Arabian Journal of Science

ISSN:2308-5703

Impact factor:13.5 *International Multidisciplinary Online Journal* May, 2026

REPRESENTATIONS OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK DISCOURSE: A COMPARATIVE LINGUOCULTURAL ANALYSIS

Feruzaxon Ashurova
Department of Foreign Languages
Academic lyceum under Ferghana State University

Abstract

This article examines how the concept of inclusive education is linguistically represented across English-language and Uzbek scholarly and policy discourse. Drawing on a corpus of academic articles published between 2024 and 2025 from Indonesian, Malaysian, Philippine, European, and North American contexts, alongside Uzbek-language policy documents, national programs, and UNICEF reports, the study conducts a comparative linguocultural analysis of terminological borrowing, semantic scope, metaphorical framing, and ideological positioning. Findings reveal that English discourse constructs inclusivity as an expansive, rights-based, and multidimensional concept encompassing disability, gender, culture, and socioeconomic status, framed through spatial-journey metaphors and universalist human rights rhetoric. Uzbek discourse, by contrast, centers on a narrower, disability-focused conceptualism inherited from Soviet medical models, rendered through the phonetic loan *inklyuziv ta'lim*, and embedded within state-driven, policy-regulatory frameworks. The study highlights the risks of conceptual dilution when global frameworks such as UNESCO's Education for All are localized in Uzbekistan, and argues for culturally attuned translation and policy adaptation strategies that bridge English universality with Uzbek contextual sensitivity.

Keywords: inclusive education, Uzbek discourse, English discourse, linguocultural analysis, terminological borrowing, SDG 4, inklyuziv ta'lim

Introduction

Inclusive education has emerged as a cornerstone of global educational reform, enshrined in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), which calls for inclusive and equitable quality education for all by 2030 (UNESCO, 2015). As international frameworks proliferate, the question of how such concepts are linguistically adapted, culturally embedded, and semantically transformed across different language communities becomes an urgent scholarly concern. Language is not a neutral vehicle for the transmission of ideas; it both reflects and constitutes the socio-cultural realities of the communities in which it operates (Fairclough, 2003; Van Dijk, 2008).

This article investigates the linguistic and cultural representations of inclusive education in two distinct discourse communities: English-language academic and policy texts, primarily from Southeast Asian and Western contexts, and Uzbek-language educational and governmental discourse. Despite significant scholarly attention to inclusive education in both traditions, comparatively little work has examined the *linguocultural* gap between these representational systems — a gap that carries substantial practical implications for policy translation, teacher training, and the equitable localization of international educational agendas.

The study addresses three research questions: (1) How does English-language discourse represent the concept of inclusive education, and what lexical, semantic, and ideological features characterise this representation? (2) How does Uzbek-language discourse represent the same concept, and how does terminological borrowing shape its semantic scope? (3) What are the key points of

convergence and divergence between these representational systems, and what implications do they carry for educational policy and practice in Uzbekistan?

Literature Review

The concept of inclusive education has its theoretical roots in Western human rights discourse, particularly in the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (United Nations, 2006). These foundational documents established a universalist framework in which inclusion is understood as encompassing not only learners with disabilities but all marginalised groups, including those defined by gender, ethnicity, language, socioeconomic background, and cultural identity (Ainscow et al., 2006). This broad conceptualisation is reflected in contemporary English-language scholarship, which employs frameworks such as Universal Design for Learning (UDL), Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK), and equity-oriented pedagogy to operationalise inclusive principles (Saini et al., 2025; Padmadewi et al., 2025).

Critical discourse analysts have long observed that abstract, nominalised language in educational policy — terms such as "equity," "empowerment," and "belonging" — can depoliticise structural inequalities by obscuring their material causes and relocating responsibility to individual teachers and institutions (Fairclough, 2001; Apple, 2004). The spatial metaphors prevalent in English inclusive education discourse ("bridging gaps," "breaking barriers," "navigating challenges") reinforce an optimistic, progressive narrative that frames exclusion as a surmountable obstacle rather than a product of systemic power relations (Slee, 2011).

The landscape of inclusive education discourse in Uzbekistan is markedly different. As a post-Soviet state, Uzbekistan inherited an educational system shaped by Soviet defectological models, which categorised learners with disabilities as requiring separate, specialised instruction rather than integration into mainstream settings (Miles & Singal, 2010). National reforms, including the 2022–2026 National Program for Public Education, have signalled a policy commitment to inclusive development; however, UNICEF Uzbekistan (2020, 2022) reports document persistent gaps in infrastructure, teacher preparedness, and conceptual clarity. The term *inklyuziv ta'lim* functions primarily as a phonetic borrowing from the Russian *inklyuzivnoye obrazovaniye*, and its semantic field in everyday Uzbek discourse remains considerably narrower than its English counterpart, predominantly denoting the integration of learners with special educational needs into mainstream classrooms (Akramov, 2023).

Research on pedagogical terminology in Uzbek highlights the broader challenges of translating globalised educational concepts into post-Soviet, Turkic-language contexts. Scholars note that phonetic borrowings frequently arrive without the conceptual expansion necessary for full semantic equivalence, a phenomenon described as "terminological hollowing" (Karimov, 2022, p. 47). This is compounded by the relative absence of Uzbek-language scholarship on the gender, ethnic, and socioeconomic dimensions of inclusion, which are more extensively theorised in English-language and European contexts (Mazur et al., 2025; Kirks-Cler et al., 2025).

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative comparative discourse analysis methodology (Wodak & Meyer, 2016) drawing on two primary corpus streams. The first comprises English-language academic articles published between 2024 and 2025 from Indonesian, Malaysian, Philippine, European, and North American institutional contexts, retrieved from peer-reviewed educational journals and focusing on inclusive education theory, practice, and policy. The second comprises Uzbek-language policy

documents, national program texts, UNICEF Uzbekistan reports (2020–2022), and available Uzbek scholarly analyses of inclusive education.

Analysis proceeded at four levels: (1) *lexical* — examining patterns of word choice, nominalization, and collocation tendencies; (2) *semantic* — mapping the conceptual scope of "inclusive education" across both corpora and identifying metaphorical structures; (3) *pragmatic/discursive* — analyzing how texts position readers and implied interlocutors, and how urgency, authority, and linguistic standards are constructed; and (4) *ideological* — examining how each discourse tradition positions learners, states, and international bodies in relation to inclusive ideals.

Given the asymmetric availability of Uzbek-language academic corpora, the analysis of Uzbek discourse draws on secondary analyses, policy documents, and comparative educational research, supplemented by observations from Uzbek linguistics scholarship on terminological borrowing. This limitation is acknowledged as a direction for future empirical research.

Findings and Discussion

English-Language Discourse: Breadth, Metaphor, and Universalism

English academic discourse on inclusive education is characterized by a rich cluster of abstract, positively valency nouns and adjectives: "equity," "diversity," "empowerment," "belonging," and "accommodation" recur with high frequency and are typically collocated with terms of systemic action — "practices," "frameworks," "challenges," and "approaches" (Saini et al., 2025; Dharma et al., 2024). The discursive transformation of "inclusion" into "inclusive education" enacts a characteristic move of educational policy discourse: it transforms a political demand into an administrative category, lending it institutional legitimacy while simultaneously smoothing over its contested edges (Fairclough, 2001).

Spatiotemporal metaphors constitute the dominant figurative register of English inclusive education texts. Phrases such as "navigating challenges," "bridging gaps," and "breaking barriers" construct inclusive education as a progressive journey whose destination — a fully equitable learning environment — is perpetually approached but never fully arrived at. This forward-momentum framing aligns with the optimistic universalism of UNESCO and SDG 4 rhetoric, which positions all signatories as travelling the same developmental path at different speeds (Slee, 2011).

A notable feature of more recent English scholarship is the integration of local cultural knowledge into inclusive frameworks — a process that scholars have termed "glocalization" (Robertson, 1995). Padmadewi et al. (2025) and Dharma et al. (2024) draw on the Balinese concept of *Menyama Braya* (communal brotherhood and harmonious coexistence) to ground inclusive principles in indigenous relational ethics, demonstrating that the English-language framework is sufficiently capacious to absorb diverse cultural logics without fundamentally destabilising its universalist architecture. Similarly, gender discourse in the English corpus has evolved markedly, with Mazur et al. (2025) and Kirks-Cler et al. (2025) employing terminology such as "gender-diverse," "nonbinary," and "gender-neutral" in ways that signal a significant broadening of the inclusivity paradigm beyond its original disability-centred origins.

Uzbek Discourse: Borrowing, Narrowing, and State-Centrism

In Uzbek educational discourse, the concept of inclusive education is rendered as *inklyuziv ta'lim* — a phonetic compound borrowing the adjective from Russian/English and appending the native Uzbek noun for education. As Karimov (2022) observes, such phonetic loans are characteristic of Uzbek academic modernisation, particularly in fields where Soviet-era Russian terminology had previously dominated. The term functions within a primarily bureaucratic and regulatory discursive

register, appearing most frequently in legislative texts, ministerial decrees, and donor-funded program documents.

The semantic scope of *inklyuziv ta'lim* in common usage is considerably narrower than that of its English source. UNICEF Uzbekistan (2022) notes that both policymakers and practitioners predominantly conceptualise inclusive education as the integration of children with special educational needs (*maxsus ta'lim ehtiyojlari*) into mainstream classrooms — a definition that maps closely onto the Soviet defectological tradition. The broader dimensions of inclusive education foregrounded in English discourse — racial and ethnic diversity, gender identity, socioeconomic marginalization, linguistic minority status — are largely absent from Uzbek conceptualization, reflecting both the relative political sensitivity of these categories and the limited penetration of English-language theoretical frameworks into Uzbek-language scholarship (Akramov, 2023).

The dominant metaphorical and discursive register of Uzbek inclusive education texts is communal and institutional rather than spatial and empowerment-oriented. Terms such as *jamiyat birligi* (societal cohesion) and *ta'lim tengligi* (educational equality) evoke a Turkic-Islamic collectivist ethic in which the social group, mediated by the state, is the primary agent of educational provision. This contrasts markedly with the English emphasis on individual empowerment, student voice, and teacher reflexivity. The Uzbek discursive construction positions the state — through *davlat siyosati* (state policy) — as the primary guarantor of inclusive provision, reflecting both the legacy of Soviet centralized governance and the contemporary nation-building imperatives of post-independence Uzbekistan.

Comparative Analysis and Implications

Table 1 summarizes the principal dimensions of divergence between English and Uzbek representations of inclusive education.

Table 1

Comparative Dimensions of Inclusive Education Discourse in English and Uzbek

Aspect	**English Discourse**	**Uzbek Discourse**
Core Term	"Inclusive education" — abstract, multidimensional	"Inklyuziv ta'lim" — borrowed, disability-focused
Semantic Scope	Broad: disability + gender + cultural + socioeconomic diversity	Narrower: primarily special needs/disability integration
Metaphors	Spatial/journey framing; empowerment-oriented	Communal/policy framing; implementation-oriented
Ideology	Universal human rights, SDG 4, glocal adaptations	National reforms, equity via policy, resource challenges
Cultural Basis	Local hybrids (e.g., Menyama Braya) in Asian English texts	Turkic collectivism, Islamic/secular enlightenment

Aspect	English Discourse	Uzbek Discourse
Translation	Dominant source language	Borrowing leads to conceptual reduction; needs adaptation

Note. Compiled from corpus analysis and secondary sources (Akramov, 2023; Karimov, 2022; UNICEF Uzbekistan, 2022).

The most consequential point of divergence identified in this analysis is the risk of what Karimov (2022) terms "terminological hollowing": when *inklyuziv ta'lim* is deployed in Uzbek policy contexts as a phonetic equivalent of the English term without the accompanying conceptual infrastructure, the result is a narrowing of the policy agenda that privileges disability inclusion while leaving unaddressed the structural barriers faced by other marginalized groups. This dynamic reflects a broader pattern identified in comparative education research, in which the glocalization of educational policy discourse produces superficial convergence that masks enduring substantive divergence (Steiner-Khamsi, 2004).

At the same time, the analysis reveals resources within Uzbek cultural and linguistic traditions that could enrich rather than merely receive global inclusive education frameworks. The communal solidarity embedded in Turkic collectivist ethics, mediated through concepts such as *ma'rifat* (enlightenment through collective knowledge) and *jamiyat birligi*, offers a culturally grounded alternative to the individualist empowerment metaphors prevalent in English discourse. A genuinely dialogic approach to inclusive education policy in Uzbekistan would involve not merely translating English frameworks into Uzbek, but developing a reciprocal conceptual exchange in which Uzbek cultural resources reshape the global agenda.

Conclusion

This comparative linguocultural analysis has demonstrated that English and Uzbek representations of inclusive education differ substantially in their semantic scope, metaphorical framing, ideological positioning, and cultural embeddedness. English discourse constructs an expansive, multidimensional, and rights-based concept whose universalist ambitions are increasingly calibrated to local cultural realities through glocalization. Uzbek discourse, shaped by Soviet legacies, national reform imperatives, and Turkic-Islamic collectivism, constructs a narrower, state-mediated, and primarily disability-focused concept in which the phonetic borrowing *inklyuziv ta'lim* has not yet achieved full semantic equivalence with its English source.

These findings carry three principal implications for educational policy and practice. First, international organizations and national governments implementing inclusive education in Uzbekistan must invest in conceptual rather than merely terminological translation, developing Uzbek-language theoretical frameworks that address the full diversity of learners. Second, teacher professional development programs must move beyond disability-centred definitions to engage educators with gender, ethnic, linguistic, and socioeconomic dimensions of inclusion. Third, the Uzbek scholarly community should be supported in developing indigenous theoretical contributions to the global inclusive education literature, drawing on the rich conceptual resources of Turkic and Islamic intellectual traditions.

Future research should employ larger, empirically collected corpora of Uzbek-language educational texts and incorporate ethnographic study of how teachers and policymakers actually

implement inclusive education in Uzbek classrooms, attending to the gap between official discourse and lived pedagogical practice.

References

1. Ainscow, M., Booth, T., & Dyson, A. (2006). Improving schools, developing inclusion. Routledge.
2. Akramov, B. (2023). Terminological adaptation of international educational concepts in Uzbek-language policy discourse. Tashkent State Pedagogical University Journal, 12(2), 34–51.
3. Apple, M. W. (2004). Ideology and curriculum (3rd ed.). RoutledgeFalmer.
4. Dharma, I. G. S., Padmadewi, N. N., & Artini, L. P. (2024). Menyama Braya as a culturally grounded framework for inclusive schooling in Bali. Journal of Southeast Asian Education, 15(1), 77–95.
5. Fairclough, N. (2001). Language and power (2nd ed.). Longman.
6. Fairclough, N. (2003). Analysing discourse: Textual analysis for social research. Routledge.
7. Karimov, F. (2022). Semantic borrowing and conceptual narrowing in Uzbek educational terminology. Uzbek Linguistic Studies, 8(1), 40–58.
8. Kirks-Cler, A., Novak, J., & Osei, P. (2025). Gender-inclusive language in higher education policy: A critical discourse analysis. Gender and Education, 37(3), 210–229.
9. Mazur, E., Henriksen, T., & Wollstonecraft, R. (2025). Nonbinary students in inclusive classrooms: Navigating identity and belonging. International Journal of Inclusive Education, 29(1), 1–18.
10. Miles, S., & Singal, N. (2010). The Education for All and inclusive education debate: Conflict, contradiction or opportunity? International Journal of Inclusive Education, 14(1), 1–15.
11. Padmadewi, N. N., Artini, L. P., & Putra, I. N. A. J. (2025). Universal Design for Learning and Balinese cultural values: A glocal approach to inclusion. Asian-Pacific Journal of Second and Foreign Language Education, 10(1), 45–63.
12. Robertson, R. (1995). Glocalization: Time-space and homogeneity-heterogeneity. In M. Featherstone, S. Lash, & R. Robertson (Eds.), Global modernities (pp. 25–44). Sage.
13. Saiful, A. R. (2025). Empowering students with physical disabilities: Inclusive pedagogical strategies in Malaysian secondary schools. Disability & Society, 40(2), 301–320.
14. Saini, R., Mehta, P., & Gupta, N. (2025). SDG 4 and inclusive education frameworks in South Asian classrooms: Challenges and prospects. International Journal of Educational Development, 103, 102945.
15. Slee, R. (2011). The irregular school: Exclusion, schooling and inclusive education. Routledge.
16. Steiner-Khamsi, G. (2004). The global politics of educational borrowing and lending. Teachers College Press.
17. UNESCO. (1994). The Salamanca statement and framework for action on special needs education. UNESCO.
18. UNESCO. (2015). Education 2030: Incheon declaration and framework for action. UNESCO.

19. UNICEF Uzbekistan. (2020). Situation analysis of children in Uzbekistan. UNICEF.
20. UNICEF Uzbekistan. (2022). Inclusive education in Uzbekistan: Gaps, challenges, and pathways forward. UNICEF.
21. United Nations. (2006). Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities. United Nations.
22. Van Dijk, T. A. (2008). Discourse and power. Palgrave Macmillan.
23. Wodak, R., & Meyer, M. (2016). Methods of critical discourse studies (3rd ed.). Sage.