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Sustainable English Language Development among EFL Transfer Students: Perspectives from Diploma Graduates at King Faisal University

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Abstract. The expansion of English-medium instruction in higher education has increased the academic communication demands placed on EFL students, particularly those transitioning from diploma to bachelor-level programs. There is increasing studies on EMI and academic literacies, while less has focused on language development for transfer students in the context of disciplinary learning environments. This study examines the issue of sustainable language development of EFL transfer students at King Faisal University. This study used a qualitative exploratory approach, and respondents were 24 transfer students in EMI program. Semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were used to collect data, which was then analyzed using thematic analysis. Results showed four main problems: academic literacy issues, oral communication limitations, lexical limitations and competing academic priorities. Participants experienced the difficulty with the discipline-specific use of vocabulary, classroom interaction and adaptation to academic writing after transition into bachelor level study. The results indicate that communication difficulties were not just a result of the individual's language level, but also the demands of the academic workload and learning conditions of EMI programs. The study suggests that it is important to provide EMI transfer students with academic communication support within a discipline course to improve their long-term language development.

Keywords. academic literacy; EFL transfer students; English-medium Instruction; language development; disciplinary communication

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1. Introduction

The growth of English-medium instruction (EMI) in higher education has increased the academic and communicative demands placed on students. English is used as a medium of instruction in many universities, and it is also used to communicate with students in many disciplines and prepare them for professional work (Evans & Morrison, 2011; Macaro et al., 2018). Students learning in EMI are required to interpret and comprehend academic texts, write within the disciplines, give presentations, and communicate well in English-based learning contexts. This means that problems with academic English skills can have an impact on classroom participation, assignment quality, academic performance, and the ability to gain employment (Hyland, 2006; Wingate, 2012).

Academic literacies and English for Academic Purposes (EAP) research has indicated that students need to be proficient in the discipline-specific communication practices to be successful in higher education (Lea & Street, 1998; Lillis & Scott, 2015). However, in many contexts of EFL, language instruction still focuses on knowledge of the language and performance in exams (Hinkel & Hinkel, 2003; Hyland & Hamp-Lyons, 2002). Consequently, students can be well prepared for general English but are not sufficiently prepared for the literacy and communication requirements of undergraduate study when entering EMI programs.

The difficulties are especially great for students who have transferred from a diploma to a bachelor's degree. Transfer students must quickly adjust to higher disciplinary standards, within a compressed time frame, unlike first-year students entering the university. They are required to read and write in longer formats, to speak in class, to learn new words and concepts, and to work in other ways that might be quite different from what they have experienced in school before (Evans & Morrison, 2011; Imbrenda & Smith, 2017). Students' difficulties in adapting to these communicative demands may impact the extent to which they are engaged and make progress in EMI settings.

Previous EMI/EAP studies have been undertaken on academic literacy challenges and language issues in Higher Education, but most studies have been conducted on general students at the undergraduate level and/or the transition experiences of first-year students (Macaro et al., 2018; Wingate, 2018). Transfer students and post-maintenance of language development have received relatively little attention. Current research also has a bias towards disease and learner-related factors that account for learners' language-related difficulties, mostly in terms of level of proficiency or communication anxiety (Alrabai, 2016; Dörnyei, 2020). Fewer studies have focused on the institutional context, the expectations of discipline, and workload requirements that affect students' possibilities for further language development in EMI.

Sustainable language development is defined as the ongoing development of academic English in the context of continuous engagement in disciplinary communication practices. This approach sees language development as an ongoing process, rather than a preparation for university, which is influenced by

the language used in the university, the language used in the disciplines, and the support provided by the university (Wingate, 2018). Therefore, students' language development relies on the students' existing language proficiency as well as opportunities for meaningful communicative interaction in an EMI environment.

There is a need to investigate, therefore, the sustainable language development of EFL transfer students in this study from King Faisal University. More specifically, the study explores the effect that academic literacy expectations, oral communication difficulties, lexical restrictions, and institutional effects have on the experiences of students after transitioning to bachelor-level EMI programs. The study contributes to the field of EMI and academic literacies studies by bringing the focus of disciplinary communication to the context of transfer pathways and by foregrounding the structural aspects of language development in higher education.

Although the EMI field has a considerable amount of research, few studies have focused on the continuity of academic English development after the transfer from diploma to bachelor programs, especially in the context of higher education in the Gulf. This study following research questions are (i) What are the experiences of EFL transfer students in terms of their English language development when they enter the EMI bachelor's program? (ii) What are some of the academic literacy and communicative problems faced by transfer students in their disciplinary learning areas? (iii) What role do institutional context and discipline play regarding transfer students' sustainable language development?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Academic Literacies and Disciplinary Communication

Recent studies on academic literacies have focused on the fact that in the academic world, it is not only grammatical competence that is important to develop, but also the capacity to engage in discipline-specific communication practices (Hyland, 2006; Lea & Street, 1998). Academic Communication includes the development of arguments, interpretation of evidence, interaction with discipline-specific texts, and the transmission of the knowledge in the ways that are characteristic of specific academic disciplines (Lillis & Scott, 2015). From this view, language is more related to disciplinary involvement than simply a technical skill learned prior to college.

Disciplinary literacy research also suggests that communication practices vary from discipline to discipline, as each discipline has its own rhetorical demands and ways of creating knowledge (Nesi & Gardner, 2012; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008). For this reason, students who enter EMI in higher education may have difficulties in transferring the general English knowledge to the contexts in the disciplines. Research indicates that many students who have had English classes fail to be adequately equipped to write for long periods, read texts critically, speak in English, or use the discipline-specific vocabulary (Evans & Morrison, 2011; Hakim & Wingate, 2022).

Many of these challenges are related to the gaps between the lessons learned in prior education and the communicative expectations of the higher education environment. In many contexts of EFL instruction, language instruction still focuses on grammatical correctness, rote learning, and test scores instead of classroom communicative practices (Hinkel & Hinkel, 2003; Hyland & Hamp-Lyons, 2002). In recent years, the importance of disciplinary literacies in supporting students' ability to engage effectively in internationalized contexts of higher education has been highlighted (Dafouz, 2026; Lim et al., 2025). Consequently, students may have developed a general English proficiency and struggle to be effective in the learning environment in their discipline.

2.2 Sustainable Language Development in EMI Contexts

Recent research challenges the notion that exposure to English-medium instruction inevitably leads to an improvement in academic English skills in the long-term (Curle et al., 2020; Wingate, 2018). While EMI environments raise the students' exposure to English, English development is largely determined by students' use of English in academic learning tasks like writing, presentation, and class discussion and interaction with discipline-specific texts.

This study sees sustainable language development as a continuous process of academic English improvement because of engagement in higher education learning practices. This view stresses the importance of ongoing language development during the university experience and the importance of using meaningful English in academic settings. Earlier research has indicated that integration of language use in classroom communication, writing, and collaborative learning activities will encourage students to develop academic communication skills (Dafouz & Smit, 2020; Wingate, 2018).

Moreover, there are some factors that may restrain the long-term language development in EMI settings. An overloaded academic workload, pressure of examinations, and lack of sufficient input in academic English in subject courses may limit students' opportunities to practice academic English regularly (Hakim & Wingate, 2022). Students tend to focus mainly on doing assignments and passing exams rather than on developing their communication skills (Alrabai, 2016, 2024). Moreover, recent studies have shown that the challenges encountered by learners in academic writing in EMI contexts are also linked to the institutions' learning practices and disciplinary discourse (Manan & Tajik, 2025).

However, few previous studies have examined the language development experiences of diploma-to-bachelor's transfer students after the academic transition, despite a growing body of research on EMI. The previous research mainly examined the first-year undergraduate students or the general EMI students in the context of adaptation, and little research has been done on how transfer students cope with the new academic communication requirements in EMI programs. This may help to understand better academic and institutional issues that affect language development following transition to higher education.

2.3 English-Medium Instruction and Transition Challenges

The speed of EM growth in HE has increased communicative demands on students in non-Anglophone contexts (Curle et al., 2020; Macaro et al., 2018). EMI students often must undertake English academic activities like disciplinary writing, presentations, discussions, and exams. Students in EMI programs have been reported to struggle with participation in the classroom, with the ability to speak and understand the teacher's lecture, and with using discipline-specific vocabulary (Dafouz & Smit, 2020; Gibbons, 2009; Ismailov, 2025).

These difficulties could be greater during the academic transition. Transfer students with diplomas to bachelor's programs are expected to quickly get up to speed with high-level disciplinary communication practices in a short period of time (Imbrenda & Smith, 2017). Transfer students may feel as if they are facing an academic adjustment that is compressed and may also be facing a greater workload and more stringent discipline requirements, unlike first-year students. Past studies have also indicated that institutional factors, curriculum design, and opportunities for communicative interaction, in addition to language proficiency, contribute to the difficulties encountered when transitioning to a new setting (Breeze & Sancho Guinda, 2017; Curle et al., 2020). The similarities of the communication and participation problems related to EMI have also been found in the recent research carried out in the context of higher education in the Arabian Gulf (Holi, 2025).

Meanwhile, many research studies remain to privilege deficit-based approaches to language-related challenges and focus on insufficient language proficiency, communication anxiety, or vocabulary deficits (Alrabai, 2016; Dörnyei, 2020). While these are relevant, there is now a growing body of scholarship that suggests that institutional and disciplinary contexts influence the opportunities for sustained communicative development in EMI contexts (Manan & Hajar, 2024; Wingate, 2018).

2.4 Theoretical Framework

This study is based on the approach of academic literacy and guided by disciplinary literacy and EMI models. These perspectives illustrate how language development in higher education is shaped in the context of language preparation prior to study, of communicative demands in academic contexts, and of learning experiences in EMI contexts.

The academic literacies approach to academic communication takes a view of communication as an act that is embedded in social contexts and is not a neutral transferable, language skill set (Lea & Street, 1998; Lillis & Scott, 2015). Disciplinary literacy research also highlights the importance for students to/ understand how communication functions in particular subject areas, through writing, reading, and oral communication practices (Hyland, 2006; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008). The EMI research also reveals that curriculum structure, classroom interaction, and the demands of academic workload all impact students' communication experiences (Dafouz & Smit, 2020; Macaro et al., 2018).

Drawing from the above, the current study sustainable language development as a continuous process, which is influenced by the students' experiences in the disciplinary learning contexts of EMI. In this context, the communication problems faced by transfer students are viewed not only as individual communication difficulties but also because of academic transition and demands for learning in each discipline.

The conceptual model for the study is shown in Figure 1.

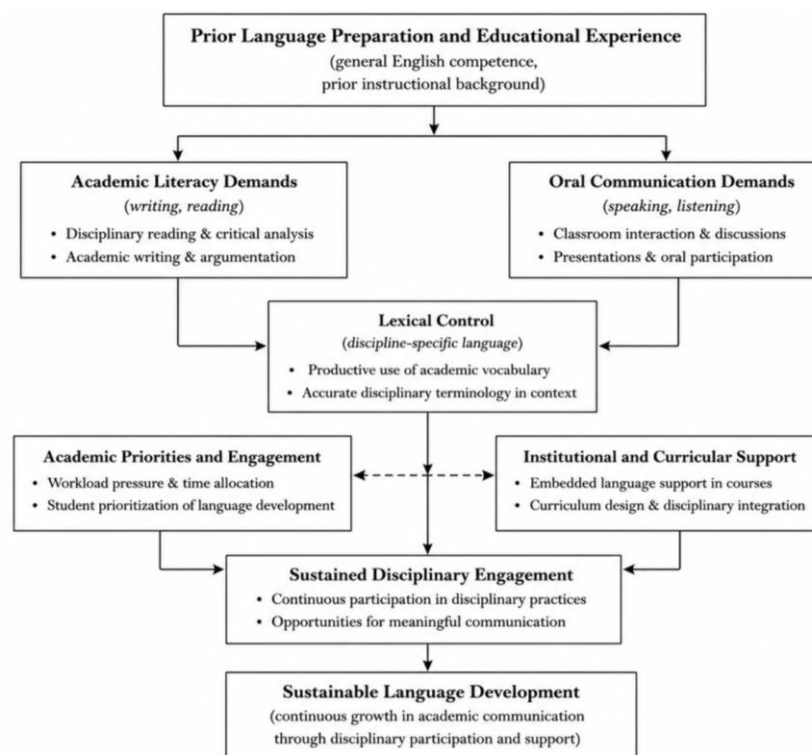


Figure 1: Proposed Conceptual Orientation of the Study

The relationship between prior language preparation, academic communication demands, institutional support, and language development is shown in Figure 1. The model shows how engagement with disciplinary learning contexts can impact students' future academic English learning.

3. Method

3.1 Research Design

The qualitative exploratory design with interpretive inquiry was used in this study to explore sustainable language development for EFL transfer students at King Faisal University at the bachelor's level EMI. The qualitative method was found relevant since the research attempted to discover the students' experiences, perceptions, and communicative difficulties in certain academic fields and disciplines (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The study was interested in understanding the students' experience of academic literacy demands, oral communication challenges, and language development after transitioning from diploma to EMI higher education.

3.2 Participants and Sampling

The subjects were 24 EFL transfer students at the bachelor's level in King Faisal University. Purposive sampling was employed to select respondents who had experienced a transition from Diploma education to EMI disciplinary education. The sample was students majoring in Business, Computer Science, and Health Sciences, as these majors have a significant amount of academic communication and disciplinary language in English (Guest et al., 2006). 14 of them were male students, and 10 were female students. In the second year of study, there were 13 participants, and in the third year of study, 11 participants. The participants were chosen according to three criteria: (1) completion of a diploma course prior to transfer; (2) participation in an EMI bachelor course; (3) first-hand experience with academic communication demands in EMI courses.

3.3 Data Collection

Data was gathered from semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions, which were held throughout the academic semester. Semi-structured interviews enabled participants to detail their experiences of academic communication, while focus group discussions facilitated discussion and reflection on common transition-related issues. The interview and focus group questions were created according to the themes that were found in the literature of EMI and academic literacy and according to the research questions of this study.

The interview protocol was based on four areas: Academic writing and reading practices, oral communication experiences, perceptions on the use of discipline-specific vocabulary, and perceptions of language development after transitioning to EMI study. Interviews and focus groups were held in English with some clarification in Arabic as needed to ensure understanding and comfort of the participants. Each session was conducted for about 40-60 minutes and recorded with the consent of the participants.

3.4 Data Analysis

Reflexive thematic analysis was used for the data collected, in accordance with the methodology of Braun and Clarke (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Audio recordings were transcribed and repeatedly listened to become familiar with the dataset. Initial codes were produced from the recurring patterns in relation to the four areas of academic literacy, oral communication, vocabulary use, and institutional learning experiences. Similar code was then grouped into larger themes that reflected patterns shared by participants' stories. In the analysis, the communicative problems experienced by the participants and the description of the relationship between the disciplinary learning demands and language development were identified. The results of the analysis revealed four main themes: academic literacy discontinuity, constraints in oral communication, lexical constraints, and marginalization of sustained language development.

3.5 Trustworthiness and Ethical Considerations

Methods were used to enhance the credibility of the study. Triangulation of data was done using interviews and focus group discussions. Furthermore, to enhance credibility and thematic consistency, repeated review of the transcripts and coding was carried out throughout the analysis process. The ethical committee of

King Faisal University approved the study. The study purpose and the fact that participants could withdraw without any consequences were explained. All participants consented to participate in the study, and their identities were anonymized to avoid confidentiality and privacy issues. Triangulation was achieved by interviewing and focus group. Detailed contextual descriptions of participants and institutional settings supported transferability. To ensure dependability, repeated coding and review of themes was performed during the analysis process, and confirmability was achieved by reflexive engagement with the data and by keeping analytic notes.

4. Results

The results indicated that there were some common problems faced by EFL transfer students when they entered the bachelor-level EMI programs. Common challenges participants reported were academic literacy practices, oral communication, and discipline-specific vocabulary usage. Furthermore, many students reported competing demands between language-related demands and academic workload pressures. The following themes were represented among participants of diverse disciplinary backgrounds. The demographic profile of the participants is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Participant Demographic Profile

Variable	Category	n
Gender	Male	14
	Female	10
Discipline	Business	8
	Computer Science	8
	Health Sciences	8
Academic Level	Year 2	13
	Year 3	11

One participant mentioned that the problem of writing assignment was a shared issue between all disciplinary groups: "The problem of writing assignments is not only mine, but all the groups are also having the problem" (Participant 12, Business).

4.1 Emergence of Key Themes

The four main themes that arose from the analysis were: Academic literacy issues, Oral communication issues, Lexical limitations, and competing academic priorities. Academic literacy difficulties and workload issues were most mentioned throughout participants' experiences (Table 2). "Not my problem alone, everyone is having difficulty in writing assignments" (Participant 12, Business). Students across all three disciplinary groups reported similar experiences.

Table 2: Emergent Themes Across Participant Accounts

Theme	Participants Reporting (n=24)
Academic literacy challenges	20
Oral communication difficulties	18
Lexical limitations	16
Competing academic priorities	19

4.2 Academic Literacy as a Point of Discontinuity

Many participants reported academic writing and reading post-transfer to be significantly different from what they had been previously exposed to at the diploma level. Students explained that in the previous language instruction, students were only given some grammar exercises and some short writing tasks, whereas studying at the bachelor level needed some research writing, analytical readings, referencing, and long writing tasks. As one participant said, "In the diploma program, we were writing short essays, but after transfer, I did not know how to write research assignments" (Participant 7, Health Sciences). A student said, "We learned grammar and short writing in diploma courses, but we were not trained to write reports, research papers" (Participant 14, Business).

Another area of challenge that was expressed by participants was access to academic reading. A few students spoke of using selective reading strategies and only paying attention to the vocabulary they did not know when reading disciplinary texts. A Health Sciences participant stated, "Well, the writing requirements changed entirely since transferring, because it has been more to explain and analyze rather than just answer the question directly" (Participant 18, Health Sciences).

4.3 From Understanding to Performance: Oral Communication Constraints

The common problem that participants reported when interacting in the classroom was the inability to articulate their thoughts fluently while having mastery of the course material. Some of the following challenges were frequently noted in presentations, discussions, and oral assessments.

One participant said, "I know the answer, but I cannot explain it clearly in English when talking in class" (Participant 8, Business). Another student who said this reported: "I will be very nervous when I have to speak in English in front of others, but I know about it during the presentation" (Participant 15, Health Sciences). Some participants also mentioned the need to get organized and get ideas ready for talking. A Computer Science participant commented, "I can describe it, but I need more time to arrange my thoughts and describe them correctly in English" (Participant 3, Computer Science).

Students also reported issues with pronunciation and fluency, as well as with lecturers who were fast speakers or spoke with unfamiliar accents when lecturing.

4.4 Lexical Control and Limits of Expression

There were difficulties related to vocabulary in both writing and speaking. While reading course materials, many participants identified discipline-specific

terminology, but they reported challenges in accurately using this terminology in interaction with the teacher and in their own writing.

One of the participants described, "I know the meaning of the technical words when reading, but not in writing assignments or speaking in class" (Participant 11, Computer Science). Likewise, a business student said, "I know the idea in Arabic, but I have difficulties in finding the right academic word in English while discussing" (Participant 6, Business). Another participant shared, "I can identify a lot of words in textbooks, but when it comes to using them correctly in reports and presentations, I still have a problem with that" (Participant 19, Health Sciences).

Some individuals also said they had to use words that were easier to use when they were presenting and discussing ideas, as they did not feel confident in using more sophisticated disciplinary vocabulary.

4.5 Prioritization and the Marginalization of Language Development

Participants recognized the significance of English in the context of an EMI program, many indicated that English development was subsidiary to the current academic needs. The most common concerns students mentioned throughout the semester were assignment due dates, tests, and discipline workload.

One participant said, "Assignments and examinations are more important than improving English because grades are more important" (Participant 9, Business). Likewise, another student reported: "We only focus on English when it impacts presentation or written assignments" (Participant 21, Health Sciences).

Some respondents also indicated that there was not enough time to practice communication skills outside of what was required for the course. A Computer Science participant commented, "There is very little time to practice communication, because the workload is already heavy" (Participant 5, Computer Science).

Students also elaborated on how language support was primarily focused on preparatory programs and less prominent upon transition to coursework in the discipline field. Table 3 shows that while transitioning to EMI bachelor programs, participants reported difficulties with academic writing, speaking, word usage, and workload management.

Table 3: Summary of Themes and Core Issues

Theme	Core Issue
Academic literacy challenges	Difficulty with academic writing and critical reading
Oral communication difficulties	Difficulty expressing ideas fluently during classroom interaction
Lexical limitations	Restricted use of discipline-specific vocabulary
Competing academic priorities	Limited focus on long-term language development

4.6 Integrative Overview of Findings

The challenges identified were presented across participant accounts and were distributed across various aspects of academic communication and learning. Writing difficulties and speaking difficulties were often mentioned in conjunction with difficulties in the use of vocabulary and organization of work in discussions on transition into EMI study. Commonly, participants related participation in class, making of presentations, reading, and assignment completion to a larger issue of communication in English. This was seen among students in the Business, Computer Science, and Health Sciences programs. Overall, the findings seem to suggest that challenges faced in academic communication were interwoven in writing, speaking, vocabulary usage and participation in EMI learning environments.

5. Discussion

This study revealed that EFL transfer students faced several issues in communication after joining the bachelor-level EMI programs. Participants indicated challenges in the areas of academic writing, oral communication, discipline-specific vocabulary, and competing demands of language development and workload in the disciplines. These findings align with previous studies that have shown that students in EMI contexts are likely to experience difficulties with the communication practices involved in a higher education setting (Evans & Morrison, 2011; Macaro et al., 2018). This indicates that in EMI contexts, not only language proficiency but also the language organization of both institutions and subject matter, influence communication problems.

One of the key results related to the discrepancy between previous language preparation and the academic literacy requirements experienced upon transition to bachelor's level study. Despite prior English language instruction, participants noted the challenges they faced in adjusting to longer writing tasks, reading that involved analysis, and research-based writing. A similar conclusion has been made by academic literacies studies, where the focus is on the kinds of communication in the university that do not just require general grammatical competence but also include "discipline-specific practices" (Hyland, 2006; Lea & Street, 1998; Lincoln et al., 1985). The results also confirm previous research that shows that many EFL learners enter EMI programs with a low level of disciplinary preparation for communication (Morgan, 1997; Wingate, 2012).

The study also revealed difficulties around oral communication in the classroom in terms of interaction and assessment. While many of the participants were able to grasp the course material, they often struggled to articulate ideas when making presentations and participating in discussions. Similarly, past EMI research has demonstrated that students can become hesitant and less active in oral communication despite having a good conceptual understanding (Curle et al., 2020; Dafouz & Smit, 2020). The subjects of the current study also reported issues with pronunciation, fluency, and fear of making errors in their interactions with the teacher in the classroom.

There were also vocabulary-related difficulties across participant accounts. Students frequently identified disciplinary vocabulary while reading but could not correctly use academic vocabulary in writing and speaking activities. The finding is consistent with disciplinary literacy research, which indicates that productive use of academic vocabulary is a long-term process of repeated exposure and practice in disciplinary contexts (Nesi & Gardner, 2012; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008).

Other significant research is on the effect of workload pressures on language development. Many participants reported that they focused more on completing assignments, exams, and content rather than on the ongoing development of academic communication skills. These experiences relate to issues identified in previous EMI research of the lack of integration of language support into disciplinary coursework (Malmström et al., 2025; Wingate, 2018). While some difficulties might be attributed to the differences in individual competence and motivation to learn English, the results indicated that the academic workload and the structure of the curriculum affected students' chances to use English regularly in the process of transitioning to EMI study.

More importantly, the findings indicate that the communication difficulties experienced during transition were influenced by the students' language preparedness prior to the transition as well as by the degree of incorporation of language development into the disciplinary learning structures of EMI programs. To this point, communicative problems were more related to institutional learning conditions than simply individual language deficits. The results, thus, confirm the academic literacies and EMI research perspectives which advocate that language learning is integrated into disciplinary and educational practices. The current study focuses on the academic transition of diploma-to-bachelor transfer students in EMI settings as contrasted to the studies that have been mainly undertaken with first-year undergraduates.

The results add to the literature on EMI and academic literacies, specifically in relation to those who transfer from a diploma to a bachelor's program. This cohort is rather underrepresented in the literature. Previous studies have primarily focused on first-year undergraduate students in transition or the general EMI population. However, the current study focuses on communication difficulties that students encounter during transfer to higher-level disciplinary learning areas.

5.1 Educational Implications

The findings have implications for both teaching and curriculum in EMI higher education in several ways. Firstly, the findings indicate that the role of preparatory English courses in preparation for the demands of communication in the study of disciplines is not sufficiently effective. Therefore, academic communication activities might be integrated more into subject courses to enhance students' transition to EMI learning environments.

Second, classroom discussion, presentation, writing, and collaborative learning opportunities may be more structured as provided by the disciplinary instructors. In subject courses, for instance, teachers can engage students with scaffolded writing tasks, guided presentation tasks, peer discussion tasks, and feedback activities related to the subject to support the development of writing in the discipline. Thirdly, stronger partnerships between EAP specialists and disciplinary faculty could work to close the language preparation-disciplinary communication gap between the two. Integrating language development into content can offer students greater opportunities to use academic English in the context of learning.

Lastly, universities can take advantage of looking at the impact of workload requirements and assessment systems on students' opportunities to develop academic communication skills. Enhanced institutional efforts to integrate language support might support long-term academic engagement and communication growth for EMI transfer students.

6. Conclusion

This study aimed at investigating the issue of sustainable language development of EFL transfer students in the EMI programs of King Faisal University at the bachelor's level. The results showed that students were having challenges in all these areas that were interrelated with academic literacy practices, oral communication, use of discipline-specific vocabulary, and the balancing of language development with the demands of academic workload. These challenges highlighted gaps between previous language preparation and the communicative demands of disciplinary learning contexts.

Additionally, it was found that the opportunities for communicative engagement are affected by the institutional and disciplinary conditions in addition to individual proficiency in language development within EMI contexts. Inactivity in disciplinary communication practices is often reported as secondary to immediate academic needs, as participants report language development. Findings thus suggest that academic language development is a process of ongoing engagement with discipline and institutional support, which should not be viewed as a stage that is finished prior to university entrance. The study contributes to the research on EMI and academic literacies by bringing the experiences of diploma-to-bachelor transfer students to the forefront, as they have been studied rather sparingly in the past. The results also highlight the need to incorporate academic communication development into the academic learning settings, to help EMI students' long-term language development.

There are several limitations that need to be acknowledged. This was done in one institutional context with qualitative self-reported experiences. The sample also limited the academic disciplines and did not consider language development longitudinally. The findings could thus be used in future research that could include studies from multiple institutions to investigate the effect of disciplinary communication practices on language development in various EMI settings, and at different stages of education. Thus, results presented should be understood as

being based on a qualitative research approach and should not be extrapolated beyond the sample of EMI transfer students.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

Data Availability Statement

The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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