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The Need for English Language Planning to Ensure Student Success in English Taught Programs

Many universities worldwide are pursuing internationalisation by increasing the quantity of degree programs taught in English, sometimes referred to as English Medium Instruction (EMI). Top-down policies that incentivise EMI are often not accompanied with requisite English language planning, meaning students may encounter difficulties studying new subject matter in English. This can create disparities in the way that university English teachers address the language and educational needs of their students. My presentation explores research at the intersection of EMI and student language requirements to succeed in English taught courses. This research underscores the crucial roles of English for Academic Purposes and English for Specific Purposes in providing targeted linguistic support to EMI students through academic literacy and the mastery of specific disciplinary genres. I discuss methods to enhance the effectiveness of English preparatory or in-sessional courses to optimally aid EMI students in achieving their educational goals. I draw on research in Japan, China and Turkey, and explore differences and similarities for European higher education. Findings indicate a need for increased cooperation between English language specialists and subject lecturers to ensure appropriate academic literacy development for students. Fundamentally, I contend that universities implementing EMI must consider their distinct institutional traits to make English language teaching a focal point in their organizational and curriculum policies. Failing to do so could disadvantage their students.