

INFLUENCE OF ENGLISH ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF PHYSIOTHERAPY UDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

**R.M.I.M. Weerasekara^{1*}, S.I. Wadugodapitiya¹, E. Liyanage¹, T.D. Dissanayaka¹,
A.L.I. Prasanna¹, D.T. Kodikara¹ and B.M.H.S.K. Banneheka²**

¹*Department of Physiotherapy, Faculty of Allied Health Sciences,
University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka*

²*Department of Basic Sciences, Faculty of Dental Sciences, University of Peradeniya,
Sri Lanka*

**isankweerasekara@yahoo.com*

Transition of students from schools to higher education system is a great achievement, which brings in many challenges for them to fare well through the course. The medium of instruction during primary and secondary education for most of the Sri Lankan students is either Sinhala or Tamil languages. However, the medium of instruction turns to English once the student enters the university. Due to globalization English language plays a vital role in the Sri Lankan Higher education system. In the University there are many factors such as gender, socio-economical status, interest, attendance, teaching aids and methods, environmental factors and proficiency in language that determine the level of academic performance. This retrospective cross sectional study was carried out to find if proficiency in English language has an influence on academic performance of B.Sc. Physiotherapy students in the Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, University of Peradeniya. The Grade Point Average (GPA) of the Physiotherapy course and the marks obtained in English Language course of batches 2005/2006, 2006/2007 & 2007/2008 were collected. The average marks for English language was considered as the indicator of each student's English knowledge and the GPAs of non-clinical and clinical modules were considered as indicators of the academic performance. Spearman correlation analysis was used to find the relationship between English knowledge and academic performance. In total, data of 93 students was obtained. Analysis of correlation between GPAs of non-clinical modules and English marks of all three batches are; 2005/2006 ($p=0.011$), 2006/2007 ($p<0.001$), 2007/2008 ($p<0.001$) and GPAs of clinical modules and English marks of all three batches are; 2005/2006 ($p=0.032$), 2006/2007 ($p=0.001$), 2007/2008 ($p=0.010$). Results revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between GPAs of non-clinical and clinical modules and English marks of all three batches, which shows that knowledge of English has an influence on academic performance. Furthermore it was observed that knowledge of English has a higher impact on academic performance of non-clinical modules than on clinical modules. Unlike non-clinical modules, which focus on writing skills, grammar and vocabulary; clinical modules are more focused on practical performance and communication through gestures which could be reasons for the difference in influence of English knowledge.