

РОЗДІЛ 2. ТЕОРІЯ ТА МЕТОДИКА НАВЧАННЯ (З ГАЛУЗЕЙ ЗНАТЬ)

EUROPEAN EXPERIENCE OF TEACHING ENGLISH TO LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

ЄВРОПЕЙСЬКИЙ ДОСВІД ВИКЛАДАННЯ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ СТУДЕНТАМ ІЗ ОСОБЛИВИМИ ОСВІТНИМИ ПОТРЕБАМИ

The article is aimed at introducing the current status and organizational structure of foreign language education provided to learners with special educational needs (SEN) based on international standards and European experience.

Three areas have been paid attention to: (1) the legal framework and organization of foreign language education of learners with SEN; (2) ways of support provided to foreign language teachers; and (3) the courses on foreign language education of learners with SEN (focused mostly on classroom management in mixed-ability classes and internal differentiation).

Foreign language education of learners with special educational needs is one of the fields of language pedagogy involving specialists of many related professions. The modern European school system elaborated three main educational approaches to SEN learners' education, namely: segregation, integration, and inclusion.

Research on foreign language education of learners with SEN performed by foreign-language pedagogy scientists emphasizes the necessity for appropriate interventions to avoid the cognitive gap in mixed-ability classes which may cause a new type of disorder named 'the foreign language learning disability'. Multisensory approach, mnemonics and helping methods including preferential seating, creation of stable climate in the class, keeping a balanced level of sound etc. are highly recommended as beneficial factors.

The study carried out reveals the following: though the legislation and state documents related to education meet international standards creating proper conditions for the development of foreign language education for the target group, the existing situation at schools is not very optimistic. The results obtained also point to the areas requiring further attention and important measures which need to be adopted. Information on teaching SEN learners should be integrated in all training programmes. Profound theoretical sources along with corresponding practical teaching materials are necessary for foreign language education of learners with SEN to be successful.

Key words: *foreign language education, international standards, European experience, special educational needs, internal differentiation.*

Стаття має на меті ознайомлення з сучасним статусом та організаційною структурою навчання іноземною мовою для сту-

дентів з особливими освітніми потребами (ООП) на основі міжнародних стандартів та європейського досвіду.

Приділено увагу трьом напрямкам: (1) законодавчій базі та організації навчання іноземною мовою студентів з ООП; (2) способам підтримки викладачів іноземних мов; та (3) курсам з вивчення іноземної мови для студентів із ООП (з акцентом на роботі у комплексних групах із залученням студентів з особливими освітніми потребами та внутрішній диференціації).

Іншомовна освіта студентів з особливими освітніми потребами є одним із напрямків мовної педагогіки, що об'єднує фахівців багатьох суміжних професій. Сучасна європейська освітня система розробила три основні підходи до навчання студентів з ООП, а саме: сегрегацію, інтеграцію та інклюзію.

Проведене вченими-педагогами дослідження іноземної мовної освіти студентів з ООП, підкреслює необхідність їх належного залучення у навчальний процес, з метою уникнення когнітивного розриву в класах зі змішаними можливостями, який може спричинити новий тип розладу під назвою «неспроможність вивчення іноземної мови». Мультисенсорний підхід, мнемотехніка та допоміжні методи, такі як оптимальне розміщення, створення стабільного клімату в аудиторії, підтримання збалансованого рівня звуку тощо рекомендуються як ефективні чинники процесу навчання.

Висновки дослідження іншомовної освіти, міжнародних стандартів та європейського досвіду, свідчать про наступне: хоча законодавство та державні документи, що стосуються освіти, відповідають міжнародним стандартам, створюючи належні умови для розвитку іншомовної освіти цільової групи, реальна ситуація не дуже оптимістична. Отримані результати також вказують на сфери, що потребують подальшої уваги, та важливі заходи, які необхідно вжити. Інформацію про навчання студентів із ООП слід інтегрувати в усі навчальні програми. Для успішного навчання іноземною мовою студентів з ООП необхідні ґрунтовні теоретичні джерела та відповідні практичні навчальні матеріали.

Ключові слова: *іншомовна освіта, міжнародні стандарти, європейський досвід, особливі освітні потреби, внутрішня диференціація.*

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The problem being regarded: foreign language education of learners with special educational needs (SEN) is one of the fields of language pedagogy which involves many adjacent helping professions and specialists. Despite the growing number of research outputs, their systematic summary is still necessary. The European experience is able to offer a systematic overview of the current status and organization

of foreign language education provided to learners with SEN. Detailed attention is paid to three defined areas: a) the legal framework and organization of foreign language education of learners with SEN in European countries; b) the extent of support provided to foreign language teachers; and c) the reflection of foreign language education of learners with SEN in research [7].

Research and publications review:

R. L. Schwarz, one of the pioneers in research on foreign language education of learners with SEN, once aptly expressed the reason why more interest should be paid to the area of foreign language education to learners with SEN: "For the student unencumbered by a learning disability, foreign language study is indeed an enriching and rewarding experience. For the learning disabled student, however, it can be an unbelievably stressful and humiliating experience, the opposite of what is intended" [9, p. 1]. He added that "these difficulties may become more serious over time if instruction is not modified to address the students' needs. Unless these students receive appropriate interventions, they will continue to struggle, and the gap between their achievement and that of their peers will widen over time" [9, p. 2]. Moreover, there is a danger of emergence of a new type of disorder named "the foreign language learning disability" that has been considered by both learning-disorders and foreign-language pedagogy scientists [1; 10].

Issues requiring further consideration. Despite many efforts and agreements, the contemporary situation of mainstream schools in the world is not satisfactory. Mainstream schools often find it difficult to provide high quality support for learners with disabilities. In some contexts, the systems of provision to support these learners and their families lack flexibility, failing to take local contexts and cultures into account. Learners' needs may not be identified and assessed until late in the learner's school career and parents may not have enough information about the services available, while bureaucracy and lack of funding may create certain barriers. One of the most obvious aspects of humanistic education is how it treats those who are somehow different, standing out from the mainstream that defines general learning objectives and curriculum. A rather sizable subgroup of these 'different' learners are learners with SEN, which can be seen in the context of foreign language education.

The aim of the article: the objective of this paper is to introduce the current status and organizational structure of foreign language education provided to learners with SEN.

The main body. The modern European school system elaborated three main educational approaches to SEN learners' education (School Act 245/2008): segregation, integration, and inclusion.

Until the early 1990-s, *segregation* (organizing learners into groups according to their health diagnosis, level of their abilities and skills, etc.) of learners with special educational needs was the main strategy applied by European education. Today, only learners with serious disorders are excluded from mainstream education and attend special schools. *Integration* is a form of education that involves learners with SEN into mainstream schools and classes. They become

regular students, however, they work with their individual educational plans. SEN learners usually spend part of their school day in the classroom with other learners completing the regular school tasks as others, and in the second part of the school day they learn individually. *Inclusive* education is an approach by which the learners with SEN are involved in regular school activities during the whole school day.

It is of highest priority to analyze the problems the teachers of English have while dealing with inclusive students. Teachers frequently worry about the situation that by adapting teaching techniques and tempo to learners with SEN, they would have a negative impact and limit progress of mainstream learners. Teachers also complain about very low cooperation with centres of pedagogical and psychological consultancy and prevention and sometimes not easy relationships with parents. By comparing their statements to the programmes of Ministries of Education, it becomes clear that teachers are provided with only general and framework instructions instead of precise directions with concrete teaching techniques and tools. Observations and data collection show that in practice, integration and inclusion of learners with SEN usually ends behind the classroom door while in the classroom the teachers very often are unaware how to deal with many of the problems they come across teaching English to inclusive students [7].

The employment of a Grounded Theory (GT) methodology by well-known scientists has become of much help for dealing with inclusive education. The theory is focused on data collection which is systematically gathered and analyzed during the research; so, data collection, analysis and theory are closely interrelated. It is an approach that emphasizes the importance of empirical fieldwork and the need to link any explanations very closely to what happens in practical situations in 'the real world' [5]. Strauss and Corbin point out GT gives a deeper understanding of the data, which is performed through asking questions, creating fitting categories and making comparisons [11]. Analysis of the data followed by moving back and forth amongst the collected experiences checking out the concepts and ideas were established. Construction of relevant themes identified the key ideas participants shared within their interviews. Participants were invited to engage with their reflections to ensure clarity and to reflect on how well these reflected their experiences. Within a GT approach is space for self-reflexivity. Charmaz notes researchers' need to account for their own positionality, as well as the participants, stating "the researcher and researched co-construct the data - data are a product of the research process not simply observed objects of it" [4, p. 182]. Rather than the researcher holding the position of power traditionally associated with research 'done to' disabled people, the data was generated and understood in context, rather than as

a decontextualized phenomenon. Braun and Clarke contend this as “a constructionist method, which examines the ways in which events, realities, meanings, experiences and so on are the effects of a range of discourses operating within society, a position that underpins the diversity experienced by the participants” [2, p. 9]. The methodology and theoretical research pave the road to creating practical tips to help SEN learners in mastering the English language. For example, multisensory approach is used while working with such language-based learning disabilities as dyslexia and dysgraphia when the learner's brain causes problems with receiving and processing verbal signs, such as letters, words, sentences. Multisensory approach integrates receiving information through seeing, hearing, and moving or touching. In some cases, even smells and tastes can be included into learning. This lets the information reach the learner's brain and comprehend the verbal message. The next important tool to help dyslectic students is the use of audiobooks that allow the reader to read and hear the text at the same time. There are many sources that can be available for dyslectic learners, for example, Free Classic Books, Libri Vox, Lit2Go, Loyal Books, Project Gutenberg etc. Mnemonics is another helpful strategy for dyslectic students as they deal much with memorization. It involves such activities using rhyme, songs, poems or acronyms.

The students with dysgraphia suffer from such warning signs as stiff grip, body posture, illegible handwriting and poor spelling. The main strategic actions should include such processes as to allow the use of recorder for lectures and a note taker, reduce the amount of written work and copying tasks.

The students' behavior with attention deficit disorder or attention (ADD/ADHD) can be rather challenging as it is characterized by lack of attention, day-dreaming, a very short period of concentration, they are very often depressed, in low mood, have problems with the teachers, peers and families.

Recommended helping methods include use of preferential seating, creation of stable climate in the class, keeping a balanced level of sound, usage of point system (e.g. colourful sticks, tokens, stars, etc).

Visually impaired learners are capable of learning foreign languages without any serious help. They usually need only special teaching aids and one assistant teacher.

Deaf learners and learners with hearing impairment can be successful in learning foreign languages, the only vulnerable sphere being fluent listening and speaking competences. The recommended accommodations embrace the use of preferential seating, asking for help from teacher assistants and interpreters, use of hearing aids when speaking, always facing the student, asking for help from good note takers in the classroom.

The students with autism (often called ASD – Autistic Spectrum Disorder) can be high-functioning and referred to as those with Asperger syndrome (after an Austrian psychiatrist Hans Asperger), have extraordinary abilities of perfect visual or numerical memory; low-functioning learners with autism can't communicate verbally successfully. According to Hannell [6, p. 19], “autism means a developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age 3, that adversely affects a child's educational performance” [6, p. 19].

Canavan lists the areas that are affected by a special kind of information processing in the brain of the learners with autism: social interaction, emotional recognition and regulation, impulse suppression, language and processing – input and output, fine and gross motor skills, planning and organization, attention, short-term memory, etc [3, p. 7]. But together with problems the students with autism have their strengths. They usually have strong visual channels, photographic memory and very elaborated skills to process visual information. So, such devices as computers, mobile phones and the internet can be widely used in autism education [8]. In spite of the possible challenges that communication with peers may present it is wise to launch such type of communication as it may result that “English lessons which require communication is the only opportunity for these students to be engaged in coherent dialogues, keeping in mind that autists usually don't start conversation themselves” [8, p. 20]. It is very critical to design an individual learning plan in autism education.

Conclusion. Information on teaching SEN learners should be integrated in all pre-service and in-service teacher training programmes. The appropriate evaluation instruments for the objective evaluation of learners with SEN should be designed and validated as soon as possible. What is needed even more is theoretical sources, teaching materials, and practical handbooks, as well as other measures that would lead to achieving the general aim: to improve foreign language education of learners with SEN while keeping the appropriate demand and attractiveness of foreign language education of mainstream learners in the same classroom.

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