exigencies of delivery in the specific context, the integration of content and literacy instruction and the deployment of a language-aware pedagogy have, in my view, much to offer higher education institutions in the Arabian Peninsula.

The separation of disciplinary or content teaching from literacy instruction that structures higher education around the globe has been challenged repeatedly over the last 30 years, from different perspectives. Theorists working within the Writing in the Disciplines (WID) tradition (Clughen and Hardy 2012, Deane and O'Neill 2011), the Integrating Content and Language in Higher Education (ICL) tradition (Gustafsson et al. 2011) and the English for Specific Purposes tradition (Wingate 2015) have all argued for curricular integrations of different kinds. Their shared intention is to make disciplinary literacy practices the object of explicit attention within disciplinary curricula so that students may be given

explicit guidance as to the practices they must master and the literacy standards they must meet. In so doing they believe it is possible to subvert what Lillis (2001, 53) has memorably called 'the institutional practice of mystery'.

These perspectives may be placed on a continuum. One pole emphasises the role of disciplinary lecturers in making explicit and visible the communicative practices of their discourse community. As Mitchell and Evison (2006: 72) write: 'Teaching writing should … be part of the responsibility of disciplinary academics and should occur within the discipline's curriculum'. What is being advocated here is a curricular expansion in which a disciplinary tutor takes the lead role in supporting students with their literacy development. So, for example, a sociology lecturer setting a written assignment might ordinarily scaffold it by helping students unpack the assignment requirements, suggesting reading, and possibly commenting on draft work. A WID approach would go much further: the lecturer would seek to exploit the completion of the assignment as a way of making explicit, modelling, and perhaps even critiquing the practices students need to engage in, and the skills they need to deploy in order to complete the task. There are any number of such practices a tutor might focus on: perhaps the use of sources in building up an argument (Tang 2009), or the way sources can be read both 'centrifugally' and 'centripetally' (Halasek 1999) or perhaps surface aspects of register. Rose et al. (2008) report such an instructional design in which reading, writing and discussion of texts were brought into the disciplinary classroom, and its application in an undergraduate health sciences context.

However, this approach requires that the disciplinary tutor have an explicit understanding of the literacy practices of their field, which is by no means assured (Bond 2020), and that the lecturer enjoy significant freedom over the curriculum. These are significant obstacles, certainly within a global higher education sector structured by a language/content dichotomy. The other pole emphasises the collaboration of disciplinary academics and literacy specialists (EGAP/ESAP teachers). In such collaborations, a literacy specialist works with a disciplinary specialist to help make explicit and to train literacy practices relevant to the students' ongoing studies. Again a continuum might be identified running from team-teaching in which the team would co-plan and co-teach disciplinary teaching with an eye to both content and language/literacy (Dudley-Evans 2001) to something like the intervention described in Webster and Green (2021), where a TESOL lecturer and an EAP lecturer worked together on a practice assignment, related to but not but not actually part of the assessed programme. Such initiatives have the advantage of allowing disciplinary tutors to remain within their academic comfort zone so long as they work systematically with a literacy tutor.

I argued above that two key problems of the separation of literacy instruction from disciplinary instruction are a lack of authenticity and a lack of timeliness. I would argue that where literacy and disciplinary instruction can be integrated, these challenges disappear. If literacy instruction is connected to the ongoing work students have to do in their disciplinary courses, it is by definition authentic, and as it will occur when the students are focused on this work, it will also, always, be timely.

The second principle is the systematic deployment of a 'language-aware pedagogy', a view based chiefly on the work of Sheltered Instruction (SI) theorists (Echevarría, Vogt, and Short 2008) and Specially Designed Academic Input in English (SDAIE) theorists (Cline and Necochea 2003). These approaches share two assumptions. The first is that second language learners, at any age, can acquire a functional competence in a second language, at least in part, through communicative interaction. They emphasise the role of comprehensible input (Krashen 1985), of negotiation of meaning as a way of co-constructing comprehensible input and of noticing interlanguage gaps, and of communicative output as a way of testing hypotheses, of moving from semantic to syntactic processing and of proceduralisation (Gass and

Mackey 2007). Such approaches in no way preclude the explicit teaching and learning of language, rather such instruction is seen as complementary and interactive.

The second assumption is that it is possible to make cognitively unmodified academic input accessible to students through systematic linguistic and interactional modification. Both SI and SDAIE offer well-developed instructional designs (for example the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol) covering all aspects of curricular delivery and classroom practice with the aims of facilitating language acquisition and making unsimplified academic content accessible to students with low English language proficiencies. Many of the features of these instructional designs are common to mainstream pedagogic practice: for example both approaches emphasise the importance of creating a stress-free learning environment in which learners feel secure and free to push their own boundaries; of making clear links between present and previous learning and connections between classroom learning and learners' own life experience; of exploiting all available affordances, such as realia and visual aids, to assist comprehension; and of helping students develop and use problem-solving strategies. SDAIE advocates a technique of 'chunking and webbing' in which curricular content is broken down into manageable learning points or 'chunks' which are systematically 'webbed' or linked to other learning points, and both approaches emphasise the importance of balancing input and output or input and application activities. Both approaches stress the importance of facilitating interaction between students and students, and students and teachers in classroom tasks. What is most distinctive in terms of pedagogic practice, compared to mainstream disciplinary teaching, is a commitment to the systematic use of linguistic and interactional modification in the classroom, and the facilitation of negotiation of meaning, in order to allow students to co-construct comprehensible input.

Taken together these two currents offer a pedagogic approach upon which, in my view, HEIs in the Arabian Peninsula would do well to reflect. An integrated literacy and content curriculum could offer students the chance to engage with support about both the construction of disciplinary knowledge and the communication of that knowledge in speech and writing. Further, it would do so in a way that would ensure that literacy input would always be authentic – reflecting the literacy practices students need to acquire – and always timely, as it would emerge from the ongoing work of the disciplinary programme. A language-aware pedagogy could mean that students with relatively low English language proficiencies would be able to co-construct comprehensible input in their disciplinary classrooms. Their teachers, instead of expecting them to display a communicative language ability they do not have and cannot achieve within the time-frame of their first year studies, would bring their *own* language use within the accessible range of their students.

I would like now to touch upon a case that I believe represents an example of the pedagogy I have suggested above, fuller treatments of which are contained in Atkins, Lamb, and Wedell (2009) and Green (2020). Atkins, Lamb, and Wedell (2009) offers an informative account of the project from a number of perspectives. Green (2020) offers a full account of the scaffolding of academic literacies on the programme and is the source for the present chapter. It also offers an account of the methodology used to gather and analyse data for the unpublished doctoral research that formed the basis of the publications.

The BA Educational Studies (TESOL), was a three-year undergraduate degree programme designed by staff from the University of Leeds and taught collaboratively by Leeds university staff and staff engaged locally by the Omani Ministry of Education to six overlapping cohorts of Omani primary and secondary English language teachers over the period 1999-2008 (Atkins and Griffiths 2009). The programme was commissioned as part of a major curriculum reform project initiated by the Omani Ministry of Education,

a reform which required teachers with degree-level understandings of second language learning and teaching methodologies. To my knowledge, it remains one of the largest such collaborative teacher education initiatives on the Arabian Peninsula.

845 students completed the programme, of 921 who commenced it (Atkins and Griffiths, 2009), 91% of whom achieved an honours degree, the mode award being Lower Second. Although the completion rates and results may seem unimpressive compared with undergraduate pass rates at UK universities, they might be more so when key features of the context are clarified. The first is that the students remained serving full-time English teachers throughout their studies. They were released for one day in the working week to attend a regional training centre but apart from that they were expected to use their evenings, weekends and vacations for study purposes. The second is that because students already had diploma-level qualifications from Omani colleges of education, they went directly into Level II of their BA. This meant that they skipped the 'grace year' afforded to many UK undergraduates, that is, a first year in which grades do not count to final degree classifications. The third, and for the purposes of this chapter, the most significant feature was that the vast majority of students started with a language proficiency at the bottom end of CEFR B1, IELTS 4.5, evidenced by an IELTS test, a Cambridge PET or a comparable local examination. The fourth is that discrete English for Academic Purposes provision was largely absent from the programme. The students were afforded a two-week (10-day) pre-sessional programme focused on academic reading and writing strategies, culminating in a 1500-word written assignment, before they commenced their studies, and they were given a further five hours of study focused on using source materials, summarising and referencing in the first day-release block (see below). That was the sum total of the discrete EAP provision for the whole of the first year of the students' studies.

As I have argued in Green (2020) I believe the students were successful partly because of their own commitment and determination but also because of a highly unusual organisation of teaching and learning characterised by two key features. The first was an integration of content and literacy instruction. As I have indicated above, the amount of *discrete* academic literacy / EAP provision afforded was very limited but this in no way represented the full extent of academic literacy work. What was characteristic of the BA was that academic literacy was interwoven with content teaching. Teaching was effectively given a dual aspect, a focus on the *construction* of knowledge and on the *communication* of knowledge. Although discrete academic literacy provision was so limited, disciplinary teaching was infused throughout with academic literacy work. The second was the enactment of a language-aware pedagogy which facilitated classroom discussion and negotiation of meaning. I shall follow Green (2020) here in discussing this organisation of teaching and learning under two headings: making input comprehensible, and scaffolding output.

There were two aspects to the way input was made accessible. Teaching on the BA was organised in two modes: intensive and extensive. The intensive modes were taught in vacation periods in two or six-week blocks, five hours per day, five days per week. These were led by Leeds teaching staff but co-taught with locally engaged 'regional tutors' (Gracey 2009) and the focus was on introducing and clarifying modular concepts. The extensive mode was covered by regional tutors alone and consisted of weekly 'day-release' sessions at regional training centres and a programme of school visits. Here the focus was twofold: on the consolidation and application of modular concepts and on completion of modular assignments.

These two modes provided two complementary learning experiences, allowing the students to move from comprehending input (through reading, and negotiation of meaning in class), deep processing of

ideas (Marton and Säljö 1976) through application to their own working experiences, and finally to output through the writing of their assignments. A similar movement was built into the structure of intensive sessions and day-release sessions. Modular teaching in intensive blocks was always divided into a 1.25 hour lecture, in which concepts were presented, delivered by a Leeds staff member, followed by 1.25 hour split-group seminars led by the regional tutor and the Leeds staff member, in which concepts were clarified through task-based discussion. Day-release sessions were structured through plenary phases in which the application of concepts to local contexts, or aspects of the assignment would be discussed, followed by a phase where students would work individually on their assignments and have individual assignment-related tutorials. The relation between these modes is illustrated in Figure 1 below.

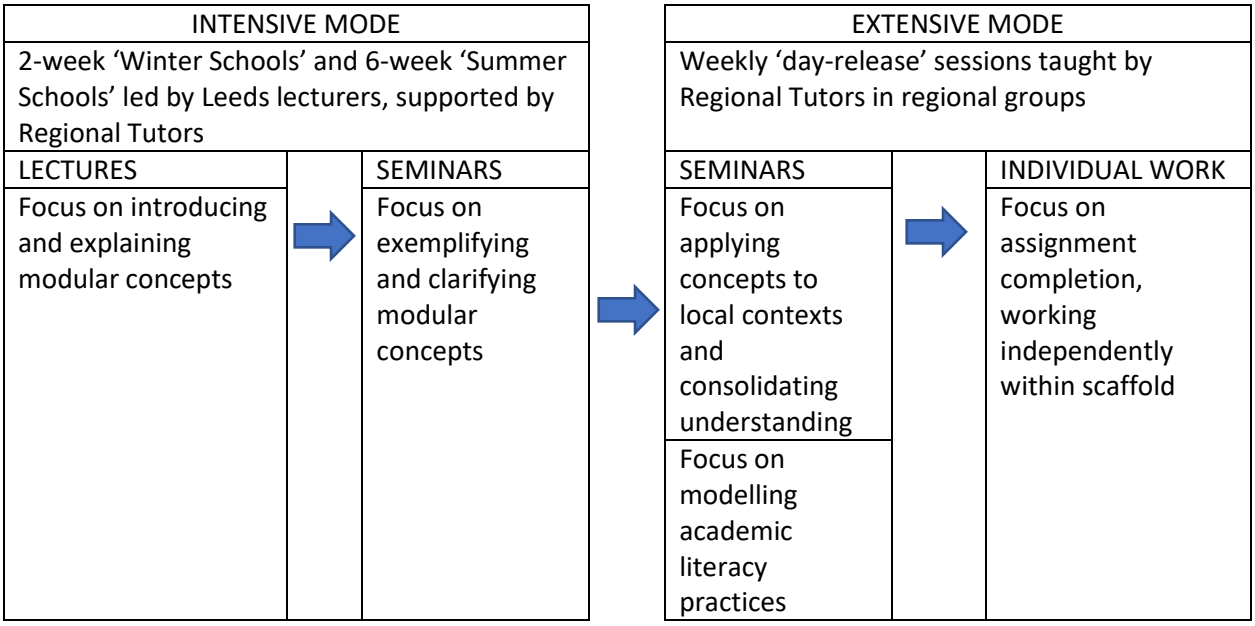


Figure 1: The organisation of modular teaching on the BA

The second concerned the way modular tutors in both intensive and extensive modes modified both linguistic input and classroom interaction to facilitate negotiation of meaning. One key fact was that all of the staff teaching on the BA were language education specialists with TESOL backgrounds. As language education specialists they had insight into the cognitive challenges that the students faced. They also understood how abstract ideas could be made comprehensible through concrete, familiar examples and through explicit connections with ideas already encountered, and with the students' own experience. As TESOL practitioners, they were also acutely aware of the linguistic challenges their students faced, and the ways that language and classroom interaction could be modified to render input comprehensible. Teachers engaged in systematic grading of their own speech and were able to modify input to ensure comprehension. Lecturers in input sessions would use strategies like systematic concept-checking and breaking down input into short 'chunks' punctuated with pause for peer-checking and clarification questions. Seminar leaders offered further opportunities for negotiating meaning in the context of discussions of applications of concepts to concrete examples. The net result of these affordances was that students with English language proficiencies at the very lowest end of the CEFR B1 band were actually able to grasp, and process in non-superficial ways, unsimplified input about second language learning and language teaching methodology appropriate to Level II of a Russell Group university BA.

The organisation of teaching and learning served to make input comprehensible. It also served to scaffold assessed output. This was one of the principal roles of the locally engaged regional tutors and involved a range of support practices addressing problems of content, theoretical framing, genre-related matters of textual structure, development of argument, writing process and register. Green (2020) summarises the principal kinds of support regional tutors offered as: helping students clarify key concepts; helping them analyse assignment questions to identify key requirements; helping students plan outlines; modelling specific elements or practices in the assignment such as going through reading lists or note-taking; responding individually to outlines and drafts; helping students manage the process of completing assignments through co-creating a staged process with sequenced outputs and feedback points; and mediation of feedback on assessed assignments. In the first year of the programme students completed three 3000-word assignments, the first of which was scaffolded very closely, through for example the prescribed staged process mentioned above. As students moved into their second, and then their third assignment, the scaffolding became progressively looser as students felt better able to take control of their own work. An example of this scaffolding pattern for one regional group, adapted from Green (2020: 130) is given below in Figure 2.

| Assignment support activities, Assignments 1-3, Day-release blocks 1 & 2 | Ass. 1 | Ass. 2 | Ass. 3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Modular concepts | | | |
| Guided, plenary class discussion to review WS/SS sessions | X | X | X |
| Guided, plenary class discussion to apply modular concepts to concrete examples e.g. teaching materials, video clips of lessons | X | | |
| Individualised discussion of observed lessons with regard to modular concepts | X | X | X |
| Assignment rubric | | | |
| Guided, plenary class discussion to analyse and 'unpack' rubric | X | X | X |
| Non-guided small-group discussion of the rubric | | X | |
| Reading practices | | | |
| Guided plenary class review modular reading list | X | | |
| Guided plenary/individual literature search | X | | |
| Guided plenary/individual note-taking | X | | |
| Managing the process | | | |
| Guided plenary discussion of a process checklist | X | | |
| Non-guided small-group discussion of a process checklist | | X | X |
| Individual completion of a process checklist | X | X | X |
| The pedagogic extension | | | |
| Guided, plenary analysis of sample pedagogic extension | X | X | X |
| Non-guided, small-group discussion of pedagogic extension | X | | |
| Individual tutor feedback on pedagogic extension: email | X | X | X |
| Individual tutor feedback on pedagogic extension: tutorial | X | X | X |
| Writing the assignment | | | |
| Non-guided individualised reading of a sample assignment | X | | |
| Guided plenary class discussion to construct possible outlines | X | | |
| Guided plenary discussion of plagiarism and strategies to avoid this | X | | |
| Individual tutor feedback on outline: email | X | X | X |
| Individual tutor feedback on outline: tutorial | X | X | X |
| Individual tutor feedback on draft: email | X | X | X |
| Individual tutor feedback on draft: tutorial | X | X | X |
| Feedback | | | |
| Individual reading and reflection on feedback sheets from the university | X | X | X |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Individualised discussion of feedback: tutorial | X | X | X |

Figure 2: The scaffolding of assignment writing on the BA in one regional group.

This assignment support was both authentic and timely. As Green (2020, 104) writes:

> It was authentic because the support offered focused on students' actual assignment writing: the support was targeted at the specific challenges posed by the writing of the specific modular assignments. The modelling of note-taking practices, for example, took place in the context of looking at one of the sources for the first assignment. The work on planning writing processes took place in the context of the planning of the first assignment. There was no generic input and therefore no question of irrelevance. Support was also appropriately timely because the work was undertaken when the students needed to do it: input was provided to tackle specific challenges as they arose over the course of the assignment-writing period.

## 4. Discussion

In the brief discussion above of the Leeds BA, I have tried to show how a particular approach to curricular organisation and delivery was used to overcome the problems posed by direct entry into undergraduate studies of students with an English language proficiency markedly lower than would be acceptable in the UK and at the bottom end of what would be acceptable elsewhere in the Arabian Peninsula. Specifically, I have tried to show how the integration of disciplinary teaching with literacy instruction meant that it was possible to offer literacy instruction that was fully authentic – it always reflected the practices students needed to master – and always timely as it emerged from the students' disciplinary studies and followed its rhythms. By taking key modular assessments as the focus of literacy support, teaching staff were able to turn literacy events into literacy learning experiences and so use support for specific modular assessments as a way of enabling wider-reaching, formative learning about literacy practices. I have tried too to show how a language-aware teaching staff, operating within an organisation of teaching and learning that afforded movement from input to clarification, consolidation, application and output - were able to modify both linguistic input and classroom interaction, to make unsimplified disciplinary input accessible.

In doing so, and in suggesting the BA as a reference point for discussion of teaching and learning in higher education institutions in the Arabian Peninsula, I am fully aware that the particular organisation of the BA was both a product of the peculiar circumstances in which the programme had to be delivered, and the affordances available to the stakeholders. I am not suggesting that this precise organisation could or should be replicated in higher education contexts in the Arabian Peninsula. However, it is my firm belief that some of the elements of this organisation might be reproducible within higher education contexts and that they are at least worth considering, given the structural problems of language proficiency, the widely reported concerns about EMI higher education in the Arabian Peninsula (Belhiah and Elhami, 2015), and the demonstrable successes of the Leeds /Oman BA. In the sections below I outline possible changes and how they might be achieved.

One change that I think would be both beneficial and, with institutional commitment, relatively easy to achieve would be a degree of integration of literacy instruction with disciplinary teaching. As I have indicated above, there are a range of options here along a continuum moving from a full curricular expansion led by disciplinary academics in the WID tradition at one end to varying degrees of collaboration between disciplinary staff and academic literacy specialists at the other. A starting point

could be the embedding of academic literacy staff within disciplinary units, with a brief to exploring and establishing collaborations with disciplinary lecturers on an experimental basis in the ways discussed in Bond (2020) and Wingate (2015). I would suggest that such collaborations are best focused on student outputs, perhaps modular assessments, which can be set and marked by disciplinary staff but scaffolded by academic literacy staff in consultation with the disciplinary staff, as in Green (2016) and Webster and Green (2021). Such a collaboration would mean disciplinary staff could largely remain within their disciplinary content-teaching roles and literacy staff could draw on them for specialist advice or feedback to students and would not be positioned so acutely as disciplinary outsiders. The students would be receiving input directly relevant to their assessments, when they needed it, and could therefore be expected to see the value of engaging with it. Arguably what would be required most for such a change, apart from institutional vision and leadership, would be a recognition on the part of disciplinary lecturers that the best way of addressing the language and literacy problems students face in their courses is by building literacy instruction into their course assessments, and a willingness to open up their courses and assessments for discussion with embedded literacy specialists. Such collaborations would not obviate the need for foundation studies programmes, nor render in-sessional EGAP or ESAP instruction irrelevant, but they would offer the interpenetration of literacy and content instruction that could only benefit both.

The second change, moving towards a 'language-aware' pedagogy in disciplinary teaching, is probably more important in view of the problems facing EMI education in the Arabian Peninsula, but also rather harder to achieve. What would be required, in my view, would be the adoption of some of the practices associated with SI and SDAIE, many of which are already mainstream, but especially the systematic use of linguistic and interactional modification to make input comprehensible. Disciplinary teachers would need to approach their lectures with their students' language proficiencies in mind, grade their own language input accordingly, and facilitate negotiation of meaning. This would require disciplinary lecturers to develop at least something of the awareness of language that would characterise a language teacher, at least at a tacit, functional level. I suspect that developing such an awareness and acquiring the requisite pedagogic linguistic skills would represent a huge cultural shift for disciplinary academics in HEIs across the Arabian Peninsula. It would require significant shifts in working culture and practice and at a deeper level, shifts in identity. Civil engineers would no longer be able to see themselves as academics exclusively concerned with researching and communicating the content of the field, for whom language is the problem of the student and ameliorating it the problem of a language centre. To engage with a language-aware pedagogy would be to restructure one's identity as an academic professional. So, although I see the adoption of a language-aware pedagogy as the only real way forward, I do not underestimate the challenges it poses.

Such a shift would obviously require committed institutional leadership but some of the practical steps might include the systematic embedding of literacy staff within disciplinary departments and the promotion of their role as language and literacy consultants and academic partners, the inclusion of literacy specialists within student education discussion and decision-making and the establishment of joint fora wherever possible. Rather than running TESOL conferences exclusively attended by EAP teachers, and civil engineering conferences, exclusively attended by civil engineers, thought could be given to running conferences open to both where the focus is on engineering and the pedagogy and discourse of engineering. Such measures would go some way to creating a genuinely inter-disciplinary approach to student education. An integrated approach to recruitment, induction and staff development would also support and encourage disciplinary staff to engage with language and with the pedagogic issues arising from it.

As a final word, the commitment to English-medium instruction poses significant challenges to higher education in the Arabian Peninsula and it may be that in future years that commitment will be qualified, and Arabic Language may be afforded a greater role as a scaffold. However, for so long as English remains the medium of instruction, and for so long as secondary education sectors achieve current levels of English language proficiency, HEIs across the region are likely to face the problems outlined in this chapter. Given the limitations of current approaches to scaffolding academic literacies in the region, I would argue that it behoves HEIs to take two significant steps. The first is to encourage and to facilitate as great an integration of disciplinary and academic literacy curricula as is institutionally possible, through the kinds of inter-disciplinary activity I have suggested above. The second is to make English and its pedagogic use an issue for debate within disciplinary departments and to provide targeted training to make a language-aware pedagogy both possible and routine.

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