



INCLUSIVE ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION: CHALLENGES, INNOVATIONS, AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEN) STUDENTS

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Received: August 14, 2025

Accepted: October 27, 2025

Published: December 31, 2025

Suggested Citation:

Sari, H. (2025). Inclusive English language education: Challenges, innovations, and future directions for special educational needs (SEN) students. *Turkish International Journal of Special Education and Guidance & Counseling (TIJSEG)*, 14(2), 210-229.



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Abstract

The present review examines the conceptual underpinnings, educational arrangements, and institutional needs of Inclusive English Language Education (IELE), highlighting the overarching theme of equity in English language teaching. Engaging with the most recent studies on Special Educational Needs, it unveils the intricate problems that inclusive English language teaching must deal with, among which are the lack of adequate teacher training, the wrongly held belief of deficit thinking, and the different levels of resource distribution existing at both technological and institutional levels. It extracts the most recent and established teaching philosophies such as Differentiated Instruction, Universal Designed Learning, and teaching as a reflective practice, along with the newest technological tools such as AI, Mobile-Assisted Language Learning, and Blended Learning, positing that these tools' roles could be transformative in helping to establish accessibility and agency. Furthermore, it investigates the policy and institutional props that are underlying the scenario of inclusivity as a sociocultural construct, proposing cooperation as the primary method for undertaking long-term change. From a theoretical perspective, the study formulates a model along the four dimensions of teaching, technology, sociocultural background, and competence, positing transformative outcomes. The study asserts, finally, the quest for inclusive English language education means a transformation, rather than a teaching modification, towards epistemological justice, marking a fresh definition of teaching, learning, and English language equity along the lines of 21st-century global teaching.

Keywords: Differentiated instruction, English language teaching, inclusive education, special educational needs, teacher training, technology integration.

INTRODUCTION

IELE has gained much attention in recent years, especially as the teaching community has had to cope with challenges in delivering effective learning experiences for their Special Educational Needs (SEN) students. Inclusion in education aims to strike a balance between teaching in a way that caters to the needs of all students, without regard to background, ethnicity, or intellectual level, to provide equal quality to everyone seeking quality education (Tuzlukova et al., 2023; Žero, 2024). Under the broader inclusionary approach to education, educating students with SEN encompasses a cross-disciplinary approach combining modern teaching, technology, and collaboration among practitioners in the discipline of teaching (Moorhouse & Wong, 2021; Pryor et al., 2023). IELE, which is mainly driven by the need for an inclusionary model of teaching English, now, more than ever, needs to have a deeper understanding of the difficulties that are related to introducing SEN children into the regular classroom. Research has pointed out a problem of inclusiveness in relation to the absence of teacher training, unavailability, as well as difficulties in the implementation process particularly in the scenario of the quality of inclusivity that is being practiced today (Pryor et al., 2023; Tuzlukova et al., 2023). The teaching programs designed for beginner teachers could be insufficiently oriented to the inclusive teaching model, and this might negatively affect the teacher's ability to meet the diverse learners' needs (Zero, 2024). The problem under discussion brings to the fore the necessity of high-quality teacher education, which not only delves into the acquisition of competencies and skills by the



teachers as professionals but also at the development of inclusive-minded individuals (Chen, 2023; Chen & Wong, 2023).

The digital age has proven to be a significant contributor to the making of English language teaching more inclusive. Applications such as ChatGPT and AI-based online teaching platforms have accommodated special needs students more and helped them along with the individual demands (Kostka & Toncelli, 2023). This case has been a part of the planetary movement as online learning has appeared as the future thus making an equal opportunity for all (Alian & Alhaj, 2023). But simply the technological access is not sufficient; teachers must be equipped with critical digital literacy as a skill and also have an ability to design learning experiences that are substantially co-aligned with the inclusive pedagogical aims (Meniado, 2023). The adoption of the Flipped Classroom and TBLT teaching models has also emphasized the triumph of the principles of active learning, cooperation, and differentiated instruction which form the basic principles of inclusion (Lei, 2022; Wu, 2023). Nevertheless, the implementation of the teaching models mentioned above also needs the professional development of the teaching force and the institutions in order not to be limited by the existing constraints of the inclusive environment and thus be incapable of the novel spread of ideas (Tuzlukova et al., 2023; Zhou & Li, 2023).

The road ahead for Inclusive English Language Education is a mix of difficulties and opportunities, where the cooperation of policymakers, researchers, and practitioners is needed to rethink the practice, disseminate the good experiences, and cover the gaps that have been recognized (Chen & Wong, 2023; Pryor et al., 2023). The cooperation calls for an English teaching practice in the future that is based on equity, inclusivity, and high quality since the English language learners need to be provided with quality education throughout. The path ahead for inclusive English language education is a process of continuous practice review, awareness and support for policymakers, and a thorough approach to teachers' preparation that would be incorporating both theory and practice. The implementation of assistive technologies together with the complete training of teachers in the whole-course and the integrated pedagogical method will be the main support of the SEN students' empowerment process in the English language learning atmosphere. Even though the path to the future will be filled with challenges, it will also be the source of great innovations that could eventually turn the tide of inclusive pedagogy and transform the entire teaching of English to different levels of learners.

The intended outcome of this research is to provide a critical and updated review, as well as a synthesis of the latest developments in the area of Inclusive English Language Education (IELE), especially concerning the influence of modern studies conducted between 2020 to 2025 on such themes as inclusion, pedagogy, technology integration, and teacher training for Special Educational Needs (SEN) students. The research will uncover trends, difficulties, and successful practices while continuously highlighting the factors that will lead the way for inclusive English language teaching and at the same time suggesting areas for further research and policy improvement. The structural organization of the paper will be the following: The description of the methodologies used to collect information and select databases will be presented under the title of 'Methodology'. The Findings section involves communicating the utmost significant thematic findings of the study analysis, which will be coded under the labels of 'teacher training, technological innovation', 'pedagogical practices', and 'policy implications'. Lastly, the job of the 'Discussion and Conclusion' will be the final step of the paper, in which the above findings will be explained against the global educational contexts.

METHOD

The study applied a critical literature review approach to bring together current research findings regarding inclusive English language teaching education for SEN learners. The relevant and peer-reviewed research articles retrieved from the study were systematically searched in the Scopus database, Web of Science (including ESCI databases), ERIC databases, and DOAJ because the four databases guarantee full coverage of quality research works available through open access in the field

of education and applied linguistics. The research applied keyword searching using the following terms: ‘inclusive education,’ ‘English Language teaching,’ ‘EFL,’ ‘ESL,’ ‘special educational needs,’ and ‘SEN,’ and the searched articles were limited to those published from January 2020 to July 2025. Finally, the study focused on a total of 53 research articles that met the criteria of being in English and published in peer-reviewed journals concerning issues of inclusion within the framework of English teaching and learning. Language education-related studies or those lacking appropriate methodological details were excluded. All the chosen papers went through qualitative content analysis to reveal the main themes and patterns that are emerging in various educational settings. The analysis used descriptive coding, thematic categorization, and interpretative synthesis with great emphasis on the areas of teacher preparedness, technology integration, policy implementation, and student engagement.

Theoretical Foundations of Inclusive English Language Education

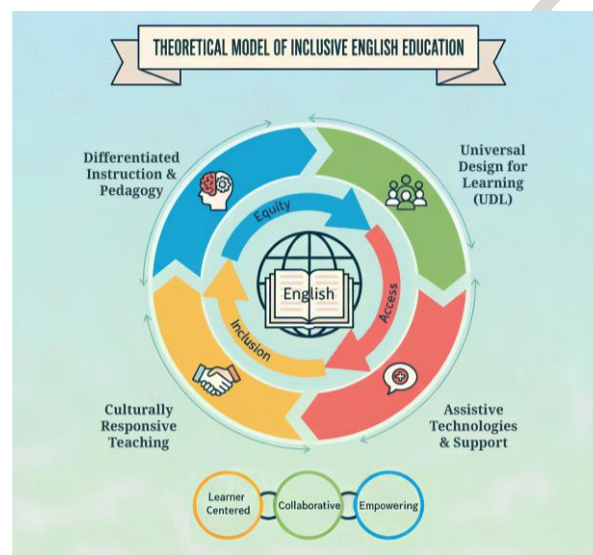


Figure 1. Theoretical model of inclusive English education

Theoretical underpinnings of Inclusive English Language Education (IELE) have been the focus of considerable scholarly debate as different educational communities attempt to create spaces where all students can learn, especially those with Special Educational Needs (SEN). The ongoing global trend of inclusion in education makes it important to consider the principles, practices, and philosophies that support inclusive teaching in English language education. Inclusive education should not be regarded as a last resort to solve problems, but as a first-rate teaching method that integrates different instructional styles, curricula, and assessments with the various learning profiles of students (Lacar, 2021; Žero, 2024). Therefore, one of the major aspects of inclusive English language teaching is the reconsideration of the traditional teaching methods that give priority to the fixed curricula and the student's needs at the same time.

It is pointed out by empirical research that inclusive education should consider diversity as a core educational asset and signifies a paradigmatic transition with regard to teachers' comprehension of pedagogical fairness (Lacar, 2021). Thus, diversity must be acknowledged as a teaching aid instead of being regarded as a hindrance that complicates the design of instruction. Consequently, it requires the teachers to become reflective practitioners, be able to change their ways, and keep on practicing student-centered teaching which can involve all the language learners in the learning process (Eslit, 2023). The institutionalization of inclusive commitment should ensure that through teacher education programs, pre-service and in-service teachers equipped with proper analytical, interpersonal, and



instructional competencies would thus attend to the SEN students' diverse learning needs (Şahan et al., 2022; Žero, 2024).

Recent research has also pointed out the role of technology as a facilitator in the emerging field of inclusive English language education. Learning platforms have come to play a central role in providing different and varied methods of teaching for SEN students in accordance with their cognitive and emotional profiles, thus allowing the students to go through the learning path that is personalized and corresponding with their unique characteristics (Siyabi et al., 2022; Thomas, 2022). These advancements imply that teachers may adopt a sceptical view towards the use of digital tools and at the same time, they should possess a solid technological pedagogical content knowledge that can guarantee the successful blending of such tools in the teaching of inclusive classrooms (Siyabi et al., 2022; Thomas, 2022). Nonetheless, the deployment of technology must be accompanied by a critical reflection of its consequences for linguistic diversity, world Englishes, and translanguaging practices, which, on their own, enable inclusive communication in the multilingual context of contemporary language education (Fang & Xu, 2022; Mahayanti et al., 2024).

Aiming to achieve a sustainable inclusive teaching practice, the UDL (Universal Design for Learning) paradigm has become the foremost guiding framework in ESL curriculum design. UDL suggests that different means of representation, engagement, and expression should be used in order to provide learning possibilities that are just and accessible for all (Lintangsari & Emaliana, 2020; Siyabi et al., 2022). The use of this framework replaces the outdated “one-size-fits-all” approach to teaching with the application of individualized methods that depend on the learners’ strengths and weaknesses (Aizikova et al., 2023). The proper use of UDL principles may establish a learning community where the characteristics of inclusion, belonging, and academic excellence are present, and where each student is acknowledged and appreciated (Ackah-Jnr et al., 2020; Lintangari & Emaliana, 2020).

The importance of social and cultural factors for language learning is increasingly acknowledged at all levels of teaching method adoption towards an inclusive approach. The factors of cultural identity, language background, and community context play a decisive role in learners' motivation, their participation, and, finally, their success in English (Mahayanti et al., 2024; Vizcarra-Garcia, 2021). Hence, teachers are required to implement culturally appropriate teaching alternatives that not only acknowledge the learners' identities but also situate language instruction within the broader social and cultural contexts. One of the strategies for building classroom cultures that are inclusive of all students, where their participation and contributions are recognized and regarded with the utmost value, is to develop mutual respect, intercultural communication, and appreciation of different viewpoints (Mahayanti et al., 2024; Vizcarra-Garcia, 2021).

Implementing the previously mentioned techniques, it has been widely recognized that professional education partnerships between teachers, parents, and other stakeholders have been increasingly stressed as the mainstay of teaching English to speakers of other languages inclusively. Interprofessional working relations among teachers, parents, and support staff stimulate the sharing of information and the solving of problems collectively, which in turn leads to the development of teaching practices that are more responsive and just (Fejes & Dahlstedt, 2023; Klimentyeva et al., 2021). This kind of teamwork not only gives teachers the power to design together with the students the interventions that are most appropriate for their needs but also, in addition to that, it enhances the feeling of acceptance as well as the academic effectiveness of SEN students (Paustovska et al., 2024; Thomas, 2022). The inclusive English education theoretical framework, in the end, emphasizes an integrated ecosystem wherein teaching, technology, and sociocultural awareness meet to help the different types of learners. On the one hand, inclusion is a difficult matter for teachers, and on the other, they must be the main advocates of fair policies, engage in continuous professional reflection, and form partnerships with the community. If schools and universities put together these joint efforts, they can establish learning environments that enable all students, particularly those with special educational needs, to express themselves and do so confidently in a world that is ever more diverse.

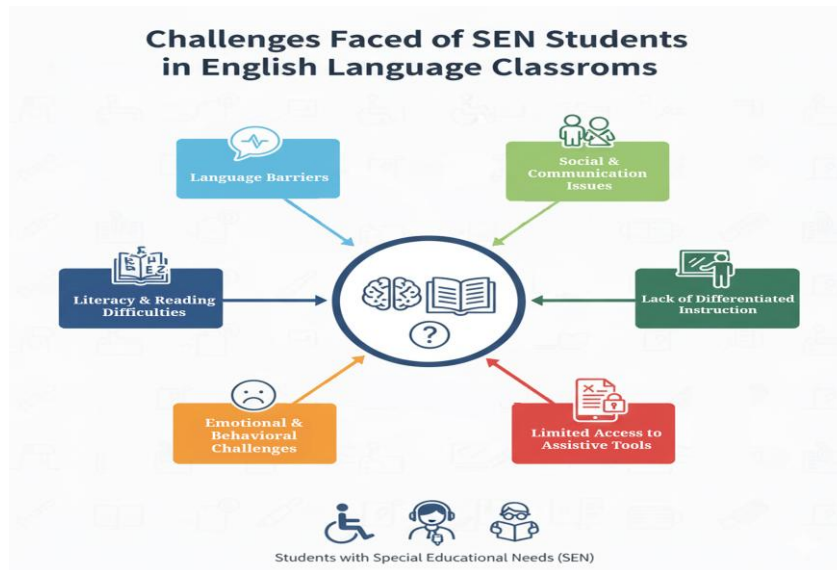
Challenges Faced by SEN Students in English Language Classrooms

Figure 2. Challenges faced by SEN students in English language classrooms.

The situation of Special Educational Needs (SEN) pupils learning the English Language encompasses a number of issues which are deeply ingrained in the learning environment and psychological settings. The problems might be induced by various factors, which might include learning difficulties within the student themselves, psychological factors, learning environment that negatively affects their studies, or the support received from the educational institution. However, it is important to address and eliminate each of them in order to promote equal opportunities to learn at the same level as others, especially SEN pupils. The classroom behavioural climate is one of the most critical issues that influence directly the participation and progress of SEN students. Research studies support the fact that SEN children are in much less friendly classroom environments than their non-disabled peers (Hoffmann et al., 2021). A negative and disruptive classroom environment, where there are no communication and frequent interruptions, can increase anxiety, lower self-esteem, and ultimately slow down language learning. Classroom interaction quality thus is the main factor that determines student motivation and their readiness to take part in communicative activities (Hoffmann et al., 2021).

Moreover, a very close relationship exists between students' perceived well-being and mental health on one hand and academic performance on the other, particularly in an inclusive education context (Chávez-Castillo et al., 2023). Thus, SEN learners who are already struggling with academic and social issues may be under more pressure and feel isolated, which make them even less able to cope with the learning of English tasks. Student–teacher relationships are the very first element emerging from the literature as a major factor that has a great impact on the development of academic self-efficacy and emotional resilience (Chávez-Castillo et al., 2023). Teacher–student relationships based on support and understanding can lessen the negative psychological impact that comes with SEN challenges, hence allowing students to be more engaged and perform better.

The design of the instruction and the choice of teaching methods are crucial to the success of English language teaching for SEN students. A number of teachers lack the necessary inclusive pedagogical training and therefore find it hard to provide different types of instruction or modify the materials for the various types of learners (Musayaroh et al., 2023). Consequently, their instruction barely ever reaches beyond the "one-size-fits-all" approach which does not cater specifically to the needs of SEN students. Teachers' perspectives regarding inclusion and their previous interactions with SEN pupils



are very much the determining factors of the level of inclusiveness in the classroom (Pryor et al., 2023). Negative attitudes and deficit-oriented expectations regarding SEN learners can have the effect of maintaining low achievement and decreased motivation (Pryor et al., 2023).

The integration of digital technologies presents both opportunities and challenges for inclusive English language education. While interactive learning environments and assistive technologies can enhance cognitive engagement and individualized support, they may also introduce new obstacles related to accessibility, motivation, and self-regulation (Ugalde et al., 2021). As a result, the educators must make certain that the technological tools are integrated academically and the circumstances are suitable (Börnert-Ringleb et al., 2021). The availability of universal access and the realization of digital inclusion in its most significant form are the conditions that must be met for us to obtain the maximum benefits from the operations.

Anxiety concerning the speaking process and avoidance of participation are among the major difficulties that can negatively impact the learning experience of the students using English as a Foreign Language (EFL) (Kuswanto & Novita, 2024). A considerable number of the EFL students who require special educational measures may not participate in the lessons for fear of being corrected, laughed at, or rated negatively by their peers. This unwillingness is quite common in large classrooms, where students are not given enough attention and emotional support. The teachers with very high standards in grammar and language use might unintentionally provoke more anxiety in the students, thereby reducing their confidence and capability to express themselves (Kuswanto & Novita, 2024).

The teachers' inability to support the SEN learners can be attributed to the absence of teaching and learning resources, materials that are not readily available, and poor professional development opportunities (Singh, 2024). Some of the teachers who received no training in teaching the learners using inclusive teaching practices may end up doing the opposite of what the SEN learners require concerning their learning experience. The SEN learners can be trapped in the cycle of poor performance due to inadequate support and poor learning opportunities. The SEN learners in various institutions continue to face the challenge of stigma and poor images of SEN within their culture. It has been noted that the SEN stigma can lead to the SEN learners being dehumanized due to the misconception of the SEN concept (Sin et al., 2023). Such stigmatizing beliefs are the main hindrances to open communication and to the creation of safe, inclusive classrooms that allow for the linguistic and personal growth of the students.

The difficulties faced by SEN pupils in English classes are related and complex, they include the classroom dynamics, the teachers' attitudes, the teaching methods, the institution's setups, and the society's perceptions. Therefore, it should be highlighted here that teachers can apply inclusive practices that are adaptable to each student's needs, that foster the building of positive teacher-student relationships, and that provide equal access to resources. Empathetic teachers who vary their methods and create a friendly atmosphere can be very supportive in the course of language and emotional skills development of the special educational needs (SEN) pupils. The progressive elimination of barriers will not be significant for educational victory only but also for the whole well-being and empowerment of the whole student body.

Even the hardest situations do not change the fact that teachers are still seen as the most influential people in the movement of making English language education inclusive. Teacher's recognition, understanding, and responding to the specific learning styles of SEN children not only foster the inclusive atmosphere in the classroom but also the whole institution's success in its struggle for justice in education. However, successful inclusion is not just a question of being nice; it needs well-planned teacher education, continual professional development, and research-based reflective practice as its support. The subsequent section, therefore, investigates the intertwining of teacher education, pedagogical competence, and professional identity in the implementation of the inclusive English

language teaching, and it also analyses to what degree the existing training frameworks prepare the teachers in handling the SEN learners' diverse needs.

Teacher Preparation and Professional Competence for Inclusive English Teaching



Figure 3. Essential Competencies for Inclusive English Teachers

An effective preparatory program for teachers of English language teaching, dealing with students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) demands a far-reaching and pluralistic approach that unites linguistics and pedagogy. Teacher education of the highest quality has to develop not only the English language competence but also the strategic and reflective abilities required to meet the different cognitive, social, and emotional needs of SEN students. The nature of this preparation can be a major factor in the academic achievement and social acceptance of these students. A core dimension of this preparation is the development of Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK), the synthesis of subject matter understanding and adaptive instructional methodology responsive to learner diversity (Dewi et al., 2020; Ruddick & Pryor, 2021). Teachers need to undergo special training for identifying and dealing with the learning styles and needs of SEN students individually as with this the alterations made in teaching can provide the same access to the opportunities of learning. Hence the pre-service teachers' training programs should be based on the principles of Differentiated Instruction (DI), which empowers teachers to incorporate people with different abilities, learning styles, and pace in their teaching (Rahmaniar et al., 2024; Sepian et al., 2023). Such variations in teaching methods will surely be an opportunity for SEN students as they will be the ones who will need the most help and thus will be the most requiring of adaptation in the forms of presenting, practicing, and assessing the content (Rahayu & Syahrizal, 2020).

Among the various factors that have been highlighted by recent research, teacher talk has come out as one of the main factors that can either promote or hinder student engagement and participation especially in English classes where students with special educational needs are among the attendees. Good, effective, and clear teacher communication that has empathy may help creating a psychologically safe environment where learners feel free to take linguistic risks and express themselves without the fear of being criticised (İrmayani & Masruroh, 2023; Kirahla & Tyas, 2020). Furthermore, through the intentionality in using the supportive and inclusive language, teacher may make the learners' confidence vulnerable and promoting the true language use.



The strategic incorporation of educational technology represents a transformative force in inclusive English instruction. The use of interactive digital tools like Kahoot! has been shown to provide significant advantages in motivation and engagement of SEN students by means of gamified and multimodal learning activities (Elangovan & Yasin, 2024). Educational technologies have made it possible to disseminate the content more clearly, and the implementation of visual learning tools has enabled the students to interact with the materials in a personalized and multimodal way (Hashim et al., 2023). Consequently, the incorporation of technology into teacher training curricula should be the primary consideration in the professional development of teachers and the facilitation of their mastery of the digital skills needed for the active inclusion of teaching strategies.

An equally important factor is the teacher-student supportive and collaborative classroom atmosphere that prompts all learners to interact with each other. Teacher education should also offer instruction on the application of cooperative learning design and peer collaboration techniques, which have been additionally shown to improve not only the academic performance but also the interpersonal relationship of SEN (Special Educational Needs) students (Bsharat & Salah, 2024). The promotion of interactive learning environments that are group-based and on cooperation fosters the feeling of belonging, increases the peer empathy, and makes the overall classroom more inclusive (Bsharat & Salah, 2024). Despite these pedagogical advances, a substantial number of teachers continue to report feelings of inadequacy and limited preparedness for teaching SEN learners, largely due to the absence of specialized training and insufficient exposure to inclusive education policies (Hussain & Amanat, 2021; Ranjit, 2022). This reality underscores the urgent need for systematic integration of SEN-focused modules within teacher education programs, ensuring that future educators acquire the theoretical grounding and practical competence necessary to construct inclusive classrooms (Nadia et al., 2021).

A further important dimension of teacher preparation is related to the issue of reflective teaching practice. According to Dewi et al. (2020), by means of reflective inquiry, teachers may critically investigate their methodological stances, check on effectiveness, and iteratively adjust them to better match learner diversity. Such continuous processes of self-evaluation not only upgrade professional recognition among teachers but also result in long-term improvements in students' learning achievements. Holistic teacher preparation for inclusive English language teaching should involve the pedagogical innovation, technological adaptations, differentiated instruction, relational pedagogies, and continuous professional learning. The teacher preparation process that centres on these aspects is bound to give educators the full potential to think, apply and keep an inclusive, high-impact learning environment that will most probably increase the levels of academic achievement together with the emotional well-being of SEN students in the process of learning English.

Continuing with the previous sections where teacher preparation and professional competence were the main themes, it is the integration of innovative pedagogies and technology that is custodian of the future for inclusive English language classes. Even if prepared teachers are the main support for the establishment of an inclusive practice, their efficiency highly relies on their potential to apply the new tools, digital resources, and creative instructional frameworks posited for the individual needs of SEN learners. Thus, the future of inclusive English language teaching is heavily dependent on professional teachers' expertise and on the clever application of innovative methods and technologies that can change the ordinary classroom into a lively, fair, and student-centered area. Consequently, the following part talks about how the cutting-edge teaching models and the latest educational tools can help us to come up with inclusiveness, motivation, and language growth among the different English language learners.

Innovative Practices and Technologies Supporting Inclusive EFL Classrooms

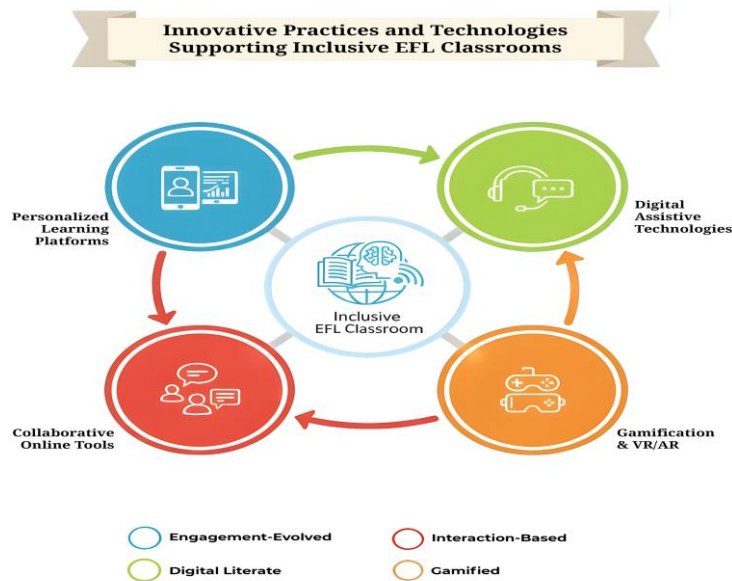


Figure 4. Innovative practices and technologies supporting inclusive EFL classrooms

The integration of innovative pedagogical practices and emerging technologies into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom holds transformative potential for enriching the learning experience, particularly for students with Special Educational Needs (SEN). Contemporary research emphasizes that inclusive, interactive, and adaptive learning environments supported by technological advancement can effectively address the diverse linguistic, cognitive, and affective needs of learners. Effective inclusive strategies must therefore align with cutting-edge educational innovations that enhance accessibility, engagement, motivation, and a sense of belonging among all students. In this regard, one of the most astonishing advancements is the adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI), which enables the creation of tailored and diverse learning experiences by changing the course content according to every student's distinct profile (Moybeka et al., 2023; Wu, 2023). With AI applications, learners now receive instantaneous feedback, learning paths that adjust according to their needs, and high levels of interactivity, consequently turning passive learners into active ones that not only participate but also do so in a meaningful way (Wu, 2023).

Besides AI, audiovisual technology and computer-assisted instruction have been recognized as effective tools in assisting diverse learners, such as those with disabilities, through the process of simplifying and reinforcing the comprehension of verbally communicated concepts (Mosquera, 2023). These allow each student to process the information at his or her own pace and help creating multisensory learning experiences which can accommodate different communication modes and cognitive strengths. This method enhances interactivity, accessibility, and independence of learners, which SEN learners require. Likewise, the technological tools of MALL enable the learner to access the information at whatever time and from wherever they wish, which provides them with flexibility that reduces the stress associated with learning in the classroom and promotes continuous engagement (Jeong, 2022; Zhou et al., 2023). The application of gamification and interactivity of MALL applications has been instrumental in improving the learner's motivation and their persistence to learn the language, which makes the learning of the subject inclusive and enjoyable (Zhou et al., 2023).

The integration of various learning methodologies involving classroom teaching and online learning has proven to be effective in developing autonomy and autonomous learning possibilities, along with various benefits involving linguistic engagement (Sheerah, 2020). The integration of literacy skills



development and the use of technology has been possible in the learning approach and also achieved multimodal engagement and differentiated instruction which are crucial elements of effective inclusion in teaching linguistics (Biantoro, 2020; Sheerah, 2020). In addition, web-based collaboration tools like Padlet facilitate peer-to-peer learning, shared reflection, and community building. Thus, social barriers are lowered, and the communication skills of diverse learners are improved (Kaldarova et al., 2024). These online learning platforms are a hassle-free method for educators to create collaborative, student-centered learning environments where students with special education needs (SEN) can deeply engage and be part of the community (Kaldarova et al., 2024).

The incorporation of assistive technologies into the classroom, and among them the text-to-speech software, voice recognition programs, and digital organizers, has played a significant part in the changing of the face of inclusive language education for SEN students, who are now more than ever empowered to take part in, as well as to understand the processes of learning (Suharti et al., 2020). The use of such technologies helps learners' gain independence and enable students to be able to participate in the hardest linguistic activities at their own pace, while the teacher provides the necessary support. Empirical findings support the fact that the incorporation of assistive and adaptive technologies has positively affected motivation levels, understanding, and learning achievement in EFL settings (Suharti et al., 2020).

To continue this momentum, there needs to be continuous professional development of the teachers. Teacher-training models such as the Technological Pedagogical and Content Knowledge framework teach the teachers the proper usage of technology in a context-sensitive way (Su, 2023). However, developing the teachers' ability to be flexible in their teaching methodologies along with their technological skills may ensure that technology becomes an integral part of the teaching learning procedure rather than a complement to it (Muslimin et al., 2023). The integration of AI, audiovisual aids, mobile-based learning, mixed-delivery classroom instruction, and group-sharing tools together signifies the concept of an inclusive EFL classroom as a living organism. For teachers, professional competence and adaptive expertise in these areas are essential to meet the changing needs of various learners, thus enabling the creation of transformative and just English language learning environments.

The role played by innovations in teaching practices and technologies in the provision of inclusive EFL instruction is of premier significance, but their potential also remains dependent upon the larger context in which they are actually facilitated. It will not be feasible for Inclusive English Language Education to prosper in an environment which lacks support from the system, inadequate funding, and the absence of legislation which, in a way, empowers schools, teachers, and students combined. In the context of this discussion, the reason for the existence of technological and educational innovations lies in the educational framework which provides constant support and advocacy of equity, accessibility, and the development of professional capacity. Moreover, it must be made sure that the culture of the institution has been shaped in line with the principles of shared responsibilities and cooperation which will ensure that the concept of inclusivity can be integrated and the concept can be planted not only as part of the educational trend but also as part of the framework of educational management. Therefore, the next part discusses the policy and institutional frameworks that support inclusive education and how the global and national initiatives influence the practical realization of equitable access to English language learning for students with Special Educational Needs.

Policy and Institutional Frameworks for Inclusion

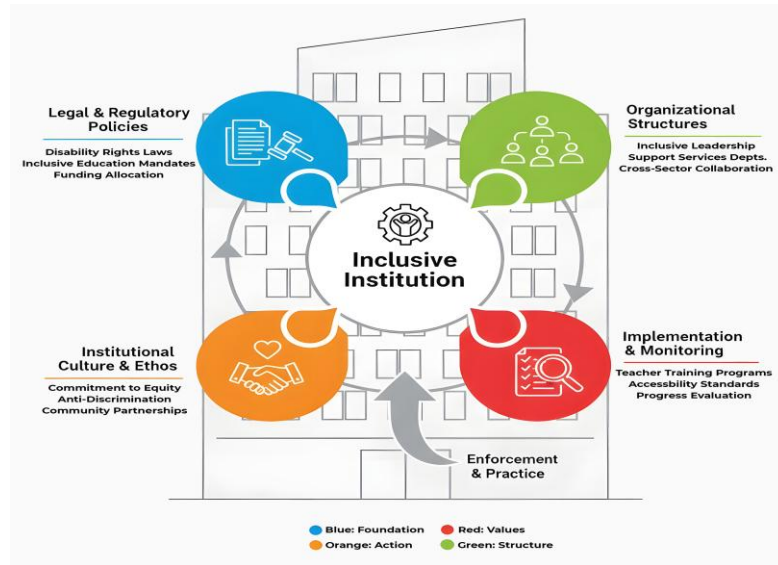


Figure 5. Policy and institutional frameworks for inclusion.

The establishment of policy and structural frameworks remains the essence of the concept of inclusive education in its totality because it constitutes the treatment of everyone fairly in the quest to access proper education, no matter who you are when it comes to Special Educational Needs (SEN). The policy framework grounded in general societal beliefs evident through policy expressions can provide the structural framework of the classroom environment that supports the development, engagement, and progress of all pupils (Kenny et al., 2023). The following discussion will interact with the various critical components of policy and structural models. Crucially, inclusive education policies are guided by universal educational goals and principles of social justice, meant not only to integrate students with SEN into mainstream education but also to dismantle systemic barriers standing in the way of full participation and accomplishment for students (Obah, 2024). The UNESCO Salamanca Statement and a Framework for Action signify that inclusive education is an undeniable right of every human being, thus requiring the educational institutions to adopt proactive measures instead of reactive ones in order to cater to the diverse needs of learners (Masunungure & Maguvhe, 2023). Similarly, the Dakar Framework for Action underlines the global commitment to "Education for All" and emphasizes the moral and practical responsibilities of the governments to dismantle every barrier to inclusion that affects the learning and success of students (Masunungure & Maguvhe, 2023).

The policy framework in Vietnam regarding inclusive education for children with disabilities has practically demonstrated and drawn attention to the basic principles of equality and participation, implying that real inclusion is about compliance with laws and about changing social attitudes to be more tolerant of diversity and acceptance (Thao, 2022). This perspective is in line with the global movement for inclusive education which is advocating for the transformation of the school settings into places which not only accept but also encourage the interaction of children with different backgrounds and differences (Thao, 2022). Teachers thus become the main performers in carrying out the policies, as they are the ones who connect the national policies to the realities in the classrooms. However, the obstacles of inadequate teacher training and professional development still exist, and they slow down the process of policy implementation (Malahlela & Johnson, 2024). Studies highlight that there are significant areas of weakness in teachers' knowledge, skills, and beliefs in the use of inclusive methods, which indicate the importance of continuous professional development so that policy objectives can be realized practically (Malahlela & Johnson, 2024). Thus, policy frameworks



should incorporate mechanisms for teacher capacity building, ensuring that professional growth and inclusive competence are institutionalized priorities.

Inclusive policymaking needs to be a participatory endeavour that embraces the views and realities of the targeted students who suffer from intellectual and learning disabilities. As noted by Herrero et al. (2020), the direct incorporation of student views into policymaking might contribute to the increased effectiveness of the policy changes implemented in the learning environment toward the development of an empowering and person-centered space. By the same token, Filippou et al. (2025) claim that inclusive higher education is dependent on an all-encompassing and evidence-based policy foundation which can deal with both access and performance issues throughout the education system. They point out the requirement of making decisions based on data and continuous assessments so that the institutions can keep track of the impact and modify the policies in a timely manner to realize inclusivity (Filippou et al., 2025).

The recent trend of the United Kingdom promoting the concept of agentic inclusion in the higher education sector marks the beginning of a dramatic and positive shift in policy culture that has become adaptive and responsive (Baltaru, 2020). This policy promotes accessibility in the field of higher education and assists in the development of an inclusive culture within the institution where the concept of diversity is reflected in the management and the overall academic environment of the institution. In this context, to bring this shift about, the educational institutions need to treat the concept of inclusion as a prime agenda rather than a secondary one.

As inclusive education continues to evolve within the global policy arena, continuous reflection, critical analysis, and framework revision are indispensable. Scholars such as Nnamani and Lomer (2024) highlight the importance of policy discourse analysis to uncover underlying tensions between ideological commitments and practical constraints in inclusive education. Such analysis is vital for constructing a holistic, context-sensitive understanding of inclusion that transcends rhetoric and informs tangible reform. The creation of policy and institutional frameworks for inclusion should primarily be based on social justice, equity, and educational democracy. These frameworks guarantee a system of education in which teachers, students, and communities are heard as the loudest, and flexibility, accountability, and responsiveness are part of the core. However, these models also need a continuous development process involving pilots and modifications to be tested and proven effective, relevant, and resilient over time to the various groups of people who believe that inclusion constitutes a right and a necessity.

The application of equity principles in education is not the only role that the policy of inclusion and the institutional framework supporting this policy do but they also shape the fate of Inclusive English Language Education (IELE) at the same time but based on the extent to which the research can probe and innovate in this ever-changing environment. The ability of researchers to establish the linkages from the policy dreams at the macro-level to the world of the classroom and its micro-sized realities forms the essence of the call for proper progress in the activities of the research. The policy research will then understand the educational and technological realities of the micro-world of inclusion. The policies of the present have opened the paths to accessibility and participation; however, there still exist considerable empirical and conceptual gaps regarding the best practices of inclusive English language education for different sociocultural contexts. In this context, the immediate next step that will be taken in this paper will be to identify the future trends and research needs in order to bring about awareness of the emerging domains that require research and also the ways through which the English language teaching paradigm can be made inclusive and research responsive.

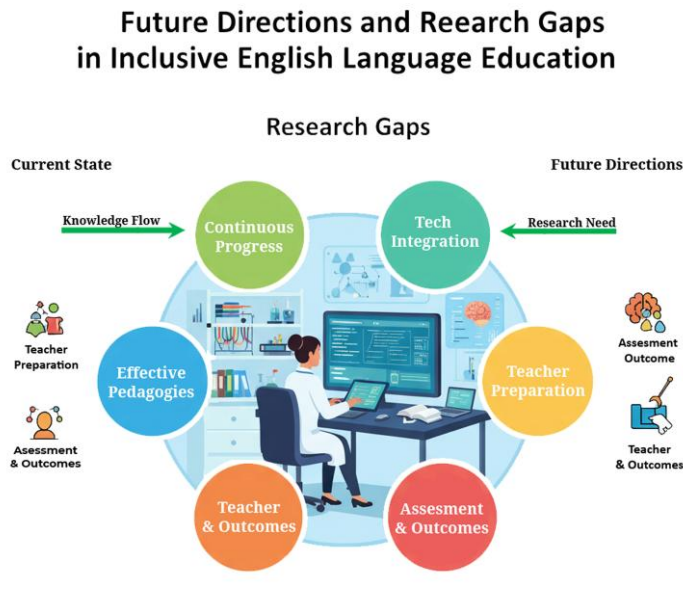
Future Directions and Research Gaps in Inclusive English Language Education

Figure 6: Future directions and research gaps in inclusive English language education

The direction of future research for Inclusive English Language Education (IELE) is quite central for the development of learning and teaching methods, practices, and policies that truly include everyone and especially the learners with Special Educational Needs (SEN). This paper reviews the literature and points out the main weaknesses that need to be filled in order for the discipline to progress. Among the most pressing research frontiers is the intersection between translanguaging practices and inclusive pedagogies. Fang and Xu (2022) are of the opinion that trans-languaging counteracts native-speakerism ideologies, and the result is more inclusive classroom conditions along with the asserting of linguistic variety. With the rising multicultural and multilingual staff in language classrooms, the strategic and right timing of translanguaging in English language instruction for the benefit of inclusion is worth exploring. The design and assessment of translanguaging-based models for SEN learners should be the case for future research. Such research will closely examine the effects of these models on language growth, participation, and social integration in culturally diverse schools.

Teacher training for inclusivity is yet another immediate concern of research in the area. Žero (2024) highlights the extreme inadequacy of teacher training in the field of Special Learning Difficulties (SpLDs) in English language teaching. The need for empirical research is urgent, and the situation should be systematic and the primary concern in the area over the years to come. Future investigations should come up with hybrid training frameworks that would be able to effectively combine the use of evidence-based inclusive practices with the teaching of SpLD-specific instructional strategies. Moreover, more research should be conducted on cooperative learning as a means for language learning inclusion to its fullest. Zheng and Zhou (2022) noted that cooperative learning can give a boost to EFL learners' motivation and to enjoyment; thus, future research should put under the microscope the impact of cooperative learning on social interaction, peer interdependence, and academic performance of SEN (Special Educational Needs) students. Task design and group composition should be given special attention in order to achieve equitable participation across different ability levels.

Under the umbrella of language policy and classroom ecology, the study on the impact of English-Medium Instruction (EMI) needs to take the multilingual classroom environment of higher education in Thailand and Vietnam as one of its focal points. Şahan et al. (2022) point out that the inclusive



qualities of bilingual teaching, which is a mixture of English and local languages, are more powerful than those of the strict EMI models. Furthermore, the research should focus on the changing of EMI's calibrations so that it is easy to accommodate the needs of the emotional-behavioural development of SEN (Special Educational Needs) participants or students in the classroom. The same thing can be said about Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL), which is a technological ground that is gradually breaking research. Liu et al. (2023) mention that mobile technologies can make the learners' lifelong education and self-directed learning sustainable, however, the SEN learners' situation is not part of the investigation. Studies should find out the most effective ways of inserting MALL into inclusive EFL classrooms and then also quantify the benefits received in terms of student autonomy, engagement, and access for a wide range of learners.

The adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in EFL settings has opened up a new area that still requires the attention of the scholars. Researchers are yet to fully explore the impact of AI on psychological constructs like self-regulation, motivation, and resilience. Along this line, Zhang et al. (2024) propose to investigate the potential of AI-driven tools in supporting the emotional and cognitive aspects of SEN learners' language acquisition. Future studies should be directed towards the development and assessment of AI interventions that match the unique affected and learning characteristics of SEN students. Similarly, the use of digital collaboration platforms like Padlet brings up possibilities for the accretion of soft skills and social interaction. Kaldarova et al. (2024) point out the success of Padlet in fostering communication, collaboration, and reflection in EFL classes, then, it is proposed that future research should be directed at discovering how the different types of online settings can be utilized to support both the academic and social-emotional development of SEN students.

At last, the emotional control and well-being of EFL students in inclusive settings is one of the domains that has received the least attention. The complex connection among emotion regulation, motivation, and academic performance points to the need for longitudinal, mixed-methods research to identify the ways in which positive teacher-student relationships and supportive classroom climates mediate these dynamics. Through their research, Zhang et al. (2024) proposed that one of the main roles of emotion regulation in the language learning process was to act as a mediator, thus suggesting the incorporation of teaching emotional skills aimed specifically at students with special educational needs (SEN) like anxiety and low self-esteem. Future IELE research may mainly revolve around these four distinct yet tightly interlinked pillars: teacher training, new curricular and methodological innovations, technology integration, and emotional resilience. Focusing on these pillars may help the road taken by the field to be through the discourse of inclusion to one where English language education is a social right and a means for social justice, empathy, and excellence to be developed.

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, and SUGGESTIONS

The outcomes of the Inclusive English Language Education (IELE) study clearly indicate that although inclusion is a theoretically strong concept and has been widely supported in international discussions, still very much depends on the specific situation that teacher skill, institutional involvement, and availability of technological and social resources are among the factors. In the literature examined, the gap between the noble words of inclusive policy and some realities of fewer implementation in classrooms has been one of the most striking features. This too is in line with Žero's (2024) statement that inclusion, although accepted as a rule in the educational systems, is still suffering from the problem of being applied only in a superficial manner. Consequently, the debate has brought about the view that IELE is an ever developing and multi-faceted concept that is at the same time pedagogical, technological, emotional, and political and thus calls for the adoption of integrated approaches rather than fragmented reforms.

The mediating role of teacher preparation in the success of inclusive English pedagogy is pointed out as a major point of significance. The reviewed studies bring to light that the inclusive outcomes



greatly depend on the teachers' skills to implement differentiated instruction, reflective practice, and adaptive communication. Nevertheless, despite the increasing focus on incorporating models such as SIOP and UDL, teacher education programs still give too little emphasis to inclusion as a core competency, which results in limited readiness to cater to Special Educational Needs (SEN). This strengthens the claim that teacher professional development should shift from being sporadic training to being a continuous, evidence-informed process that is part of the institutional culture. Dewi et al. (2020) have pinpointed the role of reflective teaching as the most powerful and have thus made this necessity of closing the gap between theoretical inclusion and the actual situation in classrooms even more pressing.

The integration of technology is considered as one of the main dimensions in the evolution of IELE. The innovations in the digital world from Artificial Intelligence tools, Mobile Assisted Language Learning and collaborative platforms such as Padlet give nothing less than the highest extent of customization and accessibility to educational activities. However, the studies indicated that the digital divide and the low levels of teachers' digital skills are still the most important systemic obstacles. The technology discussion indicates that inclusion is not a direct but a mediated role for technology; it transforms to be inclusive only after teachers are provided with the necessary digital skills, critical awareness, and the morally correct aspects to use it justly. Moreover, AI tools may provide tailored learning according to individual student's needs but their impact on learners' psychology and emotions is still an unexplored area especially in terms of motivation, resilience and self-regulation of SEN students. These less-studied areas highlight the need for new, interdisciplinary cooperation between areas such as applied linguistics, psychology, and educational technology.

Inclusive English language teaching is seen, from an institutional perspective, as a governance and accountability issue that requires a restructuring of the entire system. According to Baltaru (2020), Nnamani and Lomer (2024), the practice to be included in a school system should not only be obtained through the reputation of the school but must be intended as the guiding philosophy which will permeate all levels of the education system. The argument put forth here is that the logic of inclusion needs to be taken further into the future because of the policy ecosystems that support it and those that mix teacher empowerment, curriculum and assessment practice, and data-driven evaluation. The gap in implementation concerning this area is still quite considerable, even though inclusive policy frameworks are present in such contexts. These frameworks are not supported by adequate funding, monitoring, or stakeholder engagement that is, for instance, an indirect student participation that Herrero et al. (2020) and Filippou et al. (2025) recommend and refer to, which remains one of the main ways to assure that the inclusive nature of the system is not just a matter of compliance but really through empowering and granting the users authority.

Moreover, the recognition of emotional and sociocultural aspects in inclusive pedagogy is of the same importance. According to Chávez-Castillo et al. (2023), academic results are closely associated with mental health and social acceptance, which means that the conditions of the classroom that are trying to be inclusive should provide affective safety for the students along with cognitive development. Fang and Xu (2022) in their exploration of translanguaging and linguistic justice bring forth a discussion advocating for culturally responsive teaching, thereby reframing diversity as a resource instead of a barrier. The amalgamation of these views asserts that the very foundation of English language teaching rooted in justice is actually made up of both the mentioned attitudes and the structural reform.

Including thus, the whole discussion about Inclusive English Language Education brings out three major points that stress the need for a change. First and foremost, such an approach as inclusion should be supported by institutions and carried out by teachers thus, making the policy-intention-and-classroom-practice gap very narrow. Secondly, it should be tech-based and emotionally supportive, utilizing the latest technology but at the same time safeguarding the students' mental health. Finally, the whole process of providing the students with an inclusive environment must be culture-and-ethics-



rooted thus helping the practitioners to see the inclusion as a moral and professional duty rather than as a marketing slogan. The attainment of this integration would be a result of continual interaction among teachers, policy makers, and researchers. Thus, it would be the establishment of inclusion, not as a method for the few but rather as the basic principle in the English language education of a world that is becoming more and more diverse.

IELE/S, inclusively speaking, has undoubtedly been a whole and necessary concept in the current educational discussions and practices that resulted from the growing diversity of the learners with differing backgrounds, abilities, and educational needs. Delving into the inclusive English language teaching and its recent practices, obstacles, and innovations has led to the conclusion that, although inclusion is a concept that is theoretically well-grounded, its realization is still disparate and contingent upon the setting. According to Ackah-Jnr et al. (2020), the use of inclusive language, when applied intentionally as both a teaching and a motivational tool, benefits not only the intellectual development but also the emotional health of the students in the diverse classrooms. This indicates the necessity of inclusive discourse and practice being voluntarily and comprehensively applied in all aspects of English education.

Teacher preparation continues to be the pillar supporting inclusive English teaching. Aizikova et al. (2023) say that structured models like SIOP (Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol) help educators to match content and language goals for varied learners in a systematic way. Nonetheless, even with such frameworks in place, the majority of teacher training programs still do not give importance to inclusion as their primary pedagogical principle, which results in the unpreparedness of the graduates to cope with the diversity of learners. At the same time, the use of educational technology promises a lot in terms of accessibility and participation. Alian and Alhaj (2023) indicate that in the case of technology utilized in English teaching at the university level, it is very likely to increase students' motivation and understanding, but still, digital inequality is a major problem, particularly in poorly supplied areas, thus making the digital divide an urgent issue for the educational platforms that seek to be inclusive.

At the institutional level, Baltaru (2020) claims that inclusion is often discursively framed through institutional reputation and accountability metrics rather than through the real educational transformation that was claimed. This critique invites educators and policymakers to critically interrogate the ideological foundations of inclusion and to synchronize the initiatives with the values of equity. Börnert-Ringleb et al. (2021) add to this idea by pointing out that, on the condition that digital tools are universally available, teacher digital competence and infrastructural readiness may decide the outcome, whether it is enabling or inhibiting inclusive practice. By taking a pedagogical approach, Bsharat and Salah (2024) support the use of cooperative learning and drama-based instruction as vibrant strategies that invite participation and bring in peer collaboration and motivation, which are the essential ingredients of inclusive classrooms that cater to the diverse needs of students.

Likewise, Chen (2023) puts the emphasis on the TBLT's likelihood to customize teaching according to one's needs without losing authenticity and the engagement of learners. At the same time, Chen and Wong (2023) present to us the manner in which video discussion tools like Flip can promote reflection, professional identity, and the feeling of being part of the community among pre-service ESL teachers. The psychological side of the concept of inclusion is even more crucial than pedagogy: Chávez-Castillo et al. (2023) point out the need to regard the student's performance and psychological state as part of the discourse concerning the inclusion of students in educational institutions. Fang and Xu (2022) approach this situation from the prism of global Englishes and translanguaging and recommend the development of a novel method of calculating the value of linguistic differences rather than the handicap of linguistically heterogeneous groups of pupils. This complements the views of Filippou et al. (2025), who recommend the need to rely on research-driven transformation of



educational institutions to guarantee that the philosophy of inclusivity permeates the educational framework through the medium of the academic culture that embodies the philosophy of inclusivity.

According to Kenny et al. (2023), the concept of educational inclusivity has to be a comprehensive and collective procedure and should not be limited to non-interaction practices that occur within the classroom environment. The actual concept of inclusivity will promote the coexistence of teachers, managers, policymakers, and students and hence generate equality within their educational context. According to the mentioned studies, it's important to move beyond the constraints of altering the educational curriculum and incorporating educational technological innovations to achieve the level of genuine educational inclusivity in English teaching practices. A radical shift from the previous educational framework of promoting teacher development and culturally relevant teaching practices needs to be achieved. The future of inclusive English language teaching thus is at the crossroad of deliberate practice, research-based teacher training, ethical technology use, and a constant focus on social justice outcomes. Only with such a multi-faceted, cooperative, and ethically rooted framework can inclusion surpass the level of mere talk and become a lived reality for all learners in the educational system.

Ethics and Conflict of Interest

This research was conducted in accordance with recognized ethical standards. The author declares that he acted in accordance with ethical rules in all processes of the research, and there are no conflicts of interest related to this work.

Data availability

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author.

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