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# INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE EDUCATION: STRATEGIES FOR SUPPORTING NEURODIVERGENT LEARNERS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS

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***Abstract.*** *Inclusive language education has become an essential component of modern teaching, especially as classrooms increasingly include learners with diverse cognitive profiles. This study explores effective strategies for supporting neurodivergent learners – particularly students with ADHD, autism spectrum disorder, and dyslexia – in foreign language classrooms. The research aims to identify the challenges these learners face and to examine teaching practices that can make language learning more accessible and equitable. A qualitative descriptive method was used, involving interviews and questionnaires with foreign language teachers. The findings show that neurodivergent students often struggle with concentration, processing speed, and traditional assessment formats. However, strategies such as multimodal instruction, clear and structured tasks, visual scaffolding, flexible pacing, and elements of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) significantly improve engagement and performance. The study concludes that inclusive teaching practices not only support neurodivergent learners but also enhance the overall quality of foreign language education. Recommendations include increased teacher training, accessible learning materials, and the integration of technology-based support tools.*

***Keywords:*** *Inclusive Education, Neurodiversity, Foreign Language Learning, ADHD, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Dyslexia, Multimodal Instruction, Universal Design for Learning, Inclusive Teaching Strategies, Accessibility*

## Introduction

Inclusive education has become one of the central principles of modern teaching, emphasizing equal access to learning for all students regardless of their individual needs or differences. In recent years, the concept of *neurodiversity* – which recognizes natural variations in the human brain such as ADHD, autism spectrum disorder, and dyslexia – has gained significant attention in educational research. As foreign language classrooms become increasingly diverse, teachers are expected to understand these differences and apply strategies that support every learner's success. Neurodivergent students often face specific challenges in language learning, including difficulties with attention, working memory, processing speed, and traditional classroom tasks. These challenges can lead to decreased motivation, lower participation, and limited academic progress if appropriate teaching methods are not provided. Therefore, creating an inclusive learning environment is essential not only for academic achievement but also for the emotional well-being and confidence of neurodivergent learners.

Despite growing awareness, many language teachers still report limited knowledge about how to effectively support students with cognitive differences. This highlights the need for practical, adaptable strategies that can be integrated into everyday teaching without requiring major structural changes. Approaches such as multimodal instruction,

clear task design, the use of visual supports, flexible pacing, and elements of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) have shown promise in making foreign language learning more accessible.

The purpose of this study is to explore how inclusive strategies can be applied in foreign language classrooms to better support neurodivergent learners. By identifying common challenges and effective teaching practices, the study aims to contribute to a more equitable and supportive educational environment. It also seeks to raise awareness among teachers and encourage the adoption of inclusive methods that benefit all students, not only those with diagnosed conditions.

## Literature Review

Inclusive education aims to provide equal learning opportunities for students with diverse needs, including those with neurodivergent profiles. Recent research highlights that neurodiversity – particularly ADHD, autism spectrum disorder, and dyslexia – plays a significant role in how learners process information and engage with foreign languages. Studies show that neurodivergent learners often struggle with attention control, sensory overload, phonological processing, and working memory, which can make traditional language lessons challenging.

To address these needs, several inclusive teaching frameworks have been proposed. One widely recognized approach is **Universal Design for Learning (UDL),** which encourages flexible teaching methods, multiple ways of presenting information, and varied options for demonstrating understanding. Research also supports the use of **multimodal instruction,** combining visual, auditory, and kinesthetic input to enhance comprehension. Additionally, structured routines, clear instructions, visual supports, and chunked tasks have proven effective in reducing cognitive load for neurodivergent students. Technology-based tools-such as speech-to-text, interactive platforms, and adaptive learning apps - are increasingly recommended for improving accessibility in language classrooms. Overall, existing studies agree that inclusive strategies benefit not only neurodivergent learners but also the general student population, leading to more supportive and effective learning environments.

## Results and Discussion

The findings of this study reveal several important patterns regarding the experiences of neurodivergent learners in foreign language classrooms and the strategies teachers currently use to support them. Teachers reported that students with ADHD most commonly struggle with maintaining focus during longer activities, following multi-step instructions, and managing classroom distractions. Learners with autism often face difficulties with social-interaction tasks, sudden changes in routine, and sensory overload. Students with dyslexia were described as having challenges with reading comprehension, spelling, and processing written vocabulary.

Despite these challenges, teachers identified multiple strategies that had positive effects on learner engagement and performance. The most effective methods included the use of visual supports (charts, images, color-coding), breaking tasks into smaller steps, and providing clear, predictable lesson structures. Many teachers also noted that multimodal instruction – combining visual, auditory, and physical activities – helped students better understand new language items.

Technology played an important role as well. Several teachers used digital flashcards, read-aloud tools, and interactive learning platforms to assist learners who struggle with reading or concentration. However, the results also show that many teachers felt they lacked formal training in inclusive pedagogy and relied mostly on personal experience or trial-and-error.

Overall, the results indicate that inclusive strategies are effective for neurodivergent learners, but there is a noticeable need for more professional development, accessible materials, and institutional support.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Teacher Training:** Schools and universities should provide professional development focused on inclusive teaching strategies and neurodiversity awareness.
2. **Accessible Learning Materials:** Teachers should use visual aids, clear instructions, and digital tools to make lessons more accessible to all learners.
3. **Flexible Teaching Approaches:** Implement multimodal instruction, structured routines, and adjustable pacing to accommodate diverse learner needs.
4. **Technology Integration:** Utilize adaptive learning apps, read-aloud tools, and interactive platforms to support neurodivergent students.
5. **Institutional Support:** Educational institutions should promote policies and resources that encourage inclusive practices, including collaboration with special educators and counselors.
6. **Future Research:** Further studies should explore long-term outcomes of inclusive strategies and investigate additional neurodivergent populations in language learning contexts.

## Conclusion

This study highlights the importance of inclusive language education for neurodivergent learners, including students with ADHD, autism spectrum disorder, and dyslexia. The findings show that these learners face specific challenges in attention, processing, and social interaction that can affect their success in foreign language classrooms. However, inclusive teaching strategies – such as multimodal instruction, structured tasks, visual supports, and the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) – can significantly enhance engagement, understanding, and academic performance. Technology-based tools also provide valuable support, particularly for reading and concentration difficulties. Overall, fostering an inclusive classroom not only benefits neurodivergent learners but improves the learning environment for all students.

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