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Inclusive Approaches to Teaching English to Students with Special Educational Needs in Higher Education Institutions of Ukraine

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Abstract. The purpose of the article is to clarify the main aspects of teaching English in Ukrainian institutions of higher education in the context of inclusive education, and to evaluate the forms, methods, and techniques used in English classes



to teach students with special educational needs. The authors employed the following **scientific methods** during the writing process of the research: analysis, synthesis, deduction, and induction. The **results** show that higher education teachers are required to handle a range of tasks that include teaching English to students with special educational needs. They are: developing individual educational programs, adapting teaching materials and methods according to the cognitive abilities of students, and creating favourable conditions for their socialization. The article notes that students with hearing impairments benefit from the use of special visual techniques mnemonics, and frequent repetition to enhance memorization. The use of tables, graphic materials, and comic strips aids in the cognitive processing of information for these students. For students with visual impairments, it is recommended to incorporate audio materials such as audiobooks, music, and videos, which help develop phonetic skills and improve vocabulary acquisition. Special emphasis is placed on the effectiveness of the Pimsleur method, which focuses on listening comprehension and sentence construction to enhance speech activity. Students with intellectual disabilities encounter significant challenges in learning grammar and syntax, necessitating the use of specialized didactic games and adapted tasks tailored to their developmental level. The article also underscores the importance of interactive teaching methods, such as pair work, group activities, role-playing games, and discussions. These methods not only improve the communication skills of students with special needs but also support their socialization, the development of organizational and leadership skills, and their successful integration into the educational process. **The conclusions** state that an individual approach, the use of modern technologies, and interactive methods are important for the effective teaching of English to students with special educational needs.

Keywords: inclusive education, special educational needs, teaching English, individual educational programs, individual approach, teaching materials and methods.



Інклюзивні підходи до викладання англійської мови студентам з особливими освітніми потребами у вищих навчальних закладах України

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***Анотація.** Метою статті є виявлення особливостей викладання англійської мови в умовах інклюзивної освіти у вищих навчальних закладах України та аналіз форм, методів і прийомів навчання студентів з особливими освітніми потребами. Під час дослідження автори використовували загальнонаукові методи: аналіз, синтез, дедукцію та індукцію. Результати дослідження свідчать, що для ефективного навчання англійської мови студентів з особливими освітніми потребами викладачам ВНЗ необхідно вирішити низку проблем. Це розробка індивідуальних навчальних програм, адаптація навчальних матеріалів і методів до індивідуальних когнітивних*



*здібностей студентів, створення сприятливих умов для соціалізації студентів. Зокрема, зазначається, що студенти з порушеннями слуху потребують спеціальних візуальних методів, мнемоніки та багаторазового використання матеріалів для покращення запам'ятовування. Використання таблиць, пояснювальних матеріалів та мультфільмів також може покращити їхню здатність обробляти інформацію. Для таких студентів рекомендується використання аудіоматеріалів, таких як аудіокниги, музика та відео. Зокрема, підкреслюється ефективність методу Пімслера, який фокусується на сприйнятті на слух і побудові речень, для розвитку мовленнєвої активності. Оскільки учні з інтелектуальними порушеннями мають великі труднощі у вивченні граматики та синтаксису, слід використовувати спеціальні дидактичні ігри та завдання, адаптовані до рівня їхнього розвитку. Особлива увага приділяється інтерактивним методам навчання, таким як робота в парах або групах, рольові ігри та дискусії. Такі методи не лише покращують комунікативні навички учнів з особливими потребами, а й сприяють їхній соціалізації, розвитку організаторських та лідерських здібностей та ефективній інтеграції в освітній процес. Це дослідження дозволяє зробити **висновок**, що індивідуальний підхід, використання сучасних технологій та інтерактивних методів є важливими для ефективного викладання англійської мови студентам з особливими освітніми потребами.*

Ключові слова: інклюзивна освіта, особливі освітні потреби, викладання англійської мови, адаптація навчальних програм, індивідуальний підхід, навчальні методи та матеріали.

A general statement of the problem and its connection with important scientific or practical tasks (Introduction). Inclusive education places new demands on university teachers. They should be able to identify priority correctional,



educational, and training tasks, as well as directions for their implementation. Teachers need to develop individualized correctional and compensatory work plans for each student; adapt curricula, program materials, methods, and forms of education to meet the individual educational needs of students; focus on the social experience and cognitive capabilities of each student; and develop a variety of methods and tools to promote the overall development of students [15, p.32]. Additionally, teachers must create conditions for the social adaptation of students with special needs and typically developing children, facilitating the acquisition of social skills for all students [13, p.19]. It is evident that a person with disabilities may experience certain difficulties in the process of learning a foreign language. For instance, they may face challenges learning new vocabulary, grammatical and syntactic patterns, and understanding spoken language due to phonetic problems in distinguishing similar sounds.

Analysis of recent research and publications. The issue of inclusive education has become the subject for discussion in foreign and domestic publications. Some peculiarities of teaching children with special educational needs were studied by O. Kazachiner [1; 2], N. Sofii [3], S. Chyzh [4], Shapochka [5; 6], J. Hughes [9]. The issue of pre-service English teachers training for work with children with special educational needs was considered by R. Bhat [7], G. Hornby [8], O. Sabayleh, M. Sakarneh, [11], M. Sizwe, M. Thokozani [13] S. Pokrivcakova, Silvia [14] described inclusive education strategies and methods of teaching students. M. Seliane, K. Rantsie[12], B. Loomes [10], M. Sizwe, M. Thokozani [13], S. Rashid, M. Wong [15] showed the problems teachers may face working with students with special educational needs.

Highlighting previously unresolved parts of the overall problem. A review of scientific papers showed that despite existing research on inclusive education, some aspects of the problem of inclusive approaches to teaching English to students with special educational needs in higher education institutions of Ukraine hasn't been learnt and has to be clarified and completed. They are:



- 1) A description of the key features of an inclusive educational environment and its advantages for students with psychophysical developmental challenges;
- 2) An analysis of the forms, methods, and techniques used to teach students with special educational needs.

Formulation of the objectives of the article. The **purpose** of this article is to study and analyze the specific features of teaching English in higher education institutions of Ukraine in the context of inclusive education.

The **objectives** are:

- 1) to describe the characteristic features of an inclusive educational environment and its benefits for students with psychophysical developmental peculiarities;
- 2) to analyse the forms, methods, and techniques of teaching students with special educational needs.

Presentation of the main material of the study with a full justification of the obtained scientific results (Results of the study). According to the Encyclopaedia Britannica, special methods and techniques are designed for students whose social, mental, or physical differences are significant enough that they require adjustments to standard teaching methods used in educational establishments. These students face unique challenges that make regular school environments and teaching practices insufficient to meet their needs. The objective of modern education is to support people dealing with a variety of difficulties or impairments. This is about young people who experience emotional or behavioural problems that affect their interactions with others and their ability to control their emotions. This is also applicable to students who have cognitive impairments, as their cognitive functions and academic advancement may develop at a slower pace compared to their peers. Additionally, students with intellectual disabilities who face challenges with reasoning, problem-solving, and overall learning require tailored help. This group includes students who have sensory impairments, such as deaf students who struggle to comprehend spoken materials, and



visually impaired students who need specific resources or methods to aid in their learning. Young people who have difficulty expressing their thoughts verbally due to language impairments also belong to this category. Additionally, special support must be given to students with learning disabilities, who may encounter difficulties with reading, writing, or math. It also covers people with orthopaedic disabilities, such as bone or muscle impairments, and children with neurological disorders affecting the brain and nervous system. Teaching a foreign language to students with health problems is particularly relevant nowadays, as it ensures their general cultural, personal, and cognitive development, equipping them with the important skill of learning. Therefore, when teaching a foreign language to students with special educational needs, the teacher's primary task is to develop their thinking, memory, speech, and cognitive activity. Using information and communication technologies, students with special educational needs can learn a foreign language with pleasure. The application of game programs, SMART boards, videos, and audio recordings helps students to memorize the material presented by the teacher more quickly and easily [16; 5, p. 279].

Teaching English to a student with special educational needs is a complex and lengthy process. For children with hearing impairments, attention, and speech disorders, it is more effective to introduce new material using visuals such as colourful drawings, presentations, electronic tasks, small diagrams, reference tables, and texts in the form of comics. To review new vocabulary, a variety of exercises can be used, such as forming words from letters, inserting missing letters into words, and placing words into sentences. For homework, it is advisable to provide word cards and presentations to help students review the vocabulary learned in class. Various video tutorials are also highly effective. The use of interactive PowerPoint presentations allows for lively and visual presentation of all topics, even those that may seem boring to learn. This approach helps develop and monitor listening skills, practice reading with different



strategies, consolidate and improve lexical and grammatical material, and test and correct mistakes. This is particularly important for children with cerebral palsy, who may write slowly and illegibly.

Sensory impairment is considered a rare disorder. However, the presence of even one such student in a group requires special attention from the teacher, necessitating various changes in the educational process and the application of appropriate approaches. Hearing loss, even in a mild form, can have a significant impact on general abilities. It often causes problems in learning, particularly in tasks that require extensive reading and writing.

The general category of "hearing impairment" covers a wide range of problems: from partial hearing loss, affected only in noisy environments, to deafness, where children cannot hear sounds even when amplified with hearing aids. All types of hearing loss are associated with a decrease in perception, processing, storage, and use of information. The peculiarities of both voluntary and involuntary memorization of visual material affect the stability and duration of storing material in memory.

Teaching foreign languages to people with hearing loss cannot be done using the same methods applied to those with normal hearing. People with hearing impairments perceive language in a completely different way compared to those with normal hearing. They have different ways of forming verbal language, grammatical structures, and linguistic messages. These factors affect their language acquisition and create the need for the development of special methods for teaching English. When learning a foreign language, improving the memory of students with hearing impairments should be a focus in verbal speech, particularly within the context of educational activities. To achieve this, it is necessary to ensure that students fully understand the text and help them master the following techniques for intentional memorization: dividing the text into semantic parts, highlighting the main semantic units in the text, and using visual aids for memorization. Additionally, it is important to teach them to incorporate new



information into their existing knowledge system. It should be noted that hearing-impaired students tend to have stronger involuntary memorization compared to voluntary memorization. Therefore, when teaching these students, it is essential to aim for as many repetitions as possible while also employing a variety of mnemonic techniques, including those based on visualization, learning words within sentences, and engaging in games. Written language, despite its challenges, offers some advantages over oral language for deaf individuals, as it does not require hearing and is perceived through sight.

The most challenging aspect of language learning for a deaf person is understanding the grammatical structure of a sentence, including the rules of word combinations and word relationships. During delayed recall, students with hearing impairments tend to group similar objects. When learning a foreign language, it is crucial for these students to improve their verbal memory. To achieve this, you should ensure full comprehension of the text by helping students with hearing impairments master techniques for intentional memorization, such as breaking the text into parts, highlighting the main semantic points, and using visual aids for memorization [14, p. 25–27].

It should be noted that the attention span of these students is often unstable; they cannot focus on one type of activity for an extended period. Therefore, it is essential to frequently vary the forms of work and educational materials used in the classroom. Regarding work with children with mild speech disorders, we develop their phonetic and phonemic perception using the following forms, methods, and techniques:

1. Games to guess the sound being made by reading lips.
2. Games and exercises to differentiate similar consonants and long/short vowel sounds in words.
3. Spelling difficult words, following a model, explaining their meaning, and developing language by making sentences with these words.



4. The use of articulation and breathing exercises.
5. The use of elements of logorhythm.

When we talk about visual impairment, we mean a loss of vision, even if the person wears glasses. The nature and degree of vision loss vary widely, so each student may require individual adaptations of learning materials and differentiated instruction to learn effectively. Inclusive education is the most acceptable form of education for students with visual impairments. Teachers working with these students need to understand the specific nature of a particular student's difficulties in order to find appropriate approaches to address them. There is still debate among scholars and practitioners about the educational environment in which it would be best to provide services to students with sensory impairments [4].

For students with visual impairments, it is better to introduce new material aurally. Phrases should be repeated several times. This can be done in chorus (together with the teacher), followed by repetition after the teacher. When working with such students, you can use audio texts, songs, counting rhymes, and rhymes in English. It is worth introducing methods that are relevant for teaching English to students with visual impairments [5, p.138].

Pimsleur's method emphasizes listening, where the listener constructs phrases and recalls them from memory while listening to an audio recording. Each audio recording includes a sentence with a translation and provides time for you to repeat it. All audio recordings are made by native speakers, allowing you to practice accents and adopt correct pronunciation. The lesson lasts 30 minutes and consists of audio material with textual support. This approach to language learning involves active participation in communication, which significantly improves pronunciation.

When learning English, students with mental retardation (MRD) experience the following difficulties: slower acquisition of vocabulary, syntactic constructions, and their active use in spoken language; challenges in perceiving grammatical categories



and applying them in practice. Students with mental retardation may struggle to master grammatically complex language because the level of foreign language learning depends on the student's overall level of development. However, these students can still learn another language at a level appropriate to their development. It is common for such students to have problems with listening, especially with connected texts and dialogue, as they often face challenges with sound analysis and phonemic awareness. They may not clearly perceive the spoken language directed at them and may struggle to differentiate between similar sounds. Children diagnosed with ASD can develop the main types of language skills: reading, speaking (oral communication), and listening.

Writing at all stages of learning is used only as a teaching tool. The main goal of foreign language instruction in these classes is developmental. Therefore, in foreign language classes, it is essential to develop students' memory, speech, perception, thinking, and outlook. The following forms, methods, and techniques should be used:

1. Interesting didactic exercises and tasks aimed at teaching students to differentiate words with similar sounds and letters.
2. Simplification of requirements for the presentation of grammatical constructions.
3. Providing step-by-step development of speech activity skills.
4. Widespread use of visual aids and computer-based learning programs during the presentation of language material [14, p. 23].

When students with disabilities learn a foreign language, various interactive technologies, such as pair work, threes, unfinished sentences, brainstorming, circle of ideas, role-playing, imitation, discussions, talk shows, etc., should be integrated into the learning process. Interactive activities give students with special needs the opportunity to transfer previously acquired knowledge, skills, and abilities to new types of activities and speech interaction, which contributes to the improvement of communication skills. When taking part in various forms of interactive activities,



students with special needs work in groups with their peers, where they can freely express their thoughts, mobilize knowledge, and demonstrate their creative, organizational, and leadership potential. They are motivated by a dual incentive: the desire for personal expression and self-affirmation within the group, as well as the goal of achieving a collective objective [4, p. 153]. These types of interactive learning activities, by their content and implementation, contribute not only to the improvement of foreign language communicative experience but also to successful socialization.

Conclusions. Inclusive education is an integral part of the educational process in modern higher education institutions of Ukraine. It ensures equal access to higher education for people from different social backgrounds and abilities. However, there are certain challenges that English language teachers face when working with students with special educational needs. Some of these issues are partially addressed through the use of existing visual and technical teaching aids. While teachers possess general methods of teaching English, they sometimes lack specific knowledge regarding the development of students' speaking, writing, and other skills necessary for effective learning. Therefore, special attention should be paid to preparing English language teachers to work with students in inclusive settings. This issue may serve as a topic for further research.

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