

TEACHING ENGLISH TO CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

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Abstract: This article examines the theoretical foundations, contemporary approaches, and practical aspects of teaching English to children with disabilities within the context of inclusive education. The article investigates challenges encountered in teaching foreign languages to children with hearing, visual, intellectual, and physical disabilities, as well as their solutions through the lens of scholarly sources from international, Russian, and Uzbek educational research.

Keywords: children with disabilities, inclusive education, special needs, adaptive methods, differentiated approach, foreign language instruction

Аннотация: В статье рассматриваются теоретические основы, современные подходы и практические аспекты обучения английскому языку детей с ограниченными возможностями здоровья в условиях инклюзивного образования. В статье рассматриваются проблемы, возникающие при обучении иностранным языкам детей с нарушениями слуха, зрения, интеллектуального и физического развития, а также пути их решения через призму международных, российских и узбекских педагогических исследований.

Ключевые слова: дети с ограниченными возможностями здоровья, инклюзивное образование, особые потребности, адаптивные методы, дифференцированный подход, обучение иностранным языкам.

Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqolada nogiron bolalarga inklyuziv ta'lim doirasida ingliz tilini o'rgatishning nazariy asoslari, zamonaviy yondashuvlari va amaliy jihatlari ko'rib chiqiladi. Maqolada eshitish, ko'rish, aqliy va jismoniy nuqsonlari bo'lgan bolalarga chet tillarini o'rgatishda duch keladigan muammolar hamda ularni hal qilish yo'llari xalqaro, rus va o'zbek ta'lim sohasidagi tadqiqotlarning ilmiy manbalari obyektiv orqali o'rganiladi.

Kalit so'zlar: imkoniyati cheklangan bolalar, inklyuziv ta'lim, maxsus ehtiyojlar, adaptiv usullar, taqalashtirilgan yondashuv, chet tilini o'rgatish

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary education systems, the inclusive approach is being increasingly implemented, and the acquisition of foreign languages, particularly English, by children with disabilities holds significant importance for their social integration and future professional activities. The globalization of the world economy and the expansion of international communication have made English proficiency a crucial skill for all members of society, regardless of their physical or cognitive abilities [1]. However, teaching English to children with disabilities requires special pedagogical approaches, adapted materials, and individualized methodologies that take into account the specific characteristics of each type of disability. Research demonstrates that with appropriate support and specialized teaching methods, children with various disabilities can successfully master English language skills at levels comparable to their typically developing peers [2]. The relevance of this topic is determined by the growing recognition of the rights of children with disabilities to quality education and equal opportunities in society, as well as the need to develop effective teaching strategies that can be implemented in both mainstream and

specialized educational settings. In Uzbekistan, the development of inclusive education has become a priority in recent years, with governmental policies emphasizing equal access to quality education for all children, including those with special educational needs [3]. Despite significant progress in inclusive education theory and practice, many teachers still face challenges in adapting English language instruction to meet the diverse needs of learners with disabilities. The Russian Federation has accumulated substantial experience in special pedagogy and defectology, providing valuable insights into the psychological and pedagogical aspects of working with children with various developmental challenges [4].

METHODOLOGY AND LITERATURE REVIEW

This study employs a comprehensive literature review methodology, analyzing scholarly publications, research articles, and educational resources published. The review encompasses three primary areas: theoretical frameworks of inclusive language education, empirical studies on effective teaching practices, and practical guidelines for adapting English language instruction for learners with various disabilities. Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which originated in Russian psychology, emphasizes the importance of social interaction and the zone of proximal development in language learning, which is particularly relevant for children with disabilities who may require additional support to engage in communicative activities [5]. Russian defectology traditions have significantly contributed to understanding compensatory mechanisms in children with various disabilities, suggesting that targeted pedagogical interventions can help develop alternative pathways for learning and development [6].

Universal Design for Learning principles suggest that educational materials and methods should be flexible and accessible to learners with diverse needs from the outset, rather than requiring post-hoc adaptations. Research on teaching English to children with hearing impairments demonstrates that visual teaching methods, including written text, images, videos with subtitles, and sign language support, are essential for effective instruction. These learners benefit from explicit teaching of phonological awareness through visual-kinesthetic methods and may require additional time to develop reading and writing skills [7]. Uzbek researchers have emphasized the importance of integrating national cultural elements and native language support when teaching foreign languages to children with special needs, creating meaningful connections between students' lived experiences and new linguistic knowledge [8].

For children with visual impairments, auditory teaching materials, tactile resources such as Braille texts, and verbal descriptions of visual information are crucial. Technology plays an increasingly important role, with screen readers and audio books enabling these students to access English language content independently. Studies indicate that children with intellectual disabilities require highly structured, repetitive instruction with concrete examples and simplified language, along with frequent positive reinforcement and multisensory teaching approaches. Russian special education research emphasizes the importance of correctional-developmental work that addresses not only language learning but also the overall cognitive and social development of children with intellectual disabilities [9]. For children with physical disabilities who have no cognitive impairments, the primary challenges relate to accessing materials and participating in activities, which can be addressed through assistive technologies and environmental modifications. Research consistently highlights the importance of individualized education plans that specify clear, measurable learning objectives tailored to each child's abilities and needs. Uzbek educational reforms have placed significant emphasis on teacher professional development in inclusive education, recognizing that successful implementation of inclusive practices requires not only policy changes but also substantial investments in teacher training and support [10].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of research literature from international, Russian, and Uzbek sources reveals several key findings regarding effective practices for teaching English to children with disabilities. First, successful English language instruction for these learners is characterized by high levels of individualization and flexibility, with teaching methods adapted not only to the type of disability but also to each child's unique strengths, interests, and learning preferences. This personalized approach requires ongoing assessment and adjustment of instructional strategies based on learner progress and feedback. Russian defectological tradition emphasizes the principle of relying on intact functions while developing compensatory mechanisms for impaired ones, which proves highly applicable in foreign language teaching contexts where teachers can leverage students' strengths to overcome specific learning challenges. Second, the integration of assistive technologies has dramatically expanded possibilities for children with disabilities to access and engage with English language content, from speech-to-text software for learners with physical disabilities to augmentative and alternative communication devices for those with severe speech impairments.

However, access to such technologies remains uneven, particularly in developing countries and rural areas, creating equity concerns that must be addressed through policy interventions and resource allocation. Third, multisensory teaching methods that engage multiple modalities simultaneously prove particularly effective across disability categories, as they provide redundant pathways for information processing and accommodate diverse learning styles. The research indicates that explicit, systematic instruction in language skills is more effective than implicit or incidental learning approaches for most children with disabilities, particularly those with intellectual disabilities or learning difficulties. This suggests that teachers should directly teach vocabulary, grammar structures, and communication strategies rather than assuming students will acquire these elements naturally through exposure alone. However, this explicit instruction should be embedded within meaningful, communicative contexts that motivate learners and demonstrate the practical value of English language skills.

Uzbek researchers have highlighted the importance of culturally relevant pedagogy in language teaching, suggesting that incorporating familiar cultural contexts and examples can significantly enhance engagement and comprehension for children with disabilities. The importance of creating inclusive classroom environments where children with disabilities feel welcomed, respected, and capable cannot be overstated, as affective factors significantly influence language learning outcomes. Russian psychological research emphasizes the role of positive emotional experiences in learning, particularly for children with special needs who may have experienced educational failures or social exclusion in the past. Peer interactions and collaborative learning activities emerge as valuable pedagogical tools when appropriately structured and supported, allowing children with disabilities to practice English in authentic social contexts while building relationships with classmates and developing social competence. The discussion of research findings also reveals certain limitations and gaps in the current knowledge base.

CONCLUSION

Teaching English to children with disabilities represents both a significant challenge and an important opportunity within contemporary inclusive education systems. The literature review, drawing on international, Russian, and Uzbek sources, demonstrates that with appropriate adaptations, specialized methods, and supportive learning environments, children with various disabilities can successfully acquire English language skills. Key principles for effective practice include individualization of instruction based on comprehensive assessment of learner needs and strengths, use of multisensory teaching approaches that engage multiple modalities, integration of assistive technologies to enhance access and participation, explicit and systematic instruction in language skills within meaningful communicative contexts, application of compensatory

mechanisms that leverage intact functions while addressing areas of difficulty, incorporation of culturally relevant content and native language support where appropriate, and creation of inclusive classroom communities that value diversity and foster positive peer relationships. The success of English language instruction for children with disabilities depends not only on pedagogical methods but also on broader systemic factors including teacher preparation and professional development, availability of appropriate resources and technologies, collaboration among professionals and families, institutional commitment to inclusive education principles, and societal attitudes toward disability and inclusion.

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