Inclusive Pedagogy for Globalizing Higher Education: Evidence from Primary Qualitative Research on English-medium University Practices

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Expanded Abstract

A recent global survey of 907 higher education institutions from 126 countries has revealed that internationalization is becoming more common around the world (Marinoni, 2019), as more universities especially in non-English speaking countries prioritize the implementation of tertiary programs offered in English (Dearden, 2015; Ismailov el al, 2021). However, attending an English-medium course may be quite challenging and present many obstacles for learners with diverse needs and expectations.

Inclusive pedagogy, which is sometimes referred to as a student-centered approach, is a well-established learning theory within higher education research. It acknowledges students' diverse needs, abilities, and individual preferences for constructing knowledge (Baeten et.al. 2012).   Inclusive pedagogy emphasizes the importance of teacher-learner reciprocity, active learning, meaningful feedback, and/or an intellectual challenge, as students are the facilitator of the learning activities (Garrett, 2008; Ramsden, 2003; Schweisfurt, 2015). Thus, teachers have a special role to play in encouraging critical thinking, stimulating students' motivation, and promoting autonomy (Jacobs, 2016; Ramsden,2003; Schwisfurth, 2015). Although this learning theory has been applied to many educational practices, to date, it has not been thoroughly addressed in the context of internationalization. Furthermore, a holistic approach to exploring factors that make the English-medium classrooms inclusive is still absent, as previous research has focused on specific pedagogical interventions within specific geographic, disciplinary, or institutional contexts. For these reasons, this research attempts to fill this gap by connecting the insights from multiple studies.

The purpose of this study is to find a comprehensive picture of practice in English medium courses at universities in non-English speaking countries through the lens of inclusive pedagogy. Utilizing the qualitative thematic synthesis study, we selected and carefully appraised 40 primary qualitative articles covering 18 countries to examine the pedagogical practices that could be enhanced to accommodate diverse learners and their needs. The review process was transparent and included empirical studies from a variety of academic subjects and geographies. Also, rigorous article eligibility criteria allowed for a stronger internal validity. We thoroughly followed the ENTREQ, CASP, and COREQ protocols in

conducting the study.

The study confirmed the findings from numerous individual studies that many students believe in the usefulness of the content learning through their English-medium courses to gain new knowledge, enhance their English language skills, and improve their chances of future employment, and career growth. Meanwhile, the study identified six categories of key barriers for their participation in such courses. These six domains related to the obstacles faced by students were meta/linguistic (reported by 35 studies), instructional (21 studies), socio-cultural (21 studies), meta/cognitive (19 studies), affective (16 studies), and institutional (8 studies) domains.

For example, the *meta/linguistic domain* included themes, such as lecturers' language awareness, extensive code-switching and translanguaging, lecturers' non-standard language functions, lecturers' low English proficiency, ineffective instructional materials, and others. *The instructional domain* highlighted nomological/non-interactive lecturing, assessment issues, non-attending to students' diverse needs, lecturers' speaking rate, and so on. *The socio-cultural domain* focused on communication problems among home and international students, divergent attitudes toward class participation, ineffective peer interaction, and collaborative learning, which all required an inclusive pedagogical approach.

Meta/cognitive issues include issues such as difficulties of processing complex content, instructors' extensive use of technical language, and lack of opportunities to practice rhetorical and critical thinking skills. *The affective domain* reported themes related to students' social-emotional responses toward less inclusive English medium pedagogies and included lack of confidence, frustration, fear of losing face, dissatisfaction, anxiety, and stress. Finally, the last *institutional domain* featured university-wide policies and conditions that further hindered the implementation of an inclusive learning environment, such as ineffective curriculum design and planning, and poor self-access support.

The findings of this synthesis are consistent with previous studies that highlighted the critical role of language and academic skills from both students' and lecturers' perspectives (Curle, 2020; Macaro, 2017; Rose, 2019), as well as the need for dialogical, interactive, and multimodal pedagogical approaches in the English Medium courses in universities in non-English speaking countries (Macaro, 2018; Melnyk, 20; Morell, 2018) .

Consequently, this study offers several important implications for inclusive education in the context of educational internationalization. First, through qualitative evidence, we have identified common challenges for implementing inclusive pedagogies across many different

geographic, disciplinary, and institutional contexts. Secondly, our study discussed guidelines for English medium faculty and administrators to help design inclusive pedagogical interventions to cater to learner diversity and improve student satisfaction and engagement.

[Full paper is coming soon]