

## CHALLENGES IN TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES IN THE CONTEXT OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

**Shakirova Farzona Furkat kizi**

*The student of the 3<sup>rd</sup> English language faculty, UzSWLU*

*[shakirovafeya4@gmail.com](mailto:shakirovafeya4@gmail.com)*

*+998-99-191-41-22*

**Abstract.** This article explores the complexities of teaching foreign languages in inclusive education settings, where students possess diverse learning needs, abilities, and cultural backgrounds. It underscores the legal and ethical obligations of schools to provide equitable access to education for all students, including those with special educational needs (SEN).

The article highlights the challenges teachers face in adapting their instruction to meet the varying needs of students with different learning styles, language proficiency levels, and cognitive abilities. It emphasizes the importance of creating inclusive classroom environments that foster a sense of belonging and support for all learners.

**Keywords:** Difficulties, instructions, inclusive education, attitude, special educational needs

### Introduction

Teaching foreign languages demands a commitment to meeting the requirements of a varied student body with a range of abilities, interests, IQs, language proficiency levels, learning philosophies, and cultural and familial backgrounds. Effective foreign language instructors are equipped with the skills, resources, and drive needed to adapt their instruction to the needs of a classroom full of students with varying intelligences and abilities. With the international call and legal requirements for inclusive education, however, an increasing number of students with special educational needs (SEN) are enrolled in mainstream schools.[2] This is a relatively recent phenomena, since until the late 20th century, special education teachers taught a large number of students with disabilities mostly in segregated settings. Today, as Lewis and Bagree (2013) emphasize, ‘there is a global shortage of teachers, particularly of teachers who are sufficiently trained and motivated to include children with disabilities (and children from other marginalized groups) in regular schools.

Foreign language learning has acquired a new meaning in the modern unprecedentedly interconnected world. For people with disabilities, it provides invaluable opportunities for achieving greater social integrity by receiving better opportunities for personal development, education, access to information, employment, mobility, social interactions, cultural enrichment, and developing cross-cultural awareness. Furthermore, it prepares them to participate in the global political and economic community. [4] Besides these pragmatic and cultural gains, learning a foreign language brings in other

significant, ‘metacognitive’ benefits, such as increased awareness of one’s own language and ‘improvement in critical thinking, mental discipline, flexibility, creativity, memory, executive functions, and improved cognitive functioning’ (Wight, 2015, p. 41).

Oftentimes, foreign language teachers express their frustration of not feeling prepared to teach students with SEN as they have usually not been trained how to prepare and conduct classes with such learners. It is not uncommon to hear voices of concern and even exasperation similar to those of the Spanish teacher in Hendry’s study (2009, p. 175-176) who shared that he had had only one class on teaching students with disabilities in college, that his present class with students with disabilities “put[s] [him] at [his] wits end”, and “when special kids are pulled out, this is a different class(ibid)”. Teachers are usually willing to apply accommodations when it comes to assignments and assessment. In the authors’ experience with students with dyslexia, the assessment accommodation have taken the form of: a) opportunities for a student to do a formal test on a computer rather than as a written test, b) waiving a student from a written examination and substituting it with an oral one, and c) giving a student additional time to complete a formal test. Differentiation in terms of assignment and assessment, however, is not enough. Hendry (2009) discovered during her observational study that a foreign language teacher did adhere to the suggested modifications for formal assignments and the evaluation of students with language learning disabilities. However, when introducing, outlining, and practicing the lesson material, the teacher neglected to make the appropriate modifications.[6]

The amount of information and questions was decreased for the students, but they got no help understanding the language’s structure, meaning, or application. It has been determined that schools that seek and adopt inclusive practices must abandon the didactic, teacher-centered teaching style in favor of a diverse, meaningful curriculum that guarantees each student receives individualized instruction (Ferguson, 2008).

**Problems and its solutions.** One of the primary challenges in teaching foreign languages within the framework of inclusive education is the diversity of learning needs within the classroom. Students with disabilities or special needs may require individualized support, different teaching strategies, or adaptive technologies to access the language curriculum effectively. Language teachers must adapt their instructional methods to accommodate diverse learning styles, communication preferences, and cognitive abilities to ensure that all students can participate meaningfully in language learning activities. Another critical issue in teaching foreign languages in the context of inclusive education is the availability and accessibility of appropriate learning materials and resources. Traditional language textbooks and materials may not always be inclusive or address the varied needs of students with disabilities. Teachers must adapt and create materials that are accessible, engaging, and relevant to all learners, including those with diverse abilities and learning styles. Collaboration with special education professionals, curriculum designers, and support staff can help ensure the development of inclusive language learning resources that cater to the needs of all students. Moreover, fostering a

supportive and inclusive classroom culture is essential for effective language learning in diverse settings. Creating a welcoming environment where students feel valued, respected, and included is key to promoting language learning success among all learners. Encouraging peer support, fostering positive relationships, and celebrating diversity can contribute to building a supportive community where students with disabilities feel empowered to engage actively in language learning activities. The lack of specialized training and resources for language teachers in the area of inclusive education poses a significant hurdle.[1] Educators may not always have the necessary knowledge or skills to meet the diverse needs of students with disabilities in language learning settings. Professional development opportunities focusing on inclusive teaching practices, assistive technologies, and differentiated instruction are essential to equip language teachers with the tools and strategies needed to create inclusive language learning environments.

Even experienced professors who first encounter youngsters with special needs may feel uncomfortable and unsure of how to help them participate fully in the educational process. Some students find the presence of an individual in class puzzling, while others are inspired to seek out fresh ideas. We aim to demonstrate various strategies for working with children with special needs during an English class.

Some scholars believe that only experts, such as psychologists, speech therapists, and dermatologists, are qualified to work with children with learning impairments.[2] Of course, the assistance of all these specialists is crucial; however, the most important thing is that a youngster requires a professor who knows and accepts them for who they are, just like the rest of the class. Some teachers are concerned about having to spend more time preparing classes, researching specialized material, and considering other approaches to engage special students in work. Planning a lesson always requires a lot of time and work from the professor, but as a result, you and the children you work with will also benefit. Introducing new approaches and procedures can enhance lesson comprehension, make it more engaging, and provide valuable information.

Here are some key issues for professors working in inclusive classrooms should remember:

- 1) Do not label children; try to see their personality.
- 2) Try to organize the lesson so that the children can better know and understand each other.  
Find someone fond of skiing.  
Find someone who has a pet  
Find someone who likes the same food as you.  
Find someone who prefers the same cartoons as you and so on.
- 3) Create a positive atmosphere at the lesson.  
I am thrilled to see all of you today
- 4) It is recommended to vary the forms of work at the lesson.
- 5) The use of musical gymnastics helps create a positive atmosphere at the lesson. [1]



Try to use as many perception channels as possible.

Every person requires the support and companionship of their peers. The question remains: "Why should students with special educational needs study foreign languages?" These students often exhibit disruptive conduct due to low self-esteem. However, teachers can use specific strategies to address this issue.

It can be managed using various ways. To enhance learning, consider using a multimodal strategy that includes kinesthetic, visual, and aural learning methods. Lessons are structured and explicit, allowing students to learn gradually. A memory technique has been deployed. The program emphasizes vocabulary and grammatical refreshment, self-esteem building through praise, and soft skill development.

To practice vocabulary or grammar, youngsters might engage in activities such as group work, origami, and collecting 3-D electronic puzzles. Games, other enjoyable exercises, and skills should also be included in the classroom. The so-called game chores help children relax, and each one can have a specific purpose. Educational games improve phonetic, lexical, and grammar skills, all of which are crucial for practical communication. In this scenario, clustering on certain subjects is preferable to dictionaries. Systematizing and categorizing lexical units involve primary thought processes including analysis and synthesis, in addition to translation and transcription of vocabulary. Applicability of knowledge is crucial in learning, as is communication when teaching a language. It's crucial to realize that communication can also take place in writing. Additionally, music might provide a solution: when youngsters perform individual chores, playing quiet music is ideal.

This will assist children to regain equilibrium and focus on their work. A professor may provide children with headsets if the class size allows. Using music from popular groups and musicians in the language being studied helps broaden children's educational opportunities.

Such tools contribute to achieving the following outcomes:

- 1) Improve the vocabulary;
- 2) Expand communication with each other;
- 3) Make better educational activity, which is the key to a positive attitude towards learning;
- 4) Develop a positive attitude towards the product of their work;
- 5) Creative work and visual material contribute to the development of brain functions, mental activity, and short-term memory. [7]

Foreign language instruction is always a vital and pressing issue in the practice of inclusive education. Multiple studies and observations suggest that communication improves education and the development of international culture. It sets the foundation for personality development is essential. University education is essential for developing critical intellectual skills. Foreign language learning is thought to benefit the growth and formation of individuals with disabilities.

Learning a foreign language even at the elementary level helps these children socialize, become more self-reliant, and avoid problems in communicating with peers. Thus, the main task of inclusive education is realized - the socialization of children with learning disabilities. A variety of exercises and games helps the child more easily and quickly remember the material studied, and this leads to an expansion of the linguistic horizons, which helps master elementary linguistic representations, accessible and vital for mastering oral and written speech in English (4:20). Of course, learning English by ear is a rather tricky task, but mastering a foreign language increases the educational opportunities of such people, allowing them to become a part of the global educational environment and feel socially adopted in society. Nevertheless, specialists with visual impairments who speak a foreign language are few in Russia, and the problem of learning to listen in such circumstances is hugely relevant. Today information technologies assist in teaching. Thanks to information technology, the variety of sources are open, which are associated with the exceptional achievements of modern computers and telecommunications. Information technology provides:

- 1) Work with specialized computer programs for persons with learning disabilities;
- 2) The general knowledge of computer games and programs;
- 3) The use of the text editor as a means of developing individual written text;
- 4) The employment of multimedia presentations in training.

**Conclusion.** Navigating the challenges of teaching foreign languages within the realm of inclusive education requires a multifaceted approach that considers diverse learning needs, fosters inclusive classroom environments, and promotes accessibility and equity. Implementing inclusive strategies, adapting teaching methodologies, providing support resources, and embracing cultural diversity are essential components in addressing the complexities of teaching foreign languages in inclusive educational settings. By prioritizing inclusivity, educators can create enriching language learning experiences that cater to the diverse strengths and needs of all learners, fostering a welcoming and supportive environment where every student has the opportunity to succeed and thrive in their language acquisition journey.

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