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PROMOTING INCLUSIVE PEDAGOGIES IN ELT CLASSROOMS: PERSPECTIVES FROM UZBEKISTAN

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Abstract: Inclusive pedagogy has become an essential priority in English Language Teaching (ELT), particularly in education systems that serve learners with diverse linguistic, cultural, socioeconomic, and ability-related needs. This article examines the promotion of inclusive pedagogies in ELT classrooms in Uzbekistan. It argues that inclusion should not be understood merely as the physical placement of learners with disabilities in mainstream classrooms, but as a systematic approach to designing accessible, equitable, and responsive language-learning environments. Drawing on the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), differentiated instruction, collaborative learning, and culturally responsive teaching, the article identifies key barriers to inclusion in Uzbek ELT contexts, including limited teacher preparation, insufficient accessible materials, large class sizes, and uneven availability of assistive technologies. The article proposes a context-sensitive framework for inclusive ELT practice based on flexible lesson design, multimodal input, scaffolded tasks, learner voice, cooperative learning, and continuous formative assessment. It concludes that sustainable inclusion in Uzbekistan requires coordinated action among teachers, school administrators, teacher-education institutions, curriculum developers, and policymakers. The proposed framework may support English teachers in reducing participation barriers while improving engagement, confidence, and language achievement for all learners.

Keywords: inclusive pedagogy, English Language Teaching, Universal Design for Learning, differentiated instruction, equitable education, teacher professional development.

Аннотация: Инклюзивная педагогика становится важным приоритетом в преподавании английского языка, особенно в образовательных системах, где обучаются учащиеся с различными языковыми, культурными, социально-экономическими и физическими особенностями. В данной статье рассматриваются пути продвижения инклюзивных педагогических подходов в классах английского языка в Узбекистане. Автор подчеркивает, что инклюзия не должна сводиться к простому включению учащихся с инвалидностью в общеобразовательные классы; она предполагает системное создание доступной, справедливой и адаптивной языковой образовательной среды. Опираясь на принципы Универсального дизайна для обучения (UDL), дифференцированного обучения, сотрудничества и культурно-ориентированной педагогики, в статье выявляются основные барьеры инклюзии в узбекском контексте ELT: недостаточная подготовка учителей, нехватка доступных учебных материалов, большая наполняемость классов и неравномерное обеспечение вспомогательными технологиями. Предлагается контекстно-ориентированная модель инклюзивного обучения английскому языку, включающая гибкое планирование уроков, мультимодальные материалы,

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поэтапную поддержку, учет мнения учащихся, кооперативное обучение и непрерывное формативное оценивание. Делается вывод, что устойчивая инклюзия требует скоординированных действий учителей, администрации школ, педагогических вузов, разработчиков учебных программ и государственных органов.

Ключевые слова: инклюзивная педагогика, преподавание английского языка, Универсальный дизайн для обучения, дифференцированное обучение, равное образование, профессиональное развитие учителей.

Annotatsiya: Inkluziv pedagogika ingliz tilini o‘rgatish (ELT) sohasida, ayniqsa turli til, madaniyat, ijtimoiy-iqtisodiy sharoit va imkoniyatlarga ega o‘quvchilar ta’lim oladigan tizimlarda muhim ustuvorlikka aylanmoqda. Ushbu maqolada O‘zbekistondagi ingliz tili darslarida inkluziv pedagogik yondashuvlarni rivojlantirish masalalari ko‘rib chiqiladi. Maqolada inkluziya faqat imkoniyati cheklangan o‘quvchilarni umumiy sinfxonalarga joylashtirish emas, balki hamma uchun qulay, adolatli va moslashuvchan til o‘rganish muhitini tizimli yaratish ekanligi ta’kidlanadi. Universal dizayn tamoyillari (UDL), differensial o‘qitish, hamkorlikka asoslangan o‘rganish va madaniy-ma’naviy xilma-xilikni hisobga oluvchi pedagogika asosida O‘zbekiston ELT kontekstidagi asosiy to‘siqlar aniqlanadi: o‘qituvchilarning kasbiy tayyorgarligi yetarli emasligi, moslashtirilgan o‘quv materiallarining yetishmasligi, sinfxonalarning ko‘p o‘quvchili bo‘lishi hamda yordamchi texnologiyalarning notekis taqsimlanishi. Maqolada moslashuvchan dars loyihalash, multimodal materiallar, bosqichma-bosqich yordam, o‘quvchilar fikrini hisobga olish, hamkorlikka asoslangan faoliyat va uzluksiz shakllantiruvchi baholashga tayanadigan kontekstga mos inkluziv ELT modeli taklif etiladi. Xulosa qilib, barqaror inkluziya uchun o‘qituvchilar, maktab ma’muriyati, pedagogika oliy ta’lim muassasalari, dastur ishlab chiquvchilar va siyosat qabul qiluvchilarning hamkorligi zarur.

Kalit so‘zlar: inkluziv pedagogika, ingliz tilini o‘rgatish, universal dizayn tamoyillari, differensial o‘qitish, adolatli ta’lim, o‘qituvchilarning kasbiy rivojlanishi.

Introduction

Inclusive education represents a foundational pillar in the transformation of educational systems worldwide. Rooted in the principles of equity, accessibility, and human rights, inclusive education aims to ensure that all students, regardless of their physical, cognitive, emotional, linguistic, or socioeconomic background, have access to quality education in mainstream settings. Within the context of English Language Teaching (ELT), inclusivity not only enhances participation but also serves as a bridge to broader global citizenship, intercultural communication, and academic opportunity. Globally, English has evolved into a lingua franca—a means for international dialogue, digital communication, and economic advancement. As such, English language skills are essential for academic success, career advancement, and participation in global discourse. In Uzbekistan, the government has increasingly emphasized English proficiency as a developmental priority, integrating it into early education and national testing frameworks (MoPE, 2021) [1]. Learners may differ in English proficiency, first-language background, learning pace, motivation, disability status, digital access, and family circumstances. In such conditions, a single teaching method or uniform set of classroom activities cannot meet the needs of every learner. Inclusive pedagogy therefore becomes an

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essential approach for ensuring that all students can participate meaningfully in English language learning.

Inclusive education is commonly understood as an approach that recognizes learner diversity as a normal feature of education rather than as a problem to be solved. In an inclusive ELT classroom, the teacher does not expect all learners to progress at the same speed or respond to the same type of task. Instead, the teacher creates multiple pathways for learners to access content, participate in activities, and demonstrate their understanding. This approach is closely connected to Universal Design for Learning, which recommends providing learners with multiple means of engagement, representation, and action and expression.[explore.openaire]

In Uzbekistan, educational reforms have increasingly emphasized quality, accessibility, and inclusion in foreign-language education. However, research and professional literature indicate that many English teachers still require stronger preparation in inclusive methodology, while schools may face limitations in accessible materials, assistive technology, and specialized support services. Consequently, promoting inclusive pedagogies requires more than changing individual classroom techniques. It requires a coordinated approach involving teacher education, curriculum design, resource provision, school leadership, and policy implementation.[explore.openaire][lingvospektr][explore.openaire]

This article aims to examine how inclusive pedagogies can be promoted in English Language Teaching classrooms in Uzbekistan. It addresses three main questions:

1. *What principles should guide inclusive ELT practice in Uzbek classrooms?*
2. *What barriers limit the implementation of inclusive pedagogies?*
3. *What practical strategies can English teachers use to create more inclusive learning environments?*

The article adopts a conceptual and practice-oriented perspective. It does not claim to present new empirical findings; rather, it synthesizes established inclusive-education principles and adapts them to the specific realities of Uzbek ELT classrooms.

Literature Review

Inclusive pedagogy in ELT

Inclusive pedagogy in ELT refers to teaching practices that enable all learners, regardless of ability, background, language proficiency, or personal circumstances, to participate in language learning. It moves beyond the traditional distinction between **“regular”** and **“special”** education by treating diversity as a source of classroom richness and instructional planning. Inclusive ELT practice involves several interconnected elements. First, teachers need to identify potential barriers to participation, such as unfamiliar vocabulary, inaccessible texts, anxiety, limited hearing or vision, low digital literacy, or cultural mismatch between classroom materials and learners’ experiences. Second, teachers should design flexible activities that allow different forms of participation. Third, assessment should measure language development in ways that do not unfairly disadvantage particular learners.

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Recent research on inclusive ELT strategies highlights differentiated instruction, technology integration, culturally responsive materials, peer and cooperative learning, task differentiation, and adaptive feedback as important practices for improving engagement, equity, and motivation. These practices are relevant to Uzbekistan because English classrooms often contain learners with widely different proficiency levels, particularly in large classes and mixed-ability groups.[ojs3.unpatti.ac][ojs3.unpatti.ac]

Universal Design for Learning

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) provides a useful framework for inclusive ELT. UDL encourages teachers to offer multiple means of engagement, representation, and action and expression. In practical terms, an English lesson may include visual supports, audio recordings, simplified texts, bilingual glossaries, gestures, realia, digital tools, oral responses, written responses, and project-based outputs.[explore.openaire] UDL does not mean lowering academic expectations. Instead, it means removing unnecessary barriers while maintaining meaningful learning goals. For example, when teaching a reading text about environmental problems, a teacher may provide the original text, an audio version, a visual infographic, and a simplified summary. Learners may demonstrate comprehension through a short paragraph, an oral presentation, a mind map, or a role-play. All learners work toward the same communicative goal, but they use different routes to access and demonstrate learning.

Differentiated instruction and collaboration

Differentiated instruction allows teachers to adjust content, process, product, and learning environment according to learners' needs. In ELT, this may involve tiered reading tasks, flexible grouping, choice boards, scaffolded writing frames, vocabulary support, and alternative assessment formats. Differentiation is particularly valuable in Uzbek classrooms where learners may have uneven exposure to English outside school. Collaborative learning also supports inclusion. Pair work, group projects, peer tutoring, information-gap tasks, and cooperative games can create opportunities for learners to use English in supportive social settings. Such activities may reduce anxiety and give quieter learners alternative ways to participate. Research on inclusive classroom practices identifies cooperative learning, peer support, task-based learning, and blended learning as practices that can promote participation among diverse learners.[scielo.org]

Uzbek context

Uzbekistan has made progress in developing policies and practices related to inclusive education. Nevertheless, localized studies suggest that English teachers may lack systematic training in inclusive pedagogy and that infrastructure, particularly in rural areas, can limit access to assistive resources. Studies focusing on learners with visual impairments also identify shortages of Braille materials, assistive technologies, and specialized teacher training as major obstacles to effective English instruction.[lingvospektr][explore.openaire] These findings suggest that inclusive ELT in Uzbekistan should be realistic and context-sensitive. Teachers need strategies that can be implemented with limited resources, while administrators and policymakers need to invest in teacher development, accessible materials, and institutional support.

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Methodology

This article uses a qualitative, conceptual research design based on document analysis and professional reflection. The analysis draws on recent academic and professional literature related to inclusive pedagogy, ELT, Universal Design for Learning, differentiated instruction, and inclusive education in Uzbekistan.[explore.openaire][lingvospektr][explore.openaire][ojs3.unpatti.ac]

The study followed three analytical stages:

- *Identification of core principles of inclusive pedagogy in ELT.*
- *Examination of contextual barriers and enabling factors in Uzbek ELT settings.*
- *Development of practical recommendations for teachers, schools, and teacher-education institutions.*

The article does not involve the collection of personal data from human participants. Therefore, it does not require ethical approval. The limitations of the approach are acknowledged: the recommendations should be tested through classroom-based research involving teachers, learners, school administrators, and parents.

Findings and Discussion

Key barriers to inclusion

The analysis identifies four major barriers to inclusive ELT in Uzbekistan.

Barrier	Description	Possible consequence
Limited teacher preparation	Many teachers may not receive systematic training in inclusive methodology, disability awareness, or differentiated assessment	Teachers may rely on whole-class instruction and unintentionally exclude some learners.
Insufficient accessible resources	Accessible texts, audio materials, Braille resources, subtitles, and assistive technologies may be unavailable or unevenly distributed.	Learners with sensory, cognitive, or physical barriers may have reduced access to language input.
Large and mixed-ability classes	Teachers may face difficulty providing individual support when classes are large and proficiency levels vary.	Learners with lower proficiency or additional needs may fall behind.
Assessment-centered instruction	Assessment may prioritize written tests and standardized answers rather than communicative competence.	Learners with strong oral, visual, or practical skills may not be able to demonstrate their abilities.

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These barriers are interconnected. For example, a teacher may understand the importance of differentiation but be unable to apply it effectively without accessible materials, planning time, professional support, and manageable class sizes.

Principles for inclusive ELT

Based on the reviewed literature and the Uzbek context, this article proposes five principles for inclusive ELT practice.

1. Design for diversity from the beginning.
Inclusion should be planned before the lesson begins, not added only when a learner experiences difficulty. Teachers should anticipate possible barriers and prepare alternative materials, instructions, and participation options.

2. Provide multiple ways of accessing English.
English input should be presented through spoken, visual, written, and interactive channels. Teachers may use images, short videos, audio recordings, gestures, real objects, graphic organizers, and simplified texts. Multisensory and multimodal approaches can support learners who benefit from visual or auditory input.[proceedings.unnes.ac][files.eric.ed]

3. Offer flexible participation and expression.
Not every learner should be required to respond in the same way. Some learners may contribute through speaking, while others may write, draw, use digital tools, or participate in group discussion. Flexible participation supports learner confidence and reduces anxiety.

4. Use scaffolding and adaptive feedback.
Scaffolding means providing temporary support that helps learners complete a task independently over time. Examples include sentence starters, vocabulary banks, model texts, guided questions, peer feedback, and teacher modeling. Feedback should focus on progress, specific language use, and achievable next steps.

5. Treat learners as partners.
Inclusive classrooms should give learners opportunities to express preferences, reflect on their learning, and participate in decisions about classroom activities. Learner voice is important because inclusion cannot be achieved through teacher-centered decisions alone.

Recommendations

For English teachers. English teachers should begin with small, sustainable changes rather than attempting to transform every lesson at once. They can introduce visual supports, flexible grouping, sentence frames, choice-based tasks, and regular opportunities for learner reflection. Teachers should also reflect on whether their classroom routines allow all learners to participate, not only those who are confident, fast, or verbally active. Professional reflection is especially important. After each lesson, teachers may ask: Which learners participated actively? Which learners remained silent? Which task created unnecessary difficulty? What support could be added next time? Such reflection helps teachers move from intuitive practice toward deliberate inclusive teaching.

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For schools and administrators. School leaders should support inclusion by providing time for collaborative planning, access to professional development, and appropriate learning resources. Administrators can also encourage teachers to share successful inclusive strategies through lesson study, peer observation, mentoring, and professional learning communities. Schools should avoid treating inclusion as the responsibility of one specialist teacher. Classroom teachers, support staff, parents, and learners all have important roles. A whole-school approach is more likely to produce consistent and sustainable results.

For teacher education and policy. Teacher-education programs should include practical modules on inclusive pedagogy, differentiated instruction, assistive technology, classroom assessment, and collaboration with families. These modules should include classroom-based practice rather than theoretical knowledge alone. Policy support should focus on equitable resource distribution, especially for rural and under-resourced schools. Investment in accessible digital materials, teacher training, and school infrastructure can help translate inclusive policy into everyday classroom practice.[explore.openaire][lingvospektr]

Conclusion

This study has examined the current landscape, challenges, and future directions of inclusive English Language Teaching (ELT) in Uzbekistan within the framework of Sustainable Development Goal 4. The analysis, grounded in both global literature and national case studies, reveals that inclusive ELT is not only achievable but also highly beneficial for all learners. Promoting inclusive pedagogies in ELT classrooms in Uzbekistan requires a shift from viewing learner diversity as a problem toward viewing it as a normal and valuable feature of education. Inclusive English teaching should provide multiple ways for learners to access language, participate in activities, and demonstrate progress. Strategies such as UDL, differentiated instruction, multimodal materials, cooperative learning, scaffolding, and formative assessment can make English classrooms more equitable and engaging.

However, individual teachers cannot create inclusive education alone. Sustainable progress requires investment in teacher preparation, accessible resources, collaborative school cultures, and responsive policy. When these conditions are met, inclusive ELT can help all learners in Uzbekistan develop not only English language competence but also confidence, agency, and a stronger sense of belonging in the classroom.

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