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Linguistically Inclusive Teaching in Higher Education: A Reflective Framework for Teaching Academics

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Abstract

Despite increasingly diverse student populations, including international and home students with multilingual backgrounds, higher education teaching practices often remain implicitly oriented towards monolingual English norms, alongside a continued emphasis on standardised academic English. This linguistic landscape can inadvertently disadvantage multilingual students, shaping their participation and, at times, their assessment performance.

Drawing on exploratory practice research conducted within my own teaching context (Bulut Al Baba, 2024; Bulut Al Baba, 2025), alongside a review of relevant literature (Darling, 2026; Ryder and Lazar, 2023; Ryder and Lazar, 2025), I propose a self-evaluation tool designed to support teaching academics in assessing linguistic inclusion in their practice. The tool conceptualises three broad stages of engagement: multilingualism phobic, multilingualism tolerant, and multilingualism cheerleader.

This self-evaluation framework is grounded in the premise that linguistic inclusion requires not only pedagogical awareness but also cultural acceptance and intentional pedagogical strategies. It encourages academics to critically reflect on their underlying assumptions about language, challenge monolingual biases, and explore how multilingual pedagogies can be meaningfully integrated into their teaching.

By connecting research insights with practical, actionable approaches, this work invites higher education educators to reconceptualise linguistic diversity not as a challenge or deficit, but as a valuable resource for enriching teaching and learning.

Keywords

Linguistic inclusion, Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, reflective teaching

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