



Inclusive Language Practices and Inclusive Pedagogy among English Practice Teachers in University of Cabuyao

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Article Info

ISSN (online): 2582-7138

Volume: 05

Issue: 06

November-December 2024

Received: 09-10-2024

Accepted: 13-11-2024

Page No: 948-954

Abstract

This study focused on exploring the level of inclusive language practices and inclusive pedagogy of sixty-three (63) English practice teachers at the University of Cabuyao for the Academic Year 2023-2024. A descriptive-correlational design was employed, using a four-point Likert scale, weighted mean, t-test and Pearson product-moment correlation to assess the gender profile, level of inclusive language practices and inclusive pedagogy, and their relationship. Results indicated that the English practice teachers possess a very high level of extreme familiarity with inclusive language practices related to age; disability; sexual orientation and gender; race, ethnicity, and culture; and socioeconomic status-inclusivity. Meanwhile, they possess a high level of moderate familiarity in terms of body size and weight, and neurodiversity-inclusivity. On the other hand, English practice teachers were shown to have a very high level of inclusive pedagogy in terms of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. However, no significant differences were found between gender profiles and no significant relationship was found between the two variables. The results led to the development of a manual to help English practice teachers recognize and apply inclusive language and pedagogy in the classroom.

Keywords: Inclusive language practices, inclusive pedagogy, English practicum teachers

Introduction

Teachers bear the responsibility of providing students with the best learning experience. They have a crucial role in creating a learning environment where students feel secure, nurtured, and empowered to express their opinions, and where content eliminates marginalization (Goldwasser, 2019) ^[15]. They also play an essential part in fostering learners' identity development, rooted in their sociocultural contexts, with language being a key factor in shaping these identities (Hong & Perez, 2023) ^[17].

Inclusive language means using words, phrases, and expressions that avoid excluding, marginalizing, or offending people, particularly those from underrepresented groups. It emphasizes respect and equality and aims to reflect diversity in society (Likis, 2021) ^[21]. This encompasses a person's age, body size and weight, disability, neurodiversity, race, ethnicity, culture, sexual orientation, and gender diversity (American Psychological Association, 2021) ^[1]. Despite this, students still encounter prejudice and unfair treatment based on their identities. Transgender students, for example, may be addressed with incorrect pronouns or dead names. Additionally, terms like "crazy," "blind," "dumb," and "retarded" are often used in ways that offend individuals with disabilities or mental health struggles.

Continuing the discourse on inclusivity, Ataç & Taşçı (2020) ^[3] highlighted that a significant disconnect between individuals' knowledge of inclusive education, their professional skills, and teachers' attitudes towards inclusivity and disability affects the effectiveness of inclusive education within classrooms. They observed that prospective language teachers have indicated a need for pre-service training focused on inclusive education. Overall, this body of knowledge is called inclusive pedagogy.

Inclusive pedagogy is characterized by the integration of three key components: "knowledge," "skills," and "attitudes." These elements collectively influence the what, how, and why behind teachers' instructional practices (Moriña, 2021) ^[24].

In higher education curriculum in the Philippines, the integration of the Foundations of Special and Inclusive Education (CED104) (Cmo-no.-75-s.-2017) and Gender and Development (GAD) are essential courses to which pre-service teachers learn their critical pedagogy focusing on inclusivity.

Lacar (2021) ^[20] states that inclusive pedagogy effectively establishes a learner-centered classroom by prioritizing inclusive language and fostering a learning environment free from intimidation. Instructors acknowledged the significance of pedagogical approaches in maintaining inclusivity. This means that inclusive language practices affect an educator's pedagogical approach.

Additionally, there is a claim that nonbinary educators perceive themselves as “more inclusive” than their binary counterparts (Jones, 2023) ^[19]. Therefore, an investigation of the differences between gender profiles could be made.

Ultimately, since there are not enough studies exploring the connection between practice and pedagogy, let alone among future teachers in a local university, the study aimed to explore the correlation between the level of inclusive language practices and inclusive pedagogy among English practice teachers in the Academic Year 2023-2024 at the University of Cabuyao. It also sought to raise awareness of inclusive practices and pedagogy that should be utilized in the classroom. Furthermore, the study crafted a manual aimed at aiding practice teachers in preparing to recognize inclusive language and implement inclusive pedagogies in classroom settings.

Literature

Inclusive language, as defined by Sosa is a language that recognizes and respects the experiences and identities of individuals and considers their diverse histories, treating them with dignity. An inclusive language guide developed by the American Psychological Association (2021) ^[1] states that this encompasses a person's “age,” “body size and weight,” “disability,” “neurodiversity,” “race, ethnicity, and culture,” “sexual orientation and gender,” and “socioeconomic status.” Centre for Ageing Better (CBA, 2021) defines ageism as a form of prejudice that targets individuals based on age, impacting various parts of their lives—ageism results in diminished self-esteem, which in turn restricts their actions and prospects. Meanwhile, ageist beliefs also affect pregnant women. According to Concordia University (2022) ^[9], societal expectations of mothers remain essentially unchanged. A particularly problematic notion is that older mothers are perceived as unnatural.

On the other hand, Torres (2023) ^[29] stated that weight stigma is a widespread issue and constitutes a form of discrimination and stereotyping based on an individual's body size and weight. According to Fruh *et al.* (2021) ^[13], weight bias and stigma pervade various aspects of our society, often regrettably seen as a socially acceptable form of discrimination. For decades, Western culture has struggled to recognize and accept higher weight as a disease state, instead viewing it as a condition resulting from a lack of willpower or self-control. Similarly, according to Bytemedia (2021) ^[5], the majority of individuals with disabilities experience various forms of prejudice due to their conditions. Fortunately, a study by Ismailos (2019) ^[18], which involved pre-service teachers from five faculties of education in Ontario, Canada showed they exhibited greater confidence in their ability to effectively engage students with accommodations and preferred student-

centered classrooms that promote student choice and differentiated instruction.

Meanwhile, Blenkinsopp (2023) ^[4] addressed the concept of neurodiversity, which pertains to the functioning of the human brain in relation to learning, social interaction, cognitive processes, and other related aspects. According to Cook (2024) ^[10], teachers recognize the role of inclusion in promoting social justice, understanding that knowledge about neurodiversity tends to be reductive, viewing it as a deficit.

Moreover, EPFL (2022) ^[12] recommended refraining from making generalizations based on an individual's race, ethnicity, culture, and socioeconomic level. According to Singh & Akar (2021) ^[27], pre-service educators exhibit a satisfactory level of readiness in multiple competencies crucial for effectively engaging with culturally diverse learning environments. There is also a prevailing sentiment that they have deep-seated trust in their characteristics and attitudes toward cultural diversity.

Furthermore, Edge Hill University acknowledges that the language pertaining to sex, gender, and sexuality is subject to constant change, resulting in varying perspectives among individuals. Studying students from the University of Cabuyao, Cantalejo *et al.* (2024) ^[6] stated that they have a notable preference for gender-inclusive language, embracing societal transition towards a more inclusive environment.

On socioeconomic status, the study by Whiting and Cutri (2019) ^[30] examined prospective teachers' responses to personal privilege, highlighting how students consider the realities of social position and structural inequities in society. This awareness facilitates conversations about understanding and fulfilling professional obligations to those who are less fortunate.

On the other hand, according to Lancaster & Bain in order to close the gap between theory and practice, pre-service teachers' mastery of pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) for inclusive practices and proficiency in its elements should be achieved.

Meanwhile, Pasha *et al.* (2021) ^[25] state that pre-service teachers have indicated that they felt prepared to apply the skills and knowledge that they acquired in their educational programs and are ready to implement inclusive education effectively.

Moreover, based on attitudes, Lualhati (2022) ^[22] found that pre-service teachers from a local university in Batangas, Philippines generally held a highly positive attitude toward inclusive education. The study also revealed that they perceived themselves as highly ready to implement inclusive education.

Additionally, O' Leary *et al.* (2020) ^[23] explored a connection between pedagogy and practice. A positive shift in educators' attitudes toward marginalized STEM students within higher education was seen after taking a workshop that focused on inclusive teaching. In contrast, Massouti claims that there should be a greater review of inclusive policies and mindsets, as well as the connection of prospective teachers' knowledge and actions regarding inclusive teaching.

On the other hand, regarding the influence of gender on inclusive teaching, Singh *et al.* (2020) ^[28] states that although preservice teachers show positive attitudes towards inclusive education, there is no significant difference in the attitude when compared according to their gender. Xue *et al.* (2022) ^[31], also came with the same findings assessing teachers' professional attitudes, knowledge, and skills regarding inclusive education. However, Jones (2023) ^[19] and GLSEN

(2020) ^[14] stated that LGBTQ or nonbinary teachers were more inclined to adopt inclusive practices compared to their non-LGBTQ or binary peers.

Overall, these studies give us background information on inclusive language practices, inclusive pedagogy, their relationship and the role of gender in teaching with inclusivity.

Methods

In this study, the researchers utilized a descriptive-correlational research design with the use of survey questionnaires as its primary source of data. In this methodology, data was gathered without making any changes to the environment, meaning that no manipulation took place. The objective was to collect data on the present condition of the phenomena in order to determine the existing variables or conditions in a specific setting (Caparas and Yango, 2023). The study determined the level of and relationship between inclusive language practices and inclusive pedagogy, and the gender profile of the respondents. Secondary sources included books, articles, online journals, and related information, which the researchers used, accessed, and mentioned in their review of related literature.

This study employed convenience sampling to select its participants. The respondents were selected based on their availability and willingness to participate. This method does not intend to choose participants who most accurately represent the total population, but rather those who are readily available and willing to participate (Simkus, 2023). Furthermore, the researchers conducted a study from the English practice teachers under the program of Bachelor of Secondary Education in University of Cabuyao academic year 2023-2024. This selection was decided because English practice teachers were actively involved in teaching practicums and internships.

The researchers used a survey questionnaire as their primary data collection tool. Standardized and modified instruments were employed for the purpose of collecting data for this study. The research questionnaire is divided into three parts. Part I focused on the respondents' gender profile. Part II utilized a research questionnaire from the Harvard Qualtrics Survey (2021) Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) Explorer Self-Assessment Tool to measure the level of inclusive language practices of the respondents. Part III utilized a research questionnaire from the study of Arvelo-Rosales *et al.* (2021) titled the "Initial training of primary school teachers: development of competencies for inclusion

and attention to diversity" to measure the level of inclusive pedagogy of the respondents. Validators were taken into consideration in order to verify the validity of the modified research instruments.

The survey questionnaire was distributed after a formal request was made to the Dean of the University of Cabuyao's College of Education. Google Forms was used to complete the online questionnaire by English teachers in their fourth year. Students received orientation on their roles both before and after the survey, and ethical standards were adhered to. To maintain confidentiality, only the researchers had access to personal data. The Data Privacy Act of 2012 guaranteed the secure storage of personal data, and participation was entirely voluntary.

The collected data underwent tallying for purposes of interpretation. The study utilized various statistical techniques tools to analyze the data. The weighted mean and a four-point Likert scale were utilized to describe the level of inclusive language practice and inclusive pedagogy among English practice teachers at the University of Cabuyao. The T-test for independent groups was employed to test the null hypothesis and to determine if there was a significant difference between the means of two groups. The gender profile was tested to assess if there was a significant difference when grouped according to the level of inclusive language practices and the level of inclusive pedagogy among the respondents. The Pearson product-moment correlation was applied to determine the relationship between the level of inclusive language practice and the level of inclusive pedagogy of the English practice teachers at the University of Cabuyao.

Results and Discussion

1. Respondent's Gender Profile

Table 1: English practice teachers' gender profile

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Binary	56	88.89%
Non-binary	07	11.11%
Total	63	100%

Table 1 shows the gender profile of the English practice teachers at the University of Cabuyao. In terms of gender profile, 88.89% of the respondents are binary while 11.11% are non-binary.

2. Respondent's Level of Inclusive Language Practices

Table 2: English practice teachers' level of inclusive language practices

Level of Inclusive Language Practices	Weighted Mean	Level of Familiarity	Verbal Interpretation
Age-inclusivity	3.47	Extremely Familiar/Comfortable	Very High
Body size and weight-inclusivity	3.25	Moderately Familiar/Comfortable	High
Level of Inclusive Language Practices	Weighted Mean	Level of Familiarity	Verbal Interpretation
Disability-inclusivity	3.41	Extremely Familiar/ Comfortable	Very High
Neurodiversity-inclusivity	3.09	Moderately Familiar/Comfortable	High
Race, ethnicity, and cultural-inclusivity	3.49	Extremely Familiar/Comfortable	Very High
Sexual orientation and gender-inclusivity	3.27	Extremely Familiar/Comfortable	Very High
Socioeconomic status-inclusivity	3.40	Extremely Familiar/Comfortable	Very High

Table 2 shows the summary of the level of inclusive language practices among English practice teachers at the University of Cabuyao. Race, ethnicity, and cultural-inclusivity

garnered the highest overall weighted mean of 3.49, verbally interpreted as Very High with a level of familiarity of Extremely Familiar/Comfortable. It suggests that English

practice teachers at the university generally possess a very high level of inclusive language practices, particularly regarding the socio-cultural aspects of society. This resonates with the study of Singh & Akar (2021) ^[27] which found that aspiring educators demonstrate a satisfactory level of readiness in various competencies essential for effectively engaging with culturally diverse learning environments.

The overall weighted mean for Age-inclusivity was 3.47, verbally interpreted as Very High with a level of familiarity of Extremely Familiar/Comfortable. The findings indicate that they are generally proficient in age-inclusive language practices. However, a notable gap in familiarity and comfort on motherhood and pregnancy-related terms were exhibited by the English practice teachers. This aligns with a study from Concordia University (2022) ^[9], which found that societal expectations of mothers have remained largely unchanged. The study highlights a problematic belief that older mothers are often seen as unnatural by the public.

The overall weighted mean for Disability-inclusivity was 3.41, verbally interpreted as Very High with a level of familiarity of Extremely Familiar/Comfortable. The findings suggest that they generally exhibit a very high level of inclusive language practices related to disability, with particular familiarity in referring to individuals with disabilities. This agrees with the study of Ismailos (2019) ^[18] which revealed that pre-service teachers in Ontario, Canada, held positive attitudes towards working with students requiring accommodations. They favored a student-centered classroom that promotes student choice and differentiated instruction.

The overall weighted mean Socioeconomic status-inclusivity was 3.40, verbally interpreted as Very High with a level of familiarity of Extremely Familiar/Comfortable. This implies that they strongly understand respect towards one's socioeconomic state. This confirms the study of Whiting & Cutri (2019) ^[30] which demonstrated that prospective teachers are aware of their personal privilege as well as the realities of social positions and structural inequities in society.

The overall weighted mean for Sexual orientation and gender-inclusivity was 3.27, verbally interpreted as Very High with a level of familiarity of Extremely Familiar/Comfortable. This suggests that they have a positive inclination towards integrating gender-inclusive language into teaching practices. This is consistent with the study of Cantalejo *et al.* (2024) ^[6] which states that aspiring educators at the University of Cabuyao have a strong preference for gender-inclusive language, reflecting society's shift towards greater inclusivity.

The overall weighted mean for Body size and weight-inclusivity was 3.25, verbally interpreted as High with a level of familiarity of Moderately Familiar/Comfortable. This implies that they exhibit varying levels of inclusive language practices regarding body size and weight-inclusivity. This potential gap may be because of the normalcy of discriminatory views towards body size and weight. According to a study by Fruh *et al.* (2021) ^[13], weight bias and stigma are prevalent across many areas of society and are often, unfortunately, considered a socially acceptable form of discrimination. For instance, individuals with a high body mass are frequently perceived as lacking willpower and self-control.

The overall weighted mean for Neurodiversity-inclusivity was 3.09, verbally interpreted as High with a level of

familiarity of Moderately Familiar/Comfortable. This implies that they exhibit varying levels of inclusive language practices concerning neurodiversity. This potential gap may be because of the challenging assumptions about the concept of normalcy. This corresponds with the study of Cook (2024) ^[10], where teachers' knowledge about neurodiversity tends to be reductive. This view hinders their ability to develop strategies that effectively address the needs of diverse students.

3. Respondent's Level of Inclusive Pedagogy

Table 3: English practice teachers' level of inclusive pedagogy

Level of inclusive pedagogy	Mean	Interpretation
Knowledge	3.44	Very High
Skills	3.48	Very High
Attitudes	3.55	Very High

Table 3 shows the summary of the level of inclusive language practices among English practice teachers at the University of Cabuyao. Attitudes garnered the highest overall weighted mean of 3.55, verbally interpreted as Very High. It is apparent in their firm conviction that student diversity enhances classroom instruction, demonstrating a profound recognition of inclusivity's advantages to the learning environment. This aligns with Lualhati's study (2022) ^[22], which found that pre-service teachers at a state university in Batangas, Philippines, have very positive attitudes towards inclusive education. The study also showed that they view themselves as well-prepared to implement inclusive teaching methods.

The overall weighted mean for Skills was 3.48, verbally interpreted as Very High. It suggests that they have the dedication to promoting equal rights and readiness to effectively assist students. This corresponds with the study of Pasha *et al.* which found that most of the 250 surveyed pre-service teachers at a university had a clear understanding of inclusion and felt equipped to apply the skills and knowledge gained from their programs.

The overall weighted mean for Knowledge was 3.44, verbally interpreted as Very High. This suggests that they have a solid awareness of the importance of considering multiple factors, such as personal, academic, social, and emotional aspects when addressing student diversity. This agrees with the study of Lancaster & Bain which suggests that closing the gap between theory and practice in inclusive teaching methods can be achieved through the mastery of pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) and its components related to inclusive practices.

4. Difference in Inclusive Language Practices when Grouped according to Gender Profile

Table 4: Summary of test of significance through the comparison of inclusive language practices when grouped according to gender profile

Gender Profile and Inclusive Language Practices			
t – computed	t – critical	Decision	Conclusion
-0.31	2.00	Failed to Reject Ho	Not Significant

Table 4 provides the summary of test of significance through the comparison of inclusive language practices when grouped according to gender profile. The computed t-value (t-computed) is -0.31, significantly lower than the critical value

(t-critical) of 2.00. It suggests that the null hypothesis failed to be rejected, which means there is no significant difference in inclusive language practices when grouped according to gender profile.

This agrees with the study by Kumar *et al* which found no significant differences in attitudes toward the teaching

profession at the secondary school level based on gender. Meanwhile, this contrasts with the qualitative investigation conducted by Jones (2023) ^[19], where nonbinary teachers expressed a belief that their classrooms were more inclusive than those of many of their heterosexual colleagues.

5. Difference in Inclusive Pedagogy when Grouped according to Gender Profile

Table 5: Test of significance through the comparison of inclusive pedagogy when grouped according to gender profile

Gender Profile and Inclusive Pedagogy			
t – computed	t – critical	Decision	Conclusion
-0.16	2.00	Failed to Reject Ho	Not Significant

Table 5 presents the summary of test of significance through the comparison of inclusive pedagogy when grouped according to gender profile. The computed t-value (t-computed) is -0.16, significantly lower than the critical value (t-critical) of 2.00. It suggests that the null hypothesis has failed to be rejected, which means there is no significant difference in inclusive pedagogy when grouped according to gender profile.

This is supported by the study conducted by Xue *et al.* (2022) ^[31], which examined the professional competency of primary and secondary physical education teachers in China. The study evaluated their professional attitudes, knowledge, and skills related to inclusive education and found no significant gender differences in their competency for inclusive education.

6. Relationship of the Respondent's level of Inclusive Language Practices and Inclusive Pedagogy

Table 6: Relationship between English practice teachers' level of Inclusive Language Practices and Inclusive Pedagogy

Variables	r-computed	r-critical	Interpretation	Decision
Inclusive Language Practices	0.07	0.52	Very Low Correlation	Failed to Reject Ho
Inclusive Pedagogy				

Table 6 provides a summary of the correlational analysis conducted between the inclusive language practices and inclusive pedagogy of practice teachers. The computed correlation coefficient (r-computed) is 0.07, significantly lower than the critical value (r-critical) of 0.52. It indicates a very low correlation between the two variables, suggesting an almost no linear relationship between inclusive language practices and inclusive pedagogy among the practice teachers surveyed. Consequently, the null hypothesis (Ho) is not rejected, suggesting no significant correlation between the two variables. This means that the small observed correlation could quickly have arisen by chance and does not provide strong evidence of a natural association between the variables. This also implies that the lack of significant correlation implies that other factors might be influencing inclusive pedagogy practices among teachers. Inclusive language practices alone do not significantly impact or correlate with inclusive pedagogy.

This resonates with the study of Massouti in which there should be a thorough review of inclusive policies and mindsets, as well as the connection of prospective teachers' knowledge and actions regarding inclusive teaching.

7. Researchers' Proposed Action Plan

Based on the study findings, a comprehensive manual titled "Recognizing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Principles and Teaching Strategies: A Manual Guide for English Practice Teachers in the University of Cabuyao" has been developed. This manual aims to support English practice teachers in implementing DEI principles in their teaching practices. It includes (1) the University of Cabuyao's Mission, Vision, and Core Values, outlining its guiding principles. (2) The manual's objectives and benefits for

university courses. (3) CHED-mandated courses related to DEI, highlighting its importance and relationship with language. (4) An introduction to inclusive language, referencing the seven identities of inclusivity from the APA Inclusive Language Guide. (5) A distinction between mainstream, inclusion, and special education. (6) A short DEI instructional strategy guide tailored for English practice teachers to enhance their teaching methods in line with DEI principles.

Conclusion

The following conclusions have been drawn based on the results of the study: English practice teachers at the University of Cabuyao exhibit a high level of inclusive language practices with a moderate level of familiarity/comfort regarding body size and weight-inclusivity, as well as neurodiversity-inclusivity. In contrast, they exhibit a very high level with an extremely high level of familiarity/comfort with their inclusive language practices concerning age-inclusivity, disability-inclusivity, gender and sexual orientation-inclusivity, race, ethnicity, and cultural-inclusivity, and socioeconomic status-inclusivity. Additionally, English practice teachers at the University of Cabuyao exhibit a very high level of inclusive pedagogy in terms of knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

Despite these very high levels of inclusivity in various areas, no significant differences were found between gender profiles and there is a very low correlation between the level of inclusive language practices and inclusive pedagogy among English practice teachers at the University of Cabuyao. Consequently, there is no significant relationship between these two variables. Given this, the suggested manual focused on all sub-variables to reinforce both

inclusive language practices and inclusive pedagogy among the English practice teachers at the University of Cabuyao.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the conclusion of the study:

English practice teachers may prioritize enhancing their inclusive language practices regarding body size and weight-inclusivity and neurodiversity-inclusivity. By this, they can establish a learning environment that honors and appreciates every student, regardless of their physical measurements, weight, or neurodivergence. On the other hand, since they have also demonstrated a remarkably high level of inclusive pedagogy in terms of knowledge, skills, and attitudes, it could be prompted that other teaching competencies are to be compared to assess their strengths and weaknesses regarding other areas.

The College of Education at the University of Cabuyao could adapt the manual into their Outcomes-Based Teaching and Learning Plan (OBTLP) to integrate diversity, equity, and inclusivity principles in teacher education. Another manual focusing on inclusive language for Filipino could further support this goal. Administrators may also use the manual to improve Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion policies at the university. Additionally, a new course on inclusive pedagogy focusing on Universal Design for Learning, could be added to enhance students' teaching of inclusivity.

Mainstream and Special Education Teachers in Cabuyao can foster inclusivity by using inclusive language, motivating students to be mindful of their words and actions. This approach not only improves the classroom environment but also prepares students to be compassionate and inclusive individuals outside school. Additionally, the Department of Education and the Commission on Higher Education may implement language sensitivity policies nationwide, helping teachers manage diverse classrooms more effectively.

Future researchers may also conduct in-depth studies on inclusive language and pedagogy across different locales and diverse respondents using a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative findings for better insights. They can also examine the variables in broader demographic analyses, such as pre-service versus in-service teachers or expanding the participant pool beyond English majors.

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