

INCLUSIVE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING: FEATURES OF WORKING WITH STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

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Abstract. *The article examines the main principles and methodological approaches to teaching English in the context of inclusive education. It analyzes the characteristics of perception and acquisition of a foreign language by students with special educational needs (SEN), including learners with hearing and visual impairments, musculoskeletal disorders, autism spectrum disorders, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia. The paper substantiates the necessity of adapting instructional materials, didactic tasks, and assessment methods. Particular attention is paid to the role of the English teacher in creating a psychologically safe educational environment that ensures equal access to communication and language development. The article concludes with practical recommendations for organizing an inclusive English lesson.*

Keywords: *inclusive education, English language, special educational needs, differentiation, adaptation, universal design for learning, EFL.*

Annotatsiya. *Maqolada inklyuziv ta'lim sharoitida ingliz tilini o'qitishning asosiy tamoyillari va metodik yondashuvlari ko'rib chiqiladi. Unda alohida ta'limga muhtoj bo'lgan o'quvchilar, jumladan, eshitish va ko'rish qobiliyati cheklangan, tayanch-harakat azolari shikastlangan, autizm spektri buzilishlari, diqqat tanqisligi va giperaktivlik hamda disleksiya kabi o'rganishda o'ziga xos qiyinchiliklari bo'lgan bolalarning chet tilini o'zlashtirish xususiyatlari tahlil qilinadi. Ishda o'quv materiallari, didaktik topshiriqlar va baholash usullarini moslashtirish zarurligi asoslab berilgan. Muloqot va til rivojlanishi uchun teng imkoniyatlarni taminlovchi psixologik xavfsiz talim muhitini yaratishda ingliz tili o'qituvchisining roliga alohida etibor qaratilgan. Maqola yakunida inklyuziv ingliz tili darsini tashkil etish bo'yicha amaliy tavsiyalar berilgan.*

Kalit so'zlar: *inklyuziv ta'lim, ingliz tili, alohida ta'lim ehtiyojlari, differentsiatsiya, adaptatsiya, ta'limning universal dizayni, EFL.*

Аннотация. *В статье рассматриваются основные принципы и методологические подходы к преподаванию английского языка в контексте инклюзивного образования. Анализируются особенности восприятия и усвоения иностранного языка учащимися с особыми образовательными потребностями (ООП), включая учащихся с нарушениями слуха и зрения, нарушениями опорно-двигательного аппарата, расстройствами аутистического спектра, синдромом дефицита внимания и гиперактивности, а также со специфическими трудностями в обучении, такими как дислексия. Обосновывается необходимость адаптации учебных материалов, дидактических задач и методов оценивания. Особое внимание уделяется роли учителя английского языка в создании психологически безопасной образовательной среды, обеспечивающей равный доступ к коммуникации и языковому развитию. В заключении приводятся практические рекомендации по организации инклюзивного урока английского языка.*

Ключевые слова: *инклюзивное образование, английский язык, особые образовательные потребности, дифференциация, адаптация, универсальный дизайн в обучении, EFL (английский как иностранный).*

Introduction. Inclusive education is one of the priority areas of modern educational policy and pedagogical science. Its goal is to ensure equal access to high-quality education for all categories of learners, including children with special educational needs. Within school-based foreign language instruction, inclusion is of particular importance because learning English is associated not only with the development of cognitive skills but also with active communication, social integration, and academic success. However, practice shows that teaching English in an inclusive classroom requires additional professional competencies from the teacher: understanding the developmental and learning characteristics of students with SEN, mastering adaptive methodologies, designing lessons that account for diverse learner abilities, and maintaining a psychologically comfortable atmosphere. The purpose of this article is to examine the key principles of inclusive English language teaching and identify the main features of working with students with special educational needs. Inclusive education is defined as a system in which students with diverse educational needs learn together in a shared educational environment, provided that the necessary support conditions are created. The main principles of inclusion include:

- recognition of the value of every learner;
- ensuring equal access to educational resources;
- flexibility of the learning process;
- creation of a supportive environment.

Literature review. The theoretical foundations of inclusive education are widely discussed in international research and policy documents, particularly in the framework developed by UNESCO, which emphasizes equal access, equity, and the removal of learning barriers for all students. The Global Education Monitoring Report (2020) highlights that inclusion requires systemic transformation rather than mere physical integration. Scholars such as Mel Ainscow and Lani Florian argue that inclusive practice depends on responsive pedagogy and teacher agency rather than deficit-oriented models of disability.

Within English language teaching, inclusive methodology is closely connected with the framework of CAST and its Universal Design for Learning (UDL) guidelines, which propose multiple means of representation, engagement, and expression. Research on differentiation by Carol Ann Tomlinson supports adapting task complexity and instructional strategies to diverse learner profiles. Studies addressing specific SEN categories – such as dyslexia (Snowling), autism spectrum disorders (Odom et al.; Mesibov & Shea), and hearing impairments (Marschark & Hauser) – demonstrate the importance of multisensory instruction, structured classroom environments, and assistive technologies in foreign language learning. Collectively, the literature confirms that inclusive English language teaching requires methodological flexibility, evidence-based adaptation, and formative assessment practices to ensure equitable participation.

Research methodology. This study is based on a qualitative analytical approach. A systematic review and content analysis of contemporary scholarly publications, international policy documents, and methodological guidelines on inclusive education and English language teaching were conducted. Comparative analysis was applied to identify common principles and effective strategies for working with students with different types of special educational needs. The findings were synthesized to formulate practical recommendations for organizing inclusive English language lessons.

Results and discussion. Inclusion does not imply the same approach for all students. On the contrary, it involves differentiation, adaptation, and individualization of the educational process. One of the most promising approaches to organizing an inclusive lesson is Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Its essence lies in designing the educational process in a way that initially accounts for learner diversity. UDL includes three principles:

1. multiple means of representation (text, audio, visual diagrams);
2. multiple means of expression (oral response, project work, drawing, recording);
3. multiple means of engagement (games, inquiry, collaboration).

In the context of English language teaching, UDL is particularly relevant because language can be acquired through various perceptual channels and forms of activity. An inclusive classroom may include students with different types of educational needs. Effective lesson organization requires consideration of the specifics of perception, communication, and cognitive information processing. It is unavoidable fact that Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (**ASD**) may experience difficulties in: social interaction; understanding nonverbal cues; behavioral flexibility; interpreting figurative language and humor. Inclusive English language teaching requires systematic pedagogical planning, methodological flexibility, and a strong ethical commitment to educational equity. In contemporary inclusive classrooms, teachers increasingly work with learners who have diverse special educational needs (SEN), including Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), dyslexia and other specific learning difficulties, hearing impairments, visual impairments, and musculoskeletal disorders. Consequently, effective English language teaching in such environments depends on the teacher's ability to adapt content, classroom organization, communication practices, and assessment procedures while maintaining a shared learning objective for all learners [8]. From this perspective, inclusion is not limited to physical placement in a mainstream classroom; rather, it involves removing barriers to participation and learning through purposeful instructional design and responsive teaching strategies [1].

To begin with, it is important to recognize that learners with ASD may demonstrate high academic potential while simultaneously experiencing significant challenges in social communication, pragmatic language use, and interactional competence. Therefore, English lessons should be organized in a way that supports predictability, reduces anxiety, and

increases learners' sense of control (American Psychiatric Association, 2013; Odom et al., 2018). In particular, students with ASD benefit from a clear lesson structure, explicit routines, and stable classroom expectations. Moreover, visual supports such as schedules, diagrams, flashcards, and task sequences play a critical role in scaffolding comprehension and supporting independence, especially when learners struggle with processing verbal instructions in real time [11.570]. In addition, the use of social stories may be pedagogically justified as a strategy for preparing learners for communicative situations and reducing uncertainty in social interaction, which can enhance participation in pair and group speaking tasks [9]. Methodologically, it is also recommended to use short tasks with frequent transitions, incorporate movement-based activities such as Total Physical Response, and provide clear instructions supported by visual prompts, as these techniques help sustain attention and facilitate engagement without overloading learners cognitively [3]; [12]. Furthermore, game-based formats and low-stakes competitive elements may strengthen motivation, provided that they are implemented in ways that avoid pressure and protect learners' emotional safety.

Similarly, learners with dyslexia and other specific learning difficulties often experience persistent difficulties in reading and writing, particularly in phonological processing, decoding, spelling, and reading fluency. Studies were carried out by Snowling, (2000); Ziegler & Goswami showed that these challenges may become more pronounced in English due to the relative opacity of English orthography compared to more transparent writing systems, which increases the cognitive load of decoding and spelling. Consequently, according to Birsh and Carreker, inclusive English teaching should employ multisensory approaches that integrate auditory, visual, and kinesthetic channels, enabling learners to process language through multiple pathways. Additionally, explicit phonics instruction, focused work on sound–spelling patterns, and structured practice with high-frequency word families may support the development of decoding and spelling skills.

In order to ensure accessibility and fairness, teachers should also reduce the volume of text, simplify layout, and provide extended time for reading and writing tasks, as time pressure can significantly hinder performance and increase anxiety for learners with dyslexia [13]. In the case of learners with hearing impairments, the central challenges in English language learning relate to the perception of phonetic distinctions, intonation patterns, sound discrimination, and listening comprehension. For this reason, visual input becomes a primary compensatory channel, and the teacher's methodological choices should emphasize multimodal access to language [10]. For example, subtitles, transcripts, and visual vocabulary cards can support comprehension and facilitate learning, while speechreading may be used where appropriate. According to Marschark and Hauser, since listening-based tasks may be less accessible, it is pedagogically reasonable to place greater emphasis on reading and writing, while simultaneously integrating supportive technologies such as sound amplification and sign-supported instruction when available. Importantly,

the goal of inclusive methodology is not to exclude listening activities entirely, but rather to adapt them in ways that are meaningful and achievable.

Learners with visual impairments, in contrast, face barriers related to access to printed materials and visual representations, including tables, diagrams, illustrations, and board work. Therefore, teachers must ensure that instructional materials are available in accessible formats, such as large print, audio resources, and screen-reader compatible digital texts [15]. Furthermore, classroom discourse should include explicit oral descriptions of visual information so that learners can construct meaning through auditory channels. When appropriate, tactile materials and hands-on objects may be integrated to support comprehension and participation, particularly in vocabulary learning and content-based tasks. Students with musculoskeletal disorders may experience difficulties related to handwriting, fine motor control, participation in physically active classroom tasks, and speed of task completion. As a result, inclusive English language teaching should provide alternative response formats such as oral production, typing, audio recordings, or the use of assistive technologies. In addition, flexible timing and carefully structured pair work with role distribution can ensure that learners participate fully without being disadvantaged by motor limitations. Such adaptations are consistent with the principle that learning outcomes should remain stable while access routes and task formats may be diversified. More broadly, the adaptation of content and methodology in inclusive English language teaching is strongly supported by the principle of task differentiation. Differentiation allows learners to engage with tasks at varying levels of complexity while pursuing a shared lesson objective, thus maintaining both equity and coherence within the classroom (Tomlinson, 2014). For example, one learner may produce short sentences using a model, another may develop an extended written response, and a third may participate orally with prompts. Differentiation can be implemented through adjustments in volume, complexity, time allocation, format, and level of scaffolding. In addition, visual and structural supports—such as lesson schedules, response templates, graphic organizers, and step-by-step instructions—are essential across most categories of SEN because they reduce uncertainty, improve comprehension, and support learner autonomy. In this sense, inclusive teaching aligns closely with the framework of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), which emphasizes multiple means of representation, engagement, and expression in order to remove barriers to learning for diverse learners. Although the communicative approach remains central to modern English language teaching, its implementation in inclusive classrooms requires careful adaptation. Communicative methodology assumes spontaneous interaction, risk-taking, and real-time processing, which may be challenging for some learners with SEN. Therefore, teachers should create psychologically safe conditions for speaking by allowing preparation time, promoting pair and small-group interaction, and avoiding unexpected public performance such as calling students to the board without prior support [7.719]. Moreover, alternative forms of participation,

including flashcards, written responses, structured speaking frames, and guided dialogues, should be considered legitimate communicative contributions. Such practices not only reduce anxiety but also maintain the communicative purpose of tasks while respecting learner diversity.

Assessment and feedback practices also require significant adaptation in inclusive environments. In inclusive classrooms, assessment must be transparent, equitable, and progress-oriented, meaning that learners are evaluated not solely by final outcomes but also by effort, improvement, and the development of effective learning strategies [5.7]. In this context, formative assessment plays a particularly important role because it reduces performance anxiety, strengthens motivation, and increases learners' sense of competence. Effective formative strategies include mini-reflections, checklists, criteria-based self-assessment, peer feedback, and structured techniques such as "two stars and a wish", which provide balanced feedback and support learner agency [5.74]. Furthermore, formative assessment is consistent with inclusive principles because it emphasizes growth and supports learning rather than functioning primarily as a mechanism of selection or exclusion.

Finally, the role of the English teacher in inclusive classrooms extends beyond methodology to include socio-psychological responsibilities. Teachers must create a safe atmosphere, prevent stigmatization, and organize collaboration among learners. Additionally, effective inclusive practice often requires cooperation with tutors, psychologists, speech therapists, and parents in order to ensure consistent support and appropriate intervention [8.294]. Therefore, inclusive English language teachers need professional competencies not only in instructional design and classroom management, but also in pedagogical empathy, positive discipline, and stress resilience. These competencies are essential for maintaining a supportive learning environment in which all learners can participate meaningfully.

Conclusion. In conclusion, inclusive English language teaching requires a systematic approach that integrates pedagogical flexibility, evidence-based methodological adaptation, and respect for individual learner needs. Through the careful modification of lesson organization, instructional strategies, and assessment procedures, teachers can ensure equitable access to language learning for students with special educational needs. Universal Design for Learning, task differentiation, and formative assessment function as core methodological tools in inclusive pedagogy, enabling teachers to maintain shared learning objectives while offering multiple pathways to participation. As a result, the inclusive English classroom becomes not only a space for language development, but also a setting for social integration, confidence building, and the formation of communicative competence for every learner.

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