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Intellectual Discourse
Vol. 33, No. 3, 2025

Contents

<i>Note from the Editor</i>	767
 <i>Research Articles</i>	
Metaphysical and Phenomenological Doubt in the Search for Truth: A Comparative Study of al-Ghazālī and Edmund Husserl <i>Müfit Selim Saruhan</i>	773
Inclusive Education for All: A Case Study of Bosnia and Herzegovina <i>Almasa Mulalić</i> <i>Ratnawati Mohd Asraf</i> <i>Safija Bušatlić,</i>	789
Globalisation and Religion: A Study of Thai Muslims' Experiences on Gender Diversity in Thai Muslim Society through an Islamic Perspective <i>Jiraroj Mamadkul</i>	809
Mohd. Kamal Hassan's Perspectives on Family Relationships: Strategies for Strengthening Malaysian Muslim Families <i>Fatimah Karim</i> <i>Sayyed Mohamed Muhsin</i> <i>Nur Elyliana Abdul Hadi</i>	835
Community-Centric Governance: Unveiling the Challenges and Strategies in West Aceh Villages <i>Afrizal Tjoetra</i> <i>Aizat Khairi</i> <i>Nellis Mardhiah</i> <i>Nodi Marefanda</i>	865

- Bringing Religion Back to the Forefront: An Opinion-Oriented Study from IR Scholars in Malaysia's Research Universities 891
Siti Zuliha Razali
Nadhras Abd. Kadir
Razlini Mohd Ramli
- Coalition Rule by Pakatan Harapan, 2018-2020: Key Consociational Lessons 917
Muhammad Azzubair Awwam Mustafa
Kartini Aboo Talib @ Khalid
Nazri Muslim
- “Should I Pay a Living Wage?” A Systematic Review on Employers’ Decision from an Organisational Justice Perspective 939
Nurul Izzati Asyikin Zulkify
Ruhaya Hussin
Maisarah Mohd. Taib
- Prophetic Model of Islamic Spiritual Care from Muslim Professional Practitioners’ Perspectives: A Systematic Review within the Ṭibb Nabawī Genre 967
Zunaidah binti Mohd Marzuki
Nurulhaniz binti Ahmad Fuad
- Designing and Evaluating a Culturally Grounded Digital Parenting Initiative in Malaysia 993
Shafizan Mohamed
Nazariah Shar 'ie Janon
Mohd Helmi Yusoh
Norsaremah Salleh
Nur Shakira Mohd Nasir
Wan Norshira Wan Mohd Ghazali

Perception about Islam, Attitude, Subjective Norms,
and Behavioural Intention in Using Artificial
Intelligence among University Students 1017
Aini Maznina A. Manaf
Tengku Siti Aisha Tengku Mohd Azzman Shariffadeen

Parental Perceptions of Islamic YouTube Animation:
The Case of ‘Abdul Bari’ in Pakistan. 1043
Saima Waheed
Mohd Khairie Ahmad
Zafar Iqbal Bhatti

Development of a Model for Advertising Professionalism
from the *Maqasid Al-Shari’ah* Perspective 1071
Aida Mokhtar
Faiswal Kasirye
Mohd. Fuad Md. Sawari
Amilah Awang Abd. Rahman @ Jusoh
Ahasanul Haque

Book Reviews

Gozde Hussian (2024). *Islamic Doctrines and
Political Liberalism: Muslim’s Sincere Support.* 1101
Palgrave MacMillan. pp. 253, ISBN 978-3-031-72266-0
Reviewer: Mohamed Fouz Mohamed Zacky,

Asad, Muhammad & Asad, Pola-Hamida (2024). 1105
The Unpublished Letters of Muhammad Asad.
Kuala Lumpur, Islamic Renaissance Front &
Islamic Book Trust. pp. 252, ISBN: 978-967-26388-4-1.
Reviewer: Ahmad Farouk Musa.

Transliteration Table: Consonants

Arabic	Roman		Arabic	Roman
ب	b		ط	ṭ
ت	t		ظ	ẓ
ث	th		ع	‘
ج	j		غ	gh
ح	ḥ		ف	f
خ	kh		ق	q
د	d		ك	k
ذ	dh		ل	l
ر	r		م	m
ز	z		ن	n
س	s		ه	h
ش	sh		و	w
ص	ṣ		ء	’
ض	ḍ		ي	y

Transliteration Table: Vowels and Diphthongs

Arabic	Roman		Arabic	Roman
اَ	a		أَ، آَ، إِيَّ	an
أُ	u		أُوَّ	un
إِ	i		إِيَّ	in
آَ، آِ، إِيَّ،	ā		أُوَّ	aw
أُوَّ	ū		إِيَّ	ay
إِيَّ	ī		أُوَّ	uww, ū (in final position)
			إِيَّ	iyy, ī (in final position)

Source: ROTAS Transliteration Kit: <http://rotas.iium.edu.my>

Inclusive Education for All: A Case Study of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Almasa Mulalić*

Ratnawati Mohd Asraf**

Safija Bušatlić,***

Abstract: The global movement toward inclusivity reflects a growing recognition of the need to provide equitable access to education for all learners. This paper examines the practice of inclusive education in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with a focus on English teachers' attitudes toward teaching children with disabilities in foreign language classrooms. Data were collected from 20 English teachers using the structured interview, after which their responses were thematically analysed. The findings reveal mixed perspectives; some teachers expressed reservations about teaching in inclusive classrooms, while others strongly advocated for inclusive practices; expressing a willingness to adopt effective strategies and methodologies to integrate learners with disabilities. By capturing and highlighting the teachers' views and practices

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This article is the product of a collaborative study between the corresponding author from IIUM and the two authors from the International University of Sarajevo (IUS), supported by the Hassan Langgulung Research Grant from the Kulliyah of Education, International Islamic University Malaysia. The conceptualisation of the study was jointly undertaken by the first and second authors, while the third author was primarily responsible for carrying out the fieldwork and data collection. All authors contributed to the writing of the manuscript, and the paper reflects the shared intellectual and research contributions of the team.

on inclusivity, this paper provides insights into the common challenges they face and the strategies they employ to integrate students with disabilities into classrooms, hence contributing to the ongoing efforts to create more equitable and supportive learning environments for all students, particularly those with disabilities.

Keywords: Inclusive education, inclusivity, inclusive classrooms, inclusive practices, challenges to implementation, teacher's role.

Abstrak: Pergerakan global ke arah keterangkuman mencerminkan pengiktirafan yang semakin meningkat tentang keperluan menyediakan akses pendidikan yang adil dan saksama untuk semua pelajar. Artikel ini mengkaji amalan pendidikan inklusif di Bosnia dan Herzegovina, khususnya, sikap guru Bahasa Inggeris tentang pengajaran kanak-kanak kurang upaya di kelas bahasa asing. Data dikumpul daripada 20 guru Bahasa Inggeris menggunakan temu bual separa berstruktur, di mana jawapan mereka dianalisis secara tematik. Penemuan kajian mendedahkan bahawa sesetengah guru mempunyai keraguan terhadap pengajaran dalam bilik darjah inklusif, manakala yang lain menyokong amalan inklusif; menyatakan kesediaan untuk menggunakan strategi dan metodologi yang berkesan untuk mengintegrasikan pelajar kurang upaya. Dengan menyerlahkan pandangan dan amalan guru tentang keterangkuman, artikel ini memberikan gambaran tentang cabaran yang mereka hadapi dan strategi yang mereka gunakan untuk menyepadukan pelajar kurang upaya ke dalam bilik darjah, dan seterusnya menyumbang kepada usaha berterusan untuk mewujudkan persekitaran pembelajaran yang lebih saksama dan yang menyokong semua pelajar, terutamanya mereka yang kurang upaya.

Kata kunci: Pendidikan inklusif, keterangkuman, bilik darjah inklusif, amalan inklusif, cabaran untuk pelaksanaan, peranan guru.

Introduction

Inclusive education has become increasingly implemented as part of global educational reform. It emphasises that all children—regardless of their abilities, backgrounds, or learning challenges—should have equitable access to high-quality education in mainstream classrooms (UNESCO, 2005). This approach represents a shift from previous models that segregated students with disabilities into special schools or separate programs, toward one that values diversity, equity, and the acceptance of learners of various abilities studying together in the same classroom. (Hornby, 2014).

The recognition of education as a fundamental human right has been a powerful driver of this change. Legal frameworks, international agreements, and social movements have underscored the moral and practical necessity of building inclusive systems that remove barriers to learning. Research in psychology, neuroscience, and pedagogy has further supported this shift by highlighting how learning is enriched when classrooms embrace diversity and when teaching is responsive to individual needs.

Within the specific context of foreign language education, however, the implementation of inclusive principles presents both challenges and opportunities. Language learning requires active engagement, communication, and cultural understanding, which can be especially demanding for students with disabilities or learning difficulties. At the same time, the interactive and social nature of language classrooms provides unique opportunities for learners of diverse abilities and backgrounds to work together and foster empathy and mutual respect for one another (García, 2009; Tomlinson, 2001). Scholars argue that inclusive practices—such as differentiated instruction, assistive technologies, and supportive learning environments—not only enhance students' academic performance but also strengthen their social and emotional development (Florian, 2014; Pijl, Meijer, & Hegarty, 2008).

The purpose of this paper is to highlight the results of our collaborative study on the perceptions of Bosnian teachers towards inclusive education, with particular attention to language teaching. The study sought to understand the teachers' readiness to implement inclusive methodologies; their views on integrating inclusive principles in the language classroom; and the strategies they employed to support learners with disabilities. At the same time, it investigated the challenges they encountered in creating equitable and supportive learning environments. By presenting these findings, the paper aims to contribute to the ongoing debates on inclusive education and provide insights that may guide teacher preparation and policy development in comparable educational settings.

Inclusive Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Bosnia and Herzegovina has a very complex political and educational structure. The country consists of two entities and one district: the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republika Srpska, and Brčko

District. In the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, there are 10 cantons, while Republika Srpska has a centralised system. In total, there are 13 Ministries of Education across the country, which makes it very difficult to maintain quality and consistency in education. When it comes to inclusive education, there are many indicators that legislation is supportive of its implementation at each of the administrative levels. For instance, primary and secondary schools as well other educational institutions implement inclusive education, supported by international legislative frameworks. However, Bosnia and Herzegovina still generally implements a dual system of education consisting of general education and special education. Special education is offered at specialised centres in different parts of the country, and parents can decide on the school they would like to send their children to. Some parents choose special schools because they believe that their children will receive more specialised instruction. There are also many parents who choose to enrol their children in regular schools in the hope that inclusive education practices will offer more opportunities for them.

Today, inclusive education in Bosnia and Herzegovina is emerging as the primary framework within the education system. Nevertheless, despite the efforts made by the teachers and educational institutions in implementing inclusive education and the backing given by the Education authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina for stronger reforms and high-quality learning for inclusive education (Council of Europe Office in Sarajevo, 2025), numerous obstacles persist in realising true inclusivity. Firstly, educators hold divergent views on the conception and definition of inclusive education. While some focus only on students with mild learning disabilities, others include those with severe disabilities. There are also the challenges that teachers face when implementing inclusive strategies in their foreign language classrooms. This is shown in Bišćević et al.'s (2017) study, which found that approximately 48% of his teacher participants cited inadequate knowledge and skills in inclusive education as a primary obstacle—a challenge that is not unique to Bosnia and Herzegovina, but also experienced globally. Consequently, numerous professionals and researchers have argued that teachers should possess effective pedagogical strategies that would engage their students with diverse educational needs. De Jong et al., (2013) for instance, have advocated for enhanced teacher competencies in differentiated instruction as well as a deeper understanding of

autism, adaptive instruction, and social support techniques for engaging students on the autism spectrum (Able et al., 2014). Others, however, have questioned the necessity for teachers to be concurrently proficient in Braille, sign language, and applied behaviour analysis—considering the fact that any given group of learners could have a wide spectrum of disabilities—including visual and hearing impairments, autism spectrum disorder, and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Hence, it is evident that the issue of teacher competencies for inclusive classrooms is rather complex. As asserted by Avramidis et al. (2000) and De Boer et al. (2011), many studies focus on teachers' attitudes toward inclusion, but do not adequately capture the multifaceted competencies required to serve diverse student populations.

Hence, there are numerous challenges or obstacles faced by Bosnian teachers and institutions in implementing inclusive education. However, it should be pointed out that perhaps the greatest obstacle to inclusive education in Bosnia and Herzegovina, according to Bišćević et al. (2017), is the shortage of experts in regular schools who are able to work with students with special needs. Unfortunately, however, many schools do not have special education teachers on staff.

Before ending our discussion on the implementation of inclusive education in Bosnia and Herzegovina, we would like to point out that teachers have urged for the provision of additional incentives for working with students with exceptional educational needs. According to Johnson (1986), for instance, numerous teachers have emphasised on performance-based compensation and smaller class sizes to compensate for the additional time and effort they spend on teaching students with special and diverse needs. This can help to “soften” the possible negative attitudes they could have towards inclusion because of the additional workload and difficulty in catering to the diverse needs of their students. As asserted by Loreman (2007), the most significant theme that teachers have identified revolves around scepticism or outright opposition toward inclusion. Given that positive attitudes serve as the foundational pillar of inclusive education, this finding is concerning. In fact, according to Dizdarević et al., (2017), research indicates that teachers in Bosnia and Herzegovina have more negative attitudes towards inclusion than their EU counterparts, despite a general inclination towards supporting it. Addressing this issue, therefore, necessitates comprehensive reforms

across various dimensions, such as the psychological, behavioural, educational, cultural, and political aspects (Armstrong, 2017).

Methodology

This study adopted the qualitative case study design to explore the perceptions of Bosnian foreign language teachers on inclusive education. Qualitative research is particularly suitable for investigating complex, socially constructed phenomena such as teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and practices, which cannot be adequately captured through quantitative measures alone. As Creswell and Poth (2018) emphasise, qualitative inquiry allows researchers to gain a deep understanding of participants' perspectives and the meanings they ascribe to their experiences. In addition, the case study design enables researchers to explore this issue within its real-life institutional context (Yin, 2018). Case studies are well-suited for understanding phenomena where the boundaries between the subject of study and the surrounding context are not clearly defined, as is the case with inclusive education, which intersects with pedagogy, policy, and personal experience. By focusing on rich descriptions and contextualised insights, we deemed the qualitative case study design as being the most appropriate approach for examining how inclusivity is interpreted and enacted in the Bosnian educational environment.

Using In-Depth, Face-to-Face Interviews

To capture the feelings and experiences of the teachers towards inclusive education, we used in-depth, face-to-face semi-structured interviews as the primary data collection method. This is because semi-structured interviews strike a balance between consistency across participants and flexibility to pursue topics that emerge during the conversation (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). This method also allows participants to elaborate on their beliefs and practices while enabling the researcher to probe for clarification or examples, leading to richer and more meaningful data. In addition, face-to-face interviews facilitate rapport and trust between interviewer and participant, which enhances the authenticity and depth of the responses (Opdenakker, 2006). Non-verbal cues such as facial expressions and gestures obtained from the face-to-face interviews also provided us with valuable contextual insights that would be missed in written surveys or online-only formats. By interpreting qualitative data in this manner, we obtained the information we required because when questions are well-formulated, participants can clearly define their ideas

without any constraints (Neergaard, Olesen, et al., 2009). Further, the openness of qualitative research to interpretations and clarifications helps minimise the effects of potential interferences during the research process (Sandelowski, 2000). This approach is particularly appropriate for analysing the beliefs of teachers as it provides insights into “pre- and in-service teachers’ self-reflection; beliefs and knowledge about teaching, students, and content; and an awareness of the challenges inherent to classroom teaching” (Kagan,1990, p. 421). Given the potential complexity of discussing the challenges of putting inclusive education into practice, we felt that this method would allow our participants to articulate their perspectives more openly and reflectively.

Participants

The study involved 20 participants; nineteen of whom were female, while one was male. They were drawn from the International University of Sarajevo (IUS) and the University of Sarajevo, with nineteen of them being from Bosnia and Herzegovina and one from Türkiye. The group consisted of practising primary and secondary school teachers.

The participants were varied in terms of age, teaching experience, and familiarity with inclusive education. While some were experienced teachers with substantial professional practice, others were at the beginning of their careers. All of them had been exposed to coursework and training on inclusive education, giving them a baseline understanding of students’ diverse needs, inclusive methodologies, and relevant pedagogical approaches. To protect confidentiality and maintain anonymity, pseudonyms were assigned to all the participants. These pseudonyms are used consistently throughout the reporting of the findings to ensure clarity and narrative flow while safeguarding the participants’ identities. A detailed description of the participants is provided in **Table 1**.

Table 1: General Information about the Participants

Pseudonyms	Degree	Age	Gender	Teaching experience	Teaching Setting	Familiarity with IE	Involvement in IE practices
Amir.	PhD	30	Male	4 years	SS	Yes	Yes
Lejla	MA	25	Female	1 year	PS	Yes	Yes

Pseudonyms	Degree	Age	Gender	Teaching experience	Teaching Setting	Familiarity with IE	Involvement in IE practices
Aida	MA	40	Female	10 years	SS	Yes	Yes
Selma	BA	27	Female	3 years	PS	Yes	Yes
Amela	BA	25	Female	2 years	PS	Yes	Yes
Alma	PhD	45	Female	15 years	SS	Yes	Yes
Jasmina	MA	35	Female	7 years	PS, SS	Yes	Yes
Edina	BA	25	Female	1 year	PS	Yes	Yes
Lamija	BA	26	Female	3 years	PS	Yes	Yes
Sanela	BA	24	Female	1 year	PS, SS	Yes	Yes
Mirela	MA	42	Female	12 years	PS, SS	Yes	Yes
Azra	BA	24	Female	1 year	PS	Yes	Yes
Sabina	MA	35	Female	7 years	SS	Yes	Yes
Nadira	MA	34	Female	12 years	SS	Yes	Yes
Maja	BA	27	Female	4 years	SS	Yes	Yes
Dženita	MA	31	Female	8 years	PS	Yes	Yes
Enisa	MA	40	Female	15 years	SS	Yes	Yes
Belma	MA	38	Female	10 years	SS	Yes	Yes
Hana	BA	29	Female	6 years	SS	Yes	Yes
Selvina	MA	36	Female	9 years	SS	Yes	Yes

(Key: PS: Primary school. SS: Secondary school)

Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected using the semi-structured interview, which provided an ideal balance between allowing us to guide the discussion while allowing the interviewee to be spontaneous and unconstrained in answering our questions (Given, 2008). The interviews were then transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis to identify the patterns in the responses.

During the interview, the teachers were first asked questions regarding their gender, age, occupation, years of teaching experience and perceived level of familiarity with the concept of inclusive education. Thereafter, they were interviewed to obtain their responses to the following research questions:

1. What does inclusive education mean to the teachers? What are their attitudes and opinions towards inclusivity?
2. How can foreign language teachers incorporate the principles of inclusive education into their teaching practices?
3. What challenges and barriers might foreign language teachers face while implementing inclusive education principles in their classrooms?
4. What professional opportunities and support do foreign language teachers need to effectively integrate inclusive education principles into their teaching?

Results

This section presents the findings of the study, organised around the four guiding research questions. To preserve authenticity, the findings are conveyed through a combination of the teachers' verbatim responses and reported accounts, with pseudonyms used in place of their real names. The presentation of their responses follows the sequence of the research questions.

Participants' views and attitudes on inclusive education

In this section, we present the teachers' perspectives on the first research question: *What does inclusive education mean to you, and what are your attitudes and opinions towards inclusivity?*

From their answers to our first question, we could see that the participants had a good understanding of what inclusive education is, although their perspectives on it may differ slightly.

Amir, for instance, described inclusive education as a practice rooted in the recognition and respect for the unique qualities of every learner, regardless of their physical or mental abilities. As Amir explained:

Inclusive education, in my view, involves recognising and valuing the unique qualities of all students, regardless of their

physical or mental abilities. This approach ensures that these students feel integrated into society rather than marginalised. Moreover, inclusive education facilitates students with special needs in experiencing autonomy, self-determination, and a sense of being valued...Often, we understand the theory but lack effective practical strategies. Therefore, inclusive education also equips 'ordinary' individuals with the skills to effectively communicate and engage with members of society who have special needs.

Also related to the importance of accomodating students with special needs is the issue of enabling them to achieve at least a certain level of success, as expressed by Amela: "Inclusive education for me as an educator is about giving the opportunity for all students to achieve [at least] an average level of success...no matter what background they have, and what kind of learning disability they have."

Building on this, Lejla stressed the principle of *equity*, highlighting its importance:

Inclusive education for me is education that provides equal opportunities for all students no matter their diversities and/or physical, psychological, emotional, or social difficulties. I believe that inclusive education is a crucial topic that should be discussed more frequently in all areas of education.

The same is felt by Selma, who said that inclusive education means equality for her:

This term serves the purpose of allowing everyone to be treated equally regardless of their abilities and personalities. I believe....that it is very important for future students and educators. Therefore educators and institutions should look forward to developing it as much as possible.

While the other teachers emphasised the benefits and importance of inclusivity, Aida expressed a more cautious perspective. She acknowledged the positive intentions behind the concept but voiced concerns about its practical implementation:

In inclusive education, students with different cognitive, developmental and behavioural difficulties are given an opportunity to attend the same classes as those who do not face these challenges. Speaking from a layman's perspective, as someone who has never participated in an

inclusive educational process, I believe that inclusivity is a well-intentioned concept that often faces too many practical barriers for it to be truly beneficial for the students.

The responses by these teachers highlight both their optimism towards inclusive education and their concerns about it. They recognised inclusivity as a valuable and necessary principle for education; one that promotes fairness and social integration. However, while many of them emphasised its empowering role, others raised concerns about the barriers that limit its impact. Nonetheless, the overall tone was supportive, and the teachers recognised its importance for students, teachers, and the school community. The findings of our study with regard to teachers' attitudes towards inclusion differ from Dizdarević et al.'s (2017), who found that the teachers in Bosnia and Herzegovina have more negative attitudes towards inclusion than their EU counterparts, despite a general inclination towards supporting it; and those of Linder et al. (2023), who found that the teachers from the 36 studies he analysed generally held neutral or ambivalent views toward the inclusion of students with disabilities into mainstream classrooms. The difference in the findings is likely to do with the aspect of inclusion the researchers were referring to and the reasons for their views. The teachers in Linder et al.'s study did not favour the inclusion of all students in the same classroom; instead, their perspectives varied depending on the type of disability they had. The teachers in our study, on the other hand, generally had positive attitudes toward inclusion, but also expressed some degree of caution regarding the actions we should take to ensure that our practices would be indeed inclusive and effective.

Inclusive principles in the foreign language classroom

Having explored the teachers' general understanding of inclusive education, it is important to now consider how they put these principles into practice as this is the real test of inclusion. For foreign language teachers, this task is particularly complex as language learning can be especially challenging for students with disabilities or learning differences (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011; Lindsay, 2011). For that reason, our second research question asked how foreign language teachers can incorporate the principles of inclusive education into their teaching. Our intention for asking this question was not to solicit a fixed set of methodological prescriptions, but rather to explore teachers' lived practices, perspectives, and philosophies regarding inclusion in their

classrooms. We wanted to capture how the teachers conceptualised inclusion in practice—how they adjust their teaching to meet the diverse needs of their students; how they respond to their students' difficulties in learning; and how they differentiate their instruction to meet the needs of all their learners.

During the interview, several participants emphasised the need for teachers to first of all, recognise and accept diversity as the foundation of inclusive teaching. As Amir explained:

Predominantly, such educators must understand the term 'disability' and the term 'mental challenge' in order to progress further. Such teachers should accept diversity and general difference... attributed to all students. In other words, not all teaching and learning processes are adequate for all learners (disabilities included or not), and as such they (the processes), must be adequately distributed and allotted to the learners. Not all students are meant to reach the same results; they should not all be identical (an impossible undertaking, to say the least) and the learners, as such, ought to be respected based on their inherent skills. Such diversity in skill, understanding, or background allows different learners to acquire different skills and forms of knowledge suited to their ever-so individual needs.

Building on this, the other participants highlighted practical ways of enacting this philosophy. Amela, for instance, said that inclusive practice should begin with small, manageable steps for both teachers and students:

I believe we should begin with small, incremental steps tailored to the needs of students with special needs and the educational level of their teachers... Initially, beginner teachers should be assigned to no more than three students to avoid becoming overwhelmed. They should regularly prepare accessible classroom materials (printings with larger materials, audio materials that are loud enough, tools grasping the attention of constantly distracted students, etc.) in the target language...

Here, we see that the teachers did not verbalise inclusion as an abstract ideal but as the everyday classroom adjustments that they make to foster the enjoyment of language learning. Our interpretation is that the

teachers see inclusion as a gradual and collaborative process—one that depends on cooperation, consultation with colleagues, and consistent adaptation to meet students' needs.

Jasmina, on the other hand, connected inclusive principles directly to the nature of language teaching itself. According to her:

successful language learning in general requires ensuring a supportive learning and teaching environment...foreign language classes more often than not encompass students of diverse national, cultural, racial, and religious backgrounds, and hence they are adapted, both in content and in the teaching methods used, to incorporate the principle of accepting diversity and respecting differences in learners.

The teachers' responses highlight how they integrate inclusive principles in their teaching. The findings suggest that inclusion, as the teachers understood it, rests on valuing diversity as a guiding principle and translating that principle into responsive and adaptable classroom practices. Their responses also affirm that inclusion—as they have practised it—is grounded in both awareness and action.

Challenges in Implementing Inclusive Education

As well documented in the literature, teachers teaching in inclusive classrooms are often confronted with issues related to diverse student abilities and the demand for specialised strategies to address these varied needs. These challenges are not unique to Bosnia but also experienced by teachers worldwide (Florian & Beaton, 2018; Pantic & Florian, 2015).

A key concern raised by many of our teacher participants is the **lack of resources and institutional support**. Alma, for instance, when asked about some of the challenges she faced, answered, “Not being prepared for this education, not having adequate support from their schools, not having enough resources, not communicating their ideas, not delegating to their administrators, not good technical support...”. Amela expanded on this by pointing out the difficulty she faced in adapting teaching materials across multiple classes: “...with multiple classes to teach, it can be physically too demanding to accomplish everything at once.”

The teachers also spoke of **attitudinal barriers**. Amela observed that disagreements with colleagues or parents often obstruct the

implementation of inclusive strategies: “The most common barrier faced... is the presence of a colleague or parent who consistently disagrees with the learning process, asserting their opinion as paramount.” Such resistance, whether from peers or parents, reflects what scholars describe as “the cultural politics of inclusion,” where differing beliefs about disability, learning, and authority create tension (Ainscow, 2020).

Yet another layer of difficulty faced by the teachers has to do with the **linguistic and cultural diversity** in classrooms. As Aida shared, “If we regard inclusivity in the light of cultural diversity, the main challenge is linguistic and cultural barriers among people who come from very different cultural backgrounds, which may lead to miscommunication, misunderstandings and other difficulties in interaction.” Aida’s response is interesting as it broadens the understanding of inclusion to encompass not only disability but also multicultural sensitivity, a very important aspect of foreign language classrooms (Byram, 2018).

Finally, it is important to note that some of the teachers, despite recognising the seriousness of the situation, experience a certain degree of **fear of inclusion**, causing them to distance themselves from the activities that would support it. Others, because to their limited exposure to inclusion, feel unprepared for these responsibilities or believe they lack the ability to work with these children. Hence, it is crucial that every educator—whether they are school teachers or university instructors—receive professional, state-aided, and comprehensive support in their training related to inclusion.

These findings highlight the fact that while foreign language teachers value the ideals of inclusion, they face significant obstacles in translating them into practice. Addressing these barriers requires a concerted effort by Ministries, institutions, and schools to provide targeted teacher training, sufficient resource allocation, stronger collaboration between schools and parents, and institutional recognition of the cultural and linguistic complexities inherent in language classrooms.

Professional support for foreign language teachers

When asked about the support they needed to effectively integrate inclusive practices into their teaching, the teachers started by saying that creating effective classes and lessons for children with diverse needs requires hard work. To help them carry out their teaching responsibilities

properly, they emphasised the importance of sustained professional development and institutional backing. This is precisely the view of Armstrong (2011), who highlighted several components for effective teaching in inclusive classrooms, which includes providing professional development, access to resources, support networks, pedagogical guidance, policy and administrative support, and technological support.

Sania, a teacher with ten years of teaching experience, shared an inspiring example of a visually impaired student who thrived in her class:

I had a student in my foreign language class who was almost completely blind. He started the classes at A2 level and managed to reach the required B2 level in the prescribed four-month period, without repeating any of the levels. He had a laptop that transformed all visual materials into audio form, and this enabled him to follow and carry out all the tasks presented to him. The other students were very supportive, and this helped him to fit in easily.

Sania's story highlights how having access to the appropriate resources, combined with peer support and a nurturing inclusive classroom, can enable remarkable student progress.

The other teachers emphasised that professional development must go beyond general awareness to provide specific, actionable strategies. For example, Emina proposed that "symposiums, seminars, or workshops should be tailored more precisely to the specific needs of student groups... Each of us should conduct focused research within our respective student groups before sharing our findings with colleagues." She further argued that the Ministry of Education should play a stronger role by initiating volunteer programmes to identify committed teachers and by fostering innovation through initiatives such as competitions for university students to share new perspectives on inclusion.

Amra took a more pragmatic stance, suggesting that teachers should be formally required to pursue training: "Teachers should be obligated to finish some courses regarding teaching students in inclusive environments. Talking with other teachers may help them broaden their horizons."

Selma echoed this view, underscoring the importance of continual professional renewal: "Constant, fresh and up-to-date re-evaluation

of their own skills [is needed]...and *this can be achieved through certified programs, symposia, and conferences, as well as professional seminars*".

From the interviews, we observed that the teachers had a shared perspective, in that inclusive education is not a static goal but an evolving practice. As shared by our participants, teachers require institutional support from their schools and regular opportunities for professional growth. These elements are essential not only for equipping educators with the knowledge and skills to teach effectively, but also for cultivating the confidence and tenacity needed to create genuinely inclusive classrooms.

Discussion

The results of our study show a considerable alignment with the current research and literature on inclusive education. A notable finding is that most of the teacher-participants regarded inclusive education as a significant advancement in the educational system; one that involves using the appropriate methods and approaches to enhance both teaching and learning—as also maintained by Ainscow(2020) and Florian & Black-Hawkins (2011). The teachers also emphasised that the concept and practice of inclusion must extend beyond simply placing students with special needs in mainstream classrooms, but that to create supportive learning environments and conditions that would enable not only special-needs students, but also their peers to thrive. Their views are supported by current research such as Zins et.al.'s (2004), which shows that positive teacher–student relationships and emotionally supportive classrooms enhance engagement and belonging for all learners; and also by Florian (2015), who argues that inclusive pedagogy rests on the belief that *all* learners are capable of growth.

One of the themes that emerged from the interviews of the participants was the importance of equipping teachers with the necessary training, resources, and institutional support to sustain inclusive practices. Without adequate support, they said, teachers would often feel overwhelmed by having to meet the diverse educational needs of their students. This finding aligns with those of Forlin et. al (2014) and Slee (2018), who state that ongoing professional development and institutional support are critical to building teachers' confidence and capacity for inclusion.

Finally, the participants called for measures such as making courses and training on inclusive education mandatory at all levels of teacher education. They also called for the enactment of laws and regulations to guide inclusive practices. Their views echo UNESCO's (2017, 2020) calls for inclusive education to be reinforced through comprehensive policies and institutional frameworks. From the results of the study and current research findings, it is quite apparent that inclusive education requires a collaborative effort—to create environments where all learners are given the opportunity to succeed.

Conclusion

Inclusion is about developing a community where each member is not only appreciated, but also feels a sense of belonging. To ensure that students with disabilities have equal access to education, teachers must be provided with the appropriate support, resources, and ongoing professional development opportunities. These initiatives are crucial in enhancing their confidence and effectiveness in teaching in inclusive classrooms. Policymakers also play a crucial role. They must critically review mainstream curricula to ensure that its content and level of complexity are suitable for students with disabilities. In this regard, providing teachers with guidebooks or workshops on how to differentiate instruction will help them to cater to the needs of both students with disabilities as well as their peers. It is crucial to identify what needs to be improved, what is effective, and what is not—and to take the appropriate action—so that no student is left behind. Ultimately, our collective efforts will help create a more supportive environment to enable every learner to succeed.

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In This Issue

Note from the Editor

Research Articles

Müfit Selim Saruhan

Metaphysical and Phenomenological Doubt in the Search for Truth: A Comparative Study of al-Ghazālī and Edmund Husserl

Almasa Mulalić, Ratnawati Mohd Asraf & Safija Bušatlić,

Inclusive Education for All: A Case Study of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Jiraroj Mamadkul

Globalisation and Religion: A Study of Thai Muslims' Experiences on Gender Diversity in Thai Muslim Society through an Islamic Perspective

Fatimah Karim, Sayyed Mohamed Muhsin & Nur Elyliana Abdul Hadi

Mohd. Kamal Hassan's Perspectives on Family Relationships: Strategies for Strengthening Malaysian Muslim Families

Afrizal Tjoetra, Aizat Khairi, Nellis Mardhiah & Nodi Marefanda

Community-Centric Governance: Unveiling the Challenges and Strategies in West Aceh Villages

Siti Zuliha Razali, Nadhrah Abd. Kadir & Razlini Mohd Ramli

Bringing Religion Back to the Forefront: An Opinion-Oriented Study from IR Scholars in Malaysia's Research Universities

Muhammad Azzubair Awwam Mustafa, Kartini Aboo Talib @ Khalid & Nazri Muslim

Coalition Rule by Pakatan Harapan, 2018-2020: Key Consociational Lessons

Nurul Izzati Asyikin Zulkifly, Ruhaya Hussin & Maisarah Mohd. Taib

"Should I Pay a Living Wage?" A Systematic Review on Employers' Decision from an Organisational Justice Perspective

Zunaidah binti Mohd Marzuki & Nurulhaniy binti Ahmad Fuad

Prophetic Model of Islamic Spiritual Care from Muslim Professional Practitioners' Perspectives: A Systematic Review within the *Ṭibb Nabawī* Genre

Shafizan Mohamed, Nazariah Shar'ie Janon, Mohd Helmi Yusoh, Norsaremah Salleh, Nur Shakira Mohd Nasi & Wan Norshira Wan Mohd Ghazali

Designing and Evaluating a Culturally Grounded Digital Parenting Initiative in Malaysia

Aini Maznina A. Manaf & Tengku Siti Aisha Tengku Mohd Azzman Shariffadeen

Perception about Islam, Attitude, Subjective Norms, and Behavioural Intention in Using Artificial Intelligence among University Students

Saima Waheed, Mohd Khairie Ahmad & Zafar Iqbal Bhatti

Parental Perceptions of Islamic YouTube Animation: The Case of 'Abdul Bari' in Pakistan.

Aida Mokhtar, Faiswal Kasirye, Mohd. Fuad Md. Sawari,

Amilah Awang Abd. Rahman @ Jusoh & Ahasanul Haque

Development of a Model for Advertising Professionalism from the *Maqasid Al-Shari'ah* Perspective

Book Review

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