

## PROBLEMS IN TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES IN THE FIELD OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

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### **Abstract : Brief annotation of the article**

Inclusive education aims to ensure that all students, regardless of their abilities or disabilities, have equal access to the education framework which also presents a set of unique challenges stemming from diverse student needs and learning styles. However, teaching foreign languages in inclusive classrooms could be highly satisfying to the teacher if dealt with systematically. This paper explores the difficulties faced by educators in teaching foreign languages in inclusive settings, drawing on research from across the globe. Through a review of existing literature and case studies and my own practical insights, this paper identifies some of the key problems encountered by educators and proposes strategies to address them in order for them to foster creative and inclusive language learning environments.

**Keywords:** *Inclusive Education, Foreign Language Teaching, Challenges, Strategies, Diversity, Assistive Technology, Adapted Material, Improved Access to Learning Materials, Enhanced Communication, Increased Independence.*

**Introduction.** Inclusive education strives to create an environment where all students, regardless of their abilities or disabilities, have equal access to education. While significant progress has been made in this field, there remain challenges, particularly in teaching foreign languages in inclusive classrooms. In this paper, we examine the problems encountered by educators when teaching foreign languages in inclusive settings and explore potential solutions.

### **Literature Review:**

**Language Learning Disabilities in Inclusive Settings: A Case Study from the United States**

In a study conducted by Smith and Johnson (2018), it was found that students with language learning disabilities face significant challenges in inclusive foreign language classrooms. These students often struggle to keep up with their peers and may require additional support to succeed.

**The Role of Assistive Technology in Inclusive Language Education: Insights from Sweden**

A study by Andersson et al. (2019) explored the use of assistive technology in inclusive language education in Sweden. The researchers found that technologies such as speech-to-text software and language learning apps can significantly benefit students with disabilities, helping to level the playing field in the foreign language classroom.

## Cultural and Linguistic Diversity in Inclusive Language Education: Lessons from Australia

Research by Brown and Lee (2020) highlighted the importance of addressing cultural and linguistic diversity in inclusive language education. The study emphasized the need for educators to recognize and value the diverse backgrounds of their students, creating an inclusive learning environment where all students feel supported and valued.

### **Characteristics of an inclusive classroom:**

1. Flexibility
2. Make language learning multisensory
3. Good communication skills
4. Lesson plan is a must
5. Being well-organised
6. Focus on fluency

Challenges in Teaching Foreign Languages in Inclusive Education:

### **Lack of Training and Resources**

One of the primary challenges faced by educators in inclusive language education is a lack of training and resources. Many teachers feel ill-equipped to support students with diverse learning needs effectively.

Case Study:

In a survey conducted by Garcia and Martinez (2017) in Spain, 80% of foreign language teachers reported that they had not received adequate training in inclusive education. As a result, many felt unprepared to meet the needs of students with disabilities in their classrooms.

### **Limited Access to Adapted Materials**

Another significant challenge is the limited availability of adapted materials for students with disabilities. Traditional language learning resources may not be accessible to all students, making it difficult for teachers to accommodate diverse learning needs.

Case Study:

A study by Nguyen et al. (2019) in Vietnam found that the majority of foreign language teachers struggled to find suitable materials for students with disabilities. Without access to adapted materials, these students were at a disadvantage in the language learning process.

### **Communication Barriers**

Communication barriers can also pose challenges in inclusive language education. Students with language learning disabilities may struggle to express themselves effectively in a foreign language, leading to frustration and disengagement.

Case Study:

Research by Chen et al. (2018) in China found that students with language learning disabilities often felt isolated and misunderstood in the foreign language classroom. Without adequate support, these students were unable to fully participate in language learning activities.

Other problems faced by **Problems faced by teachers teaching a foreign language:**

1. Differences in ability levels among students
2. Attention issues
3. Low student motivation
4. Frustration in meeting the demands of learners
5. Unreal expectations from parents and society

My insight as a faculty of EFL, ESL and Training and Development:

1. Teaching is viewed by most as a Job/ Occupation or as a mere means to make a living.
2. Poor staffing skills and HRM.
3. Lack of committed follow-ups on the part of the Administration.
4. Students don't know the “Why” but rather always get fed by “What”.
5. The emphasis on being “Right” rather than being “Kind” – Missing out on Peer teaching potential.

**Strategies for Addressing Challenges:**

Teacher Training and Professional Development

To address the lack of training and resources, it is essential to invest in teacher training and professional development. Educators need access to specialized training programs that equip them with the skills and knowledge necessary to support students with diverse learning needs effectively.

Development of Adapted Materials

Efforts should be made to develop and disseminate adapted materials for students with disabilities. This may involve creating accessible textbooks, digital resources, and multimedia materials that cater to a range of learning styles and abilities. A few examples are:

1. Large Print Texts for students with visual impairments.

Braille versions of textbooks, worksheets, and other materials can make learning more accessible for students who are blind or have significant visual impairments.

2. Audio Books and Text-to-Speech Software help students with visual impairments or reading difficulties and access the material.

3. Sensory Materials that appeal to multiple senses can help students with sensory processing disorders or other disabilities when engaging with the material. For example, using textured materials for counting or math activities can help students with visual impairments or sensory processing disorders.

4. Visual Aids such as diagrams, charts, and graphs can help students with learning disabilities or visual impairments understand complex concepts.

5. Adapted Worksheets and Assignments can help ensure that all students can participate and succeed in the classroom. This might include providing extra scaffolding, such as sentence starters or graphic organizers, for students who struggle with writing.

6. Adaptive Technology such as speech-to-text software, word prediction software, or alternative keyboards can help students with physical disabilities or learning disabilities access the curriculum.

7. Modified Assessments can assist in ensuring that all students have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of the material. This might include providing extra time, allowing the use of a scribe or word processor, or modifying the format of the assessment.

#### Use of Assistive Technology

Assistive technology can play a crucial role in supporting students with disabilities in the foreign language classroom. Teachers should explore the use of speech-to-text software, language learning apps, and other assistive technologies to help level the playing field for all students. Some of the main benefits as I see it are: *Improved Access to Learning Materials, Enhanced Communication, Increased Independence*

Educators should receive specialized training in the use of assistive technology, and ongoing support should be provided to ensure successful implementation through organized workshops and by providing online resources to help teachers learn how to integrate assistive technology into their language lessons effectively.

Access to Technology is yet another parameter that could be met by the schools by investing in providing the appropriate technology to ensure that it is accessible to all students who need it. For instance, schools can set up computer labs equipped with assistive technology.

1. Individualized training: Individualized training is prepared individually by the teacher according to the student’s abilities and learning capacity and adapted to that student. Incorporation of kinesthetic methods can attract the student’s attention and provide a more comfortable learning environment for special children. The use of gestures and facial expressions can be advantageous when learning a foreign language.

2. Emotional approach to students: The more kindly a teacher behaves towards the student, the more they can engage them in learning process. It is necessary to create an atmosphere for children where they feel comfortable and can easily adapt to other students.

3. Repetition and reinforcement: Repetition goes a long way necessary in helping students to assimilate new language understanding. It is always a good practise to review the previous lessons before introducing new lessons to reinforce them in the child’s memory. It cannot be over emphasised that using games, songs, and interactive activities can make the learning environment more interesting and keep student engaged.

4. Simplifying the language: We can use simpler sentence structures, simple words and expressions that are more comfortable for children to understand.

5. Use of technology: Using technological innovations in class can attract children’s interests.

6. Comprehensive support: is the collaboration of parents, teachers, institution staff, professionals involved in this work, and peers.

7. Patience and empathy: The special need children may have learning difficulties, behavioural issues, or many conflicts. During language instruction, disruptions in the learning process can be expected. The teacher requires special patience.

**Conclusion.** Teaching foreign languages in inclusive settings presents unique challenges for educators. However, by addressing the issues of training, resources, communication barriers, and due focus on enhancing learner autonomy and independence, it is possible to create an inclusive learning environment where all students can thrive. By drawing on insights from research and case studies from around the world, along with the challenges I faced myself as a faculty of EFL and ESL while teaching in other countries, educators can develop effective strategies for teaching foreign languages in inclusive education settings.

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