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Transforming higher education language and literacy policies: The contribution of ELF

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Introduction

Over the last four decades, student populations in Anglophone universities have become increasingly diverse as a result of widening participation and internationalisation. Widening participation policies have significantly enlarged the number of students from historically underrepresented groups, including a considerable number of students from ethnic minority communities who are multilingual with English as an additional language. The internationalisation of higher education has more than quadrupled in the last four decades. In 2014, 1.3 million postgraduate students studied outside their own country (OECD, 2016), and the largest influx of foreign students has been into universities in English-speaking countries. As data provided by the UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA, 2016) shows, the percentage of international students in UK universities in the year 2014 -15 was 58% in full-time taught post-graduate programmes. The income from internationals students, who pay higher tuition fees than domestic students, is vital for universities, as state funding of higher education has decreased.

These developments mean that multilingual students outnumber monolingual students in many study programmes, and that universities have become environments where English is used as a lingua franca in spoken discourses (Mauranen, 2012). In relation to formal discourses and especially written communication, however, it has been argued that the multilingual composition of the student populations is not acknowledged, and monolingual standards prevail. As Martin (2010: 9) explains, 'UK universities reproduce the monolingual ethos common in much of society, either by ignoring the linguistic repertories of their ethnic minorities, or by treating them as problematic'. Jenkins (2014) criticises the fact that so-called 'international' universities require non-native English speaker students to 'replicate the *national* academic English norms preferred by native English speaker (NES) staff and students' (p. 11) (italics in original) and accommodate to 'standard native academic English' (p. 12). To prepare the ground for my later discussion of the monolingual orientation in Anglophone higher education policies, I wish to express two minor reservations I have with some of these claims.

Martin and a number of other scholars (e.g. Benesch, 2001; Canagarajah , 2002)see the English language policies surrounding academic writing as particularly discriminating against multilingual students. Whilst these students may face some additional linguistic and linguacultural difficulties, I have problems when they are portrayed as the only ones who struggle with having to 'use the preferred language practices of the academic community' (Martin, 2010: 13). Learning the language practices of an academic discourse community[i] means developing academic literacy, which is a learning need for *all* students, native speaker of English or not. As has been recognised long ago, academic language is 'never anyone's mother tongue' (Bourdieu & Passeron 1990: 115). Related to this point, Jenkins's notion of *native* academic English can also be seen as problematic. I would argue that no such

phenomenon exists, and also that national norms should not be of relevance in academic genres. Genres are discipline-specific ways of communication and shaped by academic discourse communities (Swales, 1990), who work globally and include people from many first languages; therefore it is unclear by which specific national norms they should be bound. If students, because they are located in an institution in the UK or the US, are asked to comply with national norms, these, I would assume, come into play only at a superficial level, for example in questions of spelling or grammar. Being familiar with national norms may give some advantage to native-speaker students; however, in relation to the real challenge, that of developing academic literacy, this advantage is small. My argument links to that of Mauranen (2012: 69), who states that

> [t]he acquisition of academic literacies and ways of talking involves much more than a few surface expressions and poses challenges in students' first languages as well… This levels the playing field for those who study in a foreign language, at least to an extent. In international study programmes, much in the way of international research groups, the contact language gets shaped by the needs and contingencies of the situation, loosening and dissolving its ties to a particular culture or origin.

Research evidence (e.g. Jenkins, 2014) suggests that lecturers indeed expect the use of national norms. This is problematic when their feedback gives students the impression that these norms determine success in academic writing (Lea & Street, 1998), and when institutional policies stigmatise students who are not familiar with the norms as deficient. This occurs as the result of fundamental misconceptions about academic literacy and students' learning needs, which underpin current higher education policies. In this chapter, I will discuss the policies and practices surrounding student admission, support and assessment, as they are based on a monolingual ideology and a deficiency view of non-native speakers of English. Next, I will consider recommendations for transformation made by scholars from the fields of Academic Literacies, Multilingualism, Critical EAP and ELF. In the final section, I discuss the theoretical and practical contribution that ELF can make towards the transformation of higher education language and literacy policies.

Existing language policies and practices

Student admission

To be admitted by Anglophone universities, non-native English speakers are required to achieve specific scores in standardised international tests such as IELTS (International English Language Testing System).The tests include speaking, listening, reading and writing, and there has been much debate particularly in relation to the writing component (e.g. Coffin & Hewings, 2004; Moore & Morton, 2005). One of the two writing tasks is an argumentative essay; however, as Coffin and Hewings (2004) have shown, the argumentative and persuasive strategies used in IELTS essays are different from those expected in academic genres. Similarly, Moore and Morton (2005: 43) point out that the writing required in IELTS tests represents 'public non-academic genres and thus should not be thought of as an appropriate

model for university writing'. Thus, the test has little predictive validity for students' performance in academic writing, and provides inadequate preparation, as students will have to unlearn certain strategies and conventions when they write at university.

Another problem with the admission system is the rigid categorisation of students into non-native speakers versus native speakers of English, categories which in UK universities are used synonymously with 'international' versus' 'home' students. The latter distinction is only valid in economic and administrative terms, as 'international' students pay much higher tuition fees than home students. Using the distinction between native and non-native speakers of English to describe language competence has long been criticised (e.g. Leung et al, 1997); however, the assumptions that (1) students from non-Anglophone countries are per se non-native speakers of English, and (2) non-native speakers' of English language competence is per se inferior to that of native speakers, continue to underpin university admission and, as I will show in the next section, the provision of language support. Requiring English language proficiency tests only from 'international' students from non-Anglophone countries, but not from 'home' students ignores the fact that many students of the latter category come from ethnic minority backgrounds with English as an additional language. Because they have taken their school-leaving certificate in the English secondary education system –although they might have spent only a relatively short time in that system-, they are admitted to university on the same assumption as students whose first language is English, namely that they are linguistically fit for academic study.

Although the admission policies seem to discriminate against international students, it could also be argued that it is disadvantageous to those of whom no test is required. While students who have to take the entry test are likely to be more aware of, and sensitive to, potential difficulties with academic language and literacy, home students may feel a false security and be less prepared for the challenge of having to deal with unfamiliar discourses and genres.

Support provision

The support offered to students at university is based on the same misconception as the admission policy, attributing too much importance to 'native speaker' language proficiency. Therefore, difficulties that students encounter with the development of academic literacy are often mistaken for language problems, and typically 'non-native' speakers of English are seen as most needy. As a result, language support is often exclusively offered to international students, in pre-sessional courses to get them admitted and in-sessional courses once they have been admitted. These 'English for Academic Purposes' (EAP) courses are typically run by central English language units and designed for students from all disciplines. Therefore they offer little preparation for discipline-specific genres and conventions, but deal with common linguistic and rhetorical features of a hypothetical 'general' academic English. For home students, the support provision is less systematic, and more generally concerned with study skills, of which academic writing is one. A recent survey of 32 universities in the UK (Wingate, 2015) found that much of this support is presented on generic study skills websites. This provision trivialises the complexity and discipline-specificity of academic writing and is deficiency-oriented, targeting students who are seen to be in need of linguistic remedy (see

Turner, 2011, for a discussion of the medical discourses surrounding language support in universities). The students who are prescribed treatment, because they are non-native speakers of English or because they are regarded at risk of failure, are stigmatised as being less capable than others. It has also been found that the generic provision of EAP or study skills support is unpopular with students (Durkin & Main, 2002). The attrition rate on in-sessional courses is high, as Murray (2016: 4) explains, because international students quickly realise the irrelevance of these courses for their subject-specific assignments and 'do not need or want is more of the same general EAP or study skills diet'.

EAP and study skills courses often represent the only support available at universities. As it targets only certain student groups and deals with general language and skills competencies, this provision does in fact fail *all* students by neglecting their need to develop academic literacy. Academic literacy requires the understanding of the communicative practices of the discourse community and can therefore only be developed within the community and taught by its expert members, i.e. the subject lecturers. However, there is no systematic provision of subject-embedded instruction; on the contrary, subject lecturers tend to be reluctant to deal with academic language and literacy, which they see as the responsibility of staff in the English language unit (e.g. Clark & Russell, 2014).

Assessment

In this section I come back to the role that standard English or national norms play in the assessment of students' written assignments. The generic undergraduate and postgraduate marking criteria issued by institutions[ii] do not suggest that they are important. The criteria typically fall into three categories, of which the first is concerned with subject knowledge, and the second with argument and analysis, use of literature and sometimes skills. The third category is usually concerned with presentation, organisation, or structure, and this may include, although mostly implicitly, accuracy of language. In terms of this relatively low weighting of language within the marking criteria, aberrations from standard English should not affect the grade of an assignment unless they are so severe that they prevent the demonstration of subject knowledge and distort meaning.

However, postgraduate students interviewed by Jenkins (2014), for instance, noted that lecturers judged them on grammar or spelling even if the meaning of their texts was not affected. This may be the case because lectures are not specifically trained to be able to recognise fundamental academic literacy problems that lead to unsuccessful student writing, and therefore focus heavily on linguistic errors to explain lower grades. Lea & Street (1998), for example, found that lecturers were unable to identify the underlying epistemological problems in student texts and instead commented on surface features such as grammar or structure. These findings show that assessment and feedback practices is a grey area in which deviations from standard English are, in the absence of a clear policy, dealt with according to lecturers' personal beliefs and practices. As Jenkins (2011: 927) points out, '[a]t its best, the current situation may result in individual university lecturers unilaterally accepting, if not condoning, instances of English that diverge mildly from standard native use but are

nevertheless intelligible to them. On the other hand, at its worst, the situation leads to assumptions that any such divergences are errors in need of remediation'.

Calls for transformation of language policies and practices

The language policies and practices of Anglophone universities have long been criticised by scholars from various fields. The difficulties of non-traditional and multilingual students with the literacy requirements in higher education became the focus of the fields of Academic Literacies and Multilingualism. The other two fields from where critique has been voiced, Critical EAP and ELF, are, by contrast, mostly concerned with non-native speakers of English who want to study through the medium of English.

Common to all four fields is their rejection of traditional or 'pragmatic' EAP, because it 'is concerned with teaching students a set of dominant academic discourse rules, i.e. the Anglo-American type' (Harwood & Hadley, 2004:356). Academic Literacies sees EAP instruction as normative, forcing students to adopt uncritically the norms and conventions of an assumed 'homogeneous culture' of the academy (Lea & Street, 1998: 159), and ignoring factors that influence student writing such as power relations and identity changes (Lillis & Scott, 2007). According to Canagarajah (2002: 32), a scholar associated with both Critical EAP and Multilingualism, 'EAP adopts the normative attitude that the discourses of academic communities are not open to negotiation or criticism'. In addition to these critiques, Critical EAP scholar Benesch (2001: 51) argues against the uncritical way in which EAP teachers prepare students to accommodate to institutional expectations and requirements. This means that 'the traditional EAP teacher is mainly a conduit for efficient inculcation of those requirements rather than an activist who could invite students to question them'. Jenkins (2014), representing the ELF perspective, explains that EAP is underpinned by outdated Second Language Acquisition concepts which regard non-native English as learner language that needs to be remedied.

In the following sections, I take a closer look at the four fields and their proposals for the transformation of language policies and practices.

Academic Literacies

Academic Literacies emerged as a critical voice in the UK in the 1990s and has since become an influential field of study. According to Lillis et al (2015: 8), transformation is 'at the heart of an Academic Literacies approach'. The plural form in the name signals the understanding that literacies are social practices, and that there is not one uniform type of academic discourse. In their seminal paper, Lea and Street (1998) showed that students' difficulties were not caused by language deficiencies, but by conflicting disciplinary requirements they encountered in interdisciplinary programmes , unclear instructions and feedback, and the rejection of previously acquired writing styles and strategies. Several other researchers affiliated to Academic Literacies have highlighted the impact that the imposed regulations can have on student identities (e.g. Ivanič, 1998; Lillis, 2001). As Lillis (2006: 32) points out, Academic Literacies has been useful as 'an oppositional frame to conventional approaches to

student writing', challenging deficit views of student performance, and revealing the existing limitations in writing instruction. However, as Lillis (2006), Lillis and Scott (2007) and most recently Lea (Lillis et al, 2015) admit, more work needs to be done towards a pedagogic application of Academic Literacies, and the research focus that has predominantly been on non-traditional students needs to be widened in order to make an impact beyond individual initiatives.

Lillis and Scott (2007: 13) recommend a pedagogy that (1) explains the epistemological reasons for existing conventions, (2) elicits 'the perspective of writers (whether students or professionals) on the ways in which such conventions impinge on their meaning making' and (3) explores 'alternative ways for meaning making in academia, not least by considering the resources that (student) writers bring to the academy as legitimate tools for meaning making'. More concrete suggestions on how this pedagogy can be achieved are provided by Lea (2004), who gives an example of incorporating Academic Literacies principles into course design, and by Lillis (2006: 34), who proposes four types of one-to-one dialogues between tutors and students to make 'language visible' and to give students an opportunity for expressing their feelings about the imposed conventions. In a recent edited volume, Lillis et al (2015) present 31 case studies of transformation in literacy instruction from various institutional and geographical contexts, which will be useful for the development of a comprehensive pedagogical approach.

Multilingualism

Researchers in Multilingualism are concerned with the mismatch between 'the monolingual ethos and the ideology of English-medium tertiary education and the needs, identities and resources of multilingual students' (Preece & Martin, 2010: 3). They have considered multilingual students' access to, and progression in, higher education (e.g. Martin 2010; Stroud & Kerfoot, 2013), the way in which monolingual policies impact on their identity (e.g. Marshall, 2010; Preece, 2010), and how they can be supported in drawing on their linguistic repertoire (e.g. Canagarajah, 2011; Stroud & Kerfoot, 2013). Studies in multilingualism relate to students from ethnic and linguistic minority backgrounds, who are less privileged than 'international' students (who are of course also multilingual). While many international students come from privileged backgrounds that enable them to go abroad for English-medium education and to pay for the necessary linguistic preparation, multilingual students seek higher education in the countries where their families immigrated, or in 'post-racial' societies such as South Africa where there was previously limited access for certain racial groups. They are often educationally underprepared in comparison to international students; however, at university, at least in countries like the UK, they are prevented access to support courses that are preserved for high-fee paying international students. Another research focus of Multilingualism that is not considered in this chapter is on multilingual scholars who have to publish in English (e.g. Canagarajah, 2002; Lillis & Curry, 2015).

Marshall (2010) gives an example of how the monolingual orientation of Anglophone higher education can impinge on students' identity. He describes how a group of multilingual students at a Canadian university encountered 're-becoming ESL'. These students were

redirected to the deficiency identity that they had as ESL (English as a Second Language) students at secondary school, because the university required them to take remedial academic literacy courses. Students are particularly stigmatised when they speak English varieties of low prestige, or languages with low status in English-speaking countries (Preece & Martin, 2010). A more drastic case of multilingual students' disadvantage is described by Stroud and Kerfoot (2013). They examined language policy in a South-African university, in a higher education context where the participation and success rate of black and coloured students is low. The authors found that at this particular university, which has traditionally been committed to the inclusion of underprivileged students, language policies and practices have reverted from an initially transformative approach to remedial EAP, resulting in 'substantial first year dropout and unsatisfactory overall throughput rates' (p. 399). Therefore, the authors propose a radical change in language policy by 'focusing on *linguistic repertoires* rather than *languages*, on *practices* rather than *proficiency*, and on *translanguaging* rather than *codeswitching* in which students use multiple, multilingual discursive resources in achieving communicative aims' (p. 397; italics in original, references given by the authors are excluded). The recommendations for reforming the undergraduate curriculum include opening up for students 'new spaces of engagement' (p. 401), allowing them to use the social media for the expression of meaning and construction of knowledge, to mix vernacular with the traditional academic genres, and to draw on multimodal resources as well as on their range of languages.

These recommendations resonate with Canagarajah's (2006, 2011), who proposes 'codemeshing' in academic writing, which means that students can use not only their different languages, but also different communicative modes and symbols system , thus shuttling 'between different genres and contexts' (2011: 415). This requires from academics a change of mind set in that 'we must stop treating any textual difference as an unconscious error. We must consider it as a strategic and creative choice by the author to attain his or her rhetorical objectives' (2006: 591). It also requires raising students' awareness that rules and conventions can be negotiated according to the writer's communicative purposes, and teaching 'strategies for rhetorical negotiation so that they can modify, resist, or reorient themselves to the rules in a way favorable to them' (2006: 602).

Critical EAP

Canagarajah's argument that students need to develop a critical attitude towards academic conventions is much in line with those of Critical EAP. This approach is underpinned by Critical Pedagogy and, as Academic Literacies, is based on the understanding that academic discourses are socially constructed, involve hierarchies and power relations and are subject to challenge and change. In her seminal book, Benesch (2001) accepts the role of traditional EAP in helping students to study successfully in the English medium, but challenges the expectation that students accommodate unquestioningly to the imposed rules and conventions. Therefore, according to Benesch, the needs analysis that is typically used in EAP to determine teaching content must be counter posed by a rights analysis which shows students that they have opportunities for negotiation and the choice of resistance. Thus,

‘Critical EAP helps students articulate their resistance, to participate more democratically as members of an academic community and in the larger society’ (2001: 57).

Critical Pedagogy has been criticised for their ‘radical’ discourse which is ‘dangerously dogmatic and judgemental, ‘falling into the very trap it accuses mainstream pragmatist pedagogy of falling into’ (Harwood & Hadley, 2004: 365) and therefore being as prescriptive as the mainstream practices. Critical EAP, in particular, has been accused of being ‘inaccessible and over-theorised’ (Morgan, 2009: 89) and for being ‘always ready to criticise mainstream practices’ (Harwood & Hadley, 2004: 365) without offering pedagogical alternatives. This critique does not take into account that Benesch (2001) devoted one of the two parts of her book to ‘Practice’, providing four examples of implementing Critical EAP. One example describes how the issue of student rights is problematized in a joined EAP/Psychology lecture. In another example, Benesch (1996) shows how classroom activities assist students first to manage disciplinary requirements (i.e. traditional EAP), then to challenge their own position in the academic hierarchy, and eventually to become politically active in relation to the course’s topic, anorexia. However, these examples are not easily applicable to other contexts, and, as Jenkins (2014: 59) points out, they are more concerned with structural rather than linguistic matters. In relation to language policies and practices in Anglophone universities, the most useful message from Critical EAP is the need for an EAP curriculum that does not simply make students accommodate to academic norms and for raising critical awareness of imposed norms in academics and students. From the structural perspective, however, Benesch’s approach of integrating EAP into content courses (Anthropology and Psychology) is instructive, as conventions and practices can only be understood and critiqued within the disciplinary context.

English as an Academic Lingua Franca (ELFA)

ELFA has developed into a ‘lively research field’ (Mauranen, 2012: 66) within ELF and has seen a rapidly growing number of publications over the last decade. It is a relatively recent advocate for transformation of higher education language policies, with Jenkins (2011, 2014) being the main proponent for change. So far, work in this domain has been more focused on the description of academic ELF than on higher education language policies and their impact on ELF users. Also, research into academic ELF has been mainly concerned with spoken language, as evident from the ELFA corpus of academic English (Mauranen 2003, 2012). This corpus contains data from spoken genres such as lectures, conference and seminar presentations , and only recently an additional corpus of informal written genres, called WrELFA, has been compiled (Mauranen 2015). However, I would argue that the existing research evidence from spoken and informal written genres is insufficient to inform the necessary transformation of language policies and practices, as it is formal written academic English that counts for access and assessment. The high-stake written genres pose greater difficulty for students (both native and non-native speakers of English) than spoken or informal communication. Whilst the latter allows speakers to ‘co-construct shared understanding’ (Mauranen et al, 2010: 185) and is governed by ‘natural, or spontaneous, norms’, written discourse is subject to ‘imposed norms’ (Mauranen, 2012: 6), which are not only unfamiliar, but also largely non-negotiable for students[iii].

Jenkins (2014) divides the various approaches to academic English into three categories: (1) conforming approaches, including traditional EAP, as 'they conform by default to native academic English' (p. 49); (2) challenging approaches, including Academic Literacies and Critical EAP, as they challenge the assumptions underpinning EAP; and (3) a paradigm-shifting approach, which is ELFA. ELFA's 'prime concern is with non-mother-tongue international academics (at any level in their career) who use English in intercultural communication in academic contexts anywhere in the world' (Jenkins, 2014: 61), and a main contribution has been the corpus evidence of how English is used as a contact language in academic contexts. However, as explained above, ELFA research into formal written academic genres is still lacking, but necessary to inform policy change. If ELF scholars decided to engage with the analysis of non-native speakers' written academic work, they could draw on corpora of academic English that consist fully or partly of work by non-native speakers (e.g. Biber, 2006; Nesi & Gardner, 2012).

Jenkins's (2014) survey of 166 university lecturers from institutions with English as the medium of instruction (EMI) from around the world and her interviews with 34 international postgraduate students in a UK university provide important evidence that clear institutional policies as well as teacher education in relation to English language requirements are needed. The majority of questionnaire respondents found their institution's language policies useful on the grounds that they 'demonstrate to students that "good" English is expected ' (p. 130), and about half of the respondents considered it important that students conform to 'native' English, 'specifically "standard" North American and British academic English' (p. 158). And even the other half, who proclaimed to be tolerant of divergences from standard English, referred to the underlying concept of 'good' or 'correct' English; there was little understanding that variations might be acceptable. The interviews revealed that the students 'subscribed at least to some extent to the "native English is the best" ideology' (p. 201); however, they found inconsistencies in the language requirements imposed by their supervisors and noticed the effect of these requirements on their identities and self-esteem. Based on these findings, Jenkins puts forward some clear recommendations for 'systemic changes' in higher education policies and practices that 'go far beyond the surface level tinkering that has largely taken place so far' (p. 202).

One recommendation represents a core ELF principle, namely that mutual intelligibility rather than conformity to a particular version of English should be the only criterion for spoken and written communication in the academic community within and outside institutions. If members of the academic community can understand the meaning conveyed in the student's message, linguistic deviations from the local norms are irrelevant. Further recommendations are concerned with a better understanding of the difficulties of studying in a foreign language and subsequent enhancement of student support by giving them more time to complete academic work and more access to advice by lecturers. This all, as Jenkins explains, would require educating home staff and students to develop their intercultural awareness and their understanding that accommodation needs to be two-directional. In other words, instead of expecting that international students adapt to the local environment, home staff and students should also learn to accept and welcome difference. And, going back to my

earlier argument, they need to understand that academic communication is specific to academic discourse communities, which consist of speakers of various first languages, rather than specific to nations.

The role of ELF in transforming language and literacy policies

All four fields discussed in the previous section recognise that current higher education policies, which favour 'native speaker' language proficiency and norm-driven assessment standards, ignore the diversity of student populations and disadvantage certain student groups. In relation to academic literacy development, they fail *all* students, as I have argued earlier. The fields converge in their calls for language policies and practices that encourage rather than ignore multilingualism and encompass students' linguistic, cultural and social diversity. Two main appeals come across. The first, called 'rights analysis' by Critical EAP, is that students must be given the opportunity to negotiate and resist traditional conventions. The second appeal is that students should be allowed to draw on their 'linguistic repertoires' and 'multiple, multilingual discursive resources' (Stroud & Kerfoot, 2013: 397), use 'codemeshing' (Canagarajah, 2006, 2011), or 'alternative ways of meaning making'(Lillis & Scott, 20007: 13).This could be achieved by broadening the range of assessment formats from the dominant formal academic essay in English to assignments in different languages and modes. However, the use of different languages in assignments would create administrative difficulties and would most certainly meet resistance by university managers and academics. As English is likely to continue to be the only language allowed in assignments, it is the ELF principle of mutual intelligibility that offers the most realistic way forward. ELF scholars can offer the theoretical underpinning as well as research evidence from spoken communication to demonstrate to university staff that what is relevant is 'accuracy and effectiveness in reporting findings and arguments', not the 'native-likeness' of grammar, spelling or expression (Mauranen, 2008: 258).

However, as sound as the ELF argument may be, achieving change in university policies and practices is a monumental task, as it requires dealing with entrenched monolingual beliefs and fears of 'dumbing down'. And even if the mutual intelligibility principle was accepted, much work would need to be invested in staff development. Lecturers would require training to gain the linguistic awareness that would enable them to recognise textual features that compromise meaning and to accept non-native forms that do not. To make training of this kind possible, ELF researchers would need to conduct in-depth analyses of academic texts written by non-native speakers and provide a framework and detailed examples of mutual intelligibility in written discourse. If the principle of mutual intelligibility would make its way into higher education assessment policies and practices, this would be of benefit not only to international and multilingual students, but also to 'home' students with English as their first language. This is because the policy would clearly signal that academic language is not a fixed code that can be learned as a technical skill, but is the academic community's main mode of constructing and communicating knowledge and therefore flexible, negotiable and mutable. In addition to changes in assessment, a mutual intelligibility policy would also lead to the transformation (if not rejection) of admission tests, and to a student support system that

focuses on the academic literacy development of *all* students rather than on the language deficiencies of a few.

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[i] The terms 'academic discourse community' and 'academic discipline', which are often used interchangeably, have been criticised for being vague, as they suggest homogenous and static entities (e.g. Hyland, 2008).

[ii] It is beyond the scope of this chapter to provide a systematic analysis of universities' assessment criteria. For my argument here, I have studied the assessment criteria of five UK universities (Anglia Ruskin, Bristol, Edinburgh, Greenwich, King's College London) and the guidelines on assessment by the UK Quality Assurance Agency (http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/understanding-assessment.pdf, accessed 20 April 2016).

[iii] This is of course also the case for formal oral presentations; however, these are not as widely used for assessment as written assignments.