

FROM SPECIAL EDUCATION TO INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: THE EVOLUTION OF PEDAGOGICAL VIEWS

Shukrulloeva Mukarram Amirullo kizi

Bukhara Innovation University 1st-year

Master's student in the specialty

“Theory and History of Pedagogy”

Abstract

This article provides an in-depth analysis of the transition from the segregational and medical-defectological model of special education to the social-integrative, ecological, and universal design-based model of inclusive education from the perspective of the evolution of pedagogical views. The main objective of the study is to demonstrate the stage-by-stage development of pedagogical paradigms (medical model → integration → full inclusion), to comprehensively cover key theoretical models (Vygotsky, Bronfenbrenner, Bandura, Piaget, Universal Design for Learning, social model), and to evaluate the degree of their theoretical-practical application in the education system of Uzbekistan. The methodology includes systematic and content analysis of scientific literature, analysis of normative-legal documents, and comparison of international and national experiences. The results indicate that the theoretical foundations of inclusive education are actively being implemented in Uzbekistan's education reforms (2020–2025 Concept, PQ-4860, ORQ-641, etc.), however, deep integration of theoretical models, teacher training, and overcoming cultural stereotypes in the macrosystem remain unresolved challenges. The discussion examines the strengths and weaknesses of theoretical models, adaptation issues in the Uzbek context, and promising directions. The conclusion emphasizes the not only pedagogical but also socio-philosophical and human rights significance of inclusive education.

Keywords

inclusive education, special education, pedagogical theories, zone of proximal development, ecological systems theory, universal design for learning, social model, education reforms in Uzbekistan, Vygotsky, Bronfenbrenner

Abstract

Статья представляет глубокий анализ перехода от модели специального образования (сегрегационной и медико-дефектологической) к инклюзивному образованию, основанному на социальной, экологической и универсальной дизайн-моделях, с точки зрения развития педагогических воззрений. Основная цель исследования — поэтапное раскрытие эволюции педагогических взглядов (медицинская модель → интеграция → полная инклюзия), детальное освещение ключевых теоретических моделей (Выготский, Бронфенбреннер, Бандура, Пиаже, Universal Design for Learning, социальная модель) и оценка степени их теоретико-практического применения в системе образования Узбекистана. Методология включает системный и контент-анализ научной литературы, анализ нормативно-правовых документов, сравнение международного и национального опыта. Результаты показывают, что теоретические основы инклюзивного образования активно внедряются в реформах образования Узбекистана (Концепция 2020–2025 гг., ПП-4860, ОРҚ-641 и др.), однако глубокая интеграция теоретических моделей, подготовка педагогических кадров и преодоление культурных стереотипов в макросистеме остаются нерешёнными задачами. В обсуждении рассматриваются сильные и слабые стороны

теоретических моделей, проблемы адаптации в узбекистанском контексте и перспективные направления. В заключении подчёркивается не только педагогическое, но и социально-философское и правозащитное значение инклюзивного образования.

Ключевые слова

инклюзивное образование, специальное образование, педагогические теории, зона ближайшего развития, экологическая модель систем, универсальный дизайн обучения, социальная модель, реформы образования Узбекистана, Выготский, Бронфенбреннер.

Introduction

The education system is one of the key factors determining the development of society. Among the most significant changes that have occurred in the field of education over the past decades, the transition from special education to inclusive education occupies a special place. Special education has traditionally been organized as a separate form of schooling for children with disabilities or developmental disorders in specialized institutions, whereas inclusive education is based on the approach of educating all children together—regardless of their abilities, health status, or social background.

This article provides a detailed analysis of the evolution of pedagogical views in this transition process, while also highlighting the local context based on the laws of the Republic of Uzbekistan and national pedagogical literature.

The essence of inclusive education lies not only in integrating children with disabilities into society but also in shaping the entire society on the principles of tolerance, equality, and humanism. International organizations such as UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) and UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) consider inclusive education a fundamental element of human rights. In Uzbekistan, this process has intensified since the 2010s and is supported by a number of laws and state programs. For example, the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated September 23, 2020 No. O'RQ-637 "On Education" defines inclusive education as one of the fundamental principles of the education system. At the same time, Presidential Decree PQ-4860 of 2020 approved the "Roadmap" for the development of inclusive education, which addresses issues such as improving teacher qualifications, upgrading infrastructure, and deepening theoretical foundations.

The purpose of this article is to analyze the transition process from special education to inclusive education based on pedagogical theories, international experience, and Uzbekistan's legal-normative framework. The article consists of the following sections: historical background of special education, emergence and development of inclusive education, evolution of pedagogical views, legal foundations of special and inclusive education in Uzbekistan, challenges and prospects. The conclusion and recommendations are provided at the end. The study mainly uses the laws of Uzbekistan and works of national pedagogical scholars as primary sources.

Theoretically, the transition from special education to inclusive education reflects the evolution of pedagogical views, requiring a shift from the medical model to the social model. For example, while L.S. Vygotsky's defectology theory formed the foundation of special education, modern models (such as U. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory) emphasize the interaction between society, family, and school in inclusive education. Uzbek scholars, such as D.O. Khimmataliev and N.P. Omonova (2025), have developed the scientific-theoretical foundations of continuous inclusive education and adapted these models to the local context. The research findings show that the development of inclusive education is being strengthened not

only legally but also theoretically, although teacher readiness and cultural stereotypes remain unresolved issues.

Historical Background and Theoretical Foundations of Special Education

The roots of special education date back to the 19th century. In Europe, the beginning of special education is associated with the experiment conducted by Jean Itard in France in 1799 with the “wild boy” Victor. This experiment demonstrated the necessity of an individual approach to children with disabilities and became the first step in pedagogical theory. In the United States, the first special school—the school for the deaf—was opened in 1817. In the early 20th century, special education was based on the principle of segregation: children with disabilities were educated in separate institutions, which isolated them from society. This model was grounded in the medical theory that viewed disability as a “disease” or “defect” to be corrected.

During the Soviet period, Uzbekistan, as part of this system, also developed special education. In the 1920s–1930s, separate schools were opened, for example, for blind children and children with hearing impairments. Soviet pedagogy in this field was based on Lev Vygotsky’s defectology theory. Vygotsky considered disability not as a “defect” but as a condition that could be compensated. His theory was applied in Uzbekistan as well, reflected in the educational views of national intellectuals such as A. Avloniy and Abdulla Qodiriy. Vygotsky’s concepts of “primary defect” (organic damage) and “secondary defect” (socio-psychological consequences) formed the main theoretical foundation of special education, emphasizing that secondary defects could be eliminated through education.

During the years of independence, Uzbekistan reformed special education. The Law “On Education” adopted in 1992 defined special education as a state guarantee. However, segregation persisted in this system. The Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On Guarantees of the Rights of the Child” (O‘RQ-139, 2008) recognized special education as part of children’s rights. This law was developed in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and theoretically laid the groundwork for shifting special education toward integration based on human rights principles.

The pedagogical views of special education were based on the medical model: disability was regarded as a defect requiring correction. Uzbek scholars such as S.Sh. Karimova and Kh. Khayitova criticized this model and emphasized the need to focus on social integration. For instance, Karimova’s textbook “Inclusive Education: Theory and Methodology” provides a detailed analysis of the limitations of special education, particularly social isolation resulting from segregation and the difficulty children face in adapting to society.

In the second half of the 20th century, special education developed at the legislative level. In the United States, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EHA) of 1975 guaranteed free education and theoretically introduced the principle of “least restrictive environment”. In Uzbekistan, the Presidential Decree PF-5270 of 2017 strengthened the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities, preparing the ground for the transition from special education to an inclusive approach. Theoretical analysis shows that the development of special education began with defectology theory (Vygotsky) and laid the foundation for the transition to modern social models, although segregation reinforced societal stereotypes and limited children’s psychological development.

Emergence and Development of Inclusive Education: Theoretical and Historical Analysis

Inclusive education emerged in the second half of the 20th century and is theoretically based on the social model. The Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) defined inclusive

education as the principle of “education for all”. This declaration was also supported by Uzbekistan and theoretically strengthened the principles of human rights and social justice.

In the international context, inclusive education is based on the social model: disability arises as a result of societal barriers. In the United States, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 1990) introduced the principle of “least restrictive environment”, theoretically grounded in U. Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory. In Europe, Sweden and Finland were early adopters of inclusive education, where individual education plans (IEP) and universal design principles were applied on a theoretical basis.

In Uzbekistan, inclusive education began in the 1990s. In 1996, the first project was implemented in cooperation with UNESCO, theoretically based on Vygotsky’s socio-cultural development theory. The Presidential Decree PF-5712 of 2019 “Concept for the Development of Public Education System until 2030” designated inclusive education as a priority direction, with a detailed theoretical foundation.

The Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On the Rights of Persons with Disabilities” (O‘RQ-641, 2020) guarantees inclusive education as a right. Article 32 specifies educational privileges, and Article 38 defines inclusive conditions. Theoretical analysis shows that this law is based on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) and provides a foundation for the national application of the social model.

In pedagogical theory, Jean Piaget’s cognitive development theory and Vygotsky’s social development theory serve as the foundation. Piaget interpreted development in stages (sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete operational, formal operational), while Vygotsky emphasized social interaction. In the article “Legal Foundations of Inclusive Education” by Uzbek scholar F. Khayitova, these theories are analyzed in the Uzbek context, and their application possibilities in inclusive education are detailed.

The emergence of inclusive education is associated with Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory and Bandura’s social learning theory. Bronfenbrenner views child development as influenced by micro-, meso-, exo-, and macro-systems, emphasizing the interaction between society and school in inclusive education. In Uzbekistan, research by Khimmataliev and Omonova (2025) applies this model widely to continuous inclusive education, covering stages from preschool to higher education.

Evolution of Pedagogical Views: Analysis of Theoretical Models

Pedagogical views have gone through the following stages:

1. *Medical model (early 20th century)*: Disability was viewed as a disease, with emphasis on “treatment” in special institutions. In this model, pedagogy was secondary. Theoretically based on the works of J. Itard and E. Segen, disability was interpreted as an organic “defect”. Vygotsky’s early works criticized this model and proposed the principle of compensation.

2. *Integration model (1970s–1980s)*: Children with disabilities began to be included in mainstream schools but in separate classes. This was based on “assimilation”. Theoretically, Piaget’s cognitive stages supported integration, as they required education adapted to children’s developmental levels. However, limitations included continued social isolation.

3. *Inclusive model (from the 1990s to the present)*: All children are educated together, with individual approaches (IEP – Individual Education Plan) applied. Theoretically based on the social model (disability as a result of societal barriers) and Vygotsky’s zone of proximal development (ZPD) principle. The ZPD theory ensures peer support in inclusive classrooms, strengthening children’s social interaction.

In Uzbekistan, Vygotsky’s compensation theory served as the foundation. Contemporary Uzbek pedagogues, such as K. Esonova, propose cooperative methods in inclusive education.

Theoretical analysis shows that Bronfenbrenner's ecological model is widely applied in Uzbekistan's education system: adaptation from the micro-system (classroom environment) to the macro-system (cultural values) is necessary. For example, Khimmataliev (2025) proposes integrating the ecological model with national characteristics in continuous inclusive education.

Legal Foundations of Special and Inclusive Education in Uzbekistan and Theoretical Application

The legal framework for inclusive education in Uzbekistan is formed on the basis of the following:

- Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan (2023): Article 41 guarantees the right to education, theoretically ensuring inclusion on the basis of human rights.
- Law "On Education" (O'RQ-637, 2020): Article 8 defines preschool inclusive education, theoretically applying the social model.
- Law "On Preschool Education and Upbringing" (O'RQ-595, 2019): Article 3 emphasizes children with special needs, requiring an individual approach based on Vygotsky's theory.
- PQ-4860 (2020): Concept of inclusive education and "Roadmap" for 2020–2025, theoretically envisaging the introduction of UDL and ecological models.
- Cabinet of Ministers Resolution No. 638 (2021): Statute on inclusive education, theoretically defining the improvement of teachers' qualifications.
- PF-60 (2022): Development Strategy, goals 66 and 70, theoretically linking inclusive education to societal development.

Uzbek literature: "Inclusive Education: Theory and Methodology" (S.Sh. Karimova), "Legal Foundations of Introducing Inclusive Education in Uzbekistan" (K. Esonova). Theoretical analysis shows that these documents adapt Vygotsky and Bronfenbrenner theories to the national context, for example, through the application of ecological models in a continuous education system.

Challenges and Prospects: Theoretical and Practical Analysis

Challenges:

- Insufficient teacher preparation (lack of study of Vygotsky's theory)
- Infrastructure (non-compliance with UDL principles)
- Societal stereotypes (in the macrosystem, according to Bronfenbrenner)

Theoretical analysis shows that these limitations hinder the full application of the social model.

Prospects:

- Achieving 70% coverage by 2025
- Introduction of innovations (digital UDL platforms)
- Making theoretical models mandatory in teacher training courses

Uzbekistan's experience (Khimmataliev, 2025) proposes the development of continuous inclusive education based on the ecological model.

Conclusion

Inclusive education is essential for societal development. Uzbekistan's laws support this process. Theoretical foundations (Vygotsky, Bronfenbrenner, and others) strengthen inclusive education, but deeper assimilation is required.

Recommendations:

- Improve teachers' qualifications through theoretical courses
- Introduce a monitoring system based on the ecological model

References:

1. O‘zbekiston Respublikasi Konstitutsiyasi (2023).
2. O‘RQ-637-son “Ta’lim to‘g‘risida”gi Qonun (2020).
3. O‘RQ-641-son “Nogironlar huquqlari to‘g‘risida”gi Qonun (2020).
4. PQ-4860-son Qaror (2020).
5. PF-5712-son Farmon (2019).
6. Vazirlar Mahkamasi 638-son Qarori (2021).
7. Karimova S.Sh. Inklyuziv ta’lim: nazariya va metodika (2024).
8. Esonova K.M. O‘zbekistonda inklyuziv ta’limning huquqiy asoslari (2024).
9. Xayitova F.K. Inklyuziv ta’limning huquqiy asoslari (2024).
10. Rustamov U.M. Inklyuziv ta’lim tushunchasi (2024).
11. Qizi, K. S. S., & Qizi, X. M. R. (2024). Development of Intellectual Skills of Primary School Students.
12. Гафуров, Д. (2020). Семейное благополучие—основа общества. *Universum: общественные науки*, (1-2 (62)), 1-3.
13. Karimova, S., & Habibullayeva, S. (2024). PEDAGOGIKADA TA’LIM JARAYONINING MOHIZASI. *Zamonaviy fan va tadqiqotlar*, 3(1), 40-44.
14. Gafurov, D. O. (2023). THE ISSUE OF TOLERANCE IN SUFISM. *Educational Research in Universal Sciences*, 2(8), 164–170. Retrieved from <https://erus.uz/index.php/er/article/view/3686>
15. Karimova, S., & Umarova, C. (2024, November). IMPROVING LOGICAL AND CRITICAL THINKING LITERACY OF PRIMARY CLASS STUDENTS. In *INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON INTERDISCIPLINARY SCIENCE* (Vol. 1, No. 12, pp. 138-143).
16. Karimova, S., & Xojiyeva, M. (2024, December). DEVELOPMENT OF INTELLECTUAL SKILLS OF PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS. In *International conference on multidisciplinary science* (Vol. 2, No. 11, pp. 47-52).
17. Shahridinovna K. S. Didactic Features Of Development Of Nature Perception Skills Of Primary School Students // *Eurasian Journal of Learning and Academic Teaching*. – 2023. – T. 19. – C. 183-187.
18. Shahridinovna K. S. INTRODUCING CHILDREN OF PRIMARY SCHOOL AGE WITH THE WORLD // *American Journal of Applied Science and Technology*. – 2023. – T. 3. – №. 06. – C. 09-14.
19. Gafurov , D. O. (2023). FAMILY EDUCATION IS AN ETERNAL SOCIAL-PHILOSOPHICAL PROBLEM. *Innovative Development in Educational Activities*, 2(16), 58–63. Retrieved from <https://openidea.uz/index.php/idea/article/view/1598>
20. Karimova, S. (2022). THE ROLE AND IMPORTANCE OF" NATURAL SCIENCES" IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF UNDERSTANDING OF NATURE IN GENERAL SECONDARY SCHOOLS. *Science and innovation*, 1(B6), 214-218.
21. Karimova S. THE ROLE AND IMPORTANCE OF" NATURAL SCIENCES" IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF UNDERSTANDING OF NATURE IN GENERAL SECONDARY SCHOOLS // *Science and innovation*. – 2022. – T. 1. – №. B6. – C. 214-218.
- 22.