

INCLUSIVE TURKISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

Assist.Prof. Dr.
Türkan YILDIRIM



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Assist. Prof. Dr. Trkan YILDIRIM*

* Harran University, Faculty of Education, Department of Turkish and Social Sciences Education, Division of Turkish Language Education, Şanlıurfa, Trkiye
ORCID:0000-0002-9818-9061



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Assist. Prof. Dr. Türkan YILDIRIM*

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duvarkitabevi@gmail.com

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PREFACE

Inclusive education is realised not primarily in policy statements, but in the ordinary decisions through which teachers organise learning, listen to students, select texts, respond to difference, and make participation possible. These decisions are particularly consequential in language classrooms, where students learn not only how to read, write, listen, speak, and view, but also whose voices, experiences, and ways of using language are recognised as legitimate.

The primary audience of this book is pre-service teachers in faculties of education and practising teachers working at different levels of schooling. It is also intended for teacher educators, school leaders, counsellors, and researchers concerned with the development of inclusive educational practice. Although its conceptual framework is relevant to all teachers, the book places Turkish language teaching at its centre. Turkish lessons provide an especially important setting for inclusion because language is simultaneously a means of learning, communication, identity formation, social participation, and belonging. The ways in which texts are selected, classroom talk is organised, feedback is given, and learning is assessed can either widen students' opportunities to participate or reproduce barriers that already shape their educational experiences.

The scope of the book extends from the historical and conceptual development of inclusive education internationally and in Türkiye to the practical decisions required in Turkish language classrooms. It considers learner diversity in relation to disability, learning difficulties, migration, displacement, multilingualism, socioeconomic disadvantage, disasters and emergencies, and experiences of violence or social exclusion. Rather than treating these circumstances as fixed student categories, the discussion focuses on the interaction between students' strengths and needs and the conditions created by schools, curricula, materials, instruction, and assessment. The book does not replace specialist assessment, clinical diagnosis, or legal advice; instead, it addresses the educational decisions that teachers can make within their professional roles and in collaboration with students, families, colleagues, and relevant specialists.

The later chapters translate this perspective into Turkish language teaching. They consider accessible and representative text selection, differentiated instruction, Universal Design for Learning, inclusive assessment, classroom interaction, feedback, collaboration with students and families, professional ethics, and the institutional conditions required for sustainable practice. The aim is not to offer a single method or a checklist that can replace professional judgement. It is to support teachers in asking more productive questions: Who can access this learning opportunity? Who is able to participate meaningfully?

What barriers are being created unintentionally? What forms of support preserve both equity and high academic expectations?

Inclusive education is not completed when students enter the same school or classroom. It develops when every student can encounter meaningful learning, contribute to the learning community, and be recognised as a valued member of it. It is hoped that this book will contribute to that continuing work by bringing the principles of inclusion into closer dialogue with the distinctive responsibilities of Turkish language teaching.

CHAPTER 1

1. Introduction to Inclusive Education

Inclusive education is not a single instructional technique, a placement decision, or a programme developed exclusively for students identified as having special educational needs. It represents a way of understanding education, learner diversity, and the responsibilities of schools. At its core lies the principle that every student is entitled to participate in common educational settings, encounter intellectually meaningful learning opportunities, and be recognised as a valued member of the school community. Accordingly, learner differences are not treated as exceptional conditions that should be addressed only after a problem arises. Differences in language, culture, disability, prior educational experience, socioeconomic circumstances, learning pace, interests, identity, communication style, and ways of demonstrating knowledge are regarded as ordinary characteristics of every classroom.

There is no single and universally accepted definition of inclusive education in the academic literature. Göransson and Nilholm (2014) identify several levels of conceptualisation, ranging from the physical placement of students with special educational needs in mainstream classrooms to the creation of educational communities that respond to the academic and social needs of all learners. Their analysis demonstrates that the same term may refer to substantially different practices. In its narrowest sense, inclusion can mean educating students with disabilities in mainstream schools. In its broader sense, it involves transforming the values, organisation, and pedagogical practices of education so that all students can participate meaningfully and learn together. Amor et al. (2019) similarly show that the field has gradually moved beyond placement-oriented interpretations towards more comprehensive concerns involving participation, equity, social justice, and systemic transformation.

This conceptual distinction is important because a student's enrolment in a mainstream school does not by itself demonstrate that inclusion has been achieved. A student may be physically present in the classroom while remaining excluded from discussion, demanding academic tasks, peer relationships, classroom responsibilities, or assessment processes. Ainscow (2020) therefore proposes that inclusive development should be examined through the interconnected dimensions of presence, participation, and achievement. Presence concerns whether students can access and remain in educational settings; participation concerns the quality of their engagement, relationships, and involvement in decision-making; and achievement concerns the progress they

make across academic, social, and personal domains. Inclusion begins with access but cannot be reduced to it.

Rapp and Corral-Granados (2024) extend this understanding by connecting inclusion to the quality of participation and the student's sense of belonging to academic, social, and cultural communities. From this perspective, inclusion is not achieved simply because students occupy the same physical space. Students must also experience recognition, acceptance, interpersonal safety, and opportunities to contribute. Belonging is therefore not merely an emotional outcome that follows inclusion; it is one of the conditions through which inclusion becomes educationally meaningful. A student who is continuously ignored, underestimated, isolated from peers, or assigned only peripheral tasks cannot be regarded as fully included, even when attending the same lessons as classmates.

Ainscow, Booth, and Dyson (2006) conceptualise inclusion as the process of identifying and removing barriers to learning and participation. This formulation changes how educational difficulties are interpreted. Instead of assuming that a difficulty is located solely within the learner, it directs attention to the interaction between the learner and the educational environment. A student's limited participation may arise from inaccessible materials, unclear instructions, inflexible time limits, inappropriate text difficulty, inadequate language support, negative peer attitudes, low teacher expectations, or assessment practices that permit only one form of response. Inclusive education does not deny individual differences or the need for specialised support. Rather, it rejects the assumption that the student's characteristics provide a complete explanation for the difficulties encountered in school.

Booth and Ainscow (2011) further describe inclusion through the development of inclusive cultures, policies, and practices. Inclusive cultures concern the values and relationships through which students are recognised as legitimate and valuable members of the school. Inclusive policies concern institutional arrangements governing admission, support services, resource allocation, disciplinary procedures, and participation in school life. Inclusive practices refer to everyday decisions about curriculum, instruction, classroom interaction, materials, and assessment. These dimensions are interdependent. A teacher may develop accessible materials, for example, but the sustainability of this practice will remain limited if the school does not allocate planning time, provide appropriate technologies, or recognise inclusion as a shared institutional responsibility.

Inclusive education must also be distinguished from integration. In integration-oriented arrangements, students may be admitted to mainstream

classrooms while the curriculum, instructional methods, and assessment procedures remain largely unchanged. The student is then expected to adapt to the existing system through individual support, remediation, or personal effort. Inclusive education reverses this expectation by asking how the educational environment itself can become responsive to learner variability. Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) describe inclusive pedagogy as an approach that extends what is ordinarily available to everybody rather than providing qualitatively separate and potentially stigmatising experiences for a few learners. This approach does not eliminate individual accommodations. It seeks to ensure that additional support expands, rather than restricts, the learner's access to common and academically meaningful experiences.

Kurth and Gross (2015) likewise maintain that meaningful inclusion depends on students having access to the supports and services required to participate fully in general education activities and curricula. Their position moves the discussion beyond the binary choice between support and inclusion. Specialised assistance, accessible technologies, alternative communication systems, and individually planned adjustments may all be necessary components of inclusive provision. The essential question is whether these supports strengthen the student's participation, independence, and connection with the learning community or separate the student from it.

Inclusive education is consequently not synonymous with providing every student with identical instruction. Treating all learners in exactly the same manner may reproduce inequality when students encounter different barriers to participation. Inclusive practice combines shared educational purposes with flexible means of access, engagement, and expression. High expectations are retained, but unnecessary obstacles are reduced. A student may require an accessible digital text, additional processing time, vocabulary support, assistive technology, or an alternative means of responding. Such arrangements do not necessarily reduce the intellectual demand of learning; they can enable the student to engage with that demand more effectively.

The scope of inclusive education has also expanded beyond its historical association with disability and special educational needs. Wolff et al. (2021), in their multilingual systematic review, found that much of the literature continues to be dominated by disability-related categories, while exclusion associated with social class, language, ethnicity, gender, and geographical location receives considerably less attention. They argue that a comprehensive understanding of inclusion must address the interaction between classroom practices and wider social, cultural, and institutional inequalities. This is particularly important because students do not experience language, disability, poverty, migration,

gender, or social marginalisation as entirely separate conditions. A student may simultaneously be learning through a new language, experiencing economic disadvantage, adapting after displacement, and encountering disability-related access barriers.

Waitoller and Artiles (2013) therefore position inclusive educational reform within a broader social justice framework involving the redistribution of educational opportunities, the recognition of difference, and the creation of meaningful opportunities for participation. Inclusive education is not simply concerned with allowing students to enter existing structures; it also requires examining whether those structures privilege particular languages, identities, forms of knowledge, and ways of learning. Slee (2018) similarly argues that inclusion must challenge the institutional practices through which some students are constructed as normal, capable, and deserving while others are represented as deficient, problematic, or peripheral. Without such critical examination, inclusion may become a new label applied to practices that continue to reproduce exclusion.

Student voice constitutes another central dimension of contemporary inclusive education. Students possess important knowledge about the conditions that support or restrict their participation, including which materials facilitate their learning, which classroom interactions make them feel unsafe, and which forms of assistance make them publicly visible or stigmatised. Messiou (2017) argues that research and school development should not rely exclusively on adult definitions of inclusion. Students' accounts can reveal forms of marginalisation that remain unnoticed within routine educational practice. Poikola, Kärnä, and Hakalehto's (2024) review similarly shows that students understand inclusion through acceptance, belonging, supportive relationships, fair treatment, meaningful participation, and opportunities to influence decisions concerning their education. These findings position the student as a participant in inclusive planning rather than a passive recipient of support.

The growing complexity of the concept is also reflected in reviews of inclusive education research. Van Mieghem et al. (2020) demonstrate that successful inclusion cannot be explained through a single classroom intervention or learner characteristic. Teacher attitudes, professional knowledge, instructional practices, school organisation, leadership, and support systems interact in shaping students' educational experiences. Inclusive education should therefore be understood simultaneously as a classroom-level pedagogical responsibility, a whole-school development process, and a system-level commitment. Focusing exclusively on one of these levels risks either placing an unrealistic burden on individual teachers or overlooking the significance of their everyday decisions.

The conceptual development of inclusive education is increasingly visible in the literature produced in Türkiye. Dedeoğlu and Yılmaz Atman (2022) define inclusive education primarily as an educational understanding through which every student is expected to access education and participate in educational settings in accordance with their individual learning and developmental characteristics. They emphasise that inclusion should not be reduced to a particular programme or curriculum because it concerns the fundamental assumptions through which student diversity is interpreted.

Kazancı and Çeliköz (2025) identify three major changes in contemporary understandings of inclusive education in Türkiye. The first is the expansion of the target population from students with disabilities to all learners who experience or are at risk of exclusion. The second is the movement from individual adjustments towards the transformation of education systems. The third is the conceptual transition from integration to a framework centred on equality, social justice, and meaningful participation. Their analysis is significant because it shows that Turkish scholarship is gradually moving beyond the view that inclusion consists primarily of placing certain students in mainstream classrooms.

Studies conducted with teachers and teacher candidates also reveal how inclusion is understood within the Turkish educational context. Temur and Uslu (2024) report that teachers associate inclusive education with unity, diversity, adaptation, equality, protection, transparency, and an ongoing process of educational development. Polat (2022) shows that prospective teachers connect inclusive practice with teacher self-efficacy, collaboration, classroom management, interaction, sustainability, and differentiated instruction. These findings indicate that inclusion is perceived not merely as a policy expectation but as a multidimensional professional responsibility requiring teachers to reconsider their expectations, relationships, and instructional decisions.

The literature in Türkiye further demonstrates the need to connect inclusive education with cultural and linguistic diversity. Şimşek et al. (2019) examine traces of multiculturalism in basic education curricula and draw attention to the representation of diverse social and cultural experiences within instructional programmes. Their work expands the discussion beyond disability and underscores the relationship between curricular representation and inclusion. Kılıç Avan and Kalenderoğlu (2020), meanwhile, address inclusive education in relation to teaching Turkish as a second language. Their study shows that the educational needs of migrant students cannot be considered independently of teachers' language-teaching knowledge, classroom experiences, and expectations concerning inclusive education.

The development of “inclusive language teaching” and “inclusive Turkish language teaching” as more specific areas is also reflected in book-length studies published in Türkiye. Ünal’s (2020) edited volume relates inclusive language teaching to supporting students who have not sufficiently developed listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills for a range of reasons. Kızıldaş (2022) translates this concern into instructional activities intended particularly for students whose Turkish language skills are below the expected classroom level and for learners acquiring Turkish as a second or foreign language. These works are important because they bring inclusive education into direct contact with language-teaching practices. Nevertheless, defining inclusive language teaching solely in terms of eliminating students’ skill deficiencies may be too narrow. A rights-based and pedagogically comprehensive perspective must also examine how texts, classroom discourse, language expectations, assessment practices, and opportunities for expression enable or restrict participation.

The theoretical perspectives discussed above converge around several interconnected principles. Inclusion concerns all learners, extends beyond physical placement, requires attention to barriers created by educational environments, and combines a common educational entitlement with responsiveness to individual differences. Translating these principles into educational practice requires a more concrete framework for examining what students actually experience in schools and classrooms. Such an examination must consider whether students can access learning environments and materials, participate meaningfully in academic and social processes, make progress from their individual starting points, and develop a sense of belonging within the educational community. It must also clarify how inclusion differs from exclusion, segregation, and integration, as well as how equity differs from treating every learner identically. The following discussion therefore moves from the conceptual foundations of inclusive education to its principal dimensions, scope, and related educational approaches.

Inclusive education can be evaluated across four interconnected dimensions in the classroom: access, participation, learning and development, and belonging. These dimensions should not be understood as independent stages that occur in a fixed sequence. They influence one another and together determine the quality of the student’s educational experience.

Access refers to the student’s ability to reach and use the educational institution, learning environment, course content, and instructional materials. Physical accessibility constitutes one part of this dimension, but access is not limited to entering the school building or classroom. It also concerns whether texts can be read through appropriate formats, visual information can be

perceived or explained, audio recordings can be heard or accompanied by transcripts, and digital content can be used with assistive technologies. Language can also create an access barrier. A student may be able to see and hear a text yet remain unable to understand it because its vocabulary, cultural references, sentence structure, or instructions are not accessible at the student's current level of language proficiency.

Participation involves more than a student's presence in the classroom or completion of assigned tasks. It entails engaging in activities, contributing to discussions, making choices, assuming meaningful responsibilities, interacting with peers, and influencing decisions related to learning. The quality of participation is important. A student who is always assigned a passive role, is called upon only to answer low-level questions, or is separated from classmates during collaborative activities may be technically involved but not meaningfully included. Participation therefore requires attention to the distribution of speaking opportunities, classroom responsibilities, peer relationships, decision-making, and access to cognitively demanding learning.

Learning and development refer to the provision of meaningful learning experiences and support for students' progress in relation to their starting points and educational requirements. Inclusive education does not mean that every student must achieve an identical outcome within the same period. It requires maintaining worthwhile learning goals while recognising that students may follow different pathways and need different forms or levels of support. Academic development should not be separated from students' communicative, social, emotional, and self-regulatory development, as these domains influence their capacity to participate in education.

Belonging refers to the student's experience of being a recognised, accepted, and valued member of the classroom and school community. It requires more than friendliness or physical proximity to peers. Students need to perceive that their identities, languages, experiences, and contributions have a legitimate place in the learning environment. Belonging is weakened when students are continually described through diagnostic labels, viewed primarily as recipients of help, subjected to discriminatory language, or excluded from reciprocal social relationships. Because belonging affects students' willingness to communicate, take academic risks, seek assistance, and remain engaged, it is inseparable from learning.

The absence of any one of these dimensions may limit the quality of inclusive education. For example, a student with a visual impairment may be able to enter and move around the classroom independently, while the texts used in Turkish language lessons remain inaccessible. In such a situation, physical access has

been provided, but access to the curriculum and participation in learning have not been adequately supported. Similarly, a bilingual student may understand the content of a narrative but remain unable to contribute to classroom discussion because rapid turn-taking and fear of linguistic error restrict participation. A student may therefore experience inclusion in one dimension and exclusion in another.

Inclusive education is not concerned exclusively with students formally identified as having special educational needs. Although disability occupies an important place in its historical development, contemporary understandings encompass a much broader range of learner diversity. Exclusion may be associated with poverty, language, ethnicity, migration, forced displacement, gender, geographical location, health, interrupted schooling, family circumstances, exposure to violence, disaster-related displacement, bullying, discrimination, and other intersecting conditions (Wolff et al., 2021). The purpose of recognising these circumstances is not to construct an indefinitely expanding list of deficient or vulnerable students. It is to identify the social, institutional, and pedagogical conditions under which particular learners may be denied equitable opportunities.

Accordingly, inclusive education takes into consideration students with disabilities or other special educational needs; students experiencing specific or general learning difficulties; migrant, refugee, and forcibly displaced students; students learning the language of instruction as an additional language; bilingual and multilingual learners; students affected by poverty or other forms of socioeconomic disadvantage; students from diverse cultural or ethnic backgrounds; gifted and talented students whose learning needs may not be addressed by standard instruction; students with chronic illnesses or extended absences; students living in geographically isolated or underserved communities; students affected by disasters, emergencies, conflict, abuse, neglect, or violence; students at risk of irregular attendance or early school leaving; and students experiencing bullying, discrimination, stigmatisation, or social exclusion.

These descriptions should not be used to classify learners into fixed, mutually exclusive categories. A student may simultaneously experience several circumstances that shape participation in education. For example, a learner with a migration background may be developing Turkish as a second language while also coping with interrupted schooling, economic hardship, disaster-related displacement, and discrimination. Concentrating exclusively on the student's Turkish proficiency may cause the teacher to overlook previous literacy experience, emotional well-being, family circumstances, peer relationships, and access to learning resources. Likewise, attributing a student's limited classroom

participation solely to disability may obscure inaccessible instructional materials, negative expectations, or exclusionary classroom routines.

An inclusive approach therefore seeks to understand the conditions that facilitate or hinder learning before assigning educational significance to a category. The teacher's responsibility is not to make a medical, psychological, or legal diagnosis. Teachers observe student performance, listen to the student's perspective, document the conditions under which participation changes, identify barriers within the educational environment, and implement instructional adjustments within their professional authority. When additional evaluation is required, the teacher contributes concrete observations to collaborative processes involving the student, family, school counsellors, special education professionals, and relevant specialists. The purpose of collaboration is not to transfer responsibility for the learner but to develop a more informed and coordinated educational response.

A clearer understanding of inclusion also requires distinguishing among exclusion, segregation, integration, and inclusion. These concepts describe different relationships between the learner and the education system. General Comment No. 4 of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities differentiates them according to the structure of educational provision and the extent to which the student or the system is expected to adapt (Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016). The distinctions are particularly important because practices described as inclusive may sometimes remain integrative or even reproduce indirect forms of exclusion.

Exclusion occurs when a student is directly or indirectly prevented from participating in education. Refusing to admit a student to school is an explicit form of exclusion. Exclusion can also occur after formal enrolment. A student who cannot access instructional materials, is prevented from participating in activities, is repeatedly sent out of the classroom, or cannot attend regularly because appropriate support has not been provided may be indirectly excluded. Exclusion is therefore not always visible in enrolment statistics; it may operate through the everyday conditions of participation.

Segregation refers to the education of students with particular characteristics in environments separate from those attended by other students. Educational services may be provided in these settings, and specialised knowledge or resources may be available. Nevertheless, students' opportunities for shared learning, reciprocal peer relationships, and participation in the wider school community may be restricted. Segregated provision is generally organised according to impairment, diagnosis, perceived ability, behaviour, or educational

difficulty. Its defining feature is not the existence of specialised support but the separation of learners on the basis of a particular characteristic.

Integration involves placing a student in a mainstream educational environment while expecting that student, to a considerable extent, to adapt to its existing conditions. The curriculum, instructional pace, classroom routines, materials, and assessment system remain fundamentally unchanged. The student participates to the extent that they can meet these existing expectations, sometimes with additional individual assistance. Although integration represents an important movement away from complete separation, it may continue to position learner difference as a problem that must be managed primarily through individual adaptation.

The concept of mainstreaming, commonly expressed through the term *kaynaştırma* in Türkiye, constitutes a legal and practical framework through which students with special educational needs are educated alongside their peers and provided with support education services. Mainstreaming has contributed significantly to increasing the presence of students with disabilities in general education settings. Nevertheless, the placement of a student in a general education classroom does not, by itself, constitute inclusive education. When classroom instruction, learning materials, peer interactions, and assessment practices remain inaccessible, mainstreaming may be limited to physical co-presence. The educational significance of the practice therefore depends on what happens after placement.

Inclusion refers to designing and continually developing the educational environment so that it can respond to learner diversity. Under this approach, the student is not the only party expected to change. School culture, curricula, instructional methods, learning materials, assessment practices, communication processes, and support services are also examined and transformed. Inclusion does not require teachers to predict every possible need before instruction begins. It requires them to anticipate learner variability, reduce foreseeable barriers, monitor the effects of their decisions, and make further individual adjustments when universal arrangements remain insufficient.

Under exclusion, the learner remains outside education or is denied meaningful access despite formal enrolment, while the system fails to make effective arrangements for participation. Under segregation, education is provided in a separate environment created for learners sharing a particular classification. In integration or mainstreaming, the student enters a general education setting, but the fundamental organisation of teaching may remain unchanged and the emphasis may continue to fall on the student's adaptation. Under inclusion, the learner is recognised as an equal and valued member of a

shared educational community, and the system assumes responsibility for responding to diversity.

In actual educational practice, the boundaries between these approaches are not always clear-cut. A school may demonstrate an integrative characteristic by admitting a student to a mainstream classroom while simultaneously developing inclusive practices through accessible materials, differentiated instruction, balanced opportunities for participation, and diversified assessment options. Conversely, a formally inclusive policy may produce exclusionary experiences if students are physically present but unable to participate in classroom activity, peer interaction, challenging learning, or decision-making. It is therefore more useful to examine how far existing cultures, policies, and practices support access, participation, learning, and belonging than to classify a school permanently under a single label.

The distinction between equality and equity is equally important. Equality requires that all students possess the same fundamental rights, are treated with equal dignity, and are protected from discrimination. Equity concerns the conditions necessary for students to exercise those rights effectively. It recognises that identical provision may not result in comparable access when learners encounter different barriers.

Providing all students with the same text, within the same period, and through the same mode of presentation may initially appear fair. However, this practice is not equitable if a student with a visual impairment cannot perceive the text, a learner who has recently begun learning Turkish cannot understand essential vocabulary, or a student experiencing reading difficulties cannot complete the task within the allotted time. Equity may require a large-print, Braille, audio, or accessible digital version of the text; explicit vocabulary and visual support; additional processing time; assistive technology; or an alternative means of responding. These arrangements do not grant an arbitrary advantage. They seek to reduce barriers unrelated to the intended learning objective. (Kayalar, 2022)

Equity does not mean removing academic expectations or assuming that students who require support are incapable of engaging in complex learning. Lowering the intellectual demand of every task may restrict development as seriously as refusing necessary assistance. The purpose of adjustment is not to make learning objectives meaningless but to distinguish the essential goal from avoidable demands that prevent students from demonstrating their learning. Any adjustment should therefore be related to an identified requirement, aligned with the purpose of the activity, monitored for its effect, and revised as the learner develops greater independence.

These conceptual distinctions have direct implications for Turkish language education because language functions simultaneously as an object of learning, a means of accessing the wider curriculum, and a resource through which students express identity and establish membership in the school community. A student who cannot understand instructional language, access a written text, participate safely in classroom discussion, or demonstrate comprehension through the expected response format may experience exclusion not only in the Turkish lesson but across the curriculum.

Research concerned with language functions and communicative competence contributes to this perspective. Çekici and Deniz (2023) emphasise that language teaching should be organised around the functions language performs in meaningful communication. Although their study does not directly define inclusive education, its emphasis on functional and communicative language use is relevant to inclusive Turkish teaching because students need opportunities to use language for authentic purposes rather than being evaluated solely through decontextualised knowledge of linguistic forms. Deniz and Öztürk's (2022) work on graphic symbols is similarly relevant to accessible communication and the representation of meaning through alternative modes. Such contributions support the language-accessibility dimension of inclusive teaching.

Within this framework, inclusive Turkish language teaching can be defined as the organisation of language-learning environments in which every student can access meaningful texts and communication, participate in listening, speaking, reading, writing, and viewing processes, receive support responsive to their requirements, and experience their linguistic and cultural repertoire as a legitimate educational resource. Its purpose is not to eliminate differences among learners but to prevent those differences from becoming barriers to learning, expression, recognition, participation, and belonging.

1.1. Fundamental Principles of Inclusive Education

Education is a right: Inclusive education regards students' participation in education not as a matter of charity or goodwill but as a fundamental right. Article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities establishes that States Parties are responsible for ensuring that persons with disabilities are not excluded from the general education system on the basis of disability and that they have access to the support they require (United Nations, 2006).

Every student is valued: Differences among students do not determine the extent of their right to education or their entitlement to belong in the classroom. In an inclusive classroom, every student is recognized as an equal and valued member of the shared learning community.

Diversity is the norm: Learner diversity is not an exceptional circumstance encountered only in certain classrooms. Students differ in terms of readiness, interests, pace of learning, language, culture, experience, and support needs. Organizing instruction around the assumption of a single “average student” may create barriers for some learners.

Difficulties are not attributed solely to the student: Learning difficulties are considered within the interaction between the student’s characteristics and the demands of the educational environment. A student’s inability to participate in an activity is not explained solely in terms of an individual impairment; the way the activity is presented, the materials used, the time allocated, and the support provided by the teacher must also be examined.

Participation extends beyond physical presence: Although being present in the classroom is necessary for inclusion, it is not sufficient. Students must have a voice, collaborate with their peers, undertake meaningful responsibilities, and be able to demonstrate their learning.

Instruction should be flexible: Inclusive instruction requires multiple means of presenting information, engaging students in activities, and assessing learning outcomes. Flexibility does not mean abandoning instructional objectives; rather, it involves creating different pathways through which those objectives can be achieved.

Collaboration is essential: Inclusion cannot be sustained solely through the individual efforts of the classroom teacher. Collaboration must be established among teachers, school administrators, guidance and counselling services, special education professionals, families, and students. The European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education identifies valuing learner diversity, supporting all learners, working with others, and continuing professional development as the core areas of competence in its Profile of Inclusive Teachers (European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, 2012).

The fundamental principles of inclusive education are not a collection of discrete recommendations for practice; rather, they constitute a coherent framework of values concerning the purpose of education, the position of the student, and the responsibilities of the education system. At the centre of this framework lies the recognition of the student not as a passive individual in need of assistance but as a rights-holder. The state, schools, and teachers, in turn, are responsible for enabling students to exercise this right. Inclusive education is therefore not a goodwill initiative limited to admitting certain students into existing educational settings. It is a rights-based approach that requires preventing discrimination, removing barriers to learning and participation, and creating opportunities for all students to access quality education.

Recognizing education as a fundamental right is the first and defining principle of inclusive education. Article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities establishes that States Parties are responsible for ensuring that persons with disabilities are not excluded from the general education system on the basis of disability; that they have access to quality and inclusive education within the communities in which they live; and that they receive reasonable accommodations and effective support in accordance with their needs (United Nations, 2006). General Comment No. 4 of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities further clarifies that the right to inclusive education cannot be fulfilled merely by placing a student in a general education classroom. Realizing this right requires transforming the cultures, policies, and practices of educational institutions so that they respond to learner diversity, as well as identifying and removing conditions that impede access and participation (Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016).

A natural consequence of the rights-based approach is the recognition that all students possess equal human dignity and equal educational worth. A student's level of academic achievement, disability status, language, socioeconomic circumstances, migration experience, behavioural characteristics, or support needs does not make them more or less entitled to belong in the classroom. In an inclusive classroom, belonging is not a conditional status earned by attaining a particular level of achievement, fully complying with classroom rules, or behaving like other students. The student is an equal and valued member of the classroom from the outset. The teacher's responsibility is not to decide whether the student belongs in the classroom but to ensure that this sense of belonging is genuinely experienced through learning and social relationships.

Recognizing the value of every student also requires maintaining high expectations for all learners. High expectations do not mean demanding the same level of performance from every student within the same period. Rather, they entail acknowledging that students can develop when provided with appropriate instruction, sufficient time, and support tailored to their needs. A student's diagnosis, family income, proficiency in Turkish, or history of academic failure should not be interpreted as imposing fixed limits on what they can learn in the future. Low expectations may deprive students of age-appropriate, high-quality learning experiences, expose them repeatedly to oversimplified tasks, and reduce their opportunities to demonstrate their capabilities. Inclusion opposes both abandoning students to failure and restricting them, under the guise of protection, to intellectually undemanding tasks.

Recognizing learner diversity as the norm is another fundamental principle of inclusive education. Classrooms are not homogeneous communities in which only some students differ while all others resemble one another. Students vary in their readiness, interests, pace of learning, linguistic and cultural backgrounds, previous schooling experiences, modes of communication, attention, sensory characteristics, social relationships, and sources of support. These differences may change over time and according to the skill being learned. One student may demonstrate strength in oral expression while requiring support in written expression, whereas another may use everyday Turkish effectively but experience difficulty understanding abstract expressions in academic texts. UNESCO's 2020 Global Education Monitoring Report demonstrates that exclusion in education is not limited to disability but may also arise in connection with poverty, language, ethnicity, migration and displacement, gender, geographical location, and diverse identity characteristics (UNESCO, 2020). The OECD similarly recommends addressing learner diversity not through a single characteristic but by considering the intersecting individual and social circumstances that shape students' experiences (OECD, 2023).

Recognizing diversity as the norm does not require assigning students to fixed categories. On the contrary, it highlights the limitations of using categories to explain a student's entire educational experience. Two students within the same disability category may have different communication and learning needs. A student with a migration background may simultaneously experience economic hardship, disrupted education, and social exclusion. A gifted student may demonstrate advanced performance in certain areas while experiencing a learning difficulty in another. Teachers should therefore examine students' strengths, current performance, views, circumstances, and the specific barriers affecting their participation in learning rather than evaluating them solely according to the group to which they are presumed to belong.

The inclusive approach moves away from a deficit-based perspective that locates the cause of difficulty exclusively within the student. It does not disregard students' individual characteristics or support needs; instead, it asks under which environmental conditions those characteristics become educational barriers. General Comment No. 4 of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities emphasizes that exclusion is not an inevitable consequence of individual characteristics but may arise from inaccessible environments, inappropriate instructional practices, inadequate support, discriminatory attitudes, and low expectations (Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016). Consequently, when a student cannot participate in an activity, the inquiry is not limited to the question, "What does the student lack?"

The characteristics of the activity that make participation difficult must also be examined.

The implications of this principle for Turkish language teaching are particularly clear. If a student cannot read a text printed in a small font, the difficulty is related not only to the student's visual characteristics but also to the failure to provide the text in an accessible format. If a student learning Turkish as an additional language cannot understand culturally specific expressions in a text, this cannot be attributed solely to insufficient vocabulary knowledge; the failure to establish the necessary context before reading and to provide appropriate language support must also be considered. If a student experiencing writing difficulties cannot complete a lengthy text within the allotted time, the teacher should examine whether the task has been divided into manageable stages and whether appropriate planning support, assistive technology, and sufficient time have been provided. The focus thus shifts from labelling the student as deficient or incapable to improving the fit between the student and the instructional environment.

In inclusive education, participation encompasses more than a student's physical presence at school or in the classroom. According to Ainscow, inclusion is an ongoing process of identifying and reducing the conditions that impede the presence, participation, and progress of all students in education (Ainscow, 2020). A student's presence in the classroom, possession of the same textbook, or proximity to a group during a collaborative activity does not, in itself, constitute evidence of inclusion. The student must be able to assume a meaningful role, express their views, engage in reciprocal interactions with peers, access high-quality learning tasks, and demonstrate what they have learned.

The academic and social dimensions of participation cannot be separated from one another. A student may complete academic activities while remaining excluded from peer relationships; similarly, a student may share the same physical environment as their peers while being consistently assigned a passive role in learning tasks. A recent scoping review examining students' perspectives on inclusive education similarly demonstrates that the academic and social dimensions of inclusion must be considered together (Poikola et al., 2024). An inclusive teacher should therefore monitor not only the grades students receive but also who contributes to discussions, who consistently remains silent, how responsibilities are distributed within groups, which students are not selected by their peers, and who avoids activities for fear of making mistakes.

The principle of participation also encompasses the recognition of student voice. Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child guarantees children the right to express their views freely in all matters affecting

them and requires that those views be given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity (United Nations, 1989). Eliciting student views does not simply mean administering a satisfaction survey at the end of a semester or treating the opinions of a few students as representative of the entire class. Safe and accessible avenues must be created through which students can explain which materials they cannot access, which activities make them feel excluded, which forms of support they find useful, and how they would prefer to demonstrate their learning.

Opportunities for student voice should not be restricted to students who can speak and express themselves fluently. Multiple modes of expression should be provided, including written responses, visual representations, sign language, augmentative and alternative communication, individual interviews, and digital tools. Equally important is the extent to which students' views inform instructional decisions. A recent study conducted in primary schools indicates that student voice can contribute to inclusion only when students are heard through diverse modes of participation, their perspectives are valued through dialogue, and concrete changes are made in response to those perspectives (Messiou et al., 2025). In Turkish language lessons, students' views regarding text selection, discussion topics, writing activities, modes of working, and the forms of support they use can constitute an important source of evidence for instructional planning.

Equity and flexibility are also fundamental principles of inclusive education. Equity does not mean providing every student with the same resources regardless of their circumstances; rather, it involves providing opportunities and support tailored to students' needs so that they can effectively exercise their shared right to education. Fairness cannot therefore be equated with requiring every student to work with the same text, within the same period, through the same method, and using the same response format. Some students may require large-print or accessible digital texts, some may need vocabulary and background-knowledge support, and others may require additional time or alternative means of expressing their ideas. These provisions are not privileges but adjustments necessary for students to exercise their right to education. The OECD's holistic framework for inclusion similarly identifies flexible education systems that respond to students' needs as a fundamental condition for equity (OECD, 2023).

Flexibility does not entail arbitrarily lowering learning objectives. Teachers must first identify the targeted skill and then reduce barriers that are not directly related to that skill. If the objective of a Turkish language lesson is to identify the main idea of a text, students may be permitted to listen to the text, use keyword support, or explain their answers orally. If the objective is to assess independent reading fluency, however, presenting the entire text in audio format may alter the

skill being measured. Similarly, a visual organizer or word bank may support students in composing a text, whereas an oral presentation alone cannot substitute for writing when written expression is the intended assessment target. Inclusive flexibility therefore requires aligning the options provided with the intended learning objective.

Accessibility should be treated not as a measure added retrospectively but as a principle guiding instructional design from the outset. Wherever possible, lesson materials, digital content, classroom communication, and assessment tools should be planned before instruction so that they can be used by diverse learners. At the same time, it must be acknowledged that not every barrier can be anticipated and that individualized accommodations may still be necessary. Turkish language teachers can prepare texts using readable page layouts, provide descriptions of visual materials, include captions or transcripts for audio and video content, present instructions both orally and in writing, and develop supports that explain relevant cultural contexts. Accessibility thus ceases to be an exceptional practice introduced only after the needs of a particular student become apparent and instead becomes an ordinary feature of instruction.

Inclusive education requires student differences not merely to be tolerated but to be valued as educational resources. Different languages, cultural experiences, narrative traditions, living environments, and ways of thinking can enrich textual analysis, oral interaction, and written production in Turkish language lessons. Valuing diversity, however, does not mean compelling a student to speak before the class as a representative of their cultural identity or defining them through a single identity characteristic. Teachers should support students' development in the language of instruction without disparaging the languages or dialectal features they use at home; include diverse social and cultural experiences in text selection; and intervene in discriminatory, ableist, or xenophobic discourse. Teaching linguistic accuracy and respecting students' identities and linguistic backgrounds are not mutually exclusive objectives.

Collaboration is a fundamental principle for the sustainability of inclusion. Assigning full responsibility for inclusive education to a single teacher overlooks the structural conditions of the classroom and school. Teachers, school administrators, guidance and counselling services, special education professionals, families, and students possess different forms of knowledge and experience. The European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education's Profile of Inclusive Teachers identifies valuing learner diversity, supporting all learners, working with others, and engaging in personal and professional development as the four core values of inclusive teaching (European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, 2012). The Agency's updated 2022

profile further emphasizes that inclusive professional learning cannot be restricted to classroom teachers; rather, it should be understood as a collective responsibility encompassing all school staff, administrators, specialists, and the wider educational community (European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2022).

Within collaborative processes, families should not be treated merely as parties to be informed when a problem arises, nor should students be positioned simply as individuals about whom decisions are made. Families' knowledge of students' communication modes, interests, prior learning, and effective forms of support can contribute meaningfully to instructional planning. Expert recommendations should likewise be implemented in relation to the objectives of Turkish language teaching and the actual conditions of the classroom. Collaboration does not, however, mean transferring the classroom teacher's responsibilities entirely to a specialist. As long as the student is educated in a general education classroom, the Turkish language teacher retains primary educational responsibility for developing the student's listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills.

Finally, inclusion is not a completed and immutable state but an ongoing process that must be continuously monitored and improved. A school's admission of students or use of certain accessible materials does not mean that all its practices are inclusive. As the student population, instructional content, and social conditions change, new barriers to participation may emerge. Teachers and schools must therefore regularly evaluate which students are unable to benefit from learning opportunities, whose voices remain unheard, which groups consistently demonstrate low levels of achievement, and whether the adjustments introduced genuinely increase participation. Inclusive development depends not on concealing problems but on making them visible through non-discriminatory language and modifying practices in response to the evidence obtained.

When these principles are considered together, the central question of inclusive Turkish language teaching is not the extent to which a student can adapt to the existing lesson. Rather, it concerns the extent to which the selected texts, the language used, classroom interactions, instructional methods, materials, and assessment practices can respond to learner diversity. Inclusive education can become a lived reality for students only when the principles of the right to education, equal worth, recognition of diversity as the norm, high expectations, accessibility, meaningful participation, student voice, flexibility, collaboration, and continuous improvement are translated into concrete instructional decisions in the classroom.

1.2. Rationales for Inclusive Education

Inclusive education is not merely a support model designed for particular groups of students; it is a holistic approach that determines how the education system should be structured in response to learner diversity. The need for this approach is explained through economic, educational, social, and legal rationales. Although these rationales can be distinguished analytically, they are mutually reinforcing in practice. Using resources to strengthen shared and accessible educational environments may enhance educational quality; high-quality shared learning experiences may improve social relationships among students; and these arrangements may enable all students to exercise their right to education without discrimination. Nevertheless, the fundamental basis of inclusive education—before any consideration of whether it is more economically advantageous or more effective in promoting academic achievement—is that all students have the right to participate equally and effectively in quality education.

Economic Rationale: The economic rationale for inclusive education is based on developing a common education system capable of responding to learner diversity rather than establishing separate schools, programmes, staffing structures, transportation systems, and administrative mechanisms for every group of students with different characteristics. Educating students in separate institutions according to their diagnoses, languages, social backgrounds, or learning characteristics may produce duplicative structures in numerous areas, ranging from physical infrastructure to human resources. UNESCO notes that maintaining multiple separate educational institutions for different groups of students may be more costly than developing common schools capable of serving all learners (UNESCO, 2001).

This rationale should not be interpreted as calling for the elimination of specialist expertise or individualized support required by particular students. The issue in inclusive education is not the existence of specialized support but the possibility that such support may develop into a permanent, parallel structure that separates students from shared educational environments. Services provided by special education teachers, school counsellors, speech and language therapists, and other professionals are fundamental components of an inclusive system. Wherever possible, however, this expertise should be organized within the school attended by the student and in ways that support collaboration among teachers, students, and families. Resources can thereby be used to enhance the quality of shared educational environments rather than to separate students from one another.

It would, however, be scientifically inappropriate to draw the generalized conclusion that inclusive education is less costly under all circumstances. Making

the physical environment accessible, providing assistive technologies, preparing instructional materials in alternative formats, supporting teachers' professional development, and establishing school-based support mechanisms require substantial resources. Although UNESCO's 2020 Global Education Monitoring Report acknowledges that reducing parallel educational structures may generate certain efficiency gains, it emphasizes that the initial and implementation costs of inclusive education must not be overlooked (UNESCO, 2020). The economic rationale should therefore be understood not as framing inclusive education as a cost-saving model designed to reduce expenditure but as requiring resources to be used more equitably and effectively to increase students' participation in education.

Economic assessments must consider not only school budgets but also the long-term consequences of educational exclusion. Failure to address students' learning needs in a timely manner may be associated with absenteeism, grade repetition, early school leaving, and low levels of learning. These outcomes may restrict individuals' participation in subsequent levels of education, employment, and social life while increasing the need for intensive remedial and social support services in later periods. Identifying students' needs at an early stage and providing appropriate support within a shared educational environment may prevent difficulties from accumulating and contribute to more effective use of resources over the long term.

From the perspective of inclusive education, economic equity does not mean allocating the same amount of resources to every school and student; rather, it requires distributing resources according to need. Schools with high levels of learner diversity, poverty, migration, or regional inequality may require more staff, materials, and professional support to achieve comparable outcomes. The OECD states that equitable education systems should distribute resources according to the needs of students and schools and that educational quality and equity are not necessarily competing objectives (OECD, 2023). The economic rationale for inclusive education is therefore concerned less with reducing educational expenditure than with strengthening the impact of resources on access, participation, and learning.

Educational Rationale: The educational rationale for inclusive education is based on recognizing learner diversity as a point of departure for improving educational quality. Schools seeking to ensure that all students learn meaningfully within the same educational environment must develop methods responsive to students' readiness, linguistic characteristics, interests, and learning needs rather than maintaining uniform instructional practices. Clarifying learning objectives, presenting content through multiple means, providing graduated support, and

enabling students to demonstrate their learning in different ways can expand learning opportunities not only for particular students but for everyone in the classroom. UNESCO identifies the need for inclusive schools to develop instructional methods capable of responding to individual differences as a central educational rationale for inclusive education (UNESCO, 2001).

Inclusive instruction treats student differences not as problems encountered after teaching has taken place but as natural conditions that must be considered from the outset. Under this approach, teachers do not simply prepare a uniform lesson plan and subsequently introduce adjustments for students who fail. Instead, they design learning environments, materials, instructions, classroom interactions, and assessment processes from the beginning to facilitate the participation of diverse learners. When individual needs arise, they supplement these general instructional arrangements with student-specific support. Such a structure enables the development of a preventive approach that reduces barriers to learning in advance wherever possible, rather than relying on a reactive approach based on remediation after students have experienced failure.

Research on the effects of inclusive education on academic achievement has produced important findings that should nevertheless be interpreted cautiously. A recent systematic review of studies conducted at the secondary education level found that students with special educational needs generally demonstrated higher academic achievement or greater progress in inclusive settings, while students without special educational needs generally experienced no academic disadvantage. The researchers nevertheless caution that the ways in which students are assigned to educational settings, classroom composition, and the support provided may influence outcomes (Holzer & Moser Opitz, 2025). A systematic review conducted by Dalgaard et al. (2022), meanwhile, found no consistent, unidirectional effect of inclusive settings on the academic and psychosocial development of students with special educational needs across all studies. These differences among research findings demonstrate that placement in a general education classroom does not, in itself, constitute an intervention that guarantees academic achievement.

The principal determinant of the educational outcomes of inclusive education is not merely the student's presence in the classroom but the quality of the education provided there. Students must be able to access the curriculum, participate in activities, receive the necessary support in a timely manner, and demonstrate their learning through appropriate means. In the absence of accessible materials, differentiated instruction, collaborative learning, coordination among teachers, and multidimensional assessment, inclusion may remain limited to physical co-presence. Evaluations of inclusive practices should

therefore consider not only the classroom in which a student is placed but also the classroom conditions that facilitate or restrict their participation in learning.

The educational benefits of inclusive education are also important for students without special educational needs. Research indicates that education in inclusive classrooms generally has no adverse effect on these students' academic achievement and, under certain conditions, is associated with positive academic and social outcomes (Kart & Kart, 2021). These findings, however, cannot be assumed to apply to every classroom in which teachers receive insufficient support or students' needs remain unmet. The educational rationale for inclusive education rests not merely on placing students together but on improving the quality of instruction so that it supports the learning of all students.

Evidence from international large-scale assessments indicates that high academic performance and educational equity can be achieved simultaneously. This association, however, should not be interpreted as direct evidence that inclusive practices alone improve examination performance. Recent OECD assessments demonstrate that numerous factors—from early childhood education and resource allocation to teacher quality and early intervention—influence the degree of equity achieved by education systems (OECD, 2023). The educational rationale for inclusive education therefore requires developing the systemic conditions under which all students can learn rather than attributing achievement to a single practice.

Social Rationale: The social rationale for inclusive education is grounded in the understanding that shared educational experiences among students with diverse characteristics can contribute to the development of a more equitable and non-discriminatory society. The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action identifies mainstream schools with an inclusive orientation as effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, and developing an inclusive society (UNESCO, 1994). This perspective demonstrates that schools are not merely institutions in which academic knowledge is transmitted but also fundamental social environments in which students learn how to relate to human diversity.

Participation in shared activities can provide students with opportunities to question stereotypes about one another and develop mutual understanding. When students learn, discuss, create, and solve problems together, they encounter differences through real people and relationships rather than through abstract categories. These experiences may support the development of social competencies such as empathy, solidarity, listening to different perspectives, resolving conflicts through democratic means, and assuming shared responsibility. The social value of inclusive education extends beyond merely

tolerating difference; it requires recognizing students, with all their differences, as equal and valued members of the classroom.

Nevertheless, placing students within the same physical environment does not automatically produce social inclusion. A student may be present in a general education classroom while remaining excluded from peer relationships, receiving no meaningful responsibilities in group work, being positioned as a passive recipient of assistance, or experiencing bullying. Social inclusion requires trusting teacher–student relationships, a positive classroom climate, reciprocal peer support, collaborative activities, and individualized support appropriate to the student’s needs (Lindner et al., 2022). Physical proximity can therefore become social inclusion only when students engage in meaningful interactions with one another on the basis of equal status.

The quality of social relationships in an inclusive classroom depends substantially on the language used by the teacher, the roles assigned to students, and the teacher’s response to discriminatory behaviour. Defining a student primarily through their diagnosis, language, culture, or academic difficulty may inadvertently reinforce labelling. By contrast, assigning every student roles through which they can contribute to the classroom, treating diverse perspectives respectfully, and intervening promptly in cases of bullying can strengthen students’ sense of belonging. In this respect, inclusive education aims not only to change students’ attitudes towards difference but also to transform the ways in which relationships are established within the school.

Students’ perspectives constitute a fundamental source of information when evaluating social inclusion. Even when teachers or school administrators consider a practice inclusive, students may experience it as stigmatizing or restrictive of their participation. Studies examining students’ views of inclusive education demonstrate that peer relationships, acceptance, and participation in decision-making are central components of the experience of inclusion alongside academic participation (Poikola et al., 2024). Decision-making should therefore not be limited to making decisions about students; students’ own views concerning their learning and school experiences must be incorporated into these processes.

Legal Rationale: The legal rationale for inclusive education is based on the principle that education is not a privilege or form of assistance offered only to individuals who meet certain conditions but a fundamental human right that must be guaranteed without discrimination. Article 2 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child requires that the rights recognized in the Convention be guaranteed without discrimination based on the language, ethnicity, social origin, economic circumstances, disability, or other characteristics of the child or the child’s family. Article 28 establishes the child’s right to education and the

exercise of that right on the basis of equal opportunity, while Article 29 states that education should be directed towards the development of the child's personality, talents, and mental and physical abilities. Article 23 protects the right of children with disabilities to live with dignity and participate actively in society, whereas Article 30 guarantees the rights of children belonging to minority groups to enjoy their own culture and use their own language (United Nations, 1989).

UNESCO's rights-based approach to education rests on the principles of access to free and compulsory education, inclusion based on equality and non-discrimination, and the right to quality education encompassing both educational content and processes (UNESCO, 2005). These principles demonstrate that the right to education is not realized merely through a student's enrolment in school. If a student is physically present at school but cannot access instructional materials, participate in classroom communication, express their views, or benefit from appropriate assessment options through which they can demonstrate their learning, they cannot be considered to be exercising their right to education effectively. Rights-based inclusion encompasses participation, learning, development, and belonging in addition to access.

For persons with disabilities, the right to inclusive education is explicitly established in Article 24 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This article states that persons with disabilities must not be excluded from the general education system on the basis of disability and must be provided with access to an inclusive education system at all levels (United Nations, 2006). General Comment No. 4 of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities further explains that inclusion does not consist merely of placing a student in a classroom whose existing structure remains unchanged; it requires transforming educational cultures, policies, and practices so that they respond to learner diversity (Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016).

It is also important to recognize that international instruments do not all possess the same legal status. The Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities are international treaties that create legal obligations for States Parties. Although the Salamanca Statement and the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development do not have the same degree of legal force, they are international policy instruments that guide educational policy. Sustainable Development Goal 4 establishes the global objective of ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all (United Nations, 2015).

The legal rationale for inclusive education demonstrates that this approach is not an optional method to be implemented only to the extent that it produces

beneficial outcomes. A student's right to education is not contingent upon evidence that inclusion is less costly or definitively improves examination performance. While the economic, educational, and social rationales explain how inclusive education can be structured and the benefits it may provide, the legal rationale establishes that participation in quality education without discrimination is both a fundamental right of every student and a public responsibility.

In conclusion, the economic rationale for inclusive education requires resources to be used to develop shared and accessible educational environments; the educational rationale requires improving the quality of instruction so that it responds to learner diversity; the social rationale requires creating communities in which diverse students can establish relationships on the basis of equal status; and the legal rationale requires effectively guaranteeing the right to education without discrimination. Grounding inclusive education in only one of these rationales narrows the scope of the approach. Inclusive education can acquire an institutional and sustainable character when the recognition of rights, provision of necessary resources, improvement of instruction, and development of a sense of belonging are addressed together.

1.3. Inclusion in Turkish Language Teaching

Turkish language courses aim to develop the fundamental language skills that influence students' participation in other areas of learning across the education system. Students' ability to comprehend what they listen to and read, express their thoughts orally and in writing, and engage meaningfully with diverse texts is important for both their academic development and social participation.

Rather than requiring every student to complete the same activity in the same manner, inclusive Turkish language teaching provides differentiated forms of support that enable students to achieve shared learning objectives. In a reading activity, for example:

- The text may be prepared in different font sizes.
- An audio version of the text may be provided.
- Unfamiliar vocabulary may be supported with visual materials.
- The text may be divided into manageable sections.
- Students may be given additional reading time.
- Comprehension questions may be answered orally, in writing, or through visual means.
- Students may work in pairs or small groups.
- Texts at different levels of difficulty may be used to address the same learning outcome.

These arrangements may benefit more than a particular student. Audio texts, visual materials, explicit instructions, and scaffolded activities can support the learning of many students in the classroom. An important characteristic of inclusive instruction is that an arrangement introduced in response to a specific need may facilitate the participation of a much broader group of learners.

1.4. Misconceptions About Inclusive Education

Inclusive education is intended only for students with special educational needs: Inclusive education considers all students whose access to education, participation, or learning may be restricted for any reason.

Placing students in the same classroom is sufficient to achieve inclusion: Although physical co-presence is important, meaningful participation may not be achieved unless instructional processes and school culture are also transformed.

Inclusive education requires a separate lesson plan for every student: Inclusive instruction does not mean designing an entirely different lesson for each student. Shared objectives can be maintained while diversifying content, processes, forms of support, and options for demonstrating learning.

Providing accommodations gives students an unfair advantage: Needs-based accommodations seek to reduce the conditions that prevent students from participating in learning on an equal basis with their peers.

Inclusion requires lowering academic expectations: Inclusive education requires maintaining high but attainable expectations that support the development of all students. The purpose of accommodations is not to lower expectations arbitrarily but to diversify the pathways through which students can access learning objectives.

Inclusive education is solely the teacher's responsibility: Although the teacher is the primary practitioner within the classroom, effective inclusion requires the shared responsibility of school administrators, families, specialists, policymakers, and other stakeholders.

CHAPTER 2

2. Historical Development of Inclusive Education

2.1. The Global Development of Inclusive Education

The emergence of inclusive education cannot be attributed to a single document, country, or date. This approach has taken shape through the convergence of the recognition of the right to education, efforts to combat discrimination, the rights-based demands of persons with disabilities, advances in children's rights, and international initiatives promoting equal educational opportunity.

This historical process has not unfolded at the same pace or in the same sequence across all countries. While some countries have developed inclusive policies in general education schools, segregated educational institutions have continued to exist in others. Even within the same country, legislation may reflect an inclusive orientation while classroom practices continue to exhibit characteristics of integration or segregation. The history of inclusive education should therefore be understood not as a completed process of progress but as an ongoing transformation in which the relationship between the recognition of rights and their realization in practice is continually reconsidered.

In general, this transformation can be traced through four broad tendencies:

1. Excluding certain students from the education system;
2. Establishing separate educational settings for students perceived as different;
3. Placing students in general education settings under particular conditions;
4. Transforming the education system to enable the participation of all students.

These developments involve more than changes to the physical structure of educational institutions. Conceptions of the student, understandings of the origins of educational difficulties, and interpretations of teachers' responsibilities have also changed over time.

Before the emergence of modern approaches to inclusive education, a substantial proportion of students perceived as different were either denied the right to education or educated in separate institutions. Persons with disabilities, people living in poverty, ethnic and linguistic minorities, migrants, and girls encountered barriers to education under different historical and social conditions.

The establishment of special education institutions represented an important advancement for some students who had previously had no educational opportunities. These institutions also contributed to the development of specialized instructional methods and areas of professional expertise for

particular groups of students. Nevertheless, grouping students in separate institutions according to their characteristics restricted their opportunities to learn alongside their peers and participate in social life.

Within segregated approaches to education, the principal source of difficulty was generally located in the student's individual characteristics. When students could not meet the expectations of the general education system, they were referred to separate settings. The structure of the education system, instructional methods, and assessment practices were subjected to considerably less scrutiny. With the development of inclusive education, this perspective began to change, and it became increasingly accepted that barriers within the educational environment must be examined alongside students' individual characteristics.

2.1.1. Recognition of Education as a Universal Right: 1948

Following the Second World War, international efforts to protect human rights gained momentum. Adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 10 December 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is one of the foundational international instruments recognizing the right to education.

Article 26 of the Declaration states that everyone has the right to education and establishes that elementary education should be free and compulsory, technical and vocational education should be made generally available, and higher education should be equally accessible on the basis of merit (United Nations, 1948).

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights did not explicitly use the term "inclusive education." Nevertheless, by defining education as a right belonging to everyone rather than as a service available only to particular groups, it provided an important foundation for the rights-based approach to inclusive education.

This development is also significant in relation to the teacher's role. Once education is recognized as a right, teaching cannot be regarded as an activity provided only to selected students or those capable of adapting to the existing system. Teachers are responsible for establishing conditions that enable every student in the classroom to exercise their right to learn.

2.1.2. Combating Discrimination in Education: 1960

The Convention against Discrimination in Education, adopted by the UNESCO General Conference on 14 December 1960, linked the right to education with the principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity. The Convention recognized that distinctions, exclusions, limitations, and preferences based on race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other

opinion, national or social origin, economic condition, or birth may undermine equality in education (UNESCO, 1960).

One of the Convention's major contributions was its recognition that equality in education must be evaluated not only in terms of enrolment but also in relation to the conditions and quality of the education provided. The right to education thus came to be understood not merely as the right to enter a school but as the right to benefit from quality education without discrimination.

Although the Convention did not use the concept of inclusive education in its contemporary sense, its obligations concerning the prevention of discrimination and the promotion of equal educational opportunity established an important legal foundation for the inclusive approach.

2.1.3. Strengthening the Children's Rights Perspective: 1989

The Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 20 November 1989, recognized the child not merely as an individual requiring protection but as a rights-holder. Article 28 addresses the child's right to education, while Article 29 sets out the aims of education. The Convention also establishes the principles of non-discrimination, the best interests of the child, the right to life and development, and respect for the child's views (United Nations, 1989).

This perspective contributed to two fundamental changes in inclusive education. First, children were no longer to be regarded as passive individuals who were merely subject to adult intervention in educational decision-making. Second, the right to education was linked to the development of each child's personality, abilities, and potential.

The principle of respect for the child's views requires teachers to value student participation in inclusive practice. Making decisions with students, rather than merely making decisions about them, is an integral part of inclusive education. Student perspectives constitute a fundamental source of information for understanding the support students need, the materials through which they learn most effectively, and the circumstances in which they feel excluded from the classroom.

2.1.4. The Education for All Movement: Jomtien, 1990

The World Declaration on Education for All and the Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs were adopted at the World Conference on Education for All, held in Jomtien, Thailand, from 5 to 9 March 1990. The Declaration emphasized that every individual should have access to educational opportunities

designed to meet their basic learning needs (World Conference on Education for All, 1990).

The Jomtien process broadened the focus of educational policy beyond enrolment rates to include educational quality and basic learning needs. Although access to education remained important, greater attention was directed towards what students learned at school and how they benefited from education.

This shift was significant for inclusive education. A student's enrolment in school does not demonstrate the full realization of the right to education if their basic learning needs remain unmet. The teacher's responsibility cannot therefore be limited to covering the curriculum; it also includes supporting students' participation in learning and their acquisition of fundamental skills.

2.1.5. Emphasis on Equal Participation: 1993

On 20 December 1993, through Resolution 48/96, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities. Comprising 22 rules, this framework sought to promote the equal participation of persons with disabilities in social life and guide the measures to be taken by states in this regard (United Nations, 1993).

The Standard Rules contributed to the development of the approach that would later become a binding human rights framework under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In education, the central orientation was to ensure that persons with disabilities could access educational opportunities on an equal basis with others and that the necessary support would be developed within the general education system.

2.1.6. The Salamanca Statement: 1994

One of the most significant milestones in the international expansion of inclusive education was the World Conference on Special Needs Education, held in Salamanca, Spain, from 7 to 10 June 1994. The conference resulted in the adoption of the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education.

The Salamanca Statement maintained that all children, regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic, or other characteristics, should be able to learn in shared educational settings. By emphasizing that schools should adapt to students' diverse needs, the document strengthened the transition from an approach focused on changing the student to one centred on transforming the education system (UNESCO, 1994).

The Salamanca Statement made the following principal contributions to the history of inclusive education:

1. It affirmed that general education schools should be open to all children.
2. It recognized student differences as a natural feature of the educational process.
3. It called for instructional methods and curricula to be adapted to students' needs.
4. It emphasized the importance of teacher education and support services.
5. It linked inclusive schools to efforts to combat discriminatory attitudes and build inclusive societies.

The Salamanca approach also transformed the teacher's role. Teachers were no longer viewed solely as individuals who transmitted the same content to every student but as professionals who differentiated learning, promoted collaboration among students, worked with families and specialists, and reduced barriers to participation.

The adoption of the Salamanca Statement did not, however, lead to the automatic realization of inclusive education in every country. Because legislation, funding, teacher education, school infrastructure, assessment systems, and social attitudes varied across countries, the extent to which the document was translated into practice also differed. Salamanca should therefore be regarded not as an endpoint but as a foundational starting point and shared commitment guiding the transformation of education systems.

2.1.7. The Dakar Framework for Action: 2000

The Dakar Framework for Action was adopted at the World Education Forum, held in Dakar, Senegal, from 26 to 28 April 2000. The Framework reaffirmed the Education for All movement initiated in Jomtien and established six global education goals to be achieved by 2015 (World Education Forum, 2000).

The Dakar process placed particular emphasis on early childhood education, free and compulsory primary education, the learning needs of young people and adults, adult literacy, gender equality, and educational quality. It thereby reinforced the understanding that inclusive education concerns not only access to school but also the quality of learning and inequalities within education systems.

An important implication of the Dakar Framework for teaching was its connection of educational goals with students' actual learning experiences. Although increasing enrolment rates was necessary, it was acknowledged that Education for All could not be achieved without improving the quality of classroom instruction and addressing the needs of disadvantaged students.

2.1.8. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: 2006

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 13 December 2006, is a legally binding international treaty that addresses disability within the framework of human rights and social participation. Article 24 establishes the right of persons with disabilities to education on the basis of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity and requires the provision of an inclusive education system at all levels and lifelong learning (United Nations, 2006).

The Convention seeks to ensure that students with disabilities are not excluded from the general education system on the basis of disability, can access education on an equal basis with others, and receive accommodations suited to their individual needs and the support they require.

This approach moved inclusive education beyond the status of an optional instructional model and connected it to human rights obligations. Failure to provide students with reasonable accommodation came to be regarded not merely as a pedagogical shortcoming but also as an issue of discrimination.

The implications of the Convention for teaching practice are evident in teachers' responsibilities to prepare accessible materials, consider students' communication needs, adapt instruction and assessment, provide support without separating students from their peers, and collaborate with specialists when necessary.

2.1.9. Conceptualizing Inclusion as Systemic Transformation: 2016

In 2016, the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities published General Comment No. 4 on the right to inclusive education, providing a detailed interpretation of Article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The General Comment distinguished among exclusion, segregation, integration, and inclusion and stated that inclusive education requires comprehensive transformation across educational cultures, policies, and practices (Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016).

According to the General Comment, placing students in general education classrooms without making any structural changes is insufficient to achieve inclusion. Curricula, instructional methods, assessment processes, and physical environments must be arranged to respond to learner diversity.

This clarification demonstrates that inclusive education cannot be used synonymously with mainstreaming or integration. Whereas integration may require students to adapt to the existing system, inclusion requires the system itself to be transformed so that it supports all students.

2.1.10. Education 2030, the Incheon Declaration, and the Sustainable Development Goals

The Education 2030 Incheon Declaration was adopted following the World Education Forum held in Incheon, Republic of Korea, in May 2015. The Declaration reaffirmed the Education for All movement initiated in Jomtien and continued in Dakar and adopted the objective of inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all (UNESCO, 2015).

In the same year, Sustainable Development Goal 4 of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development called for ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all (United Nations, 2015). Its targets address not only access to different levels of education but also the elimination of gender disparities, equal access for vulnerable groups, safe and inclusive learning environments, and an increased supply of qualified teachers.

Following these developments, inclusion came to be understood not as a separate subfield within education systems but as a fundamental condition of quality education. An education system that is of high quality but benefits only certain students is not inclusive. Similarly, a system that is accessible to all students but does not produce effective learning fails to fulfil the aims of inclusive education. Inclusion, equity, and quality must therefore be considered together.

2.1.11. Contemporary Directions in Inclusive Education

Contemporary approaches to inclusive education are moving from incorporating particular groups of students into the existing system towards transforming the entire education system in response to learner diversity. UNESCO's 2020 Global Education Monitoring Report demonstrates that exclusion is not limited to disability but may also be associated with poverty, language, ethnicity, migration, displacement, gender, geographical location, and other characteristics (UNESCO, 2020).

Accordingly, the principal characteristics of contemporary inclusive education include:

- Applying inclusion to all students;
- Avoiding the attribution of barriers to learning solely to the student;
- Valuing students' perspectives and experiences;
- Making educational environments accessible;
- Differentiating instruction;
- Assessing student development through multiple means;
- Strengthening family and community participation;

- Developing teachers' competencies in inclusive education;
- Monitoring the relationship between educational policies and classroom practices;
- Considering intersecting and multiple forms of disadvantage.

The adoption of international instruments does not, however, mean that exclusion has been eliminated in practice. Discrepancies between legislation and implementation, inadequate teacher education, shortages of accessible materials, overcrowded classrooms, limited support services, and discriminatory attitudes may hinder the realization of inclusive education. Inclusive education should therefore be understood not as an achieved and completed state but as a process requiring continuous evaluation and improvement.

2.1.12. Implications of the Historical Process for the Teaching Profession

The historical development of inclusive education has significantly transformed how the teaching profession conceptualizes students, instruction, and professional responsibility. It must nevertheless be emphasized that this transformation has been neither linear nor complete. Although the fundamental principles of inclusive education are now widely accepted, approaches that standardize students, explain difficulties solely through individual characteristics, and base instruction on uniform practices continue to exist within education systems. Historical development should therefore be understood not as the complete disappearance of one approach and its replacement by another, but as a shift in direction that has prompted the values, responsibilities, and practices underpinning the teaching profession to be reconsidered.

Traditional approaches to teaching assumed that students of the same age or grade level possessed similar learning characteristics; curricula, instructional materials, and assessment practices were consequently organized according to the needs of the majority. Within this structure, students who could not keep pace with the prescribed instructional process were often regarded as exceptions existing outside the main group. The inclusive approach, by contrast, recognizes learner diversity not as a problem to be resolved after instruction but as a starting condition of teaching. Students may differ in their readiness, interests, linguistic and cultural characteristics, pace of learning, modes of communication, and support needs. Recognizing these differences requires teachers to understand the diversity within their classrooms and plan instruction accordingly rather than expecting every student to behave and learn in the same way. For this reason, the Profile of Inclusive Teachers identifies the recognition of student differences not as a problem that diminishes educational quality but as a resource capable of

enriching the learning environment and, therefore, as a fundamental professional value (European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, 2012).

Another implication of this historical transformation for the teaching profession concerns how students' difficulties are explained. Earlier approaches centred on individual deficits associated learning difficulties primarily with students' impairments, lack of motivation, or limitations. Within the inclusive approach, however, difficulty is examined through the interaction between the student and the educational environment. Teachers therefore consider not only what students cannot do but also the linguistic complexity of the texts used, the clarity of instructions, the structure of activities, the accessibility of materials, forms of classroom communication, and assessment conditions. UNESCO emphasizes that teacher education should move away from approaches that locate the problem within the student and towards identifying barriers to learning (UNESCO, 2020). This shift requires teachers to move from being practitioners who seek to change the student to reflective professionals who critically examine and improve the instructional environment.

The assumption that students must adapt to the curriculum has also been reconsidered through the development of inclusive education. Although the curriculum establishes a shared direction for all students in inclusive teaching, the pathways through which its objectives are achieved are not expected to be uniform. Teachers may adapt how content is presented, the level of difficulty of activities, the materials used, the time available for learning, and the means through which students express their learning. Such flexibility does not mean developing an entirely separate programme for every student or rendering academic objectives ambiguous. The essential aim is to preserve shared learning objectives while reducing instructional constraints that prevent students from accessing them. Rather than relying on special practices added retrospectively for particular students, inclusive pedagogy seeks to develop learning options from the outset that make participation possible for everyone (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011).

This development has also changed assumptions about the scope of teachers' responsibilities. The belief that educating students who experience learning difficulties or require specialized support is solely the responsibility of special education professionals, school counsellors, or other support staff is incompatible with inclusive education. Although specialist support remains important, the subject teacher retains primary responsibility for the student's daily learning experience. Teachers are not expected to make diagnoses or undertake interventions beyond their area of expertise. They are, however, expected to observe students systematically, identify barriers to learning, implement the

necessary classroom arrangements, and collaborate with specialists. Competence in collaborating with colleagues, families, and education professionals from different areas of expertise is defined as a core competency of inclusive teachers (European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2022). Inclusion therefore requires teachers not to transfer their responsibilities to specialists but to integrate the support provided through different forms of expertise into classroom instruction.

Changes in conceptions of teaching have also influenced how equality and equity are interpreted in the classroom. Providing all students with the same content, within the same period, and through the same method was long regarded as an indicator of fair instruction. The inclusive approach demonstrates, however, that identical practices may not produce equitable outcomes for students with different starting conditions. Teachers' understanding of fairness has consequently expanded from giving everyone the same provision to providing the support students need to exercise their right to learn effectively. Maintaining high and meaningful academic expectations for students remains important; however, students may be offered additional time, accessible materials, visual support, clarified instructions, scaffolded tasks, or different options for participation to enable them to meet those expectations. A recent study based on teachers' views in Türkiye similarly characterizes inclusive teachers as professionals who respect differences, prevent discrimination, consider students' needs, and use materials that represent diversity (Oğlakçı & Amaç, 2024).

The historical development of inclusive education has also shifted assessment from the measurement of a single outcome towards the monitoring of learning processes. Assessing every student's achievement through the same examination, within the same period, and using the same response format may not always provide a valid representation of their knowledge and skills. Provided that the assessment remains aligned with the intended learning objective, inclusive teachers may therefore enable students to demonstrate their learning through oral, written, visual, practical, or digital means. Feedback provided throughout the learning process, student work, observations, and performance-based tasks can be used not merely to assign a final score but also to plan subsequent instruction. Assessment thus moves from being a tool for classifying students to becoming a process that supports learning and informs instructional decisions.

The student's position within educational decision-making is another important dimension of this transformation. Whereas decisions concerning students' needs, achievement, or educational futures were traditionally made predominantly by adults, the inclusive approach recognizes student perspectives as valid components of decision-making. Instructional quality may be enhanced

by providing students with opportunities to explain the conditions under which they learn most effectively, the materials they can use, the activities in which they feel safe, and the forms of support they require. Involving students in decisions about their own learning does not mean that teachers relinquish their professional responsibility. On the contrary, teachers can make more informed decisions by considering students' views alongside pedagogical knowledge and observational evidence. This represents a transition from making decisions about students to making decisions with them.

This historical transformation is particularly significant for Turkish language teachers. Because language is both the subject of study and the principal medium through which students participate in other subjects, Turkish language lessons have a direct influence on students' educational experiences. The texts selected by Turkish language teachers, the instructions they provide, the ways in which they distribute opportunities to speak, their responses to students' answers, and their attitudes towards different forms of language use can shape students' classroom participation and sense of belonging. Inclusive Turkish language teachers should therefore regard their professional responsibilities as encompassing not only the development of students' reading, listening, speaking, and writing skills but also the identification of linguistic, cultural, affective, and instructional barriers that restrict the use of those skills.

Inclusion in Turkish language lessons requires selecting texts that provide balanced representations of different cultures, lived experiences, and identities; supporting texts through accessible modes of presentation; and enabling students to demonstrate their language skills in different ways. Allowing a student to listen to a text, use a visual outline before writing, receive preparation time before a speaking activity, or use computer-assisted writing tools may improve the conditions for participation without removing the intended learning objective. Similarly, rather than treating every linguistic error made by a student learning Turkish as an additional language as evidence of deficiency, inclusive teaching requires monitoring the student's language development, providing comprehensible input, and supporting meaning-making. Research demonstrates that accessible materials which represent diversity and respond to students' needs are as influential as teacher attitudes in developing inclusive classrooms (Oğlakçı & Amaç, 2024).

As a result of this historical process, teachers have come to be positioned not merely as individuals who transmit the curriculum and measure student achievement but as professionals who design learning environments, respond to learner diversity, collaborate with others, critically examine their own practices, and take action when necessary to change the conditions of the educational

environment. Nevertheless, responsibility for inclusion should not be placed solely on individual teachers. Teachers' ability to develop inclusive practices depends on the availability of appropriate instructional materials, accessible physical and digital environments, sufficient time, specialist support, a collaborative school culture, and opportunities for continuous professional learning. Recognizing teachers as central actors in inclusion does not mean making them solely responsible for overcoming systemic shortcomings. Rather, it means supporting their professional judgement, capacity for collaboration, and ability to effect change. From this perspective, teachers are not passive implementers of inclusive education principles but active agents of transformation towards inclusion and social justice (Pantić & Florian, 2015).

2.2. Historical Development of Inclusive Education in Türkiye

The historical development of inclusive education in Türkiye cannot be explained solely by the introduction of the term “inclusive education” into official documents. Understanding this process requires the combined examination of the development of special education institutions, the expansion of compulsory education, the strengthening of the principle of equality in education, the establishment of a legal framework for mainstreaming practices, and the recognition of disability as a human rights issue.

In subsequent years, migration, temporary protection, poverty, linguistic diversity, and other groups of students experiencing barriers to education became increasingly visible within the scope of inclusive education policies. The debate on inclusive education in Türkiye consequently expanded from the placement of students with special educational needs in general education settings towards the pursuit of an education system capable of responding to broader learner diversity.

This process should not be regarded as linear or complete. Special education schools, special education classrooms, mainstreaming practices, and inclusive education initiatives may coexist during the same period. Discrepancies may also arise between the principles established in legislation and practices implemented in schools. Historical development must therefore be evaluated not only through enacted regulations but also through the ways in which those regulations are reflected in instructional environments.

The institutional history of special education in Türkiye extends to the final period of the Ottoman Empire. Sources from the Ministry of National Education indicate that a class for students with hearing impairments was opened in 1889 within the School of Commerce in Istanbul and that students with visual impairments were subsequently included in this educational provision. This

initiative is regarded as one of the earliest institutional examples of education for persons with disabilities in Türkiye (Ministry of National Education, 2003).

Unlike contemporary inclusive education, practices during this period developed as separate educational arrangements for particular disability groups. Nevertheless, they are historically significant because they provided institutional education to individuals who had previously been entirely excluded from education.

During this initial period in the history of special education, educational provision developed primarily through the establishment of separate institutions for particular groups of students rather than by bringing students together in common schools. This orientation resembles the early development of special education in other parts of the world.

2.2.1. The Early Years of the Republic

Following the establishment of the Republic, state regulation, expansion, and universal provision of education became fundamental objectives. Nevertheless, services for individuals with special educational needs continued for many years to be delivered through a limited number of separate schools and institutions.

Sources from the Ministry of National Education indicate that a private school for deaf and blind students was opened in İzmir in 1921 and subsequently continued its activities under public administration (Ministry of National Education, 2025). This institutional development contributed to the recognition of education for students with special educational needs as a public responsibility.

The predominant approach during this period involved providing specialized education to different disability groups. Students' participation in general education settings and the transformation of the education system in response to diversity had not yet become central policy objectives. Nevertheless, the development of special education institutions laid the foundation for recognizing the need for teacher education and professional specialization.

2.2.2. Compulsory Education and the Expansion of the Right to Education: 1961

The Primary Education and Education Law No. 222, adopted on 5 January 1961, is one of the foundational legal instruments governing primary education and the implementation of compulsory schooling. The Law was published in Official Gazette No. 10705 on 12 January 1961 (Primary Education and Education Law, 1961). The Ministry of National Education's legislation register also confirms the date and issue number of its publication.

Strengthening the principle of compulsory education was an important development in bringing more children into the education system. Expanding access to education, however, does not necessarily mean that all students receive education of equal quality or education suited to their needs. From an inclusive perspective, access is necessary but insufficient on its own.

The historical significance of Law No. 222 lies in its contribution to institutionalizing the state's responsibility to provide primary education to every child. From the perspective of inclusive education, however, the central issue concerns the forms of support available to students with diverse characteristics once they enter compulsory education in shared educational settings. Subsequent special education regulations provided more detailed responses to this need.

2.2.3. The Basic Law of National Education: 1973

The Basic Law of National Education No. 1739, adopted on 14 June 1973 and published in Official Gazette No. 14574 on 24 June 1973, established the general aims and principles of the Turkish national education system.

Article 4 states that educational institutions are open to everyone without discrimination based on language, race, sex, disability, or religion. Article 8 provides for equality of educational opportunity and provision for both women and men (Basic Law of National Education, 1973).

These principles are important to the legal foundations of inclusive education in Türkiye. The principles of universality and equality require non-discrimination in admission to educational institutions, while equality of opportunity and provision requires the creation of conditions that enable students to benefit from education.

Equality, however, should not be understood merely as providing every student with identical opportunities. When students have different starting conditions and needs, they may require different forms of support to exercise their right to education effectively. Inclusive education requires the principle of equality established in the Basic Law of National Education to be interpreted alongside the provision of equitable support.

2.2.4. The Constitutional Framework: The 1982 Constitution

Article 42 of the Constitution of the Republic of Türkiye states that no one shall be deprived of the right to education and learning. The same article requires the state to take measures for individuals who need special education because of their circumstances (Constitution of the Republic of Türkiye, 1982).

Article 42 treats the right to education not merely as a liberty requiring non-interference by the state but as a social right that requires the state to establish the

necessary conditions. The requirement to take measures for individuals needing special education also demonstrates the state's positive obligation in this area.

The article's emphasis on "making individuals useful to society," however, does not reflect the same perspective as contemporary rights-based language on inclusive education. Under the current inclusive approach, an individual's value is not determined by their perceived usefulness to society. Participation in education derives from the individual's inherent human dignity and equal rights. This illustrates how the language employed in legal texts may reflect historically specific understandings of disability.

2.2.5. Law No. 2916 on Children in Need of Special Education: 1983

Law No. 2916 on Children in Need of Special Education, adopted in 1983, represented an important stage in establishing a coherent legal framework for special education services in Türkiye. The Law established a framework for the development and education of children requiring special education, their preparation for social life, and the allocation of responsibilities among relevant institutions.

Through this legislation, special education services became a more clearly defined public responsibility. Progress was made towards systematically addressing educational identification and assessment, placement, special education institutions, and support services.

Nevertheless, the concepts and practices of the period remained largely centred on classifying students according to the type of impairment. The emphasis was placed on identifying the appropriate form of service for students requiring special education rather than transforming the general education environment. This approach would change substantially through subsequent debates on mainstreaming and inclusion.

2.2.6. Decree-Law No. 573 on Special Education: 1997

Decree-Law No. 573 on Special Education, dated 30 May 1997, was published in supplementary Official Gazette No. 23011 on 6 June 1997. Its purpose was to regulate the principles governing the rights of individuals requiring special education to benefit from general and vocational education (Decree-Law on Special Education, 1997).

Decree-Law No. 573 occupies an important place in the development of the contemporary structure of special education services in Türkiye. It emphasized principles including:

- Beginning special education at an early stage;
- Planning special education services according to individual differences;

- Developing individualized education programmes;
- Involving families in the special education process;
- Educating individuals requiring special education alongside their peers to the greatest extent possible;
- Providing educational assessment, identification, and placement services;
- Establishing collaboration between general and special education.

One of the significant features of the Decree-Law was its establishment of mainstreaming as a central form of special education provision. It recognized that students should be educated in general education settings and receive education appropriate to their individual needs.

The individualized education programme also became one of the principal instruments defining teachers' responsibilities. Adapting general curricular objectives according to students' performance and needs required teachers to understand their students, monitor their development, and collaborate with other professionals.

2.2.7. The Law on Persons with Disabilities: 2005

The Law on Persons with Disabilities No. 5378, adopted on 1 July 2005, was published in Official Gazette No. 25868 on 7 July 2005. The Law established a framework intended to enable persons with disabilities to exercise fundamental rights and freedoms on an equal basis with others and to participate fully and effectively in society (Law on Persons with Disabilities, 2005).

The current version of the Law, as amended over time, incorporates rights-based concepts such as direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, reasonable accommodation, and accessibility. These concepts also have important implications for educational services.

Reasonable accommodation requires necessary and appropriate modifications to enable students to exercise their right to education on an equal basis with others. In Turkish language lessons, such accommodations may include:

- Presenting texts in accessible formats;
- Providing visual or auditory support;
- Allowing additional time;
- Using alternative response formats;
- Modifying classroom seating arrangements;
- Providing access to assistive technologies;
- Simplifying or sequencing instructional directions.

These accommodations are not intended to confer an advantage on the student. They seek to reduce the barriers the student encounters and enable the effective exercise of the right to education.

2.2.8. Türkiye's Ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Türkiye signed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on 30 March 2007. Ratification of the Convention was approved through Law No. 5825, dated 3 December 2008. Following the completion of the ratification process, the Convention became binding on Türkiye on 28 October 2009 (Ministry of Family and Social Services, n.d.).

Article 24 of the Convention requires States Parties to establish an inclusive education system at all levels. It created an international obligation for Türkiye to ensure that students with disabilities are not excluded from the general education system on the basis of disability, can access the support they require, and benefit from accommodations appropriate to their individual needs.

Ratification of the Convention strengthened the transition from an approach to special education based primarily on care and service provision towards one grounded in equality, non-discrimination, accessibility, human dignity, and social participation.

2.2.9. Special Education Services Regulations

The procedures and principles governing the implementation of Decree-Law No. 573 were elaborated through special education regulations issued at different times. The Special Education Services Regulation, published in Official Gazette No. 26184 on 31 May 2006, introduced comprehensive provisions concerning educational assessment and identification, referral, placement, individualized education programmes, mainstreaming practices, and support education services.

A new Special Education Services Regulation, prepared in response to changing needs, was published in Official Gazette No. 30471 on 7 July 2018 and entered into force on that date (Ministry of National Education, 2018).

The Regulation addresses the provision of special education services, educational assessment, placement, education through mainstreaming and integration, individualized education programmes, support education rooms, and special education classrooms. The current version published by the relevant public authority indicates that the Regulation is based on Laws No. 222, 1739, and 5378 and Decree-Law No. 573.

In education through mainstreaming and integration, it is important not only for students to share the same environment as their peers but also to benefit from

appropriate support education services. Teachers' responsibilities are therefore not limited to admitting students to the classroom. They also include determining students' educational performance, contributing to the development of individualized education programmes, implementing necessary instructional adaptations, and monitoring student development.

2.2.10. The Transition from Mainstreaming to Inclusive Education

Debates concerning the participation of students with special educational needs in general education settings in Türkiye developed for many years around the concept of “mainstreaming education” (kaynaştırma eğitimi). Following the introduction of the term “integration” (bütünleştirme), official documents generally adopted the expression “education through mainstreaming/integration” (kaynaştırma/bütünleştirme yoluyla eğitim). Nevertheless, distinctions among mainstreaming, integration, and inclusive education have not always been clearly established in either academic publications or educational practice. A recent systematic review of studies published in Türkiye between 2000 and 2024 demonstrates that these concepts are frequently used interchangeably and that their English equivalents also vary considerably. This is not merely a matter of word choice but a conceptual ambiguity that affects the scope of the transformation expected of education systems (Hazır et al., 2026).

Education through mainstreaming/integration represents an important stage in the development of special education services in Türkiye. The Special Education Services Regulation defines this practice as the full-time education of individuals with special educational needs alongside their peers or their part-time education in special education classrooms, with support education services intended to promote reciprocal interaction with others and enable them to achieve educational objectives to the greatest possible extent. The Regulation also requires individualized education programmes to be prepared for students receiving education through mainstreaming/integration, appropriate environmental arrangements to be made, support education services to be provided, and necessary measures to be implemented in assessment processes according to students' characteristics (Ministry of National Education [MoNE], 2018).

In view of this legal framework, it would be inaccurate to define education through mainstreaming/integration solely as the placement of a student in a general education classroom. At the legislative level, mainstreaming/integration encompasses individualized education programmes, support services, instructional adaptations, and assessment arrangements. When a student is placed in a classroom but does not receive the required support, the problem therefore concerns the quality of implementation rather than the definition of

mainstreaming itself. The Ministry of National Education's National Action Plan for Educational Practices through Mainstreaming/Integration similarly states that physically bringing students together with their peers is insufficient on its own and that practices which fail to provide appropriate support services to students and teachers cannot move beyond physical co-presence (MoNE, 2022).

The principal distinction between mainstreaming/integration and inclusive education concerns not whether students occupy the same setting but how the education system responds to differences. The United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities describes integration as placing students with disabilities within existing general education institutions, accompanied by certain adjustments, whereas inclusion requires the systematic transformation of educational cultures, policies, and practices to respond to all students. Under integration, the fundamental structure of the educational environment may remain largely intact, and the student may be expected to adapt to it. Inclusion, by contrast, does not stop at admitting students despite their differences; it questions whether the system itself responds adequately to learner diversity (Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016).

Another distinction between the two approaches concerns the scope of the student population considered. Mainstreaming/integration regulations in Türkiye primarily address students formally identified through educational assessment as having special educational needs. Inclusive education, however, concerns the access, participation, learning, and belonging of all students, irrespective of any diagnosis or formal assessment decision. In addition to disability and special educational needs, it encompasses numerous circumstances that may affect students' educational experiences, including migration, poverty, linguistic and cultural differences, social exclusion, chronic illness, learning difficulties, giftedness, and irregular school attendance. Recent studies demonstrate that the population addressed by inclusion has expanded over time from particular disability groups to all students and that the focus of intervention has shifted from individual accommodations to systemic transformation (Kazancı & Çeliköz, 2025).

In mainstreaming/integration practices, support and adaptations are generally planned after a student has been identified as having special educational needs. The inclusive approach, by contrast, prioritizes the creation of accessible and flexible instructional environments before students experience learning difficulties. Inclusive instruction therefore seeks to prepare texts, directions, activities, digital content, and assessment instruments from the outset for use by the broadest possible range of students. Preventive and flexible instructional design does not, however, eliminate the need for individualized support. Some

students may require additional time, assistive technology, alternative materials, individualized instruction, or specialist support beyond general arrangements. Inclusive education treats shared and accessible design and student-specific accommodations not as competing alternatives but as complementary practices.

The transition to inclusive education also requires changes in how responsibility is shared. In mainstreaming practices, a student's education may sometimes be viewed as the responsibility of the special education teacher, school counsellor, or teacher working in the support education room. Under an inclusive approach, the classroom or subject teacher, school administration, special education professionals, psychological counsellors, families, and other stakeholders share responsibility for the student's participation and learning. This shared responsibility does not eliminate distinctions among areas of expertise. Subject teachers remain responsible for classroom instruction, specialists provide the support needed by students and teachers, and school administrators create the time, space, and resources required for collaboration. Inclusion can thereby become embedded in the culture and operation of the entire school rather than being left to the efforts of individual teachers.

The quality of the transition from mainstreaming to inclusive education should be evaluated not by whether a student is present at school but by how that student participates in school life. Although it is important for a student with special educational needs to be educated in the same classroom as their peers, physical co-presence does not become genuine educational participation if the student cannot access instructional materials, participate in group work, contribute to classroom discussions, or demonstrate their learning through an appropriate means. Similarly, a school's admission of diverse groups of students does not constitute inclusion if those students encounter low expectations, labelling, or exclusion from social relationships. The principal criterion for this transition is therefore not where students are educated but whether they have opportunities to learn, interact, express themselves, and become valued members of the classroom in that setting.

This transformation is particularly important for Turkish language teaching. Education through mainstreaming/integration seeks to ensure that students with special educational needs participate in Turkish language lessons alongside their peers and receive individualized support when necessary. Inclusive Turkish language teaching goes further by examining barriers that may restrict any student's participation in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Instructional accommodations for a student learning Turkish as an additional language, experiencing reading difficulties, requiring visually or auditorily accessible materials, or finding oral expression difficult should not always depend on a

formal diagnosis. By observing students' classroom performance, teachers can use accessible texts, audio and digital content, visual support, sequenced instructions, and different options for expression.

Inclusive Turkish language teachers also examine how learner diversity is represented in the texts they select, whether discriminatory or exclusionary expressions arise in classroom discourse, and whether assessment formats enable students to demonstrate their language skills validly. Instructional arrangements thereby cease to be retrospective additions made only for particular students and become part of the general planning of Turkish language lessons. Student-specific support is maintained for those who require it, while a flexible learning environment is created in which every student can participate in shared activities.

In conclusion, the transition from mainstreaming to inclusive education does not entail rejecting or devaluing mainstreaming practices. Education through mainstreaming/integration provides an important foundation for inclusive education by recognizing the right of students with special educational needs to learn alongside their peers and connecting support services with general education. Inclusive education preserves these achievements while expanding the population addressed to include all students and broadening the focus of intervention from the individual student to the classroom, school culture, curriculum, instructional materials, assessment, and educational policy. This transition should therefore be understood as a comprehensive shift from placing students within the existing system to transforming the education system so that it responds to learner diversity.

2.2.11. Expansion of the Inclusive Education Agenda Following Migration

The scope of debates on inclusive education in Türkiye expanded, particularly through the large-scale migration movements experienced during the 2010s. The participation of Syrian children under temporary protection in the education system made new needs visible in areas such as access to education, learning Turkish, school adjustment, academic assessment, peer relationships, and family participation.

The Project on Promoting the Integration of Syrian Children into the Turkish Education System, implemented by the Ministry of National Education with financial support from the European Union since 2016, moved towards a broader inclusive education framework in its subsequent phases. The project sought to provide foreign-national children with access to quality education, develop their Turkish language skills, and support their social integration (PIKTES, n.d.).

This process clearly demonstrated that inclusive education cannot be addressed solely in the context of disability or special education. A student who

is not yet proficient in the language of instruction may require language support to access lesson content, while a student who has experienced migration and displacement may need social and emotional support in addition to academic assistance.

Turkish language teachers assume a particularly important responsibility in this process. For students, Turkish is not merely a school subject but one of the principal means of participating in other lessons, developing friendships, expressing their needs, and experiencing a sense of belonging to the school community. The student's home language and cultural identity, however, should not be presented as barriers or deficiencies. Turkish language instruction should respect students' identities and build on, rather than disregard, their existing linguistic repertoires.

2.2.12. Teacher Education and Professional Development

The success of inclusive education in practice is closely related to teachers' knowledge, skills, attitudes, and access to support. The Ministry of National Education's 2017–2023 Teacher Strategy Paper addressed initial teacher education and professional development as an interconnected whole and established a roadmap for developing teacher competencies (Ministry of National Education, 2017).

From the perspective of inclusive education, teacher education should encompass the following areas:

- Understanding learner diversity;
- Recognizing personal biases and stereotypes;
- Identifying barriers to learning;
- Differentiating instruction;
- Preparing accessible materials;
- Contributing to individualized education programmes;
- Implementing inclusive assessment;
- Collaborating with families and specialists;
- Supporting students learning Turkish as an additional language;
- Strengthening peer relationships and students' sense of classroom belonging.

The inclusion of a single course on inclusive education within teacher education programmes is insufficient. Inclusion should be integrated into courses on instructional methods, material design, classroom management, assessment, and subject-specific pedagogy. Preservice Turkish language teachers should

likewise be able to evaluate the teaching of fundamental language skills in relation to diverse student needs.

2.2.13. Current Challenges in Inclusive Education in Türkiye

Türkiye has introduced significant legal regulations concerning the right to education, special education services, mainstreaming, and accessibility. Nevertheless, various difficulties may arise when translating legislation into classroom practice.

The principal areas of concern include:

- Treating the placement of a student in a general education classroom as sufficient for mainstreaming;
- Failing to develop individualized education programmes in a functional manner;
- Providing teachers with insufficient support for implementing adaptations;
- Overcrowded classrooms;
- Disparities in access to support education services;
- Insufficient accessibility of instructional materials;
- Interpreting the linguistic needs of students learning Turkish as an additional language as evidence of academic deficiency;
- Labelling students and subjecting them to low expectations;
- Failing to establish effective collaboration with families;
- Disparities in resources and opportunities among schools;
- Gaps between legislative provisions and classroom practices.

These challenges cannot be resolved solely through the efforts of individual teachers. School administrations, guidance and research centres, support services, teacher education institutions, and educational policies must be addressed alongside the teacher's role.

2.2.14. Implications of the Historical Process for Turkish Language Teachers

The historical transition from special education to inclusive education in Türkiye has expanded the responsibilities of Turkish language teachers. Turkish language teachers are now responsible not only for developing the language skills specified in the curriculum but also for enabling students with diverse characteristics to access those skills.

The classroom implications of these responsibilities include:

1. Identifying students' initial linguistic and academic levels;
2. Avoiding the interpretation of learning Turkish as an additional language as a cognitive impairment;
3. Providing appropriate support to students experiencing reading and writing difficulties;
4. Making visual, auditory, and digital materials accessible;
5. Enabling students to use different options for oral and written expression;
6. Ensuring that diverse identities and lived experiences are represented in a balanced manner when selecting texts;
7. Intervening in discriminatory, labelling, and othering language;
8. Evaluating students' development in terms of their individual progress rather than solely through comparisons with peers;
9. Collaborating with families, guidance and counselling services, and special education professionals;
10. Incorporating student perspectives into instructional and accommodation-related decisions.

Legal developments in Türkiye require teachers to regard these practices not as matters of personal goodwill but as requirements arising from the right to education and their professional responsibilities.

CHAPTER 4

4. Learner Diversity Addressed by Inclusive Education

Every classroom is diverse in terms of students' developmental characteristics, prior learning, interests, abilities, languages, cultural experiences, family structures, and learning needs. Learner diversity is therefore not an exceptional circumstance encountered only in certain schools or classrooms; it is one of the fundamental realities of teaching.

Traditional approaches to education often organize instruction around the assumption that students within a particular age group can learn in similar ways and at similar rates. Students who fall outside this assumption may be regarded as “deficient,” “unsuccessful,” “maladjusted,” or “behind.” Inclusive education, by contrast, does not treat student differences as problems in themselves. Instead, it examines the relationship between students' characteristics and the expectations of the educational environment.

According to UNESCO's 2020 Global Education Monitoring Report, exclusion from education may be associated with disability, poverty, language, ethnicity, migration or displacement, gender, age, belief, geographical location, and various identity characteristics (UNESCO, 2020). Inclusive education must therefore be based on a broad understanding that encompasses every student, irrespective of identity, background, or ability.

A fundamental distinction in relation to learner diversity is that between a difference and a barrier. Being bilingual, coming from a different cultural background, having a physical impairment, or learning a subject more quickly than one's peers is a student characteristic. Such a characteristic may become a barrier to participation or learning when the educational environment fails to respond to the student's needs.

For example, a student with a hearing impairment who cannot follow classroom discourse should not be understood solely in terms of the student's hearing. The teacher's failure to face the student while speaking, the absence of visual support, classroom noise, and the lack of appropriate technological assistance may all contribute to the difficulty.

Instead of asking, “What kind of deficit does the student have?”, an inclusive approach asks: “Which conditions impede the student's participation and learning, and how can those conditions be changed?”

Certain classifications may be necessary to identify students' needs, plan educational support, and enable access to particular rights. Educational assessment and identification may facilitate students' access to appropriate services and help teachers implement needs-based arrangements.

A category or diagnosis, however, does not explain every characteristic of a student. Students with the same diagnosis may differ substantially in their language skills, interests, rates of learning, family support, prior educational experiences, and required accommodations. Teachers should therefore not make decisions about students solely on the basis of diagnostic information.

Labelling may create the following risks:

- Developing low expectations of the student's achievement;
- Overlooking the student's strengths;
- Attributing every difficulty to the diagnosis;
- Separating the student unnecessarily from their peers;
- Making decisions on the student's behalf without seeking their views;
- Defining the student through a single characteristic;
- Interpreting a temporary difficulty as an immutable impairment.

Inclusive teachers do not reject diagnostic or categorical information. They use it to understand the support a student requires rather than to impose limitations on that student.

The following questions are more useful when teachers evaluate students' educational needs:

1. What can the student do independently?
2. Under which circumstances does the student require support?
3. Which materials and instructional approaches facilitate the student's learning?
4. What are the student's interests and strengths?
5. Which forms of support does the student consider helpful?
6. Which barriers within the classroom environment can be changed?

4.1. Students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Special educational need is a broad concept referring to a student's need for support that differs from or supplements the instructional opportunities provided to peers so that the student can access education, participate in learning, and continue to develop. Such needs may relate to vision, hearing, mobility, communication, cognitive development, attention, learning, self-regulation, emotional development, or health. Special educational need and disability, however, are not synonymous. A student with a disability may require particular forms of educational support, but not every student with special educational needs can be defined as having a disability. For example, a student who requires support with attendance and energy management because of a chronic illness or differentiated instruction because of advanced performance in a particular area

may also have special educational needs. This section addresses needs associated with vision, hearing, mobility, communication, and cognitive development, as well as autism and multiple disabilities. Students with specific learning difficulties are examined in detail in the following section.

The medical model explains disability primarily as a deficit located within an individual's body, senses, or cognitive functioning and largely attributes educational failure to the student. By emphasizing the functions the student cannot perform, this approach may overlook barriers created by the curriculum, instructional materials, teaching methods, physical environment, and classroom attitudes. Rights-based and interactional approaches, by contrast, understand disability through the interaction between individual characteristics and inaccessible environments, inflexible instructional arrangements, and discriminatory attitudes. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities guarantees that persons with disabilities will not be excluded from the general education system, will have access to quality inclusive education on an equal basis with others, and will receive the individualized support and reasonable accommodations they require. The Convention also explicitly recognizes the importance of Braille, sign languages, alternative scripts, and augmentative and alternative communication in realizing the right to education (United Nations, 2006).

The United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities similarly emphasizes that inclusive education cannot be achieved merely by physically placing students with disabilities in existing classrooms. Inclusion requires educational cultures, policies, curricula, materials, assessment processes, and support services to be transformed to enable the effective participation of all students. A student's presence in a general education classroom is therefore necessary but insufficient. Students cannot be considered to exercise their right to education on an equal basis if they cannot access texts, follow classroom communication, use an appropriate means of expression, or demonstrate their knowledge because of assessment barriers unrelated to the intended construct (Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016).

UNICEF Innocenti's 2026 report, which considers system-level data from six countries alongside the experiences of students, families, teachers, and administrators and the relevant literature, similarly demonstrates that exclusion is not inevitable. The opportunities for children with disabilities to participate and learn can be improved when their needs are recognized, teachers are supported, materials and environments are made accessible, and inclusion is strengthened through adequate resources (UNICEF Innocenti, 2026).

In Türkiye, the 2018 Special Education Services Regulation governs educational assessment and identification, education through mainstreaming/integration, support education services, and individualized education programmes for students with special educational needs. The Regulation establishes that students should be directed to settings suited to their educational needs and educated alongside their peers to the greatest possible extent (Ministry of National Education [MoNE], 2018). From the perspective of inclusion, however, the decisive issue is how instruction is organized after the student has been placed in the classroom. An individualized education programme (IEP) should not be treated merely as a document that must be completed for administrative purposes. It should function as a dynamic planning instrument connecting the student's current performance, long- and short-term objectives, required support, instructional methods, and assessment criteria. MoNE's IEP guide for teachers similarly states that preparing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating the programme requires collaborative teamwork (MoNE, 2022).

In inclusive instruction, accessibility, Universal Design for Learning, reasonable accommodation, and individualized education are complementary but distinct structures. Accessibility involves preparing physical and digital environments for independent use by the broadest possible range of users. Universal Design for Learning requires instruction to be planned from the outset with multiple means of engagement, representation, and expression. Reasonable accommodation encompasses individualized and appropriate modifications required to ensure a particular student's equal participation. An IEP provides for the systematic planning of performance-based objectives and individualized support. For example, preparing all digital texts to be compatible with screen readers reflects accessibility and universal design; providing Braille materials to a particular student with a visual impairment constitutes reasonable accommodation; and planning that student's reading and writing objectives according to current performance forms part of the IEP process.

Reasonable accommodation does not mean arbitrarily lowering academic expectations. It means reducing barriers unrelated to the intended knowledge or skill that prevent students from demonstrating what they know and can do. Under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, denying a required reasonable accommodation constitutes a form of disability-based discrimination (United Nations, 2006).

The Universal Design for Learning Guidelines updated by CAST in 2024 recommend providing multiple options that enable students to engage with and sustain participation in lessons, perceive information through different means,

and express their learning using different tools. The updated version draws attention not only to individual differences but also to biases and exclusionary structures within education systems (CAST, 2024). A systematic review and meta-analysis of Universal Design for Learning found that practices based on this framework produced promising learning outcomes. Nevertheless, studies varied considerably by country, educational level, subject area, and methodology, while the prevalence of single-group research designs limited the generalizability of their findings (Almeqdad et al., 2023). Universal Design for Learning should therefore be regarded not as a prescription offering a single method automatically suited to every student but as a flexible planning framework that reduces predictable barriers before instruction begins. A universally designed lesson does not eliminate every need for individualized support.

Teachers are not responsible for making or reassessing clinical diagnoses. Their responsibility is to observe systematically the activities, conditions, and forms of support under which a student can participate most effectively. Instead of making the general judgement that “the student cannot read,” the teacher should determine whether the student can access the printed text, decode letters, read words but experience difficulty constructing meaning, process the length of the instructions, or write a response despite motor difficulties. Such functional observations may provide more direct instructional information than a diagnostic label.

A study involving 688 students in inclusive schools found that the intensity of participation was associated not only with diagnostic variables but also with environmental conditions, perceived competence, identity, and support. The study further demonstrated the importance of distinguishing between how frequently a student is present in the classroom and the extent to which that student is actively involved in an activity (Maciver et al., 2023). This finding supports the need for teachers to examine interactions among the student, activity, and environment rather than inferring immutable characteristics from a diagnosis.

The needs of students within the same diagnostic group are not identical. Two students with a similar degree of vision loss may prefer different font sizes, colour contrasts, or access tools. One student with hearing loss may use Turkish Sign Language as their primary language, while another may use spoken language and hearing-assistive technologies. Students with the same autism diagnosis may differ entirely in language, sensory processing, social interaction, executive functioning, and academic skills. Disability may also intersect with migration, multilingualism, poverty, gender, disaster experiences, or chronic health conditions. Providing support to a student with a hearing impairment who is learning Turkish as an additional language solely on the basis of hearing loss may

overlook the effects of multilingualism and prior educational experiences. Inclusive instruction must therefore consider students' perspectives, communication preferences, strengths, and environmental barriers without reducing them to a single identity.

Preparing accessible materials involves considerably more than increasing the font size of a text. For a digital Turkish text to be navigable using a screen reader, it must be provided as selectable text rather than as a scanned image; headings must be structurally defined; images must have functional alternative text; links must be meaningfully labelled; and keyboard navigation must be possible. Video and audio content should include accurate captions, written transcripts, and audio description where necessary. Colour should not be used as the sole means of communicating information; sufficient contrast should be provided between text and background; and content should remain intact when users adjust the font size. The current accessibility standard developed by the World Wide Web Consortium establishes that digital content should be perceivable, operable, understandable, and robust enough to function with different assistive technologies (World Wide Web Consortium [W3C], 2024). Formal compliance with technical criteria, however, does not guarantee that a resource will meet every student's cognitive and linguistic needs. Accessibility should therefore be tested with the student.

Assistive technology encompasses low- and high-technology tools and systems that increase students' functioning, independence, and participation. Pencil grips, slant boards, and communication cards are low-technology examples, whereas screen readers, refreshable Braille displays, alternative keyboards, eye-tracking systems, speech-to-text software, and electronic augmentative communication devices are high-technology examples. The World Health Organization and UNICEF identify assistive technology as a fundamental facilitator of participation in education and social life. They emphasize, however, that access to a device is insufficient on its own and must be accompanied by assessment, person-centred selection, instruction, maintenance, and follow-up (World Health Organization & UNICEF, 2022). A device does not promote inclusion if the student does not know how to use it, it is incompatible with instructional materials, or its use is prohibited in the classroom. Technology should not be selected unilaterally by the teacher but through consultation with the student, family, and relevant professionals.

For students with visual impairments, the central issue is not only presenting information through senses other than vision but also ensuring independent access to literacy. A student with low vision may benefit from large-print text, appropriate line spacing, high colour contrast, adjustable screen magnification, and controlled lighting. A blind student may use Braille, accessible electronic

text, a refreshable Braille display, a screen reader, audio materials, and tactile graphics for different purposes. Teachers should identify the student's preferred access mode and provide instructional materials before the activity. Information written on the board should be verbalized, while pictures, graphs, cartoons, and diagrams should be described in a manner aligned with the instructional objective. Description should make the information required for meaning-making accessible rather than interpreting the visual material on the student's behalf.

Although audio texts are important access options, they are not automatic substitutes for Braille literacy or the independent use of written text. A recent systematic review examining barriers to Braille use found that shortages of materials, teachers' knowledge of Braille, access to technology, and educational administration could restrict instruction and assessment (Kana & Hagos, 2025). Another systematic review of computer-assisted instruction found that digital texts, word-processing programs, and tactile or audio-based applications offered significant opportunities. It also concluded that students' ability to use the technology and teachers' role in implementation required explicit planning (Tuttle & Carter, 2023). When punctuation, spelling, paragraph organization, word structure, and intertextual relationships are taught in Turkish language lessons, listening to the text alone may be insufficient. Students may need to examine punctuation marks, orthographic forms, and structural textual features through Braille or an accessible digital format.

In educating students with hearing impairments, auditory access must be distinguished from linguistic access. It cannot be assumed that every student using a hearing aid or cochlear implant perceives all speech with equal clarity. Noise, distance from the speaker, rate of speech, simultaneous speakers, and limited visual cues can affect access. Ensuring that the teacher's face and mouth are visible, providing sufficient lighting, reducing background noise, requiring speakers to take turns during classroom discussions, presenting oral instructions in writing, and using verified captions in videos can facilitate access. Seating should enable the student to see both the teacher and classmates. When a sign-language interpreter is present, the teacher should communicate directly with the student rather than addressing the interpreter.

Turkish Sign Language is not spoken Turkish encoded through hand movements but a natural language with its own phonological, morphological, and syntactic structures. The process through which a student whose primary language is Turkish Sign Language learns written Turkish must therefore be planned with consideration of the relationship between two distinct languages and modes of communication (Dikyuva et al., 2015). A student's proficiency in Turkish Sign Language should not be devalued because of difficulties using

written Turkish. Turkish language teachers can address differences between the syntax and meaning-making systems of the two languages explicitly and connect vocabulary with contexts, visuals, signs, written examples, and authentic situations.

A meta-analysis of vocabulary instruction for deaf and hard-of-hearing children found that explicit, direct, multisensory, and multimodal instruction could support vocabulary development. Nevertheless, because the studies displayed high heterogeneity and risks of bias, their findings should be interpreted in relation to students' individual characteristics (Aldemir et al., 2023). Rather than imposing one communication method on every student, this finding supports the use of multiple forms of assistance suited to students' linguistic backgrounds and preferences.

Physical or mobility-related impairments do not imply cognitive or linguistic limitations. Students may require support with holding a pencil, turning pages, accessing books, writing on the board, moving around the classroom, or remaining in the same position for an extended period. Alternative keyboards, switch systems, eye tracking, speech-to-text tools, scribe assistance, digital books, adjustable desks, and additional time may be used. In Turkish language lessons, the quality of a student's written expression should not be confused with the speed at which the student can produce handwriting. If the objective is to organize ideas, establish cohesion, and construct a text, using speech-to-text software, typing on a keyboard, or receiving appropriate assistance from a scribe does not invalidate the assessment of written expression. If the objective directly concerns handwriting or keyboard use, the assessment criteria should be explicitly defined accordingly.

The needs of students experiencing chronic illness, pain, muscular fatigue, risk of seizures, ongoing treatment, or periodic loss of functioning may vary throughout the day and from week to week. Their absence should not be interpreted as disinterest or irresponsibility. Instructional materials may be shared in advance, assignments divided into smaller sections, rest breaks planned, remote participation offered, coordination established with hospital or home-based education services, and reasonable flexibility provided for deadlines. These arrangements should not, however, become a separate programme that continually removes the student from the classroom's shared learning experiences. The confidentiality of the student's health information must be protected, and only information necessary for the safe implementation of education should be shared with relevant personnel.

The language comprehension and cognitive abilities of students experiencing speech-production difficulties or complex communication needs should not be

assessed on the basis of speech fluency. Augmentative and alternative communication may encompass gestures, signs, gaze, writing, picture and symbol boards, communication books, speech-generating devices, and tablet applications. Teachers should not complete students' sentences on their behalf, should provide sufficient response time, and should respond to communication attempts regardless of whether they are made through speech, signs, writing, symbols, or a device. A communication device is not merely a tool for expressing requests; it should also be used to ask questions, express opinions, make jokes, interpret texts, discuss ideas with peers, and produce written work. Removing the device as a punishment restricts the student's right to communicate.

Studies included in a systematic review of augmentative and alternative communication instruction in inclusive settings reported positive outcomes. However, because most employed single-case designs, interventions comprised multiple components, and limited evidence was available regarding the generalization of outcomes across settings, it was not possible to conclude that any single technique would be effective for every student (Kleinert et al., 2023). Turkish language teachers should therefore connect the vocabulary available within a communication system with classroom texts and create appropriate opportunities for peers and other adults in the classroom to communicate with the student through that system. Communication support becomes functional through authentic classroom interactions rather than solely within individual therapy settings.

Reducing Turkish language instruction for students with intellectual disabilities to memorizing a few words used in daily life restricts their right to academic literacy. Instruction should be sequenced according to the student's current performance without entirely abandoning age-appropriate texts, literary experiences, or meaning-oriented activities. Explicit and systematic instruction, modelling, guided practice, controlled exercises, repetition, concretization, visual support, and generalization across contexts may be employed. A recent systematic review demonstrates that reading instruction for students with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities should not focus solely on sight-word recognition but should also encompass components such as phonological awareness, letter-sound correspondence, decoding, and fluency (Williams, 2025).

A study involving special education teachers in Türkiye found that reading and writing were considered important to the daily lives, social participation, and employment of individuals with intellectual disabilities and that teachers used different methods of initial literacy instruction and play-based activities. The study also identified needs relating to family support and instructional materials. Although its findings were based on a small qualitative sample and cannot be

generalized to all teachers, they demonstrate that functional life skills and academic literacy objectives should be addressed without treating them as mutually exclusive (Terzioğlu & Topaç, 2023). Rather than infantilizing an entire text, Turkish language teachers can make its vocabulary and sentence structures comprehensible, divide it into meaningful sections, pre-teach key concepts, and provide more intensive instructional support using age-appropriate content.

Students on the autism spectrum may display highly diverse characteristics in communication, sensory processing, social interaction, interests, attention, executive functioning, and adaptation to change. There is consequently no standard “autism accommodation” based solely on diagnosis. Previewing the sequence of the lesson, providing notice of transitions, presenting instructions explicitly and directly, dividing lengthy tasks into stages, using visual schedules, and reducing sensory load may benefit some students. Visual support, however, should not be assumed to be necessary or sufficient for every autistic student. Students’ interests may provide a bridge that increases participation in text selection and writing activities, but organizing all instruction around a single intense interest may restrict access to new content.

In Turkish language lessons, metaphor, idiom, irony, turn-taking, implicit meaning, narrative perspective, and characters’ intentions may require explicit instruction for some autistic students. Rather than assuming that a student will interpret every expression literally, teachers should observe actual performance and, where necessary, model the reasoning process, make textual cues visible, and teach inferencing progressively. A systematic review and meta-analysis of interventions intended to improve reading comprehension among autistic students found small but significant effects and indicated that interventions integrating textual information with prior knowledge may be particularly important. Because the methodological quality and findings of the studies varied, however, no single approach can be considered effective for every autistic student (Zhang et al., 2023). Harmless self-regulatory behaviours should not be suppressed merely because they appear different to others; teachers should instead consider whether those behaviours affect the student’s learning or safety.

For students with multiple disabilities or deafblindness, needs are not simply the sum of separate diagnoses. Combined limitations in visual and auditory access may have distinctive effects on communication, environmental awareness, mobility, and incidental access to information. Students may require tactile communication, object symbols, calendar systems, orientation and mobility support, individualized assistive technology, and consistent communication partners. Teachers should interpret the student’s behaviour as a potential

communicative attempt and ensure that all significant individuals in the classroom use the communication method consistently.

A student with multiple disabilities does not participate in group work merely because a peer has been seated beside them. The student must assume a meaningful role, make choices, and contribute in ways that affect the group's final product. In inclusive Turkish language teaching, listening/viewing, speaking, reading, and writing should each be examined separately in relation to accessibility. Using audio alone in a listening or viewing activity may exclude a student with a hearing impairment, whereas relying exclusively on visual information may exclude a student with a visual impairment. The same content can be presented through complementary modes such as audio, captions, written transcripts, sign language, and audio description.

Speaking ability should not be equated exclusively with fluent vocal speech. Depending on the communicative objective, the use of sign language, augmentative communication, written expression, and digital tools should also be considered. In reading, converting a text into an accessible format must be distinguished from reducing its linguistic difficulty. If a student with a visual impairment can access a text fully through Braille, its content does not automatically need to be simplified. In writing, generating ideas and constructing a text should be distinguished from the motor demands associated with holding a pencil, operating a keyboard, and producing text at a particular speed.

The first step in assessment is to define the intended construct clearly. If the objective is to determine whether a student understands the main idea, relationships among characters, or the author's perspective, handwriting speed, visual access, or oral fluency should not influence the score unnecessarily. Students may respond to questions using Braille, a computer, sign language, augmentative communication, or an oral response. If the objective is to assess spelling and punctuation directly, however, an assistive tool that performs those skills automatically may alter the construct being measured. Accommodation should therefore be understood not as "making the task easier under all circumstances" but as reducing disability-related access barriers while preserving assessment validity.

Instructional accommodation must also be distinguished from curriculum modification. Presenting a text in large print, providing additional time, simplifying instructions, or accepting responses through an alternative mode may facilitate access to a shared learning objective. If the scope or level of difficulty of the expected learning outcome is changed, however, the curricular objective has also been modified, and this decision must be planned explicitly within the IEP. A study involving 130 classroom teachers in Türkiye found that although

teachers introduced some differentiation for students with special educational needs, they relied predominantly on traditional assessment methods. The study drew attention to the need for teacher education (Uzuner & Yazıcı, 2022). Rather than relying on a single written examination, Turkish language teachers can combine evidence from observation, performance tasks, portfolios, oral or supported expression, and brief staged assessments to obtain a more valid understanding of student development.

Inclusive Turkish language teaching encompasses not only students' access to texts but also how disability is represented in the classroom. Textbooks, children's literature, visual materials, and classroom discourse should not construct disability exclusively through narratives of suffering, dependency, deficit, miraculous recovery, or extraordinary heroism. Characters with disabilities should be represented as multidimensional individuals who form friendships, make mistakes, create, use humour, make decisions, and participate in diverse areas of everyday life. A recent content analysis highlights the need to evaluate the accuracy and authenticity of disability representation in children's books systematically (Hughes & Talley, 2026). When selecting texts, Turkish language teachers should examine whether a character is defined solely through disability, whether the character has a voice and decision-making power within the narrative, whether they are reduced to a passive recipient of assistance, and whether the work reproduces ableist stereotypes.

A student with a disability should not be required to speak on behalf of every member of a disability group or disclose personal experiences. Relationships involving assistance in the classroom should also be organized in ways that protect students' autonomy. Peer support can strengthen inclusion, but positioning one student permanently as the caregiver or spokesperson for a classmate with a disability is inappropriate for both students. Before offering assistance, the student should be asked whether it is wanted; tasks the student can perform should not be completed on their behalf; and support should be reduced gradually when appropriate. Additional time, communication assistance, and accessible materials should not be presented to the class as "privileges." Diagnostic information forms part of the student's privacy and should not be disclosed to the class without the student's consent and an educationally valid reason. Mockery, belittlement, imitation, exclusion, and low expectations related to disability must be addressed explicitly rather than through general reminders that students should simply "be kind to one another."

Students' participation in decisions about their own learning is a fundamental component of inclusive education. Students should be asked which text formats they find easiest to use, which assistive technologies are helpful, which roles they

wish to assume during group work, and which assessment formats enable them to demonstrate their learning most accurately. A systematic review of research on developing self-determination among students with extensive support needs demonstrates the importance of supporting choice-making, goal-setting, and problem-solving skills. It also indicates that these students remain insufficiently represented in research on self-determination in inclusive settings (Alsaed et al., 2023). Student participation should be understood not merely as selecting one option from alternatives prepared by adults but as making a meaningful contribution to defining objectives and evaluating support.

Turkish language teachers are not expected to conduct this process alone. Special education teachers, school counsellors, speech and language therapists, audiologists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, sign-language interpreters, orientation and mobility specialists, school administrators, and families may contribute expertise in different areas. Collaboration does not, however, mean transferring the classroom teacher's responsibility to a specialist. Specialist support must be connected with authentic classroom activities, and recommendations must be translated into feasible instructional arrangements.

A recent qualitative study involving teachers working in mainstreaming/integration classrooms in Türkiye found that teachers needed greater knowledge and professional support when working with students with special educational needs. They also regarded teacher-family, teacher-administrator, and school-university collaboration as important. Although the study was limited to 20 teachers, its findings demonstrate that collaboration should not be left solely to personal goodwill (Yıldırım & Kılıç, 2024).

In conclusion, the fundamental purpose of inclusive Turkish language teaching is not to regard the student as a problem requiring correction but to identify and reduce barriers that restrict participation in linguistic and cultural life. This approach maintains shared and high expectations for all students while recognizing multiple pathways through which those expectations can be achieved. Through the selection of accessible texts, language and communication support, literary representation, classroom interaction, and valid assessment, Turkish language teachers are among the central actors responsible for ensuring that students with disabilities do not merely attend lessons but read, write, contribute, construct meaning, and experience recognition as valued members of the classroom community.

4.2. Students Experiencing Learning Difficulties

Students experiencing learning difficulties may encounter challenges in reading, writing, spelling, written expression, or organizing information. These difficulties should not be interpreted as evidence that the student is unwilling, inattentive, or academically incapable.

Some indicators that may be observed in Turkish language lessons include:

- Difficulty reading words accurately and fluently;
- Confusing similar sounds or letters;
- Requiring excessive time to comprehend a text;
- Difficulty organizing ideas in writing;
- Repeated spelling and punctuation errors;
- Difficulty copying text from the board;
- Difficulty following lengthy and complex instructions.

These indicators should not be used by teachers to make a diagnosis independently. Teachers should record their observations systematically, use different instructional approaches, monitor how the student responds to those approaches, and collaborate with the school's guidance and counselling services when necessary.

Support that can be provided in Turkish language lessons includes:

- Dividing texts into short, meaningful sections;
- Pre-teaching key vocabulary before reading;
- Using audio and digital texts;
- Providing preparation and review time;
- Dividing writing tasks into planning, drafting, and revision stages;
- Using graphic organizers;
- Permitting the use of assistive technology for written expression;
- Distinguishing reading speed from reading comprehension during assessment.

4.3. Migrant, Refugee, and Displaced Students

Migration is not merely a geographical movement that changes where a student lives. The language of instruction, school culture, peer relationships, family arrangements, economic circumstances, future expectations, and the social environment to which the student feels they belong may all change simultaneously. In cases of forced displacement, these changes may be accompanied by concerns about safety, loss, uncertainty, separation from family members, disruption of education, and difficulties relating to legal status. Including migrant, refugee, and displaced students therefore requires a holistic

approach that extends beyond school enrolment or short-term language assistance and simultaneously safeguards educational continuity, quality learning, safety, belonging, and students' agency in decisions concerning their futures.

The terms migrant, refugee, asylum seeker, and internally displaced person should not be used interchangeably. "Migrant" is a broad term that may encompass individuals moving within or across countries for various reasons and does not denote a single protection status under international law. A refugee is a person outside their country who requires international protection because of persecution, conflict, violence, or other circumstances threatening their safety. An asylum seeker is a person whose application for international protection has not yet been determined. Internally displaced persons are those who have been forced to leave their place of residence because of conflict, violence, human rights violations, disasters, or similar causes but have not crossed an international border (International Organization for Migration [IOM], 2019; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], n.d.). Although these distinctions may affect students' access to rights and services, teachers should not reduce their educational approach to a student's legal classification.

Not every child commonly described in Türkiye as a "refugee student" has the same legal status. Children under temporary protection, applicants for or holders of international protection, students residing in Türkiye under residence permits, and those who have migrated for other reasons may fall within different administrative categories. Temporary protection is a form of protection designed for situations of mass influx in which individual status-determination procedures cannot be conducted. Children under temporary or international protection are provided with access to education within the framework of the relevant identity documents and official regulations (Presidency of Migration Management, n.d.). Teachers need to understand these conceptual distinctions; however, continually defining students by their legal status within the classroom is inappropriate. Legal status neither constitutes the entirety of a student's identity nor determines their academic capacity, personality, or future achievement.

Migrant, refugee, and displaced students do not constitute a homogeneous educational group. Some may have uninterrupted educational histories, advanced literacy skills, and strong family support, whereas others may have been unable to attend school for an extended period. Students differ substantially in age, gender, disability, health, family structure, prior schooling, reasons for migration, language of instruction, economic resources, and social support. One student may have been educated in several countries and school systems, while another may have repeatedly changed schools because of disaster, conflict, or insecurity without crossing an international border. Educational needs cannot be identified

accurately when this diversity is overlooked and all students are assumed to have experienced trauma, lack proficiency in Turkish, be academically behind, or experience difficulties with adjustment.

A deficit-based perspective treats migration experience as an immutable student deficiency. A student's silence may be interpreted as disinterest, limited production in Turkish as low intelligence, absence as a lack of regard for education, and difficulty communicating with the family as parental indifference. These situations may instead arise from learning an unfamiliar language of schooling, transportation difficulties, economic pressures, caregiving responsibilities, legal uncertainty, frequent relocation, fear of discrimination, or unfamiliarity with the school system. An inclusive approach considers not only the difficulties students encounter but also their prior knowledge, languages, family and community relationships, resilience, motivation to learn, and coping strategies. Students are viewed not as passive victims of migration but as individuals whose knowledge and experiences can contribute to learning.

The educational effects of migration are shaped through interactions among conditions before, during, and after migration. Conflict, oppression, economic deprivation, or disaster may have interrupted education before migration. Safety, accommodation, and health difficulties may arise during the journey. In the place of settlement, students may encounter new challenges involving language learning, school enrolment, recognition of prior learning, housing, livelihoods, discrimination, and social acceptance. Not every student experiences all these processes or responds to the same events in the same way. Educational assessment should therefore be based on the student's individual educational history and current learning conditions rather than general assumptions about the group to which they belong.

School enrolment remains a global challenge for migrant and refugee children. According to UNHCR's 2025 Education Report, based on data from more than 70 countries, the average enrolment rate of refugee children in reporting countries was 67% at the primary level but fell to 37% at the secondary level (UNHCR, 2025). This disparity indicates that adolescents may face greater barriers involving school dropout, employment, caregiving responsibilities, early marriage, and educational costs. Global rates alone, however, cannot explain differences among countries, regions, and student groups. Disaggregating school attendance data by age, grade level, gender, disability, and other relevant variables can help schools identify students at risk of disengaging from education at an earlier stage.

Drawing on practices from 19 countries, a UNICEF report recommends including children on the move within national education systems with the necessary support rather than retaining them in separate and temporary educational structures. This requires more than removing enrolment barriers. Teacher competencies, recognition of prior learning, language support, reliable data systems, family participation, and coordination among institutions must be addressed together (UNICEF, 2022). A joint assessment by UNICEF and UNHCR similarly emphasizes that sustainable outcomes are more likely to be achieved through long-term public policies that recognize refugee children as ordinary and valued members of the education system than through short-term projects (UNICEF & UNHCR, 2023).

Although enrolment in the national education system is necessary, it is insufficient for genuine inclusion. Cooc and Kim's (2023) analysis of TALIS data from 130,803 teachers and 8,054 schools across 41 countries found that schools attended by refugee students could experience less favourable conditions in terms of resources, safety, and social inclusion. The cross-sectional design of the study and its reliance primarily on teacher and administrator reports do not permit causal conclusions. Nevertheless, the findings are important in demonstrating the distinction between physical access and meaningful participation. A student's presence in the classroom does not constitute inclusive education when that student cannot access lesson content, establish safe relationships with peers, or participate in decision-making.

A recent scoping review examining migrant children's access to education in Türkiye similarly demonstrates that the challenges are multidimensional. Selçuk and Güzel's (2025) review of 35 studies identified not only linguistic barriers but also difficulties relating to cultural adaptation, insufficient psychological support, economic constraints, and school infrastructure. The researchers concluded that holistic approaches to migrant students' education remained insufficient and that support should be planned for long-term educational and social participation rather than immediate needs alone. This finding clearly demonstrates that not every difficulty experienced by a student can be attributed to limited proficiency in Turkish. Language support is important, but its effects may remain limited when insecure housing, poverty, discrimination, or irregular attendance are not addressed.

Understanding the prior educational history of a student with migration experience is a starting point for inclusive planning. Teachers and schools should investigate not only the student's previous grade level but also the subjects studied, the language in which literacy was developed, the extent of any interruption to education, and knowledge and skills acquired outside school. The

absence of documentation does not indicate the absence of prior learning. Placing students with younger peers solely on the basis of their performance in Turkish may adversely affect social relationships, self-concept, and willingness to remain in education. Conversely, placing students exclusively according to age without providing bridging support may confront them with an inaccessible curriculum. Decisions regarding grade placement and support should therefore consider age, previous education, literacy, subject knowledge, proficiency in Turkish, and the student's views together.

The purpose of initial assessment is not to compile a list of the student's deficits but to determine an appropriate starting point for instruction. When students cannot respond in Turkish, they should be given opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge visually, practically, orally, or, where possible, through a language they use more proficiently. During a brief assessment period, teachers can observe not only reading, writing, listening, and speaking but also problem-solving, classification, causal reasoning, and recognition of textual structure. This information should be used to update support over time rather than create a fixed label. Where accelerated or compensatory programmes are available, they should support students' transition to age-appropriate curricula rather than maintain them permanently in separate provision.

Although migration experience and multilingualism frequently intersect, they are not synonymous. Not every migrant student is learning Turkish as an additional language, and not every student learning Turkish is a migrant. This distinction prevents migration status from being conflated with language proficiency. Although detailed instructional principles concerning linguistic diversity are addressed in the following section, the fundamental point is that proficiency in Turkish is not an indicator of intelligence or academic potential. Turkish language teachers should investigate students' prior literacy experiences, distinguish between everyday communicative language and academic language, and connect language support with age-appropriate texts and cognitively demanding tasks.

A qualitative study conducted in a lower-secondary school in Türkiye found that Syrian students faced the linguistic demands of all school subjects before completing the process of learning Turkish, were assessed under the same conditions as native speakers of Turkish, experienced difficulties accessing appropriate materials, and were affected by problems of belonging (Karakoç et al., 2024). Because it was conducted in a single school, its findings cannot be generalized to every migrant student. Nevertheless, the study demonstrates the need for instruction to bridge the distance between age-appropriate cognitive content and students' current proficiency in Turkish. Continually infantilizing

content restricts students' access to age-appropriate learning, whereas expecting identical performance without providing linguistic support constitutes an apparently equal but inequitable practice.

The unspoken rules of school also constitute an important area of learning for newly arrived students. The timetable, break-time arrangements, conventions for contributing to classroom discussions, homework submission procedures, examination practices, physical areas within the school, and individuals from whom assistance can be requested should be explained explicitly. This information should not be communicated only once through an intensive oral explanation but reinforced through visual schedules, school maps, demonstrations, and support from a trusted adult. Planned peer support can help students understand school life, but one peer should not be assigned the permanent role of guide, interpreter, or responsible person. Peer support should be based on reciprocity, voluntariness, and teacher supervision.

Predictable classroom routines can support a sense of safety, particularly for students who have experienced substantial change. Explicit beginning and ending routines, task stages, assessment criteria, and classroom rules can help students manage uncertainty. A safe routine should not, however, be confused with rigid control. Offering students limited choices concerning task order, working partners, response formats, or text selection may strengthen their sense of agency. Responses to rule violations should be consistent and non-humiliating. Because teachers may not know students' previous experiences with authority figures, they should consider the possible effects of shouting, sudden physical proximity, or public interrogation.

Some students who have experienced forced displacement may experience intense stress following war, violence, loss, dangerous journeys, family separation, or prolonged uncertainty. It should not, however, be assumed that every refugee student is traumatized. Trauma is not a diagnosis that can be inferred from group membership. Some students may maintain their functioning despite significant difficulties, while others may be affected more strongly by poverty, discrimination, and uncertainty following settlement than by pre-migration experiences. Without fixing the student in the position of a vulnerable and helpless individual, inclusive teachers should observe sustained changes in attention, memory, participation, sleep, attendance, and behaviour and initiate referral to school guidance services and relevant specialists when necessary.

Teachers are not responsible for providing therapy or eliciting detailed migration histories. Students who do not wish to speak should not be compelled to recount their past, and teachers should not repeatedly ask for details of events under the assumption that doing so is helpful. UNHCR states that teachers can

identify signs of stress and refer students to appropriate support structures but should not undertake interventions that require specialist expertise (UNHCR, n.d.). When a student discloses violence, neglect, abuse, or a current threat to safety, the teacher should not promise absolute confidentiality. Instead, the teacher should explain in age-appropriate language with whom the information must be shared to obtain help and follow the applicable child-protection procedures.

The protective function of education becomes particularly important during emergencies and forced displacement. INEE's 2024 Minimum Standards identify equitable access to education, safe learning environments, psychosocial well-being, culturally and linguistically relevant curricula, appropriate assessment, teacher support, and inter-agency coordination as interconnected components of a quality educational response (Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies [INEE], 2024). This approach regards it as insufficient to assign students' psychosocial needs solely to guidance services and academic needs solely to classroom teachers. Safe education can be provided through collaboration across the school and, where necessary, with health, social services, and child-protection institutions.

Belonging is not a secondary social objective in educating migrant and refugee students but a fundamental condition of participation in learning. A systematic review of the education of refugee and forcibly displaced students in Europe found that safety, belonging, and academic achievement mutually influenced one another. Bullying and discrimination weakened students' sense of safety, whereas supportive relationships with teachers and peers and inclusive school environments strengthened belonging. A stronger sense of belonging was, in turn, associated with participation in school life and students' ability to imagine an educational future (Aleghfeli et al., 2025). Belonging is therefore developed not only through celebration days or cultural events but through students' daily access to voice, respectful relationships, and academically meaningful tasks.

A mixed-methods study involving 318 Syrian lower- and upper-secondary students in Türkiye found that students perceived a moderate level of school belonging and that belonging and educational expectations were associated with school acceptance, social alienation, family circumstances, gender, and the school attended (Mammadova & Aypay, 2023). Because the study was limited to Syrian students in one city, its findings cannot be generalized to every group. Nevertheless, it demonstrates that school belonging cannot be explained solely through students' "willingness to adapt." Pronouncing students' names correctly, taking their views seriously, maintaining high but attainable expectations, and

intervening in discrimination are everyday classroom practices through which teachers support belonging.

Migrant and refugee students may encounter explicit or implicit xenophobia at school. Derogatory language used by peers, mockery of the student's language, attribution of all social problems to a particular group, exclusion from working groups, or the continual treatment of students as "guests" reproduces exclusion. Teachers should intervene even when discriminatory expressions are presented as jokes. Intervention should not be limited to prohibiting the expression; it should explain why the statement is harmful, which generalization underpins it, and why it is incompatible with the classroom's shared rights and responsibilities. The student subjected to discrimination should not, however, be required to recount the incident before the class or defend the group to which they belong.

In a study involving teachers and administrators in Türkiye, participants reported that Syrian students encountered discrimination, that teachers experienced difficulties adapting their classroom management and professional competencies to these students' needs, and that school-level strategies could remain insufficient (Eranıl & Kasalak, 2024). These findings are based on teacher and administrator perceptions and should therefore not be interpreted as objective and generalizable conclusions about students' characteristics. Examining teacher perceptions is valuable because it reveals how difficulties may be attributed to students and highlights deficiencies in institutional support. Explanations that attribute a student's behaviour directly to culture, nationality, or migration status may prevent investigation of contextual causes.

In their meta-synthesis of 51 qualitative studies examining teachers' experiences with refugee students in Türkiye, Yağan et al. (2025) found that teachers considered their training insufficient, could experience burnout, and reported that refugee students might be stigmatized by peers and parents. These findings demonstrate that inclusive education cannot be left solely to teachers' goodwill. Expecting teachers to undertake language instruction, psychosocial support, family communication, classroom management, and action against discrimination without appropriate training, time, or specialist support is unsustainable. Supporting teachers is an integral component of the quality of education provided to students.

Turkish language lessons constitute an important learning environment in which migration and displacement are named, represented, and discussed. Conflating terms such as "refugee," "asylum seeker," "migrant," "temporary protection," "displacement," and "statelessness" may contribute to the dissemination of misinformation and prejudice. Turkish language teachers can enable students to examine critically the words used in news reports, social media

content, and everyday discourse. Students can discuss which actors are made visible by a headline, how active and passive constructions assign responsibility, how photographs and numerical data are selected to evoke particular emotions, and what evidence supports generalizing statements. Turkish language lessons thereby promote not only migrant students' language learning but also every student's critical media literacy and awareness of discriminatory discourse.

Selecting texts concerning migration also requires ethical care. Representing refugee characters exclusively as helpless, impoverished individuals awaiting rescue renders their agency invisible. Conversely, presenting every refugee as the hero of an extraordinary success story may suggest that exceptional achievement is required for acceptance. Texts should represent the everyday lives, humour, friendships, knowledge and skills, future aspirations, and diverse identities of individuals with migration experiences. Addressing the same issue from multiple perspectives can demonstrate that migration cannot be reduced to a single narrative.

Students' personal histories should not be treated as instructional materials. Tasks such as "Describe how you escaped your country," "Write about what you experienced during the war," or "Describe the home you left behind" may compel students to disclose their past without adequate preparation. During activities concerning migration, family, home, loss, or war, every student should be offered the option of writing through a fictional character, analysing a text, selecting a different theme, or using a non-personal form of narration. When students choose to share their own experiences, they should have a voice in how their narratives are used within the classroom and should not be compelled to provide personal details to satisfy their classmates' curiosity. Teachers should not position students as representatives of an entire country, culture, or refugee group.

One of the primary objectives of Turkish language teaching is to develop functional language for effective participation in school life alongside academic language. Learning how to request assistance, ask for clarification, take a turn in discussion, resolve disagreements, and express needs is important for safety and participation. Students should also receive academic Turkish support that enables them to understand age-appropriate texts, make inferences, justify claims, and produce different types of texts. Visuals, examples, model texts, key vocabulary, sequenced instructions, and oral and written rehearsal can facilitate access to content. Support should be gradually withdrawn as students' needs decrease, and students should not be confined indefinitely to simplified texts.

Peer interaction can provide valuable opportunities for language learning and belonging, but seating students at the same table does not automatically create inclusive collaboration. Roles within group tasks must be distributed equitably,

every student must be able to make a meaningful contribution, and decision-making should not be restricted to fluent speakers of Turkish. Assigning students with migration experience only low-cognitive-demand roles, such as colouring pictures, carrying materials, or providing brief responses, may ensure physical involvement while perpetuating academic exclusion. Teachers should provide support that enables students to prepare their ideas and assume genuine responsibility for producing the group's work.

Migration history should not become a justification for low expectations during assessment. A student's initial performance may be affected by proficiency in Turkish, interruption to education, and the process of learning a new school system. A single examination is insufficient to establish what a student knows or how quickly they can learn. Observation, student work, portfolios, oral explanations, practical activities, and progress over time should be considered together. In Turkish language lessons, examining dimensions such as vocabulary, textual organization, development of ideas, and grammatical accuracy separately can help teachers identify areas in which support is required. Accommodations should not eliminate learning objectives but should reduce irrelevant linguistic, temporal, or formal constraints that prevent students from accessing them.

Collaboration with families is frequently framed through deficit-based discourse in the education of migrant and refugee students. Molla's (2024) scoping review of school participation demonstrates the prevalence of research narratives that focus more heavily on the perceived deficiencies of refugee students and families than on their resources. A family's absence from school meetings or limited communication with teachers does not demonstrate indifference to the child's education. Working conditions, transportation, language, digital access, limited knowledge of the school system, and concerns regarding public institutions may influence participation. School communication should be provided in languages and formats families can understand, flexibility should be offered in meeting times, and adult language support should be used where necessary. Children should not be required to interpret for their families in sensitive matters involving discipline, health, legal status, or psychological support.

Families' knowledge and skills can also provide valuable educational resources. Telling stories in the family's language, reading together, supporting the child's prior learning, and sharing cultural knowledge may contribute to student development. Contacting families only when a problem occurs confines the relationship to a corrective and supervisory framework. Teachers should also share students' progress, strengths, and participation with their families. A 2025 systematic review examining factors supporting the school success of migrant

and refugee children emphasizes the importance of interactive learning environments, community participation, and high-quality training for teachers and other professionals (Aiello et al., 2025).

Absence and school dropout should not be explained solely through student motivation. Frequent family relocation, registration and transportation difficulties, the need to work, sibling-care responsibilities, housing problems, health needs, and discrimination at school may affect attendance. When absence occurs, its causes should be investigated before punitive action is taken, and barriers that the school can address should be identified. Needs involving economic assistance, social services, transportation, or child protection may exceed the classroom teacher's authority, but the teacher can initiate referral processes by providing timely information to the relevant school units. Students' personal and legal information should be shared only with authorized personnel and only to the extent necessary.

The intersection of migration with other forms of disadvantage must also be considered. Migrant students with disabilities may experience barriers to both support services and linguistic access. Adolescents may disengage from school because of employment or caregiving responsibilities, while girls' educational continuity may be affected by family circumstances, safety concerns, economic difficulties, and social expectations. Unaccompanied or separated children may require support from trusted adults and specialized protection mechanisms. Teachers should not assume that these circumstances apply to every student but should evaluate each student's situation without stigmatization and while protecting privacy.

Students' perspectives on their own education should be central to inclusive planning. Teachers should speak with students about the subjects they find difficult, which forms of support are effective, when they feel safe in the classroom, and which activities they wish to join. Such conversations may take place in a safe setting where students can speak comfortably rather than in front of the class. Not every request can necessarily be implemented, but the reasons for decisions should be explained, and feasible options should be considered collaboratively. INEE's (2024) participation standard similarly recognizes the meaningful involvement of crisis-affected individuals in identifying educational needs and in planning and evaluation as a fundamental indicator of quality.

The inclusion of migrant and refugee students cannot be sustained through the individual efforts of a single teacher. Clear structures for collaboration must be established among school administrators, Turkish language and other subject teachers, guidance and counselling services, special education units, and health and social service professionals. Necessary information should be shared

ethically and securely so that students are not required to recount their histories to every teacher. School procedures for addressing discrimination and bullying should be explicit, while attendance, academic progress, and access to support services should be monitored regularly. Teachers' collaborative consideration of students' strengths and progress, rather than focusing solely on their difficulties, can reduce fragmented interventions.

In conclusion, the inclusion of migrant, refugee, and displaced students is not a unilateral process in which students are expected to adapt to an existing school. The education system must recognize prior learning, establish safe and predictable environments, support Turkish language development and academic learning, intervene in discrimination, and include students and families in decision-making. Turkish language teachers occupy a distinctive position within this transformation because, in addition to teaching language, they influence how migration is narrated, how differences are represented, and which discourses students develop about one another. The objective is not to define students continually through the identity of "migrant" or "refugee" but to reduce barriers arising from migration experiences and enable students to learn and build their futures as equal, safe, and valued members of the classroom.

4.4. Bilingual and Multilingual Students

Bilingualism or multilingualism refers to an individual's ability to use two or more languages across different areas of life, for different purposes, and at varying levels of proficiency. Defining bilingual students as individuals who use both languages equally across all skill domains and at the level of monolingual speakers is therefore inconsistent with authentic linguistic experience. A student may speak one language fluently within the family but have no experience of reading or writing in that language. The same student may understand instructional texts in another language while experiencing difficulty in spontaneous conversation. Listening, speaking, reading, and writing proficiency may vary according to the duration and frequency of language exposure, communicative environment, learning opportunities, and the social status of each language. The Council of Europe describes plurilingual competence as "an uneven and changing competence" and regards students' languages not as entirely independent systems but as an interconnected repertoire used collectively to perform tasks (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 30).

Bilingual and multilingual students do not constitute a homogeneous group. Some acquire two languages simultaneously from early childhood, whereas others encounter Turkish through schooling, migration, displacement, or changes in their family environment. Turkish may be one of the languages used at home

by one student but used exclusively at school by another. Some students may understand their family's heritage language without speaking it, while others may use several languages orally but have developed literacy only in Turkish. The terms "mother tongue," "first language," "home language," "heritage language," and "language of schooling" therefore do not describe the same circumstances for every student. Rather than inferring students' linguistic backgrounds from predetermined ethnic or national categories, teachers should learn how students and their families describe their own linguistic experiences.

Multilingualism should not be associated exclusively with migrant or refugee students. In Türkiye, this group may include children who use different local, regional, or cultural languages, students growing up in bilingual families, returnees from other countries, internationally mobile students, and those whose language of schooling differs from the language used at home. Multilingualism may also intersect with disability, learning difficulties, poverty, migration, disaster experiences, disrupted education, traumatic experiences, or giftedness. Attributing every academic, behavioural, or social difficulty to linguistic difference may therefore cause important needs to be overlooked. A recent scoping review of migrant children's access to education in Türkiye similarly found that linguistic difficulties occurred alongside challenges involving cultural adaptation, insufficient psychological support, economic constraints, and infrastructure (Selçuk & Güzel, 2025). Language support is therefore necessary but insufficient on its own to achieve inclusion.

Inclusive Turkish language teaching requires students' proficiency in Turkish to be distinguished from their cognitive capacity, subject knowledge, and thinking skills. Students may understand a concept without being able to explain it in Turkish. They may fail to complete a task within their capability because they cannot process the linguistic structures of lengthy instructions or may express sophisticated ideas through brief, grammatically incomplete sentences. This does not mean that they have failed to understand the concept or possess limited thinking skills. Inferring students' general academic capacity solely from their production in Turkish makes language proficiency the measure of all learning. Inclusive assessment should, wherever possible, make visible both what students know and the level at which they can express that knowledge in Turkish.

Apparent fluency in everyday communication does not demonstrate complete command of academic Turkish. Students may converse with friends, communicate basic needs, and participate in routine classroom dialogue while experiencing difficulty with abstract concepts, passive constructions, nominalizations, causal relationships, figurative expressions, and information-dense complex sentences in textbooks. This distinction is particularly important

in Turkish language lessons, where students are expected not only to communicate but also to establish relationships among texts, draw inferences, formulate reasoned opinions, analyse narrative structure, interpret aesthetic uses of language, and produce different genres. Each of these tasks requires vocabulary, textual knowledge, grammatical awareness, and discourse competence extending beyond everyday conversational ability.

UNESCO's current guidance on multilingual education regards multilingualism both as a fundamental human characteristic and as an educational approach capable of supporting more inclusive and equitable education systems. Supporting languages students understand during learning can help establish connections between prior knowledge and new content, strengthen conceptual understanding, and increase participation in education (UNESCO, 2025). The objective is not to postpone learning Turkish or diminish the importance of a shared language of schooling. Rather, it is to avoid separating the process of learning Turkish from students' existing linguistic and conceptual resources. Instead of adopting a subtractive orientation that attempts to reduce students' existing languages while adding Turkish, an inclusive approach adopts an additive orientation in which Turkish becomes a new and powerful means of communication and learning within the student's repertoire.

Treating multilingualism as a deficiency is problematic, but assuming that it automatically produces academic achievement or cognitive superiority for every student is equally reductive. Multilingualism does not, in itself, resolve every learning difficulty. Its educational benefits depend on the conditions under which languages are learned, whether students are permitted to use them, how those languages are valued at school, and whether high-quality instructional support is available. Teachers should neither present multilingualism as the cause of academic failure nor assume that multilingual students require no support. The decisive factor is the relationship between the student's specific language profile and the educational environment's response to that profile.

Recent research in Türkiye demonstrates the multidimensional nature of bilingual students' needs. Güngör Yereyıkılmaz and Boyacı's (2025) mixed-methods study, which combined observations, student work, interviews, and quantitative assessment data, found that bilingual primary school students could require support across listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Needs relating to productive and receptive skills, vocabulary, grammar, communication, and social participation were particularly prominent. The study also found that instructional activities were not always aligned with students' proficiency in Turkish and that a substantial proportion of teachers had received no formal preparation in teaching Turkish as an additional language. These findings demonstrate that the

solution cannot be limited to encouraging students to work harder; teacher education, needs assessment, curricula, materials, and assessment practices must be developed together.

In a qualitative case study conducted in a lower-secondary school, Karakoç et al. (2024) found that Syrian students encountered the linguistic demands of every subject before completing the process of learning Turkish, were assessed under the same conditions as native speakers of Turkish, experienced difficulties accessing appropriate materials, and faced communication barriers that affected their sense of belonging. Because the study was conducted in a single school, its findings cannot be generalized to every multilingual student. Nevertheless, it clearly demonstrates that instruction must bridge the distance between age-appropriate cognitive expectations and students' current proficiency in Turkish. Directing students towards texts prepared for much younger children may reduce linguistic demands but can also infantilize content and create learning experiences inappropriate to their cognitive and emotional development. Texts should therefore not merely be made easier. Age-appropriate content should be retained while vocabulary, sentence structure, visual support, and task stages are made accessible.

Turkish language teachers' beliefs about bilingualism may also directly influence instructional quality. Başbayrak and Akin (2024) found that a substantial proportion of participating teachers regarded bilingualism as a characteristic that adversely affected learning Turkish. This finding does not demonstrate that bilingualism itself causes difficulty in learning Turkish; it reflects teacher perceptions. The central concern is that deficit-based beliefs may produce low expectations, prohibitions on the use of home languages, or the attribution of every error to the first language. The same study found that teachers recommended visual support, drama, digital applications, cross-linguistic comparison, and varied instructional approaches. This suggests that teachers may develop more flexible responses to linguistic diversity when supported with appropriate pedagogical knowledge.

Asking only "Which language do you speak at home?" is insufficient when developing an understanding of the student. Teachers need to determine which languages students use, with whom and for what purposes; which skills they possess in each language; the language in which they previously developed literacy; when and under which conditions they encountered Turkish; whether their education has been interrupted; and the types of tasks for which they require support. This information should be used to plan instruction rather than place students at a fixed proficiency level. Because language profiles change over time, neither a single examination nor an initial observation is sufficient for definitive

conclusions. Students' speech, responses to reading, written work, classroom interactions, and progress under different forms of support should be considered together.

Translanguaging is one prominent approach to multilingual education. It enables students to use their entire linguistic and semiotic repertoire to construct meaning. Rather than treating students' languages as entirely isolated compartments within the mind, translanguaging recognizes that knowledge is constructed through the combined use of speech, writing, visuals, gestures, translation, and comparison (Li, 2018). Translanguaging instruction does not mean shifting between languages purposelessly or without structure in Turkish language lessons. Teachers must plan which linguistic resource will be used, at which stage, and for which learning objective. Students may think about a concept in a language they know, develop keywords in two languages, or discuss meaning with a peer before gradually transforming their understanding into increasingly sophisticated production in Turkish.

Moraru's (2025) systematic review of 94 publications involving multilingual children with migration experiences found that translanguaging could be implemented through the combined use of features from different languages, translation, cross-linguistic comparison, multiple representations, peer collaboration, and multilingual learning environments. These practices could contribute to students' access to content and ability to demonstrate their knowledge. Their effects, however, were inseparable from school policies, teacher attitudes, linguistic hierarchies, and the classroom's social context. Translanguaging should therefore not be presented as a technical prescription that produces identical outcomes in every setting. Using several bilingual materials will not eliminate structural exclusion in a school where students' home languages are devalued, language use is mocked, or multilingualism is celebrated only superficially.

Teachers do not need to know every language represented in the classroom to adopt this approach. They can allow students to take bilingual notes, investigate unfamiliar concepts in another language, compile personal dictionaries, discuss a Turkish text first in a more familiar language, or compare forms of expression across two languages. When digital translation tools are used, students can evaluate whether the generated equivalent is appropriate to the context. Translation then becomes an opportunity to reflect on meaning, lexical choice, and grammatical structure rather than a mechanism that simply supplies an answer. A student should not, however, be continually assigned the role of classroom interpreter or required to interpret for family members during official,

psychological, or confidential meetings. Competent adult language support should be provided in such circumstances.

A purposeful translanguaging process in Turkish language lessons can build a progressive bridge between access to meaning and production in Turkish. During a lesson involving an expository text, for example, students may initially demonstrate prior knowledge in a preferred language, through visuals, or using a concept map. After the essential Turkish vocabulary and relationships within the text have been explained, students may compare equivalents in two languages, discuss the main idea with a peer, and ultimately produce a summary in Turkish. Production initially supported through keywords and brief sentence frames can gradually develop into more independent and detailed expression in Turkish. This arrangement does not represent an abandonment of Turkish; it enables students to reach Turkish through what they already know.

The structural characteristics of Turkish must also be addressed explicitly. Students who developed literacy through a different writing system learn not only new letters when encountering the Turkish alphabet but also different correspondences between sounds and written symbols. Before interpreting slow reading as a general reading impairment, teachers should consider the student's previous writing system, phonological distinctions, and duration of exposure to Turkish. A case study involving students and parents whose first language was not Turkish reported difficulties with learning and blending sounds, reading speed, and reading comprehension. Participants identified a need for more frequent visual, gamified, reading, and writing activities (Karaman & Yılar, 2023). Although these findings reflect the experiences of a small and specific participant group, they demonstrate the importance of supporting phonological awareness and comprehension together during initial literacy instruction.

The agglutinative structure of Turkish may require teachers to make the meaning-related functions of roots and suffixes visible. The combination of case, tense, mood, person, and possessive suffixes within long words may make both word analysis and the interpretation of sentence relationships difficult. These structures should be taught through authentic uses in texts rather than decontextualized lists of suffixes. Roots and suffixes may be separated visually, words derived from the same root compared, and changes in meaning resulting from different suffixes demonstrated within sentences.

Turkish word order, subject omission, participial and converb constructions, passive structures, and nominalized academic expressions may also impede meaning-making. Dividing complex sentences into shorter units of meaning, clarifying referents, and subsequently returning to the original structure can provide support without arresting linguistic development through permanent

simplification. Vocabulary instruction should extend beyond providing a single equivalent for each word. Students need to examine contextual meaning, collocations, polysemy, word families, and textual functions. Idioms, proverbs, metaphors, connotations, and culture-specific references may create invisible barriers to meaning for multilingual students. Teachers should regard students' unfamiliarity with these expressions as natural, explain their functions within the text, and compare similar and different forms of expression across languages where possible. Students should also be shown that cross-linguistic similarities do not always constitute one-to-one equivalents. Comparison can thereby develop language awareness rather than producing memorized translations.

Using comprehensible language in listening and speaking activities does not require lowering the cognitive level of the content. Teachers can divide instructions into short units of meaning, display important words on the board, provide visual and gestural support, repeat information when necessary, and allow thinking time. Rather than asking only "Did you understand?", teachers can ask students to explain the task in their own words, demonstrate the first step, or provide an example. Paired rehearsal, brief preparatory notes, and sentence starters can help students prepare to speak before the whole class. Some students may initially focus more heavily on listening and comprehension and contribute less frequently to oral interaction. This should not become a justification for low expectations or prolonged exclusion from classroom interaction.

Students' accents should not be interpreted as evidence of deficiency. The objective of Turkish language teaching is not to ensure that every student imitates a single form of pronunciation but to develop intelligible and contextually appropriate communication. Pronunciation feedback should be selective and supportive and should not continually interrupt students' messages. Correcting every difference in sound production or stress immediately may increase speaking anxiety and encourage silence. Teachers should prioritize features that impede communication and prevent accents, dialects, and linguistic differences from becoming subjects of ridicule. The updated approach to phonological competence in the Common European Framework of Reference similarly emphasizes intelligibility, phonological control, and communicative effectiveness rather than perfect imitation of a native speaker (Council of Europe, 2020).

Developing background knowledge before reading may be particularly important for multilingual students. Explaining vocabulary alone will not ensure comprehension if students do not share the cultural or experiential knowledge assumed by the text. Examining the title, visuals, genre, and central concepts; activating prior knowledge through multiple languages and representational

modes; dividing the text into meaningful sections; and making key relationships visible can support inferencing. Audio texts, teacher modelling, and paired reading may also be used. Facilitation should not, however, remove all the linguistic and intellectual richness of a text. Continually providing only simplified texts may delay students' engagement with academic Turkish. Effective support should progressively increase access to authentic texts.

Students should not be expected to manage every cognitive demand of writing simultaneously. Identifying a topic, generating ideas, finding Turkish vocabulary, constructing sentences, organizing a text, and checking orthographic conventions may each be challenging. Students may prepare plans in a language they know, use bilingual keywords, rehearse ideas orally, examine model texts, and develop drafts progressively. Teachers can initially provide feedback on meaning and organization and address targeted linguistic structures in subsequent stages rather than transforming every draft into a product covered in corrections. Sentence and paragraph frames may offer initial support but should be withdrawn progressively as students become more independent.

The representational quality of texts used in Turkish language lessons also forms part of inclusion. When multilingual students appear in classroom materials only in relation to migration, poverty, or cultural difference, their identities are reduced to a single experience. Individuals from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds should be represented across diverse contexts, including everyday life, science, art, humour, achievement, friendship, and social participation. Students should not be expected to explain their culture to the entire class or represent a linguistic community. Using translations, parallel texts, and multilingual products in literary study may support intertextual awareness and reflection on translation. A student's preference not to use a home language publicly should also be respected. Inclusion protects both the right to use a language and the right not to disclose one's identity.

The first question in assessment should concern the intended construct. If the purpose is to assess a particular Turkish structure, written expression, or reading comprehension, performance in Turkish is naturally part of the assessment criteria. If the objective is to determine conceptual knowledge in science, social studies, or another subject, however, limited production in Turkish should not make that knowledge entirely invisible. Visual explanation, oral responses, practical demonstrations, concept maps, and staged responses may be used when they do not alter the construct being measured. Even in Turkish language lessons, evaluating content, textual organization, vocabulary, grammatical accuracy, and orthographic features through separate criteria can help teachers identify the areas in which students require support.

Benson's (2024) guidance on classroom assessment for multilingual students recommends planning consciously for the language used in instruction and assessment and combining diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments capable of documenting students' assets and skills accurately. Speech samples, responses to reading, written drafts, student self-assessments, and performance tasks collected over time should therefore be considered together instead of relying on a single examination. Accommodations such as additional time, bilingual dictionaries, or alternative response formats do not automatically constitute a reduction in standards. Their appropriateness depends on whether they alter the intended construct. Dictionary use may undermine the objective of an assessment measuring vocabulary, whereas limited dictionary support during a task assessing the ability to justify an argument may produce a more accurate representation of the student's intended competence.

It is particularly important not to conflate bilingualism with language and communication disorders. Cross-linguistic transfer in syntax, movement between languages during word retrieval, accent, limited Turkish vocabulary, or reluctance to speak for a period does not independently constitute evidence of a disorder. The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association states that multilingualism is not a communication disorder, patterns of cross-linguistic transfer should not be treated as evidence of impairment, and signs of a genuine language disorder should be investigated across all languages used by the student (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, n.d.). Conversely, assuming that a student "will improve over time because they are bilingual" may delay access to necessary support. Teachers should not diagnose but should systematically observe the tasks, languages, and support conditions under which difficulties occur and share their observations with families, guidance services, and relevant specialists. Wherever possible, samples should be collected across languages, assessments based on monolingual norms should be interpreted cautiously, and dynamic assessment should be used to examine how students progress when provided with instruction.

The classroom's emotional and social climate cannot be separated from the technical organization of language instruction. Students' names should be pronounced correctly, jokes about their languages or accents should not be permitted, and errors should not be used to humiliate them publicly. Linguistic errors should be treated as evidence of what the student is still learning. Continually interrupting students while they speak Turkish, allowing peers to laugh, or inviting them to respond only to easy questions may weaken both belonging and willingness to speak. Providing preparation time, paired

discussion, valuing the content of contributions, and treating errors as a natural part of learning can support students in taking academic risks.

Linguistic accessibility must also be considered in communication with families. Limited proficiency in Turkish does not indicate that families are uninterested in their children's education. School announcements and important meetings should be provided in languages and formats families can understand, with reliable language support used where necessary. Families should not be given generalized advice to speak only Turkish at home. Rich communication in the language a family uses most effectively—including storytelling, shared reading, conversation, and discussion of concepts—can support broader language and literacy development. Assigning responsibility for learning Turkish exclusively to the family obscures the educational institution's obligations.

In conclusion, inclusive Turkish language teaching should not expect students to leave their other languages outside the classroom to gain access to Turkish. Its objective is to develop academic Turkish systematically while using students' entire linguistic and cultural repertoires as resources for learning. This requires needs assessment based on language profiles, comprehensible but age-appropriate content, integrated support for listening, speaking, reading, and writing, purposeful cross-linguistic comparison, and attention to the relationship between the linguistic demands of an assessment and the knowledge being measured. Multilingual students enter the classroom not with linguistic deficiencies requiring correction but with linguistic repertoires that the educational environment has not yet fully recognized. Inclusive teachers are responsible for transforming those repertoires into resources for learning Turkish, academic participation, and belonging without turning them into categories that restrict students.

4.5. Socioeconomically Disadvantaged Students

Socioeconomic circumstances may affect students' access to nutrition, housing, healthcare, technology, books, study spaces, school attendance, and extracurricular learning opportunities. Students experiencing economic hardship should not, however, be assumed to lack interest in achievement or to come from families that do not value education.

Some classroom tasks may inadvertently intensify economic inequalities. Projects requiring paid materials, activities dependent on home internet access, homework that assumes the availability of a quiet and independent study space, and tasks requiring substantial academic assistance from family members may not be accessible to every student.

Inclusive teachers:

- Avoid requiring students to purchase expensive materials for compulsory tasks;
- Provide offline alternatives to digital assignments;
- Ensure access to books and materials at school;
- Begin a substantial proportion of homework during school hours;
- Avoid making students' economic circumstances visible within the classroom;
- Provide assistance without humiliating students;
- Avoid evaluating family participation solely through financial contributions or physical attendance at school.

Poverty is neither a personality characteristic nor an indicator of academic capacity. Students' material constraints should not be allowed to become unnecessary barriers within the learning environment.

Students bring diverse modes of communication, values, narratives, and experiences from their families and communities. Cultural diversity becomes particularly visible in Turkish language lessons through texts, characters, examples, idioms, oral narrative forms, and classroom communication.

Culturally inclusive Turkish language teaching requires teachers to:

- Select texts representing diverse life experiences;
- Avoid treating a single cultural experience as universally applicable;
- Make an effort to pronounce students' names correctly;
- Prevent accents and dialectal characteristics from becoming subjects of ridicule;
- Avoid devaluing forms of language used by students at home;
- Examine stereotypes in texts critically with students;
- Avoid reducing cultural difference to special days and events.

Teachers should not expect every student to speak as a representative of their culture. Assigning students responsibility for explaining their ethnic or cultural background may inadvertently isolate them within the classroom.

Inclusive education does not mean providing support only to students who experience difficulty learning. The needs of students who demonstrate performance beyond that of their peers in particular areas or possess high learning potential must also be considered.

Gifted students may not demonstrate the same high level of achievement in every subject. A student may possess advanced oral expression skills while experiencing difficulty planning the writing process. Another may read rapidly but require social support during group work. Giftedness should therefore not be used as a single label that explains every characteristic of the student.

The following practices may be used in Turkish language lessons:

- Providing more complex and multilayered texts;
- Asking students to establish relationships among different texts;
- Assigning open-ended research and writing tasks;
- Increasing the depth and quality of tasks rather than providing more exercises of the same type;
- Offering creative writing, critical reading, and independent project options;
- Avoiding the continual assignment of successful students as peer tutors solely because of their achievement.

Giving gifted students additional tasks is not equivalent to enriching their learning. The purpose is not to increase workload but to provide deeper and more meaningful learning opportunities.

Some students may experience anxiety, attention difficulties, impulsivity, withdrawal, school refusal, or difficulties in peer relationships. These behaviours should not be explained solely through unwillingness or lack of discipline.

Behaviour often reflects a student's needs, difficulties, or interactions with the environment. A student who continually walks around the classroom may experience difficulty remaining still for long periods. A student who avoids participating in reading activities may be anxious that peers will discover they cannot read the text.

Rather than attempting merely to suppress the behaviour, teachers can consider the following questions:

- During which activities does the behaviour occur?
- What happens immediately beforehand?
- What does the student obtain or avoid through the behaviour?
- Is the task appropriate to the student's current level?
- Are the instructions sufficiently clear?
- Does the student feel safe in the classroom?
- Can alternative forms of participation be provided?

Teachers are not responsible for making psychological or medical diagnoses. When concerns are persistent or involve risk, teachers should share their observations with the relevant school units and seek specialist support.

Students' educational experiences are rarely determined by a single characteristic. Disability, poverty, migration, language, gender, and geographical location may intersect to create different forms of barriers.

In General Comment No. 6 on equality and non-discrimination, the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities states that overlooking multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination may restrict the

effective protection of rights (Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2018).

For example, the needs of a student with a visual impairment who has experienced migration and is newly learning Turkish cannot be understood solely through the category of “visual impairment.” The student may simultaneously require accessible materials, Turkish language support, recognition of prior learning, and practices that strengthen social belonging.

UNICEF notes that barriers encountered by migrant and displaced children with disabilities may be intensified by intersections between exclusionary attitudes towards migrants and disability-related prejudice (Allen et al., 2023).

Intersectionality does not require teachers to collect detailed personal information about every characteristic of a student. It requires them to consider the conditions affecting educational experience without reducing the student to a single category and while respecting privacy.

4.6. Students Affected by Disasters and Emergencies

Disasters and emergencies encompass processes in which earthquakes, floods, landslides, wildfires, droughts, extreme temperatures, epidemics, industrial accidents, and similar events severely disrupt people’s lives, safety, and access to essential services. A disaster, however, should not be treated as synonymous with a natural event or hazard. According to the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, a disaster occurs when a hazardous event interacts with conditions of exposure, vulnerability, and capacity, causing serious disruption to the functioning of a community. This definition demonstrates that an earthquake or flood does not constitute a disaster in isolation. Social conditions such as unsafe buildings, poverty, unplanned urbanization, inaccessible services, discrimination, and limited preparedness determine whether a hazardous event becomes a disaster (UNDRR, 2017). Referring to a natural hazard becoming a disaster through its interaction with social conditions is therefore more accurate than using the expression “natural disaster,” which may encourage fatalistic explanations that attribute responsibility solely to nature.

This conceptual distinction is important to inclusive education. Difficulties encountered by students affected by disasters cannot be explained solely through the severity of the event. Injury, bereavement, damage to the family home, forced displacement, school closure, loss of family livelihoods, barriers to healthcare, or the assumption of caregiving responsibilities may affect educational experiences in different ways. These effects may be intensified for students with disabilities, chronic illnesses, migrant or refugee backgrounds, students living in poverty or rural areas, and those who are not proficient in the language of instruction.

Vulnerability is therefore not an immutable characteristic of the student but a result of the relationship between the student's circumstances and available resources.

Maintaining education during disasters is not solely a matter of preventing academic loss. Education can enable children to re-establish relationships with trusted adults and peers, create predictable structures within daily life, access accurate information, receive referrals to support services, and preserve a sense of continuity and future orientation. The earthquakes of 6 February 2023 disrupted the education of more than four million children in Türkiye, many of whom simultaneously required schooling, shelter, healthcare, and psychosocial support (UNICEF, 2024a). Current standards published by the Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies treat access, protection, psychosocial well-being, contextual relevance of curricula, inclusive instruction, holistic assessment, and teacher support as interconnected components of the same right to education. Standard 9 states: "Learning environments are secure and safe and promote the protection and psychosocial well-being of learners, teachers and other education personnel" (INEE, 2024, Standard 9).

Being affected by a disaster is not a linear process that produces identical symptoms in every student. Some students may experience fear, anxiety, heightened startle responses, anger, withdrawal, sleep difficulties, or physical complaints, while others may display no visible reaction. Teachers may also observe distractibility, difficulty remembering instructions, intrusive thoughts during reading, shorter written responses, inability to complete tasks, absence, and reduced academic motivation. The intensity of these responses may change over time. Alarms, aftershocks, rainfall, enclosed spaces, particular dates, news images, or expressions within lesson texts may evoke memories of the event. Observed behaviours should not, however, be interpreted as clinical diagnoses. The same behaviour may result from grief, sleep deprivation, inadequate housing, insufficient nutrition, transportation difficulties, interrupted access to medication, or limited comprehension of the language of instruction.

Studies conducted in Türkiye following the 6 February earthquakes demonstrate these multidimensional effects. A study involving 42 teachers from 11 provinces identified interconnected difficulties relating to educational infrastructure, attendance, accommodation and transportation, safety, communication, and psychosocial well-being (Arıcı et al., 2023). In another study involving 220 classroom teachers working in the earthquake-affected region, participants viewed the reopening of schools positively but reported increased stress among students and teachers and reduced attention and motivation (Yaşaroğlu et al., 2025). A study based on the perspectives of 13 classroom

teachers in Gaziantep found that fear, lack of motivation, aggressive behaviour, and attention difficulties were prominent during school readjustment and that teachers used play, social activities, family communication, and psychosocial support (Karakuzu & Kasa Ayten, 2025). Because these studies rely on teacher observations, their findings should not be interpreted as clinical evidence but as contextual evidence of recurring educational needs.

A recent study involving earthquake-affected upper-secondary students in Gaziantep more clearly demonstrates the need to examine the academic, psychological, social, and physiological effects of disaster together. Of the 413 students in the quantitative component, 43.3% scored above the specified threshold on the Impact of Event Scale–Revised. Some symptom scores were higher among students who had experienced bereavement or relocated following the earthquake (Şam et al., 2025). This proportion was derived from a convenience sample and cannot be generalized to the entire earthquake-affected region; nor does it independently constitute a psychiatric diagnosis. The study’s important educational finding is that students reported learning loss, examination anxiety, absence, and a need for academic assistance alongside psychological support. Psychosocial well-being and academic participation cannot therefore be separated.

Teachers’ capacity to support students following a disaster cannot be considered independently of their own living conditions. Teachers may also have lost family members, homes, schools, or colleagues, may be living in temporary accommodation, or may be concerned about their families’ safety. A study examining the experiences of 16 teachers working in Hatay found that the earthquake affected both their personal and professional lives psychologically and physically and positioned them simultaneously as recipients and providers of assistance (Kabaklı Çimen, 2025). One teacher in Arıcı et al.’s study described the need for professional support as follows: “Because I had no training on how to approach students who had lost family members or loved ones, I sometimes experienced difficulties communicating with them” (Arici et al., 2023, p. 663; translated by the author). Expecting teachers to disregard their own losses and working conditions and resolve every psychosocial difficulty in the classroom alone is neither inclusive nor professionally sustainable.

Reopening schools is important but does not, on its own, constitute realization of the right to education. Students cannot be assumed to be ready to learn when fundamental needs such as safe transportation, adequate nutrition, clean water, suitable accommodation, accessible toilets, medication, and assistive technology remain unmet. Similarly, apparent school access may not become genuine participation when students in temporary learning spaces cannot obtain materials,

hear in overcrowded classrooms, enter inaccessible buildings, or attend regularly because of family responsibilities. Under these conditions, absence should not be interpreted as unwillingness or indiscipline. Barriers to attendance should be examined collaboratively with families, school administrators, guidance services, and relevant institutions.

Inclusive instruction following a disaster begins with understanding students' current circumstances. Rather than asking students to describe their disaster experiences in detail, teachers should observe conditions affecting participation in learning and communicate with students and families in ways that respect privacy. Clearly defined lesson beginnings and endings, visible daily schedules, brief and sequenced instructions, large tasks divided into manageable stages, and safe arrangements allowing short breaks when necessary can increase predictability. The aim is not to "normalize" the student rapidly but to make the learning environment comprehensible and manageable during a period characterized by uncertainty and loss of control.

Teachers are not responsible for diagnosing students' psychological conditions or providing therapy. They can establish safe and respectful relationships, listen, observe daily needs, adapt instruction, and refer students to appropriate support services. Psychological first aid is not an intrusive clinical interview but humane, supportive, and practical assistance that respects individuals' dignity, culture, and decisions. Individuals are not compelled to recount their experiences, privacy is protected, unsubstantiated reassurance is avoided, and providers remain aware of the limits of their competence (WHO, War Trauma Foundation, & World Vision International, 2011). When students demonstrate persistent and severe loss of functioning, face safety risks, or show possible signs of neglect or abuse, school referral and child-protection procedures must be initiated.

Current research on school-based psychosocial support indicates that structured programmes may be beneficial but do not produce identical outcomes in every context. A meta-analysis of 13 randomized controlled trials involving 2,418 participants found that school-based interventions could produce significant short- and long-term effects on post-traumatic stress symptoms, whereas effects on depression were more limited. Intervention type, duration, provider, and cultural context substantially influenced outcomes (Laksmi et al., 2026). Another meta-analysis examining 43 randomized controlled trials conducted in humanitarian emergencies found that cognitive behavioural programmes could reduce some symptoms of depression, while results for other forms of psychosocial support were inconsistent. Particularly noteworthy was the association between arts-based programmes and increased symptoms of depression in some contexts (Bangpan et al., 2024).

These findings demonstrate that activities such as drawing, playing games, writing stories, or discussing emotions should not be regarded as inherently therapeutic under every circumstance. Asking every student to “Write in detail about what you experienced during the earthquake” or requiring them to describe loss, death, or fear before the class may cause students to disclose experiences they are not ready to revisit. Literary and creative activities should not be designed as substitutes for therapy but as instructional tasks in which students can make choices, are not compelled to disclose personal experiences, and can select alternatives when necessary. Students should be able to write through a fictional character, use third-person narration, or choose a theme unrelated to the disaster.

Teachers’ participation in structured psychosocial programmes cannot be left solely to goodwill. A recent systematic synthesis of seven international studies involving 7,134 children found that programmes implemented by teachers and other school personnel could produce positive outcomes, particularly in student adjustment and daily functioning. Successful implementation, however, required 12–20 hours of structured initial training, cultural adaptation, and continuing specialist supervision. Although the inclusion of only seven studies limits the generalizability of the evidence, the common finding is that teachers should function not as replacements for mental health professionals but as part of a multilevel system supported by specialists (Fukuchi et al., 2026). A scoping review of universal school-based crisis programmes similarly found that collaboration among school teams, mental health professionals, families, and relevant institutions was decisive for implementation quality (Capurso et al., 2022).

Belonging requires particular attention for students transferred to another school following a disaster. Continually labelling students as “earthquake victims,” fixing them in the position of aid recipients, or presenting them as objects of pity may undermine equal membership despite benevolent intentions. A study involving 40 teachers whose classes included students transferred because of the earthquake found that peers were generally accepting but that responses based on pity, sadness, and anxiety also occurred. Some teachers collaborated with guidance services, whereas others reportedly avoided this process (Türksoy et al., 2023). This finding demonstrates the importance of recognizing students not merely as passive individuals requiring protection but as classroom members capable of making choices, assuming responsibilities, and contributing. Students should receive the support they require without being singled out or treated as privileged, and peer relationships should be developed on the basis of reciprocity.

Inclusive disaster education should not be reduced to post-event recovery. Disaster risk reduction and preparedness before an event are fundamental components of education. An integrative review of disaster preparedness in K–12 schools found that schools’ perceived preparedness could differ from their actual level of preparedness and that effective preparation required written plans, accessible equipment, regular training and drills, clearly allocated responsibilities, and collaboration with external agencies (Horton et al., 2023). Drills and warning systems must also respond to learner diversity. Preparedness cannot be regarded as inclusive unless visual, auditory, tactile, and multilingual notification options are planned for students with hearing or visual impairments, mobility support needs, chronic illnesses, or limited proficiency in Turkish.

Disasters and emergencies create an area of disaster literacy directly related to Turkish language teaching. Language is not merely a means of academic achievement in this context; it is fundamental to accessing accurate information, understanding danger, requesting assistance, communicating needs, and adopting a critical stance towards misinformation. Knowing the meanings of concepts such as “hazard,” “risk,” “evacuation,” “assembly area,” “aftershock,” “emergency kit,” and “early warning” is insufficient. Students must be able to understand instructions containing these concepts, evaluate the reliability of different information sources, and apply information to their circumstances. Disaster literacy is therefore a multidimensional language competence encompassing critical reading, functional writing, effective listening, and clear oral communication rather than vocabulary instruction alone.

The limited research within Turkish language education indicates that existing content does not fully address this need. Kıymaz et al. examined lower-secondary Turkish language textbooks used during the 2022–2023 academic year and found that the Grade 5 textbook did not address pre-earthquake preparation, the Grade 6 and Grade 8 textbooks did not cover earthquakes, and the Grade 7 textbook did not explain actions to be taken during an earthquake (Kıymaz et al., 2023). Although this finding cannot be generalized to every current textbook, it demonstrates the importance of addressing pre-disaster, disaster, and post-disaster processes as complementary stages. A study examining the perspectives of 120 Turkish language teachers working in Adıyaman found that student participation declined during emergencies, teachers experienced particular difficulty teaching grammar, and the curriculum required revision according to the nature of the emergency (Polat & Akkaya, 2023).

Disaster literacy can be developed in Turkish language lessons through the functional use of fundamental language skills. In listening and viewing activities, students can distinguish essential actions and information about place and time in

an official emergency announcement. Evacuation instructions, informational texts, risk maps, public-service announcements, news reports, and infographics can be compared in reading activities according to source, date, evidence, purpose, and intended audience. Comparing a claim circulating on social media with a statement from an official institution can develop critical reading in relation to false and misleading information. Speaking activities can focus on communicating one's location and needs briefly and clearly, requesting assistance, and confirming instructions by restating them. Writing activities may involve producing emergency contact cards, plain-language safety instructions, public-interest announcements, or age-appropriate informational texts. The purpose of these activities is not to create fear but to increase students' capacity to access information and communicate.

Texts concerning disasters should be evaluated not only for factual accuracy but also in relation to students' recent experiences. A text appropriate for developing awareness before a disaster may be unsuitable immediately after an event in a classroom containing students who have experienced significant loss. Sensational headlines, images of destruction and death, detailed accounts of loss, and discourse presenting disaster as inevitable may increase fear rather than support learning. Before using a text, teachers should evaluate its scientific accuracy, age appropriateness, linguistic accessibility, and relationship with students' experiences. Sensitive content should be identified in advance, alternative texts or tasks should be offered, and students' right not to disclose personal experiences should be protected. Children's literature concerning disasters may help address grief, solidarity, hope, and rebuilding indirectly, but literary texts should not become therapeutic instruments used to elicit students' emotions.

Differences between students' previous and current performance after a disaster should not be interpreted directly as losses of ability. Interrupted instruction, school transfers, loss of materials, attention difficulties, and irregular attendance may affect how learning is demonstrated. Low-stakes formative assessment should be used to determine students' current levels; tasks should be staged; additional time and alternative response formats should be provided; and oral, written, and visual products should be considered. Accommodation does not mean removing learning objectives. Its purpose is to reduce disaster-related constraints that prevent students from achieving an objective or demonstrating their learning. Short-term declines in performance should not become permanent low expectations, and compensatory work should not be planned at an intensity that undermines well-being.

Student participation in disaster preparedness and recovery is also a requirement of inclusion. Students can express views and develop age-appropriate solutions concerning classroom safety arrangements, informational texts, communication methods, and peer support. Participation should not, however, transfer the responsibilities of schools and public institutions to children. The “Education in Emergencies and Children’s Rights Programme,” initiated in 2024 by the Ministry of National Education, the Board of Education and Discipline, and UNICEF, seeks to develop the capacity of teachers, administrators, curriculum developers, and textbook-review units. This demonstrates that responsibility must be addressed at the system level rather than through individual teacher effort alone (UNICEF, 2024b).

In conclusion, inclusive education for students affected by disasters requires the safe continuity of education, an understanding of disasters’ variable effects on learning and participation, and the development of knowledge and skills that reduce future risks. Resilience should not be treated as an individual characteristic requiring students to recover rapidly but as a contextual capacity developed through safe schools, supportive relationships, accessible instruction, essential services, and effective referral mechanisms. The Turkish language teacher is not a therapist within this process but an education professional who ensures linguistic access, develops the ability to distinguish accurate information from misinformation, protects students’ right to remain silent as well as to speak, adapts instruction, and refers them to specialist support when necessary.

4.7. The Teacher’s Process of Understanding the Student

The starting point of inclusive instruction is understanding the student. This is not a one-time information-gathering exercise completed before teaching begins but a cyclical pedagogical inquiry sustained throughout instruction and assessment. Understanding a student cannot be limited to reviewing examination scores, grades from previous years, or an official diagnostic report where one exists. The process requires a holistic understanding of the student’s strengths, interests, linguistic and cultural resources, prior learning, modes of communication, conditions affecting classroom participation, learning strategies, and support needs. Information about the student should be used not to place them within an immutable category but to inform decisions that make instruction more accessible and effective.

The quality of this process depends first on clarifying how the information collected will be used. General questions such as “Is this student successful?”, “Is the student a weak reader?”, or “Is the student uninterested in the lesson?” have limited value for instructional decision-making. Questions intended to determine

the types of texts, levels of comprehension, forms of support, and degrees of independence under which the student can perform provide more direct guidance. Standards for educational and psychological assessment similarly emphasize that a measurement result has no independent meaning; validity depends on the purpose for which, population within which, and conditions under which it is interpreted. Reducing linguistic, cultural, sensory, or physical barriers unrelated to the targeted skill is a fundamental condition for fair interpretation (American Educational Research Association et al., 2014).

Understanding the student is therefore not an exercise in “searching for deficits.” Teachers must identify not only the skills students have yet to acquire but also what they can already do, what they can accomplish with assistance, and the experiences that can serve as learning resources. An assessment that records only errors renders students’ developmental potential and the resources available to teachers invisible. For example, a student who makes numerous spelling and punctuation errors may nevertheless develop original ideas, establish coherent relationships among events, or demonstrate strong oral expression. When instructional planning is based exclusively on spelling errors, the student’s capacity to construct narratives may be overlooked. Strengths-based assessment uses students’ existing resources to develop areas in which they require additional support.

Teachers are not responsible for making clinical or medical diagnoses. Their responsibilities are to observe students’ classroom performance systematically, identify conditions affecting participation in learning, implement instructional support, and monitor responses to that support. Teacher observations constitute important educational evidence that can be shared with guidance and counselling services, special education teachers, families, and relevant professionals when necessary, but they cannot independently be used as diagnostic instruments. The individualized education programme guide published by the Ministry of National Education similarly treats the determination of current performance, development of objectives, monitoring of implementation, and evaluation as interrelated processes requiring teamwork (Ministry of National Education, 2022).

Students should be regarded not as passive objects about whom information is collected but as primary sources of information within this process. Articles 12 and 16 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child protect children’s rights to express views on matters affecting them, have those views considered, and enjoy protection of their privacy (United Nations, 1989). In educational settings, these rights require teachers to explain the purpose of assessment activities in comprehensible language, ask students which forms of support they find helpful, and enable them to participate appropriately in instructional decisions concerning

them. Eliciting student views involves more than asking, “Which texts do you enjoy most?” Teachers should also investigate the activities in which students feel competent, where they experience difficulty, which instructions they find confusing, how they prefer to receive feedback, and what changes could facilitate their classroom participation.

Student perspectives should not be elicited solely through oral interviews. Some students may express themselves more comfortably during individual conversations, while others may communicate more clearly through writing, drawing, rating scales, photographs, role-play, sign language, or augmentative and alternative communication. A recent scoping review of students’ perspectives on inclusive education found that diaries, drawings, photographs, observations, and participatory methods were used alongside interviews and surveys to understand students’ experiences (Poikola et al., 2024). Student voice can contribute to inclusion only when views are not merely recorded but become part of a dialogue between the teacher and student and, where feasible, inform classroom practice. A participatory study conducted in primary schools found that listening to, discussing, and acting on students’ views enabled teachers to reorganize their instructions, lesson structures, and opportunities for participation (Messiou et al., 2024). A systematic review of K–12 studies similarly found that student feedback could help teachers critically examine and improve their practices (Santos et al., 2024).

No single source of information should be used to understand a student. Naturalistic classroom observations, student interviews, classroom work, reading and writing samples, brief performance tasks, self-assessments, information from families, observations by previous teachers, and specialist assessments should be treated as complementary evidence. The objective is not to collect as much information as possible but to examine how different forms of evidence that genuinely contribute to instructional decisions relate to one another. If a student reports enjoying reading during an individual interview but does not participate in classroom reading activities, these findings do not invalidate each other. The teacher should investigate the difficulty of the texts, anxiety associated with reading aloud before the class, accessibility of materials, peer reactions, and the relationship between the texts and the student’s interests. Discrepancies among information sources often provide valuable indications of the conditions under which performance changes.

For classroom observations to be useful, their purpose and context must be recorded. Expressions such as “uninterested in the lesson,” “distracted,” “unmotivated,” “lazy,” or “slow” do not explain behaviour; they present the observer’s interpretation as though it were a student characteristic. Records

should instead describe the task during which the behaviour occurred, its duration, the preceding instruction, the support provided, and the student's response. Rather than recording that "the student did not participate in the reading activity," for example, the teacher might note that the student read the first two paragraphs of a 350-word informational text independently, stopped during the third paragraph, continued when the text was divided into sections and key vocabulary was explained, and subsequently answered explicit-information questions. Such a record makes the relationship between the task and performance visible without attributing an immutable characteristic to the student.

The accuracy of teacher judgements is influenced by the quality of the cues used in decision-making. An experimental study involving secondary school teachers found that direct evidence, such as students' performance on previous tasks, increased the accuracy of teachers' judgements about text comprehension. Cues that did not directly demonstrate the relevant performance, such as students' general interests or personality characteristics, could reduce accuracy (van de Pol et al., 2024). This finding does not mean that students' interests are unimportant. Interests are valuable for selecting texts, increasing participation, and connecting students with instruction. Judgements about a particular reading or writing skill, however, should be based on performance samples that directly demonstrate that skill. Similarly, teachers cannot infer that a student who speaks frequently in class possesses advanced speaking skills or that a quiet student is unable to use language effectively.

In Turkish language teaching, the process of understanding the student should include evidence concerning listening/viewing, speaking, reading, and writing. Recent studies conducted in Türkiye demonstrate that although assessing all four fundamental language skills is considered necessary, time, class size, implementation challenges, and workload can make it difficult to collect regular evidence across every skill. Studies based on Turkish language teachers' perspectives report particular difficulties in assessing listening and speaking, monitoring individual differences in reading and writing, and implementing process-based assessment in overcrowded classrooms (Savaşkan & Özer, 2024; Sallabaş & Kiler, 2024; Yağmur, 2025). These difficulties indicate that understanding students should not depend on continually administering new examinations disconnected from ordinary classroom activity. Daily lessons should instead be designed to generate useful evidence. Students' participation in discussions, annotations on texts, drafts, revisions, and feedback to peers can simultaneously function as diagnostic and formative evidence.

Assessment of listening and viewing should not be limited to the number of comprehension questions answered correctly. Different tasks should be used to observe whether students can follow oral instructions, identify the main idea of speech, select important details, draw inferences, follow transitions among speakers, take appropriate notes, and respond meaningfully to what they hear. Difficulty following lengthy, multistep instructions should not be interpreted directly as weak listening ability. Performance may be affected by linguistic complexity, classroom noise, auditory access, attention, working-memory demands, and proficiency in the language of schooling. Teachers should monitor how performance changes when the same task is presented through shorter sentences, written support, or sequenced stages.

Speaking ability should not be reduced to how frequently students contribute in class. Participation frequency may be affected by language proficiency, sense of safety, speaking anxiety, peer relationships, preparation, classroom climate, and teacher wait time. Assessment should consider students' ability to plan ideas, select vocabulary appropriate to the purpose, establish coherence at sentence and text levels, adapt speech to the audience and context, follow turn-taking conventions, and provide clarification when necessary. Impromptu speech, prepared presentations, paired dialogue, small-group discussion, and audio recordings can reveal variations in performance across contexts. The use of sign language, communication boards, speech-generating devices, or other forms of augmentative communication does not diminish the value of students' ideas; it enables communicative competence to become visible through an accessible mode.

When assessing reading, teachers should distinguish among word recognition, reading accuracy and fluency, vocabulary, recognition of textual structure, retrieval of explicit information, inferencing, construction of the main idea, establishment of relationships among information, and critical evaluation. A student who reads slowly aloud may comprehend the text successfully, while a fluent reader may be unable to establish causal relationships within it. Students should not therefore be classified generally as "strong" or "weak" readers solely on the basis of reading speed or pronunciation accuracy. Narrative, informational, poetic, instructional, and multimodal texts create different processing demands, meaning that performance on a single text does not represent overall reading proficiency. Text length, lexical frequency, conceptual density, cultural references, visual organization, and background-knowledge requirements should also form part of the observation record.

When assessing writing, teachers should examine idea generation, planning, drafting, text organization, cohesion and coherence, lexical selection, sentence

construction, spelling and punctuation, review, and revision rather than evaluating only the final text. Legibility and writing speed should not be confused with text-production ability. A student with a physical impairment or difficulty producing handwriting may construct a high-quality text when using a keyboard or speech-to-text tool. Similarly, numerous spelling errors do not indicate that the student has no ideas to communicate. Teachers should examine multiple writing samples produced for different purposes and genres and, where possible, consider initial drafts, feedback received, and revised texts together. This makes visible not only the final product but also how students use feedback and improve their writing.

Determining baseline performance is important, but baseline performance should not be interpreted as a student's fixed capacity. In addition to identifying what students can do independently, teachers should monitor changes in performance when a model is provided, instructions are simplified, key vocabulary is explained, a graphic organizer is supplied, the text is divided into sections, or additional time is allowed. This reveals not only current achievement but also responsiveness to instruction. Known as dynamic assessment, this approach does not separate assessment from teaching but considers students' development following assistance and instruction. A recent meta-analysis synthesizing 35 studies on word-reading skills found that dynamic assessment could provide useful information, particularly during early literacy and among younger children, and could produce similarly valid outcomes for monolingual and bilingual children. The authors nevertheless noted the limited number of studies involving bilingual students and cautioned against directly generalizing the findings to older age groups (Wood et al., 2024).

For example, a student who cannot answer inference questions about an informational text should not immediately receive the general label "poor reading comprehension." The teacher can first observe whether the same difficulty persists across different text types and then explain unfamiliar vocabulary, provide a diagram representing causal relationships, or ask the student to reread the text in sections. If the student can draw inferences after receiving this support, the difficulty may relate not solely to an absent skill but also to vocabulary, textual structure, or task design. If the difficulty persists despite support, more systematic instruction should be planned, progress monitored, and relevant professionals consulted when necessary. The purpose is not to diagnose but to determine which instructional conditions are functional for the student.

Brief assessments used to understand students should be low-stakes and integrated with instruction. The purpose of formative assessment is not to grade students frequently but to determine their current stage of learning and plan the

next instructional step. An umbrella review synthesizing 13 meta-analyses at the K–12 level found that formative assessment generally produced positive effects on student learning, although effects differed according to implementation and the certainty of available evidence was predominantly low (Sortwell et al., 2024). Merely calling an assessment “formative” is therefore insufficient. If the information collected does not genuinely change instructional decisions, feedback, or support, the procedure remains a brief test. Turkish language teaching also offers opportunities to combine feedback, self-assessment, and peer assessment. A quasi-experimental study involving Grade 3 students in Türkiye found that a 12-week editing intervention based on formative assessment significantly improved written-expression achievement (Kara & Tavşanlı, 2024). This finding should nevertheless be interpreted in relation to the age group and research conditions.

When developing an understanding of bilingual or multilingual students, proficiency in the language of schooling should be distinguished from subject knowledge, literacy experience, and learning potential. Limited Turkish vocabulary does not provide direct evidence of a student’s thinking skills or knowledge of a subject. Teachers should learn which languages students use at home, their oral communication and literacy experiences in those languages, the duration of their exposure to Turkish, their prior schooling, and whether their education has been interrupted. A recent study of literacy assessment for multilingual students identified the use of culturally and linguistically irrelevant texts, the conflation of language acquisition with literacy difficulty, and deficit-based interpretations of assessment results as significant equity concerns (Rosheim et al., 2024). Turkish language teachers should therefore avoid drawing conclusions about students’ overall linguistic and literacy capacity from a single standardized task administered only in Turkish. Evidence should be collected using different texts, modes of expression, and levels of support.

When assessing students with special educational needs and disabilities, materials and response modes must be accessible. A low score obtained by a student with a visual impairment on an inaccessible printed text may reflect a barrier to accessing the text rather than reading comprehension. Instructions provided exclusively through speech to a student with a hearing impairment, a requirement that a student with a physical impairment respond only through handwriting, or the provision of exclusively oral response options to a student using communication support introduces limitations unrelated to the intended skill into the assessment. Students should therefore be able to use the assistive technologies, accessible text formats, and communication support employed in their everyday learning environments. Accommodations are not intended to raise

achievement artificially but to reduce barriers unrelated to the intended construct and produce more valid information about the targeted skill.

Families can provide important information about students' linguistic histories, interests, skills used in daily life, effective forms of support, and previous educational experiences. Family interviews should not, however, become processes that interrogate home circumstances or position families as responsible for educational difficulties. Conditions such as access to reading materials, digital tools, or quiet study spaces should be discussed without judgement, and families should not be given the impression that using a language other than Turkish at home is problematic. A systematic review of partnerships with families of children with disabilities in low-resource settings found that trusting relationships, comprehensible information and resources, encouragement of family questions, and reduction of cultural and linguistic barriers strengthened collaboration (Johnston & Burke, 2024). Where families have limited proficiency in the language of schooling, appropriate language assistance should be provided rather than assigning students or siblings to act as interpreters.

Discussions among teachers and specialists should focus on observable evidence of performance rather than general labels. Statements such as "The student does not read," "The student does not understand," or "The student has behavioural problems" do not explain what occurs or under which conditions. Records describing students' performance with a particular text type, during a particular task, and before and after specific forms of support facilitate collaborative decision-making. Teachers should also record the support they have implemented, its duration, and the student's response. If specialist consultation becomes necessary, systematic evidence of classroom learning patterns can then be provided rather than a general report of a problem.

When attempting to understand students affected by disasters, forced displacement, bereavement, neglect, violence, or other difficult experiences, teachers should not assume the role of collecting detailed life histories or compelling disclosure. Students should not be required to reveal private experiences as a condition of receiving educational support. Teachers can record observable conditions such as attendance, sudden changes in performance, distress in response to particular texts or activities, fatigue, withdrawal, hyperarousal, and changes in peer relationships. Students should be offered safe and accessible opportunities for communication, and school safeguarding and referral procedures should be initiated when risks to safety are suspected. These indicators should not independently be interpreted as evidence of trauma, and teachers should not construct speculative life histories to explain student behaviour.

Facts and interpretations must be distinguished in record-keeping. Whereas “The student was unmotivated” is an interpretation, “During a ten-minute writing period, the student wrote two sentences, covered the paper three times, and resumed working after receiving individual instructions” is an observable record. Records should specify the task, date, material used, support provided, student response, and resulting product. Teacher interpretations should be recorded separately and regarded as open to revision when new evidence emerges. Initial impressions should not be allowed to determine the interpretation of every subsequent behaviour; new performance samples should be collected across different contexts and times.

Privacy must be protected throughout the process. Private information unnecessary for educational decision-making should not be collected; diagnostic and family information should not be disclosed in the classroom; student work should not be shared without permission; and records should be stored so that they are accessible only to relevant individuals. Support should not be delivered in ways that make a student’s diagnosis visible to peers. Except where safety concerns or mandatory reporting obligations apply, the sharing of sensitive information should be limited according to educational necessity and the principle of confidentiality.

The student profile developed through this process should not be a form listing immutable characteristics but a living document that supports instructional decision-making. It should connect the student’s strengths in language skills and interests; current performance across text types and tasks; what the student can do independently and with support; communication and working conditions that facilitate participation; linguistic resources beyond Turkish; literacy opportunities available at home and school; the student’s perspectives and objectives; modifiable barriers to learning; and forms of support observed to be effective. Students should not be reduced to fixed types such as “visual,” “auditory,” “slow,” “unsuccessful,” or “problematic.” Preferences for accessing information should be interpreted in relation to the type of task and the intended skill.

The profile should serve a concrete instructional decision. On the basis of the information collected, the teacher should identify a priority area for development, establish an attainable objective, plan the support and instructional method, determine the evidence that will demonstrate progress, and reassess the outcome after a defined implementation period. Effective support should be maintained or gradually withdrawn. When support is ineffective, the student should not be regarded as incapable of learning; instead, the task, material, form of support, or assessment method should be reconsidered. Understanding the student thereby

ceases to be a bureaucratic exercise in preparing a file and becomes an inclusive decision-making process that continually improves instructional quality.

Teachers may draw on the following sources of information:

- Naturalistic classroom observations;
- Individual interviews with the student;
- Student work;
- Reading and writing samples;
- Brief and purposeful assessments;
- Information provided by the family;
- Observations by previous teachers;
- Guidance-service and specialist assessments;
- Student self-assessment.

Student privacy must be protected throughout information gathering. Diagnostic and family information should not be disclosed in the classroom, and accommodations should not be presented in ways that label the student before peers.

Core Questions for a Student Profile Form

1. What are the student's strengths across language skills?
2. Which text types interest the student most?
3. Through which modes does the student understand information most easily?
4. Does the student work most effectively individually, in pairs, or in groups?
5. Which forms of support does the student require during oral and written expression?
6. Does the student use languages other than Turkish?
7. How does the student access reading and writing at home?
8. In which classroom situations does the student feel comfortable or anxious?
9. Which forms of support does the student find helpful?
10. Which barriers within the educational environment can be changed?

4.8. Diversity-Based Planning in Turkish Language Teaching

Diversity-based Turkish language teaching does not require teachers to prepare an entirely separate lesson for every student. It may be sufficient to establish different means of access, participation, and expression through which students can achieve shared learning objectives.

For example, if the shared objective is to identify the main idea of a text, students may:

- Read a printed version of the text;
- Listen to an audio version;
- Use an accessible digital version;
- Read the text with a partner;
- Use keywords and visual support.

Students may demonstrate their learning through:

- A written paragraph;
- An oral explanation;
- A concept map;
- An audio or video recording;
- A brief individual conference with the teacher.

The shared learning objective is maintained, while the means of accessing that objective and demonstrating learning are diversified.

When working with learner diversity, teachers should adopt the following principles:

- Avoid defining students solely through diagnosis, language, background, or achievement;
- Use students' strengths as instructional resources;
- Maintain high expectations;
- Distinguish observation from interpretation;
- Seek students' views when making decisions about them;
- Draw on families' knowledge and experiences;
- Protect student privacy;
- Intervene in discriminatory and labelling language;
- Provide support without separating students unnecessarily from their peers;
- Seek specialist support when necessary;
- Evaluate barriers that may be created by instructional practices;
- Regard diversity as a shared learning resource for the classroom.

CHAPTER 5

5. Inclusive Teachers' Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes

Inclusive education cannot be realized solely through legislative reform, improvements to the physical accessibility of schools, or the placement of students with diverse characteristics in general education classrooms. The classroom is one of the principal settings in which inclusion becomes a concrete experience for students. How teachers address students, the language they use, the texts they select, the materials they prepare, the ways in which they distribute opportunities to speak, their interpretations of learning difficulties, and the options they provide during assessment directly affect students' access, participation, learning, and belonging. Inclusive teaching therefore involves more than the mechanical implementation of particular methods; it refers to teachers' capacity to make professional decisions with learner diversity in mind.

Preparing every teacher to teach every student is a fundamental condition of an inclusive education system. The UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report Team and the International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030 state that teachers require more than knowledge of instructional techniques to achieve inclusion; their values, attitudes, and expectations concerning students' capacity to learn must also be transformed. This requires a transition from teaching approaches that locate the source of difficulty exclusively within the student to those that also investigate barriers to learning and participation within the educational environment (Global Education Monitoring Report Team & International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030, 2020).

Teacher competence is not simply the sum of independent areas of knowledge and skill. The Ministry of National Education's General Competencies for the Teaching Profession treats professional knowledge, professional skills, attitudes, and values as complementary domains of competence (Ministry of National Education [MoNE], 2017). The Profile of Inclusive Teachers developed by the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education similarly defines competence through the combined application of attitudes, knowledge, and skills within a particular educational context. Teachers' values and attitudes influence which forms of knowledge they consider important, how they interpret student behaviour, and which practices they develop from their professional knowledge (European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, 2012).

Because of this interrelationship, inclusive teaching cannot be explained through goodwill alone. A teacher who believes that every student can learn but lacks knowledge of reading difficulties, language development, accessible material design, or instructional adaptations may struggle to translate a positive

attitude into effective practice. Conversely, a teacher who knows differentiated instructional methods but believes that certain students cannot progress academically may fail to use that knowledge or restrict students to oversimplified tasks that offer little opportunity for development. Inclusive teacher competence must therefore be evaluated by considering teachers' beliefs about students and learning, the knowledge they possess to understand students and instruction, and the classroom practices into which they can translate that knowledge.

The Profile of Inclusive Teachers identifies four core values guiding this integration: valuing learner diversity, supporting all learners, working with others, and engaging in continuing personal and professional development. These are not competencies intended only for special education teachers; they constitute a shared professional framework for teachers working across different educational levels and subject areas (European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, 2012). The Agency's updated professional learning profile published in 2022 retained these values and emphasized that inclusive teacher competence cannot be completed during initial teacher education but must be developed collaboratively throughout professional life at school and community levels (European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2022).

Valuing learner diversity does not mean romanticizing differences or overlooking students' support needs. It requires recognizing linguistic, cultural, cognitive, sensory, physical, social, and emotional differences as ordinary dimensions of human diversity and avoiding predetermined judgements about students' capacity to learn on the basis of those differences. Rather than defining students by diagnosis, family income, language, migration history, or experienced difficulties, inclusive teachers seek to understand their strengths, interests, prior learning, and support needs together.

Valuing diversity in Turkish language teaching requires particular sensitivity to differences in language and expression. Turkish language teachers should not interpret dialectal features, accents, home languages, or linguistic errors as indicators of intelligence, knowledge, or willingness to learn. Teaching the characteristics of standard Turkish and devaluing students' existing linguistic repertoires are fundamentally different practices. Teachers can use the languages students know and their prior oral narrative experiences as resources for new learning. Similarly, classroom texts should not represent only dominant cultural environments. Including diverse ways of life, identities, geographical contexts, and experiences enables students both to see themselves reflected in texts and to encounter lives different from their own.

Supporting all learners requires teachers to maintain expectations that are high but aligned with students' current performance and needs. High expectations do not mean requiring every student to complete the same task, through the same method, and within the same period. They involve recognizing that every student can progress towards a meaningful learning objective and providing the support necessary for that progress. Unnecessarily lowering a student's objectives is no more inclusive than expecting identical performance from every student without providing support.

5.1. Inclusive Teacher Language

Teacher language is not a neutral means of transmitting ideas. It is a pedagogical practice that influences how students are positioned in the classroom, who is considered competent and successful, from whom high performance is expected, and which differences are regarded as ordinary. Teachers' oral explanations, questions, corrections, written feedback, assessment notes about students, and conversations with families all form part of this practice. Inclusive teacher language cannot therefore be reduced to avoiding offensive words. It requires a coherent approach to communication that protects students' human dignity, voice, agency, and the expectation that they can learn.

Describing students as “weak,” “unsuccessful,” “lazy,” “problematic,” or “incapable” transforms performance observed under particular conditions at a particular time into an immutable student characteristic. Learning performance emerges through interactions among instructional quality, task difficulty, prior knowledge, available support, language proficiency, emotional state, and assessment conditions. Instead of making the generalized statement that “Ali is weak in reading comprehension,” it is more explanatory and educationally useful to state that “Ali requires support in identifying textual evidence when answering questions involving implicit meaning.” The second statement neither identifies the student with a deficit nor obscures the support the teacher can plan.

Teacher language and expectations are not independent of one another. A longitudinal study conducted at the primary level found a positive relationship between high teacher expectations and student achievement and indicated that students from different socioeconomic groups could benefit from high expectations. Although the research was conducted in mathematics, its findings are important because they demonstrate that discourse about students is not merely descriptive; it may affect the quality of assigned tasks, allocated time, and support provided by teachers (Hollenstein et al., 2024). Inclusive teacher language is therefore not an optimistic discourse that ignores difficulties but a language of high expectations that recognizes current needs while keeping the

possibility of development open. Replacing “This student cannot understand the text” with “The student needs to study the key concepts in advance to interpret the text independently” acknowledges the difficulty while defining an instructional responsibility.

Diagnostic and categorical terminology requires particular care. Diagnoses may be necessary for students to access support services and for appropriate educational arrangements to be planned, but diagnostic information should not become an identity marker presumed to explain every aspect of a student. In an experimental study involving 413 teachers, Kashikar et al. presented fictional students whose learning difficulties were described identically but who were assigned different diagnostic labels. The labels did not produce identical teacher judgements. Both increased acceptance of the diagnosis, while the label “learning disability” lowered some long-term expectations of achievement and the label emphasizing support needs increased teachers’ intentions to improve the student’s academic performance. Although these findings demonstrate that labels do not have a uniform effect, they also indicate that terminology can shape expectations and educational decisions (Kashikar et al., 2026). Diagnostic information should therefore be used only to the extent necessary for instructional planning and should not replace the student’s name, personality, or capabilities.

Inclusive language is not simply a matter of replacing one word with another considered more appropriate. Kanno et al. state that terms used to describe multilingual students make different aspects of their experiences visible but that changing labels alone cannot transform educational structures that position students through a deficit perspective (Kanno et al., 2024). Replacing “weak student” with “student requiring support” does not produce inclusive practice if the teacher continues to assign only low-level tasks. Similarly, apparently positive expressions such as “our special student” may position the student outside the ordinary classroom community. Inclusive language must be considered alongside the tasks students encounter, the extent to which their views are heard, how errors are addressed, and how their prospects for success are understood.

The central objective of disability-inclusive language is to avoid reducing students to diagnoses or representing disability through narratives of pity, helplessness, or extraordinary heroism. United Nations disability-inclusive communication guidelines recommend person-first language as a general starting point while recognizing that some individuals and communities prefer identity-first terminology. No single usage should therefore be assumed to be mandatory for everyone; where uncertainty exists, individuals should be asked how they prefer to be described. The same guidelines note that expressions such as “normal,” “healthy,” “victim,” “confined to,” and “succeeded despite their

disability” may reproduce inequality (United Nations, 2022). The American Psychological Association similarly states that inclusive language should respect self-identification, avoid reproducing stereotypes, and use person-first or identity-first language according to context and community preferences (American Psychological Association, 2022).

In Turkish usage, “student with a disability” may be preferred as a person-first expression, while some students may adopt “disabled student” as part of a rights-based identity. Teachers should not impose definitive terminology without knowing the student’s preference but should develop respectful, contextually appropriate language. Derogatory, pity-inducing, or othering expressions equivalent to “handicapped,” “crippled,” “abnormal,” “wheelchair-bound,” or “a student who succeeded despite their disability” should be avoided. A wheelchair is not a form of confinement but a tool supporting mobility and independent participation; “student who uses a wheelchair” is therefore more accurate.

When referring to a nonspeaking student who uses augmentative and alternative communication, expressions such as “uses a communication device,” “communicates through signs,” or “uses augmentative communication support” describe the student’s actual communication more accurately than “cannot speak.” Describing one group as “normal students” establishes that group as the standard and implicitly places students with different characteristics outside normality. Depending on the purpose of the comparison, more explicit expressions such as “other students in the class,” “same-age peers,” or “students without disabilities” should be used. The expression “mainstreaming child” identifies the student with the educational service received. Current Ministry of National Education terminology uses “student with special educational needs” and “student receiving education through mainstreaming/integration” (Ministry of National Education, 2025). When the service received is irrelevant to the discussion, however, there is no need to repeat this information. Within the classroom, students should be referred to primarily by their names and their status as students.

Expressions concerning linguistic and cultural diversity also reveal teachers’ judgements about student competence. Statements equivalent to “has no Turkish,” “does not know a language,” “foreign child,” or “speaks broken Turkish” render students’ linguistic repertoires invisible and present Turkish proficiency as an indicator of general cognitive ability. Bilingual and multilingual students may demonstrate different levels of competence across different domains of Turkish. A student may sustain everyday conversation while requiring support to interpret abstract concepts in academic texts or may speak fluently while experiencing difficulty establishing coherence in writing. Although “a

student in the process of learning Turkish” is more inclusive than “a student with no Turkish,” it remains insufficiently specific. A skill-focused description such as “The student uses Turkish effectively in everyday communication but requires support to develop the academic vocabulary used in informational texts” is more valuable for instructional planning.

A systematic review of 63 studies examining teachers’ beliefs about linguistic diversity found that these beliefs were related to instructional practices, evaluations of students’ families, and schools’ institutional conditions (Gallagher & Scrivner, 2025). Defining multilingual students solely through Turkish structures they have yet to acquire may cause teachers to overlook conceptual knowledge and literacy experiences developed in other languages. Alford’s research involving teachers working with students who had migration and refugee experiences similarly demonstrates that teacher language which considers learning difficulties in relation to curricula, assessment, and instructional conditions—rather than explaining students’ capacities through deficit discourse—positions students as agents capable of participating in higher-order thinking (Alford, 2024).

This approach does not require Turkish language teachers to abandon the teaching of standard Turkish. One objective of Turkish language teaching is to develop forms of oral and written expression appropriate to different contexts. Standard language should not, however, be taught by devaluing the language used at home, local dialects, accents, or multilingual repertoires. A statement such as “You may speak like that at home, but that is incorrect Turkish” incorrectly associates the student’s family and linguistic identity with error. Instead, the teacher might state: “This form may be used in everyday speech or a regional dialect; in the academic text we are preparing, we will use the standard written form.” The student is then taught to make linguistic choices according to communicative context rather than to abandon one language form. Inclusive Turkish language teaching seeks to add new expressive possibilities to students’ repertoires rather than erase those they already possess.

The Turkish language teacher’s use of language is particularly important during correction and feedback. Identifying errors or areas for development in listening, speaking, reading, and writing is a natural part of instruction. Correction may nevertheless restrict participation when it targets the student’s personality, is delivered publicly in a humiliating manner, or entirely devalues the content the student seeks to communicate. When the objective of a speaking activity is fluency and idea development, interrupting students for every pronunciation or grammatical error may reduce their willingness to communicate. Teachers can select errors most relevant to the targeted skill, allow students to

complete their contribution, subsequently model the appropriate form, or encourage self-correction. Immediate feedback may be more functional during activities focused specifically on accuracy. The timing and form of feedback should therefore be determined according to the activity's objective and the student's characteristics rather than through a single fixed rule.

A recent qualitative study involving 13 instructors and 14 learners in the teaching of Turkish as a foreign or additional language found that participants considered oral corrective feedback necessary but believed that its frequency, timing, and mode of delivery should reflect students' confidence and motivation (Şahin Atbaş, 2026). Another study of writing instruction in Türkiye found that instructors reported using specific and explicit feedback more frequently and vague or destructive feedback less frequently and observed that positive feedback supported learner motivation. Because these findings are based on instructors' perspectives, they should not be interpreted causally. They nevertheless demonstrate the importance of considering not only what feedback communicates but also how it is perceived (Zileli & Çocuk, 2025). A systematic review of monolingual and multilingual K–20 students' perceptions of reading and writing feedback similarly found considerable variation in feedback preferences and indicated that written, oral, audio, and video feedback could provide different benefits, particularly for multilingual students (Berry et al., 2025).

Inclusive feedback describes which aspects of students' oral or written texts are effective and what they can improve next; it does not define who the student is. Statements such as “Your writing is terrible,” “You simply cannot learn punctuation,” or “None of this makes sense” provide no direction for improvement. By contrast, feedback such as “The sequence of events is clear in the first two paragraphs; the third paragraph needs an expression signalling the change in time” or “You have stated your opinion; now support it with evidence from the text” is criterion-referenced and actionable. Such language associates achievement and error with an improvable product and applicable strategies rather than with an immutable personality.

Praise also requires careful use. Person-focused praise such as “You are very intelligent” or “You are a naturally talented writer” may appear positive but can associate achievement with an immutable characteristic. A study involving teachers found a greater tendency to provide person-focused rather than process-focused praise to students described as having low self-esteem. The researchers noted that person-focused praise could have adverse motivational consequences, particularly when students subsequently encountered failure (Graf-König & Puca, 2024). In Turkish language lessons, teachers can instead use process- and evidence-based statements such as “You made a strong inference by combining

two clues from the text,” “Rereading your draft and removing unnecessary repetition improved the flow,” or “Identifying keywords before speaking helped you organize your ideas.” Praise should not present the student’s success as surprising. Statements such as “Even you managed to do it” or “You read beautifully despite your disability” may appear celebratory but reproduce low expectations and otherness.

Inclusive teacher language also concerns who speaks and who is spoken for. When a student with special educational needs is accompanied by support personnel, a peer, or a family member, teachers should address questions directly to the student and allow sufficient response time. Signs, writing, visual choices, communication devices, and other modes of communication should be accepted as valid means of contributing. Even when well-intentioned, continually allowing others to speak on the student’s behalf may weaken the student’s agency. Similarly, migrant students should not be expected to represent an entire culture, students with disabilities to represent all disabled people, or disaster-affected students to speak for everyone with similar experiences. Students have both the right to discuss a topic and the right not to disclose personal experiences.

Privacy is an indispensable dimension of inclusive language. Students’ diagnoses, migration status, family circumstances, disaster experiences, exposure to violence, economic difficulties, or receipt of psychosocial support should not be disclosed in the classroom. Teachers should avoid statements such as “The student has dyslexia, so I am providing extra time” or “Let us not place demands on the student today because of the earthquake.” When students ask about differing arrangements, the teacher can provide a general explanation of equity—“People may require different tools and amounts of time to achieve the same learning objective”—rather than disclosing personal information. Wherever possible, students’ views should be sought concerning how accommodations are presented, and support should not expose them before their peers.

Language used about families also affects students’ school experiences. Expressions such as “uninterested family,” “problematic family,” or “parents who do not value education” present communication difficulties as immutable family characteristics. Families may be unable to attend meetings because of working hours, transportation, caregiving responsibilities, language barriers, limited digital access, or a lack of safety and trust within the school environment. Inclusive teachers describe the observable situation and the need for a solution rather than applying an interpretive label. Instead of stating that “the family is uninterested,” the teacher might record: “A meeting could not be held during either of the two times offered; an appropriate time and communication channel should be identified with the family.” Appropriate translation and interpreting

support should be sought instead of continually positioning a child as an interpreter for family members with limited proficiency in Turkish.

Experiences of disaster, migration, poverty, or violence should not become permanent student identities. Expressions such as “earthquake-victim child,” “student who is a victim of violence,” or “child from a broken family” may transform an experienced circumstance into a label defining the student’s entire identity. Where educationally necessary, expressions that distinguish the circumstance from the individual—such as “student affected by a disaster,” “student exposed to violence,” or “student who has experienced a change in family arrangements”—may be used. Employing more appropriate terminology does not, however, justify sharing the student’s history with individuals who do not need that information. Inclusive language depends not only on how something is named but also on why, where, and with whom the information is shared.

When discriminatory, derogatory, or mocking language is used in the classroom, teacher silence may be interpreted as acceptance. Intervention should be explicit without humiliating the student responsible. Teachers should explain why an expression is problematic, distinguish the speaker’s intention from the impact of the words, and guide the student towards reconstructing the meaning inclusively. If a student tells a peer, “You are not normal,” it is insufficient to respond only with “Do not speak like that.” The teacher might instead say: “Using the word ‘normal’ to devalue a classmate excludes the differences present in our classroom. Explain what you mean again without labelling the person.” When systematic bullying, hate speech, or threats are involved, correcting individual words is insufficient; the school’s safeguarding, guidance, and disciplinary procedures must be initiated.

Inclusive teacher language should not be treated as an immutable dictionary of “prohibited” and “correct” terms. Terminology may change over time, individuals within the same community may prefer different forms of identification, and expressions may acquire different meanings in different contexts. More enduring principles include avoiding reduction of students to a single characteristic, providing only information relevant to the context, distinguishing observable performance from judgements about personality, respecting preferences for self-identification, and incorporating student voice into decisions that affect them. Turkish language teachers should regularly review their questions, feedback, assessment notes, and expressions used in conversations with families in relation to these principles. Such self-evaluation moves inclusive language beyond the search for correct terminology and transforms it into a teacher competence that strengthens classroom participation, high expectations, and educational equity.

5.2. Collaboration with Students

In inclusive education, students are not passive implementers of decisions made about them by adults; they are educational stakeholders who participate in planning, monitoring, and evaluating their learning. Teachers can observe students' academic performance, examine their work, and make professional judgements about instructional needs. Students, however, directly experience how an activity makes them feel, which barriers they encounter, which forms of support are functional, and which practices separate them from their peers. Collaboration with students therefore does not involve transferring the teacher's pedagogical responsibility to the student. It brings the teacher's professional knowledge and the student's experiential knowledge together within the same decision-making process.

Student participation in educational decision-making is first and foremost a rights-based requirement. Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child guarantees children capable of forming their own views the right to express those views freely in matters affecting them and to have them given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity (United Nations, 1989). The United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities similarly requires persons with disabilities, including children, to participate actively in the planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of inclusive education. Students and families should be regarded not merely as recipients of services but as partners in educational decision-making (Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016). Eliciting student perspectives is therefore not an optional act of courtesy but a classroom manifestation of the right to inclusive education.

Merely asking students for their views does not demonstrate meaningful participation. Lundy's model of children's participation identifies four interrelated elements of student voice: students must have a safe space in which to form their views, accessible means of expressing those views, an audience with decision-making authority that listens to them, and opportunities for their views to influence decisions. Genuine collaboration does not occur when students express their views but are consistently disregarded, decisions have already been made, or students are not told what action was taken in response to their feedback (Lundy, 2007). A recent systematic review of 25 years of research on student participation similarly found that student voice in educational research frequently remained at the level of consultation and that a substantial gap existed between eliciting views and translating them into action (Gillett-Swan & Baroutsis, 2024). The decisive issue is therefore not whether information is collected from students

but whether that information produces a visible response in instructional decision-making.

Collaboration with students should be understood as a cyclical process that begins before instruction, continues during teaching, and is reassessed afterwards. Before instruction, the purpose of an activity and the available options can be explained in comprehensible language. Teachers can learn about students' previous experiences, which materials they can access, when they experience difficulty requesting assistance, and how they prefer support to be provided. During instruction, attention should be given not only to whether students complete a task but also to the extent of their participation, whether they find the support functional, and how their independence is affected. Following instruction, students' experiences can be made visible through questions such as: "What helped you most during this activity?", "At which stage did you experience difficulty?", "Which of the forms of support made the task easier?", and "What could we do differently next time?" The purpose is not to elicit responses that affirm the teacher but to obtain information that improves subsequent instructional decisions.

Restricting student voice to those who can communicate orally and fluently may make the participation process itself exclusionary. Students with communication difficulties, those newly learning Turkish, students experiencing intense anxiety, autistic students, and those reluctant to express disagreement to adults may not wish to communicate their views directly through speech. Written responses, visual options, emotion or rating scales, drawings, marking systems, augmentative and alternative communication, sign language, another language in which the student is more proficient, or individual interviews may be used instead. Silence does not mean that a student has no views or that adults can make decisions on the student's behalf. The teacher's responsibility is not to compel speech but to identify students' preferred modes of communication and establish conditions in which they can express themselves safely. The European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education similarly emphasizes that student voices are not uniform and that a culture of participation must be developed to enable students with diverse experiences, communication characteristics, and identities to participate meaningfully and systematically in decision-making (European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2022).

Collaboration with students is particularly important in Turkish language teaching in relation to access to texts, the use of language skills, participation in activities, and assessment. Before a reading activity, students may be asked whether they can most readily access a printed, enlarged, digital, or audio version of a text. Their preferences must nevertheless be considered in relation to the

learning objective. If the objective is to understand information in the text, an audio version may support access. If the objective is to assess independent word-decoding skills, presenting the entire text in audio form may alter the construct being measured. In such cases, the teacher can explain the purposes of the learning activity and assessment and determine collaboratively at which stage audio support will be used. This establishes a transparent balance between student preference and instructional validity.

During writing activities, students can participate in decisions concerning topic selection, planning tools, writing media, and feedback formats. Some may prefer to organize their ideas using a visual diagram, others to make an audio recording, and others to use a keyboard or speech-to-text tool. Teachers should monitor the effects of these options on writing collaboratively with students. If the objective is to organize ideas into a coherent text, assistive technology may make the student's content visible. If the purpose is to assess spelling conventions, handwriting, or a particular linguistic structure, the effects of the tool on the assessment objective must be considered separately. Explaining this distinction helps students understand that accommodations are not arbitrary forms of assistance but deliberate arrangements intended to reduce particular barriers to learning.

During speaking, listening, and group activities, students should not merely be asked whether they wish to participate; the conditions necessary for their participation should be identified collaboratively. A student who experiences difficulty speaking before an audience may prefer to prerecord a presentation, present with a peer, or assume responsibility for a brief section. Continually directing the student towards less visible, easier, or secondary tasks is not inclusive, however. Even when an initially assigned role provides a sense of safety, subsequent activities should progressively develop the student's responsibility and independence. Asking both "Which role would you like to assume within the group?" and "What support would help you work more independently in this role?" enables preference and developmental objectives to be considered together.

When collaborating with bilingual and multilingual students, teachers can discuss the circumstances in which they feel safe using Turkish, how they prefer errors to be corrected, and the extent to which they wish to draw on other languages. A student may feel uncomfortable when pronunciation errors are corrected before the class or may find it useful to take notes in another language before expressing ideas. Considering these experiences does not mean abandoning Turkish language instruction. It creates a safer pathway through

which students can use their existing linguistic resources to develop academic expression in Turkish.

Students' perspectives on interests, experiences, and representation can similarly inform text selection. Participation should not be reduced to selecting the most popular texts. Student perspectives can provide instructional evidence concerning the texts in which students can see themselves represented, the content they find exclusionary or distressing, and the topics that help them develop alternative perspectives.

Privacy is particularly important in collaboration with students. Explaining a student's support before the class, disclosing a diagnosis, or telling peers why the student uses different materials may result in labelling, even when well-intentioned. Teachers should therefore ask students in advance where and how support should be provided. If a student requiring an audio text is uncomfortable with being the only person given this resource, for example, the audio file could be made available to the entire class through a digital platform. The individual need is then met without visibly separating the student from peers. If a request for confidentiality concerns safety, safeguarding, or mandatory reporting, however, teachers should not promise complete secrecy. They should explain in age-appropriate language with whom the information must be shared and why.

Not every preference expressed by a student should automatically be regarded as the most effective instructional option. Students may prefer easier tasks because they are familiar, reject necessary support, or request practices that provide short-term comfort but restrict long-term development. Student perspectives should therefore be considered alongside teacher observations, student work, formative assessment evidence, and, where necessary, information from families or specialists. When the most appropriate option is initially uncertain, two forms of support may be trialled for a defined period and their effects on participation, independence, and learning evaluated with the student. Decisions are then based neither solely on adult assumptions nor exclusively on student preference but on collaboratively interpreted evidence.

Eliciting student perspectives does not require every request to be fulfilled unconditionally. Nor should students' views be readily disregarded through appeals to their "best interests." Teachers retain responsibility for decisions in relation to learning objectives, student safety, the rights of other students, and available resources. When a request cannot be implemented, however, the reason should be explained openly and respectfully, and feasible alternatives should be developed with the student. Listening to a student and then making a different decision without explanation reduces participation to a tokenistic exercise.

Recent research demonstrating that student perspectives can produce changes in classroom practice indicates that the process depends on teacher openness, dialogue that values students' thinking, and concrete action following consultation. A participatory study conducted in primary schools found that teachers' collaborative consideration of students' views about their learning experiences contributed to changes in classroom practice and the development of more inclusive forms of participation (Messiou et al., 2025). The central consideration is not whether students approve the teacher's decisions but whether teachers and students can examine barriers to learning and participation together.

In conclusion, collaboration with students is not an additional practice appended to inclusive Turkish language teaching but a fundamental principle determining instructional quality. Providing safe and accessible means of expression, listening carefully, explaining how student perspectives have affected decisions, and reassessing practices with students transform participation from a tokenistic procedure into a meaningful process. This approach enables teachers to understand barriers to learning that may not be readily visible from the outside while developing students' capacity to express their needs, monitor their learning, and assume responsibility in decisions concerning support.

5.3. Collaboration with Families, Specialists, and Colleagues

Inclusive education does not assume that a single teacher can identify and address every need affecting a student's learning and participation. Classroom performance is shaped through interactions among individual characteristics, family experiences, linguistic and cultural resources, the school environment, instructional practices, and support services. Inclusive teacher competence should therefore be evaluated not only through classroom methods but also through the ability to establish learning-focused collaboration among students, families, colleagues, and specialists. The European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education states that families should not merely be informed about educational decisions but should participate meaningfully in developing them. Its framework emphasizes that inclusive policies and practices should be designed not for families but with them (European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2022).

In this section, "family" encompasses not only biological mothers and fathers but also parents, guardians, and other caregivers who assume responsibility for the student's care, development, and education. Family structures, living conditions, approaches to child-rearing, and relationships with schools vary substantially. Evaluating every family against a single model of the "involved family" may cause teachers to overlook both available resources and encountered

barriers. Regular attendance at school meetings, monitoring homework, and frequent communication with teachers are visible forms of family involvement, but they are not the only indicators that a family values education. A family unable to attend school activities physically may nevertheless contribute to learning by creating a safe study environment, listening to the child, supporting literacy in the home language, or making significant sacrifices in daily life to sustain school attendance.

Families possess information about students' histories, developmental trajectories, interests, strengths, communication preferences, home languages, previous schooling, and forms of support that function in everyday life—information teachers may be unable to obtain through school observations. Teachers possess professional knowledge of the curriculum, classroom interactions, academic expectations, lesson performance, and student development that can be monitored without comparisons with peers. Effective collaboration treats these forms of knowledge as complementary rather than positioning one above the other. A family's status as the party who "knows the child best" does not mean it should make every instructional decision independently, just as a teacher's subject expertise does not justify devaluing the family's experience.

The distinction between family involvement and family partnership is important. Participating in activities determined by the school, signing requested documents, or implementing teacher instructions at home may constitute involvement, but they do not independently create an equitable partnership. Goodall and Montgomery describe a continuum extending from parental involvement with school activities to active engagement with the child's learning and emphasize that meaningful engagement encompasses more than assigning tasks to families (Goodall & Montgomery, 2014). A meta-analysis comprising 448 independent studies and more than 480,000 families found small but positive associations between family involvement and students' academic adjustment, motivation to learn, classroom engagement, and some social-emotional outcomes. Different forms of family involvement did not produce identical outcomes, however, and direct assistance with homework was not consistently associated with higher achievement (Barger et al., 2019). The quality of collaboration and its effects on student independence therefore matter more than the quantity of family participation.

Communicating with families only when a problem occurs may place the school–family relationship on a defensive footing. If families begin to expect every contact to involve failure, behavioural concerns, or complaints, they may avoid sharing information, asking questions, or attending meetings. Initial contact

should therefore be established before a crisis, and students' strengths and positive development should be communicated regularly. A recent study examining families' experiences of positive teacher communication concerning students with disabilities found that everyday welcoming behaviours, brief but regular communication, warm and non-judgemental language, student-centred conversations, and solution-focused approaches were decisive in developing functional partnerships (Mann et al., 2024). Rather than stating, "Your child has once again failed to complete the homework," a teacher might say, "I observed that the last three writing tasks were not completed; I would like us to identify together which stage of the task is creating difficulty." Such evidence-based language initiates collaborative inquiry without forcing the family into a defensive position.

Limited communication with school should not immediately be interpreted as family "disinterest." Working hours, transportation difficulties, caregiving responsibilities, economic conditions, access to digital tools, literacy levels, health concerns, migration experiences, limited proficiency in the language of schooling, and previous negative school experiences may affect participation. Some families remain silent not because they do not wish to speak with the teacher but because they are unfamiliar with their rights, professional terminology, or what the education system expects of them. A recent systematic review of bilingual families' access to special education services found that communication barriers arose not only from the absence of a shared language but also from professional terminology, limited knowledge of the system, insufficient access to appropriate resources, and a lack of cultural understanding (Barrera-Lansford & Sánchez, 2025). Although these findings emerged within particular national and community contexts, they demonstrate the importance of institutional and cultural accessibility alongside linguistic accessibility in school–family communication.

When families are not sufficiently proficient in the language of schooling, communication support should be provided rather than expecting their child or another student to interpret. Qualified language assistance is especially important in meetings concerning assessment and identification, individualized education programmes, safety, behaviour, health, and student rights. Meeting agendas and essential documents should, wherever possible, be provided in languages families understand and written in clear terms. Even when families are physically present, unexplained expressions such as "phonological awareness," "receptive language," "adapted assessment," and "cognitive processing" may exclude them from decision-making. Comprehensible language does not oversimplify

scientific or professional knowledge; it makes that knowledge accessible enough to support participation.

A uniform approach should also be avoided when determining communication channels. Some families may find face-to-face meetings most accessible, while others may prefer telephone calls, text messages, email, or online meetings. The timing, frequency, and purpose of communication should be agreed upon mutually, establishing a feasible arrangement between teachers' professional boundaries and families' living conditions. Families should be informed from the outset which channels will be used for routine and non-urgent information, when school administrators or guidance services should be contacted, and within which hours teachers can respond. Collaboration can thereby remain sustainable without creating an expectation that teachers will be available at all times.

Family meetings should not be conducted solely as occasions on which teachers provide information. The purpose, participants, and proposed topics should be shared with families in advance, and families should be invited to add issues to the agenda. Beginning with the student's strengths and progress and then describing observable difficulties through student work and concrete examples creates a more constructive basis for discussion. After listening to the family's observations at home, participants can establish an attainable objective, determine the support to be implemented, allocate responsibilities, and agree on a review date. Families should receive a comprehensible summary of decisions, including when the effects of implementation will be reassessed. The meeting then becomes a cycle of planning, implementation, monitoring, and revision rather than a one-time transfer of information.

Turkish language teaching offers important opportunities to draw on family knowledge. Families can explain which languages students use at home, the narratives they hear, the texts that interest them, their previous reading and writing experiences, difficulties observed during oral reading, and the conditions under which they express themselves most comfortably. Such information prevents students' linguistic competence from being evaluated solely through classroom performance in Turkish. Learning that a bilingual student who rarely speaks in class tells detailed stories at home, for example, can help the teacher establish bridges supporting expression in Turkish rather than assuming that the student cannot generate ideas. Family information may also help explain why a student avoids certain textual content, which cultural narratives are familiar, or which topics may be distressing because of disaster, migration, or bereavement.

Collaboration with families does not mean transferring Turkish language instruction to the home. Asking the family of a student experiencing reading difficulties to conduct lengthy oral-reading sessions every evening, instructing a

family whose child is learning Turkish to use only Turkish at home, or requiring parents to complete every writing activity for a student experiencing difficulty may disregard both family circumstances and student independence. Suggested activities should be brief, purposeful, feasible, and appropriate to the student's developmental level. Rather than prohibiting other family languages, teachers can encourage natural linguistic activities such as storytelling, shared book exploration, establishing relationships among words, and discussing everyday experiences in those languages. Families are not unpaid teaching assistants but partners who contribute knowledge and experience concerning their child's learning.

Partnership with families is inseparable from collaboration with specialists and colleagues. In an inclusive school, Turkish language teachers may work with classroom teachers, other subject teachers, special education teachers, school counsellors or psychological counsellors, administrators, guidance and research centre personnel, speech and language therapists, sign-language interpreters, and other professionals according to student needs. These individuals contribute different areas of knowledge. Special education teachers may provide expertise in task analysis and instructional adaptation; psychological counsellors in social-emotional well-being and school experience; speech and language therapists in communication and language processes; and Turkish language teachers in listening, speaking, reading, and writing objectives, textual structures, vocabulary, and assessment criteria. The Profile of Inclusive Teachers identifies working with families and professionals from different areas of education as a core competency for every teacher (European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, 2012).

Legislation in Türkiye also establishes a team-based structure for students with special educational needs. Under Article 47 of the Special Education Services Regulation, an individualized education programme development unit comprises a school administrator, guidance counsellor, classroom teacher, subject teachers responsible for the student's lessons, the student, and the parent or guardian. Its responsibilities include coordinating the preparation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the IEP; arranging educational environments and materials; and collaborating with other school units (Ministry of National Education, 2018). The presence of multiple individuals at the same meeting does not, however, independently constitute collaboration. A meeting in which participants merely provide signatures, instructional decisions are not discussed, and implementation is not monitored does not fulfil the educational purpose of the team-based approach envisaged by the Regulation.

Effective collaboration with specialists and colleagues begins by defining the purpose of consultation clearly. A focused question such as “Although the student can locate explicit information in the text, at which stage does difficulty arise when establishing causal relationships, and what evidence should we collect to understand this?” enables team members to make more concrete contributions than the broad question “What should I do for this student?” Meetings should be informed by reading records, written work, observation notes, assessment evidence, and the student’s views rather than diagnosis or general impressions alone. Broad descriptions such as “poor attention,” “inadequate language skills,” or “unmotivated” should be replaced with accounts of the task, conditions, duration, and observed behaviour. This moves collaboration away from producing labels and towards instructional problem-solving.

Specialist recommendations must be translated into observable practices suited to the classroom context. General recommendations such as “use visual support,” “simplify the text,” or “provide additional time” may have little practical effect unless they specify which materials will be prepared, during which activity the support will be used, who will provide it, for how long, and how its effectiveness will be evaluated. The Turkish language teacher’s subject knowledge is decisive here. Shortening a text may preserve the objective of identifying the main idea but alter an objective involving analysis of textual structure or comparison of modes of expression. Similarly, an audio text may increase access during an activity assessing comprehension but alter the construct during an assessment of independent reading fluency. While specialists provide information about access requirements, Turkish language teachers evaluate how recommendations affect subject-specific objectives.

Consider, for example, a student who cannot complete lengthy texts in Turkish language lessons. The family may report that the student reads short texts with interest at home but becomes tired quickly when pages contain dense visual information. The student may explain that following the lines is difficult. The special education teacher may recommend dividing the text into sections and using a reading guide, while the school counsellor may observe that the student’s anxiety increases when asked to read before the class. By combining this information, the Turkish language teacher can prepare a segmented text with reduced visual density while preserving the same learning objective, allow the student to read silently first, and then discuss selected sections with a peer. Effectiveness can be monitored by considering performance on comprehension questions, duration of independent engagement, and the student’s views—not merely whether the task was completed. No individual stakeholder produces the

entire solution; different sources of knowledge converge in a shared instructional decision.

Collegial collaboration should not be limited to meetings concerning students with special educational needs. Collaboration among Turkish language, science, social studies, and mathematics teachers can support students in understanding disciplinary text structures, academic vocabulary, instructions, and question stems. If a student knows the scientific content but cannot solve a lengthy word problem, the difficulty may relate more closely to linguistic structure than subject knowledge. The Turkish language teacher can contribute to teaching structures involving causality, comparison, classification, and explanation, while the subject teacher makes their use within the discipline visible. Language support then ceases to be the exclusive responsibility of the Turkish language lesson and becomes a shared responsibility that strengthens access across the curriculum.

Physical co-presence is likewise insufficient for genuine collaboration in co-teaching arrangements. When one teacher instructs the whole class while the other sits exclusively beside a student with special educational needs, the arrangement may visibly separate that student rather than distribute responsibility. Co-teaching requires objectives, roles, materials, and assessment criteria to be planned jointly in advance, with both teachers assuming responsibility for instruction and assessment. A meta-analysis examining academic achievement in co-taught settings found that students with disabilities could demonstrate more positive academic outcomes in co-taught classrooms than peers educated in separate special education classrooms. The researchers nevertheless noted that included studies did not always describe implementation adequately and that identical outcomes could not be assumed for every co-teaching arrangement (King-Sears et al., 2021). The effectiveness of co-teaching therefore depends not on the presence of two adults but on the genuine sharing of planning and responsibility.

Disagreement during collaboration is normal. A family may wish particular support to continue while the teacher believes it restricts independence; a specialist may recommend more extensive adaptation while the subject teacher believes it would alter the learning objective. Such disagreements should be addressed through student needs and available evidence rather than participants' authority or intentions. Opinions should be distinguished from observations, feasible options should be trialled for a defined period, and their effects monitored using predetermined indicators. When a recommendation cannot be implemented, the reason should be explained and alternatives developed. The perspectives of students or families who disagree with a decision should also be

documented; partnership should not become an effort to make every participant appear to hold the same opinion.

Student privacy must be protected when information is shared with families and specialists. Diagnostic information, health details, family circumstances, and information concerning private life should be shared only with those who require it to support the student and only to the extent necessary. Students' circumstances should not become topics of casual conversation in staff rooms, while electronic correspondence, assessment records, and student work should be stored securely. The presence of numerous specialists at a meeting does not mean that every detail about the student must be shared with everyone. Wherever possible, students and families should be informed in advance about who will attend, which information will be discussed, and with whom decisions will subsequently be shared.

Finally, effective collaboration cannot be left solely to teachers' goodwill. Without shared planning time, appropriate meeting spaces, accessible communication channels, clear role descriptions, systems for documentation and monitoring, and administrative support, collaboration may remain temporary and dependent on particular individuals. School administrators should provide private and accessible spaces for family meetings, allocate time for joint planning, and monitor how specialist recommendations are translated into lessons. Collaboration among families, specialists, and colleagues can thereby become part of a school culture that responds continuously to learner diversity rather than an intervention used only when problems arise.

Students remain at the centre of high-quality collaboration in inclusive Turkish language teaching. More accurate and feasible decisions can be made when families' experiential knowledge, Turkish language teachers' subject and pedagogical knowledge, colleagues' classroom observations, and specialists' professional expertise are considered alongside students' perspectives. The principal measure of collaboration is not the number of meetings held or documents exchanged but the extent to which joint work improves students' access to texts, use of language skills, classroom participation, independence, and sense of belonging.

5.4. Professional Ethics and Student Privacy

Inclusive teaching encompasses not only the responsibility to make instructional arrangements that respond to students' diverse needs but also the ethical management of information acquired during that process. Because the teacher–student relationship is unequal in terms of institutional authority and age, teachers bear a particular responsibility to protect students' dignity, autonomy, and private lives. Student privacy should therefore not be understood merely as

refraining from disclosing particular information. It encompasses every decision concerning which information about a student may be collected, for what purpose, by whom, for how long, and with whom it may be shared.

Privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity are related but distinct concepts. Privacy concerns restricting access to students' personal lives and information about them. Confidentiality refers to the teacher's responsibility to protect information acquired in the course of professional duties from unauthorized individuals. Anonymity seeks to make it impossible to associate data with a particular student. Replacing a student's name with a pseudonym does not independently ensure anonymity. The school's name, place of residence, a rare diagnosis, a distinctive migration history, family structure, or an identifiable extract from the student's writing may enable indirect identification. Removing direct identifiers and preventing re-identification are therefore not equivalent.

A child's right to privacy is a fundamental human right rather than a matter of courtesy left to teachers' discretion. Article 16 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child protects children from arbitrary interference with their privacy, family, and correspondence, while Articles 3 and 12 require consideration of the child's best interests and views in decisions affecting them (United Nations, 1989). Article 22 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities similarly guarantees equal protection for the personal, health, and rehabilitation information of persons with disabilities (United Nations, 2006). Possessing information about a student's disability, diagnosis, or support arrangements does not authorize its disclosure in the classroom or elsewhere within the school.

Students' personal information is not limited to names, identification numbers, and contact details. Photographs, video and audio recordings, handwriting samples, records of reading fluency, examination results, attendance information, behavioural observations, assistive technologies used, and individualized education documents may all constitute personal data when associated with an identified or identifiable student. Health and disability information, biometric data, and certain identity information may be connected with legally protected categories of sensitive personal data. Information not legally classified as sensitive personal data is not necessarily ethically insignificant. Information concerning poverty, family conflict, migration or asylum experiences, exposure to violence, caregiving responsibilities, housing insecurity, or a student's home language may also produce stigmatization, discrimination, and loss of trust when misused.

The Ministry of National Education's professional ethical principles for educators require the confidentiality of information obtained from students and prohibit its disclosure to unauthorized individuals except where legally required

or during emergencies. The same principles regard the initiation of necessary safeguarding procedures when educators become aware that a student is experiencing maltreatment as part of their professional responsibilities (Ministry of National Education, 2015). Privacy does not therefore create an absolute duty of silence. Confidentiality is maintained to protect the student; when maintaining it would seriously endanger the student or another person, limited disclosure to authorized individuals may be required under applicable legislation and school child-protection procedures.

A student may disclose violence, neglect, thoughts of self-harm, or a serious safety risk in a writing activity. In such circumstances, the teacher should not question the student before the class, attempt to conduct a detailed investigation, or promise absolute secrecy. The student should be heard calmly and assured that the disclosure is being taken seriously. Without increasing the risk to the student, the teacher should explain whose assistance must be sought to protect their safety. Information should be shared only with those authorized to conduct the safeguarding process and only to the extent necessary. Records should be based on the student's words and observable circumstances rather than interpretive or accusatory language. The responsibility to ensure safety and the right to privacy can thereby be protected together.

The Personal Data Protection Law No. 6698 requires personal data to be processed lawfully and fairly for specified and legitimate purposes; to be relevant, limited, and proportionate to those purposes; to be accurate; and to be retained only for the period required (Personal Data Protection Law, 2016). In education, these principles mean that teachers cannot collect unlimited information merely because they consider it pedagogically useful. Before recording data, teachers must consider the educational purpose for which it is needed, whether that purpose can be achieved through a less intrusive means, who requires access, and when the information should be deleted. Recording a student's reading performance may be necessary to understand a reading difficulty; collecting the student's entire medical history, family relationships, and previous life experiences for the same purpose would generally be disproportionate.

Information sharing in inclusive education should be restricted according to the need-to-know principle. A teacher, psychological counsellor, special education professional, or administrator directly supporting the student's learning may require particular information. The scope of disclosure must nevertheless remain proportionate to the person's role. It may be educationally useful for a Turkish language teacher to tell a colleague that "the student benefits from additional prompting during inference questions," but unnecessary to disclose the student's complete diagnostic history or detailed family information. Casual

discussions about students in staff rooms, corridors, transport areas, or personal messaging groups cannot be justified as professional information sharing. A student's decision to discuss personal circumstances in class does not authorize the teacher to repeat that information elsewhere.

The manner in which instructional accommodations are provided is also directly related to privacy. Statements such as "I am giving you this text because you have dyslexia" or "You will answer different questions because your Turkish is insufficient" may transform educational support into a practice that exposes the student. More ethical approaches include making alternative text formats available to all students, incorporating additional time or audio texts as ordinary instructional options, and consulting students beforehand about how they prefer support to be provided. Although it is neither possible nor necessary to provide every form of support to the entire class, individualized arrangements can be made without disclosing diagnoses or using language that devalues students in relation to their peers.

Student work produced in Turkish language lessons requires particular attention to privacy. Autobiographical writing, diaries, memoirs, letters, and creative texts may contain sensitive information about family relationships, migration experiences, economic hardship, health, identity, violence, or bereavement. The fact that a text was written for a lesson does not grant the teacher unlimited authority to read it aloud, display it, share it with colleagues, or publish it on social media. Teachers should explain the purpose of any proposed sharing and seek the student's views. Names may be removed during peer assessment, examples safe for sharing may be selected instead of personal narratives, and students should be taught not to disclose outside the classroom any private information encountered in their peers' writing.

Comparable care is required during oral reading, speaking, and listening activities. Audio and video recordings of reading speed, pronunciation, stuttering, language and communication difficulties, accents, or proficiency in Turkish are not merely technical exercises; they are personal data that make students' identities and performance visible. The purpose of recording, who will listen, how long the recording will be retained, and whether it will be deleted after assessment should be determined in advance. Storing student recordings on personal telephones, sharing them through open links, or sending them through unauthorized messaging applications creates serious concerns relating to data security and professional ethics.

Publishing photographs, videos, audio recordings, or student work on school websites or social media has consequences different from restricted classroom use. Online content may be copied, removed from its original context, reused for

other purposes, and accessed by a substantially wider audience than intended. A 2026 principle decision of the Personal Data Protection Board emphasizes that public-sector data controllers making online disclosures must have a valid legal basis for processing and comply with purpose limitation, data minimization, masking or anonymization, and the removal of content after the relevant period has expired (Personal Data Protection Board, 2026). Educational institutions therefore cannot treat online publication as an ordinary promotional activity.

When explicit consent forms the legal basis for data processing, it must relate to a specified activity and be informed and freely given (Personal Data Protection Authority, n.d.). A general authorization obtained at the beginning of the academic year should not be interpreted as unlimited permission to publish all student work indefinitely on every platform. The type of content, platform, audience, purpose, and duration of publication should be specified. Parental authorization does not make the student's views unnecessary. Students should receive age- and developmentally appropriate information, and objections to the sharing of their photographs or work should be considered as requirements of participation rights and human dignity. Given the power imbalance in the teacher–student relationship, students must know that refusal will not adversely affect their grades, relationship with the teacher, or participation in school activities.

Digital learning platforms and generative artificial intelligence tools introduce new dimensions to student privacy. Content uploaded to a publicly available AI system to correct student writing, obtain recommendations concerning a reading difficulty, or translate a multilingual text may remain identifiable through the school, age, family events, diagnosis, migration route, or distinctive narrative features even after the student's name has been removed. UNESCO requires data privacy to be protected when generative AI is used in education and states that institutions must evaluate tools not only pedagogically but also in terms of ethics and safety (UNESCO, 2023). Teachers should therefore not upload diagnoses, individualized education programmes, audio recordings, original student writing, or family information to institutionally unauthorized AI systems, translation platforms, cloud-storage services, or comparable online tools. A service is not necessarily safe or ethical for student data merely because it is free and readily accessible. Where use is necessary and institutionally approved, direct and indirect identifiers should be removed, only essential data should be used, and institutional data-security requirements should be followed.

Using student work for research, conference presentations, journal articles, books, professional development, or case studies differs from ordinary pedagogical use in the classroom. Submission of an assignment for a course does

not automatically constitute permission for it to be used subsequently as research data. The British Educational Research Association's current ethical guidelines emphasize continuing voluntary and informed consent, age-appropriate assent from children, the right to withdraw, data security, and assessment of re-identification risks (British Educational Research Association, 2024). Research conducted by teachers with their own students requires particular care because teachers also hold authority over grading. Students must be informed clearly that non-participation will create no academic or social disadvantage. Necessary ethics committee and institutional approvals must be obtained, and procedures for data collection, storage, and destruction planned in advance.

Changing a student's name is often insufficient in a scholarly publication. A combination of age, grade level, school, place of residence, rare need, family structure, and distinctive narrative may enable recognition by people in the student's immediate environment. Case presentations should therefore omit details that are not educationally necessary, and direct quotations should be evaluated for re-identification risk. Composite examples drawing on several experiences may be used, but they should not be presented as authentic individual cases; their fictional or composite nature must be stated explicitly. A student may also wish to be acknowledged as the author of their own work. This right deserves ethical consideration, but when the author is a child, the long-term consequences of public visibility must be discussed with the student and legal guardian.

Protecting privacy does not mean that no information about a student should ever be shared. Failing to communicate essential information to those responsible for arranging instructional support may also undermine the right to education. The ethical issue concerns the purpose, scope, method, and recipient of disclosure rather than the mere existence of information sharing. Limited, verified, and necessary disclosures to authorized individuals that support learning or safety may be ethically defensible. Disclosure motivated by curiosity, labelling, exposure, institutional promotion, or casual conversation is unacceptable.

When making privacy-related decisions, inclusive teachers do not treat pedagogical benefit as sufficient on its own. They consider the effect on student dignity, the availability of less intrusive options, the student's views, the likelihood of re-identification, possible safety risks arising from non-disclosure, and the limits of institutional authority. Where uncertainty exists, teachers should consult school administrators, psychological counselling and guidance services, authorized data-protection units, or relevant specialists rather than acting solely on personal judgement. A data loss or inappropriate disclosure should not be concealed; it should be reported promptly under institutional data-breach procedures, and action should be taken to limit harm.

In conclusion, student privacy is not an administrative obligation external to inclusive education but a fundamental condition of safe classroom participation. Students who trust that their personal information will not be dismissed, disclosed, or used against them are more likely to express their views, request assistance, share linguistic and cultural experiences, and participate in learning. Professional ethics does not require teachers to make students invisible. It requires them to recognize students' rights over their own visibility, voice, and personal information and to support them within a dignified, safe, and equitable learning environment.

5.5. Teacher Self-Evaluation and the Monitoring of Inclusive Turkish Language Teaching

Inclusive teachers do not use assessment solely to determine students' achievement; they systematically examine the effects of their own instruction on access, participation, learning, and belonging. Self-evaluation therefore extends beyond answering "Did the lesson go well?" through personal impressions. It requires an evidence-based analysis of the relationship between teachers' objectives, selected texts, language, grouping arrangements, instructions, support, and assessment instruments and the resulting student experiences.

Teacher self-evaluation does not mean assigning teachers personal responsibility for every difficulty students encounter. Class size, inaccessible physical environments, shortages of support personnel and materials, social conditions affecting attendance, and educational policies are factors individual teachers cannot change alone. Teachers can nevertheless identify variables within their decision-making authority, make institutional barriers visible, and collaborate with administrators, families, colleagues, and specialists to reduce them. Self-evaluation is therefore based not on self-blame but on a realistic distinction between professional and institutional responsibility.

Reflective and inclusive teaching are closely related. Reflective teachers assess not only whether a method was effective but also their assumptions concerning students, achievement, language, and difference. Rather than immediately explaining a student's inability to complete a task through unwillingness, incapacity, or family disinterest, they examine barriers created by the task structure, materials, instructions, time allocation, and assessment criteria. According to Minott, reflective and inclusive teaching intersect when teachers question deterministic assumptions, consider the learning of every student, monitor their practices, experiment with alternative solutions, and assume responsibility for their professional development (Minott, 2019). Teacher self-

evaluation is thus not merely a technical review of a lesson but a critical process examining expectations, values, and implicit biases.

Research on reflective thinking in Turkish language teaching has addressed different contexts, including teacher education, reading and writing instruction, teaching Turkish as a first language, and teaching Turkish as an additional language (Ustabulut, 2021). For self-evaluation to perform an inclusive function, however, it must not remain an intellectual exercise; it must produce observable changes in instructional decisions. The general conclusion that “students did not understand the text” does not identify which students experienced difficulty, in which section, or for what reason. Determining whether students struggled with unfamiliar vocabulary, cultural references, inferencing, intertextual relationships, or organizing ideas in writing creates a self-evaluation capable of informing subsequent instruction.

The reliability of self-evaluation depends on teachers not relying exclusively on memory or general classroom impressions. Student work samples, reading and writing products, brief exit responses, observation records, assessment rubrics, participation records, student questions, peer feedback, and student perspectives can provide complementary evidence of instructional effects. Audio or video recordings produced with appropriate ethical and privacy safeguards may help teachers examine their own speaking time, the quality of their questions, wait time, and distribution of opportunities to contribute. Data collection alone, however, does not constitute self-evaluation. Evidence must be connected with the learning objective, emerging patterns interpreted, and those interpretations translated into new instructional decisions.

Teacher reflection occurs across three complementary temporal dimensions: reflection for action during planning, reflection in action while teaching, and reflection on action after the lesson. A recent study examining teachers’ reflective practices in Türkiye similarly found that these forms were used at different stages of the instructional process (Kılıç, 2024). This distinction demonstrates that self-evaluation in inclusive Turkish language teaching is not an activity undertaken only after a lesson but a cyclical process beginning during design and extending into subsequent instruction.

Pre-lesson self-evaluation begins by examining the plan in relation to learner variability. Teachers should first determine whether the learning objective is explicit, observable, and comprehensible to students. An ambiguous objective such as “learning the story” should be replaced with a more precise outcome, such as identifying the plot, explaining characters’ behaviour using textual evidence, or developing a reasoned interpretation of the text’s message. Clear objectives strengthen alignment between instruction and assessment.

Teachers must also identify which skill an activity actually targets. Asking students to produce a two-page written response to assess their understanding of a story introduces not only reading comprehension but also writing fluency, vocabulary, grammatical proficiency, text construction, and working speed into the assessment. Unless these dimensions are distinguished, the area in which the student requires support cannot be identified.

During planning, a text should be evaluated not only for age and grade appropriateness but also for linguistic, cultural, cognitive, and visual accessibility. Unfamiliar vocabulary, complex sentence structures, culture-specific references, implicit and figurative meanings, font, line spacing, visual quality, and compatibility of digital files with assistive technologies may create invisible barriers. Teachers should also consider which identities the text makes visible, which life experiences it treats as normative, and whether particular groups are represented one-dimensionally or stereotypically. Inclusive self-evaluation asks not merely whether a text is “good literature” but how different students may relate to it.

The clarity of instructions is another component of planning. Lengthy, multistep directions delivered exclusively through speech may create barriers unrelated to the task content for students requiring support with attention, working memory, hearing, or the language of schooling. Teachers should consider whether instructions are brief and sequenced, supported by a model product, and designed to allow students to demonstrate their understanding of the task. Graphic organizers, word banks, audio texts, accessible digital files, model paragraphs, and additional working time should not be treated only as retrospective solutions for individual students. They should be incorporated during planning in anticipation of learner variability. CAST’s Universal Design for Learning Guidelines similarly recommend embedding explicit objectives, accessible feedback, tools for monitoring progress, and different means of self-assessment into learning from the outset (CAST, 2024).

Self-evaluation during a lesson requires teachers to balance adherence to the plan with responsiveness to emerging evidence. Student silence does not necessarily indicate disinterest. A question may be unclear, response time may be insufficient, mistakes may be treated dismissively in the classroom, or the activity may privilege students who respond orally and rapidly. Teachers should therefore observe who contributes, who consistently remains in the background, whether certain students are interrupted, and how responsibilities are distributed during group work. Participation cannot be evaluated solely through speaking frequency. Listening, taking notes, producing a visual response, writing questions,

explaining ideas to a peer, and using alternative communication tools are also meaningful forms of participation.

When responding to difficulty during a lesson, teachers should seek to preserve the learning objective. If a student cannot follow a lengthy text, the teacher may divide it into meaningful sections, explain key vocabulary, or provide audio access rather than removing the text entirely. When students cannot answer a question, the teacher may reformulate it, allow additional thinking time, facilitate paired discussion, or permit students to develop initial responses through keywords rather than providing the answer directly. Self-evaluation shifts the teacher's focus from "Did I implement my plan?" to "How did my plan respond to student learning, and what modification became necessary?"

After the lesson, teachers should first examine whether student products provide valid evidence of the intended learning objective. Average class achievement is insufficient; teachers must investigate which students remained invisible in terms of access, participation, and learning. The fact that most students completed an activity does not independently demonstrate its inclusiveness. Some may have been unable to access the materials, assume a meaningful group role, or demonstrate their knowledge through the selected assessment format. Evidence should therefore be used to identify patterns of barriers rather than divide students into immutable categories.

Error analysis can make an important contribution to this process in Turkish language lessons. A student who can locate explicit information but experiences difficulty with inference questions requires different instruction from a student who has failed to understand the entire text. A student who sequences ideas logically but makes spelling and punctuation errors should not receive the same feedback as a student experiencing difficulty developing a topic. During listening and viewing, failure to recall information may relate to attention, note-taking speed, vocabulary, audio quality, or the instruction having been provided only once. When teachers distinguish among these possibilities, assessment results become instructional decisions rather than judgements.

Students' perspectives may reveal barriers to participation that teachers cannot identify through observation alone. Questions such as "In which section of the text did you require support?", "Was the purpose of the task clear?", "What made it easier or more difficult to demonstrate your thinking?", and "What would you change if we completed this activity again?" provide functional evidence of student experience. The relevance of student voice to inclusive education extends beyond measuring satisfaction. Listening to students and enabling their views to influence instruction are regarded as fundamental to valuing diversity and improving participation (Messiou et al., 2022). Teachers should not, however,

seek feedback only from students who express themselves readily. Anonymous brief forms, visual scales, individual conversations, audio responses, and home-language support can provide alternative means of feedback.

Student feedback does not eliminate the teacher's responsibility for professional decision-making. A student's finding an activity enjoyable does not prove that it serves the learning objective, and finding it challenging does not mean that it should be removed. Teachers should interpret student perspectives alongside work samples, observation evidence, and assessment results. They should also avoid drawing permanent conclusions from difficulty observed during a single lesson and should monitor the effects of adjustments across multiple applications. Self-evaluation is not a form completed once but a cycle of gathering evidence, interpreting it, making adjustments, and reassessing their effects.

Teachers' sense of self-efficacy may also affect the quality of this process. A systematic review of 71 studies in inclusive education found that teacher self-efficacy was associated with instructional experience, professional context, knowledge of inclusive education, initial teacher education, and professional learning opportunities (Wray et al., 2022). Self-evaluation should therefore not become a process that identifies only deficiencies. Teachers should also identify successful practices and the conditions under which they were effective, while translating areas for development into attainable professional learning objectives. Replacing the generalized judgement "I cannot work with multilingual students" with the specific conclusion "I need to develop new approaches to planning academic vocabulary instruction through visual and contextual support" provides more effective direction for professional learning. The European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education's profile of inclusive teacher professional learning similarly emphasizes that inclusive competencies are dynamic and must be developed throughout a career through collaboration and self-evaluation (European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2022).

An inclusion checklist developed for Turkish language teachers should be used not as a static list of duties but as a flexible professional instrument for monitoring instruction. Before the lesson, teachers can examine the learning objective, students' prior knowledge, the text's linguistic and cultural characteristics, instructions, access options, and possible support. During the lesson, they can monitor the distribution of participation, wait time, peer interaction, emerging barriers, and immediate adjustments. After the lesson, they can examine student work, assessment validity, student feedback, and the next instructional step. Checking every item does not independently prove that

instruction was inclusive. The essential criterion is whether the arrangements genuinely improved access, participation, and learning.

Self-evaluation can be sustained through brief but regular records. Rather than preparing a lengthy report for every lesson, teachers can record in several sentences the relationship among the learning objective, evidence obtained, barrier identified, adjustment implemented, outcome, and next step. A note such as “Students identified the main idea but experienced difficulty citing textual evidence; the next lesson will include modelling of an example response and colour-coded identification of evidence” is more useful than the general statement “The topic will be reviewed.” Periodic examination of accumulated records may reveal patterns that remain invisible within a single lesson. Examples include the same students continually serving as group spokespersons, reduced participation among multilingual students during particular text types, or more students successfully drawing inferences when visual support is provided.

A situation arising in a Grade 7 Turkish language lesson can illustrate the inclusive function of self-evaluation. The teacher asked students to evaluate a story they had read through a two-page written response. A student learning Turkish as an additional language explained the sequence of events accurately during classroom discussion, offered an interpretation of the character’s motivations, and responded to peers’ comments. In the written task, however, the student produced only a few brief sentences and could not complete the assignment within the allotted time. The teacher’s initial conclusion was that the student had not understood the story adequately.

Inclusive self-evaluation requires the teacher to reconsider the relationship between the task and the intended objective. If the primary purpose is to understand and interpret the story, a two-page written product measures academic Turkish proficiency, writing fluency, text planning, grammatical use, and ability to write within a defined period alongside the intended comprehension skill. The student’s oral explanations provide evidence of understanding the plot and character relationships, while the written work demonstrates difficulty transforming that understanding into an evaluative text in Turkish. The conclusion that the student “did not understand the story” reduces different dimensions of performance to a single judgement.

A closer examination of the writing may show that vocabulary was selected meaningfully but that the student experienced difficulty establishing connections among sentences and developing ideas within a paragraph structure. Providing the task in a single stage, omitting a model evaluative paragraph, and allowing no planning time may have increased the difficulty. During the next activity, students can first share their views of the story orally, complete a graphic organizer

illustrating relationships among character, behaviour, and textual evidence, and then construct a paragraph from that plan. A word bank of cohesive expressions, a model paragraph, staged feedback, and additional time may be provided. These forms of support need not be restricted to the multilingual student; many students experiencing difficulty planning written expression may benefit from them.

If the learning objective is to produce a written evaluative text, however, allowing the student to provide only an oral response would not assess the intended skill fully. Oral expression can be used to determine comprehension and prepare the writing process, but the student should still produce a written final text. The teacher can separate assessment criteria into understanding the story, using textual evidence, organizing ideas, and linguistic accuracy, thereby showing strengths and areas requiring support independently. Accommodation then reduces unnecessary barriers to the learning objective rather than eliminating academic expectations.

After the lesson, the teacher should examine the task's effect on the entire class rather than considering only this student's performance. The teacher can evaluate how many students waited for an extended period before beginning to write, who could not complete the text, whether feedback focused primarily on spelling conventions or idea development, and how students understood the purpose of the task. Similar difficulty among multiple students may indicate a problem with task design rather than an individual impairment. On the basis of this evidence, the teacher may divide subsequent writing activities into planning, drafting, feedback, and revision stages. A difficulty experienced by one student can thereby contribute to developing a more accessible and educationally effective writing process for the whole class.

Teacher self-evaluation is not an instrument for reaching faster conclusions about students but for examining the foundations of those conclusions more carefully. Before asking whether an activity was completed, inclusive Turkish language teachers investigate who could access the text, who assumed a meaningful role, who could demonstrate their thinking, and which skills the assessment made visible or invisible. They do not regard student performance as an outcome independent of instruction but as emerging through interactions among student characteristics, task demands, available support, and the classroom environment. Regular, evidence-based self-evaluation incorporating student perspectives enables teachers to transform experience into professional learning and make Turkish language teaching progressively more accessible, equitable, and inclusive.

CHAPTER 6

6. Designing an Inclusive Learning Environment

An inclusive learning environment is not simply an arrangement in which students with different characteristics are placed in the same classroom. It is a learning ecosystem in which the physical environment, social and emotional relationships, instructional objectives, language, texts and materials, student groupings, assessment practices, digital tools, and support services are organized to promote every student's access and participation. Its fundamental purpose is not to eliminate differences among students but to prevent those differences from becoming barriers to learning through their interaction with the educational environment.

Although students' presence in the same physical environment is necessary for inclusion, it is insufficient on its own. A systematic review examining the academic and social-emotional outcomes of students with special educational needs in inclusive and segregated settings found that placement in a general education classroom did not automatically produce either positive or negative outcomes; the quality of implementation, available support, and instructional conditions were decisive. Although methodological limitations prevented strong causal conclusions, the findings clearly demonstrate that physical placement cannot substitute for high-quality instruction (Dalgaard et al., 2022). Inclusive learning environments should therefore be evaluated not primarily according to where students are situated but according to what they can access, which roles they can assume, with whom they can interact, and the extent to which they can demonstrate their learning.

The first dimension of inclusive design is physical accessibility. Movement routes, seating arrangements, the height at which materials are placed, visibility of the board, lighting, acoustic conditions, ambient temperature, and the intensity of sensory stimuli may all affect participation. Physical design includes enabling a student who uses a wheelchair or mobility support to move independently, seating a student with a hearing impairment where the teacher's and classmates' faces are visible, and providing appropriate lighting and contrast for a student with a visual impairment. Seating arrangements should not, however, continually separate students from their peers. Consistently positioning a student directly in front of the teacher, beside the door, or in a separate workspace outside the classroom may increase access while restricting social participation. Physical accessibility must therefore be considered alongside belonging and peer interaction.

The social and emotional dimension of an inclusive environment requires a classroom climate in which students are not afraid to make mistakes, ask questions, request assistance, or use different modes of communication. Pronouncing students' names correctly, avoiding disparagement of their speech or accents, preventing disability-related support from becoming a subject of ridicule, and intervening promptly in discriminatory language are fundamental indicators of such a climate. A meta-analysis synthesizing 82 studies involving secondary students found a small positive relationship between school belonging and academic achievement and positive relationships ranging from small to moderate between belonging and motivation, social-emotional development, and classroom engagement. Although the correlational nature of the research prevents the conclusion that belonging independently causes these outcomes, it is clearly an important component of students' school experiences (Korpershoek et al., 2020).

In Turkish language lessons, social and emotional accessibility is directly related to responses to students' language use. Mispronouncing a word, hesitating while reading, making a spelling error, or expressing an idea through dialectal features that differ from standard Turkish should not lead to devaluation. The timing and form of correction should support learning without humiliating the student before peers. Text selection also affects the classroom climate of belonging. Texts that present different cultures, living conditions, family structures, disability experiences, or linguistic identities solely through problems, deficiencies, or pity do not create inclusive representation. Texts representing diverse identities should be selected authentically and equitably without reproducing stereotypes.

The instructional design of an inclusive environment begins with a clearly defined learning objective. Teachers must distinguish between what they expect students to learn and the tools used to achieve that learning. If the objective is to organize ideas coherently and construct a text, requiring students to write exclusively by hand within a specified period may not be an inherent component of the objective. Graphic organizers, keyboards, speech-to-text tools, or additional time may help students achieve the objective of organizing ideas and producing written texts. If the objective is to develop legible handwriting or use particular spelling conventions independently, however, the selected tool should not remove the skill being assessed. Inclusive design does not make every task easier; it reduces barriers unrelated to the learning objective.

Universal Design for Learning is one of the principal frameworks systematizing this approach. It calls for learning environments, materials, activities, and assessments to be designed flexibly from the outset in response to

learner variability. Learner variability does not concern only students with diagnoses or membership in identified disadvantaged groups. Every student may differ in attention, background knowledge, vocabulary, language, culture, interests, perception, mobility, communication, motivation, working memory, and self-regulation. The same student may also perform differently at different times depending on the task, fatigue, classroom climate, materials, and available support. Learner variability does not therefore entail classifying students into fixed “visual,” “auditory,” or “kinaesthetic” learning types. It requires consideration of the changing interaction among the individual, task, and environment.

The Universal Design for Learning Guidelines 3.0, published by CAST in July 2024, recommend designing learning experiences with multiple means of engagement, representation, and action and expression. While retaining the emphasis on learner variability found in previous versions, the updated framework makes students’ identities, belonging, and cultural and linguistic resources more visible and addresses barriers arising from bias and exclusionary systems alongside individual differences. Its ultimate objective is not for students simply to use options provided by others but to become agents capable of establishing meaningful objectives, accessing resources, developing strategies, monitoring learning, and participating in decisions about their education (CAST, 2024).

Accumulated evidence concerning Universal Design for Learning is promising but should be interpreted cautiously. Almeqdad et al.’s systematic review and meta-analysis of 13 experimental or quasi-experimental studies published between 2015 and 2021 reported that UDL-based practices could positively affect various learning outcomes. Considerable heterogeneity among the studies, limited sample sizes, the predominance of single-group designs, and possible publication bias nevertheless restricted the generalizability of the findings across subjects and student groups (Almeqdad et al., 2023). Universal Design for Learning should therefore not be used as an immutable list of methods whose effectiveness is guaranteed under every condition. It is a design framework through which teachers continually evaluate their practices using evidence of student participation and learning.

Universal design, accessibility, reasonable accommodation, differentiated instruction, and individualized support are related but not synonymous. Accessibility concerns the general usability of learning environments, materials, and services. Universal design anticipates potential user diversity and seeks to make products, programmes, and environments usable by the broadest possible range of students from the outset. Reasonable accommodation encompasses

individualized and appropriate modifications made when necessary to ensure a particular student's equal participation. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities explicitly states that universal design does not exclude assistive devices for particular groups and requires reasonable accommodations and individualized support appropriate to students' needs to realize the right to education. It also defines denial of reasonable accommodation as a form of disability-based discrimination (United Nations, 2006).

This distinction has practical implications in the classroom. Providing every student with accessible digital texts, adjustable font sizes, and text-to-speech options may constitute universal design. A student with a visual impairment may nevertheless require Braille materials, a student with a hearing impairment may need sign-language support, and a student experiencing speech difficulties may require augmentative and alternative communication. Universal design does not make these individualized forms of support unnecessary. It reduces commonly encountered barriers from the outset and makes the areas in which individualized support remains genuinely necessary more visible.

Differentiated instruction is likewise distinct from Universal Design for Learning. Universal design establishes shared means of access by anticipating learner variability before planning begins. Differentiated instruction involves adapting content, process, product, or the learning environment according to evidence about students' readiness, interests, and needs. Universal design is primarily preventive, whereas differentiation may be both preventive and responsive to evidence collected during instruction. Neither approach substitutes for individualized education programmes or specialized instructional support. Inclusive instruction uses them in complementary ways within the same lesson when necessary.

The first domain of Universal Design for Learning involves providing multiple means of engagement. Engagement encompasses more than physical presence or the apparent completion of an assigned task. Students must understand the learning objective, establish a relationship with the task, exert an appropriate level of effort, request assistance, and sustain their learning. Students are not motivated under identical conditions. Some participate more effectively when they can make choices, some when they know the lesson sequence in advance, some when working with peers, and others when given an opportunity for individual preparation. Teachers may therefore explain lesson objectives and stages, divide lengthy tasks into manageable sections, provide feedback that makes progress visible, and plan purposeful transitions among individual, paired, and small-group work.

Engagement options should also enable students to establish meaningful connections between learning and their identities and experiences. If the shared objective in a Turkish language lesson is to examine character development within a narrative, students may choose among several texts appropriate to their age, language proficiency, and interests. Each text should contain structural features that enable practice of the same skill; choice should not alter the learning objective. Offering choice does not mean confronting students with an unlimited number of alternatives. Excessive choice may create decision-making difficulty and cognitive load. Teachers can support autonomy by offering two or three meaningful options clearly connected to the objective.

Nor is it necessary to make every activity entertaining to increase engagement. Some learning tasks require sustained effort, repetition, and work on errors. Inclusive design does not eliminate difficulty but establishes an appropriate balance between challenge and support. Rather than allowing students to abandon a difficult text entirely, teachers may divide it into sections, establish progress objectives, model an example, and provide feedback. Allowing students to select only tasks they already find easy may create the appearance of participation in the short term while restricting opportunities for long-term development.

Multiple means of representation support students' perception and interpretation of information. Instruction based exclusively on written language may create barriers for students with visual impairments, reading difficulties, emerging proficiency in Turkish, or limited academic vocabulary. Multiple representation does not, however, mean multiplying the same content through irrelevant images, audio, and animation. Every representational mode should serve the learning objective and clarify essential information. Decorative content, visual density, and numerous simultaneous stimuli may direct attention away from the central content.

In Turkish language teaching, multiple means of representation may include providing printed, audio, and accessible digital forms of a text; accompanying visuals with oral or written descriptions; explaining key vocabulary within context; making textual structures visible through graphic organizers; and examining abstract or figurative expressions through examples. Establishing connections between prior knowledge and new texts is another important dimension of representation. Before reading an informational text, teachers may use a relevant image, brief question, concept map, or keywords with equivalents in languages known by students. The purpose is not to remove the text's cognitive demands but to reduce unnecessary linguistic and perceptual burdens that impede access to relationships of meaning.

Multiple representation also involves including diverse identities and forms of knowledge production in instructional materials. Turkish language textbooks and supplementary texts should not be restricted to a narrow framework that treats a single cultural experience or way of life as normative. Diversity cannot be represented merely by including authors from particular groups on special occasions or under a “differences” theme. Different languages, dialects, cultures, disability experiences, and ways of participating in social life should form part of the lesson’s ordinary textual diversity. Teachers can critically examine with students which identities a text’s perspective and language make visible or invisible and how stereotypes are produced. CAST 3.0’s emphasis on authentic representation of different identities and perspectives demonstrates that multiple representation extends beyond technical accessibility (CAST, 2024).

Multiple means of action and expression seek to diversify how students navigate learning, use tools, communicate, and demonstrate what they have learned. Students may need to use keyboards, pens, touchscreens, alternative keyboards, screen readers, magnification tools, speech-to-text systems, or augmentative and alternative communication. They may demonstrate their knowledge through written explanations, oral presentations, audio recordings, concept maps, visual summaries, digital stories, or dramatization. These options must nevertheless be selected according to the nature of the learning objective.

If the objective is to identify the main idea and supporting details in a text, students may demonstrate their understanding through a written paragraph, oral explanation, or annotated concept map. Each product may provide evidence of reading comprehension. If the objective is to assess writing within a particular genre, an oral presentation alone is insufficient; students must still produce a written text. If handwriting, writing speed, and motor coordination are not the intended constructs, however, students may use keyboards, speech-to-text tools, word prediction, or additional time. If spelling accuracy is being assessed, using automatic correction may affect the outcome. The central question in inclusive assessment is therefore not “Did every student produce the same product?” but “Do the product and tools provide valid evidence of the intended skill?”

Options for action and expression should be provided throughout learning rather than only during final assessment. Students should be supported in setting objectives, selecting necessary tools, planning stages of work, monitoring progress, and reviewing their products. Providing only a choice of final product in a writing activity may not address difficulties with planning or self-regulation. A topic-selection chart, idea web, model text, checklist, peer feedback, and brief assessment conference with the teacher may provide progressive support that makes the learning process accessible. Support should be reduced as

independence increases rather than leaving students permanently dependent on adult direction.

Flexible grouping is another important element of inclusive design. Dividing students into fixed “advanced,” “average,” and “low” achievement groups throughout the term may make low expectations and social labelling permanent. In flexible grouping, students work in different configurations according to the activity’s objective, sometimes on the basis of interests, readiness, support used, or random selection. A student may require assistance with reading fluency while leading a group during oral expression or text interpretation. Such variability prevents the student from being defined through a single achievement category.

Collaborative learning involves more than seating students at the same table. It requires a shared objective, positive interdependence, explicit tasks, individual accountability, and opportunities to evaluate group processes. Continually assigning a student with special educational needs secondary roles such as distributing papers, copying a final version, or observing peers may create physical involvement without cognitive participation. In Turkish literature circles, roles such as summarizer, question developer, connector, and vocabulary researcher may initially be supported according to students’ strengths. Roles should nevertheless rotate over time so that every student can use different language skills. Peer support should not result in one student becoming the permanent helper and another the permanent recipient of assistance.

The digital dimension of an inclusive learning environment is not realized merely by placing technological devices in the classroom. Inaccessible digital content may allow technology to create new barriers. The World Wide Web Consortium’s Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.2 provide an international technical framework for making digital content perceivable, operable, understandable, and compatible with assistive technologies for people with diverse disabilities (World Wide Web Consortium, 2024). Fundamental accessibility practices include using genuine heading styles in digital texts, providing purpose-appropriate alternative text for images, including accurate captions and transcripts where necessary, ensuring sufficient colour contrast, avoiding the communication of information through colour alone, and labelling links descriptively.

Converting a scanned page into a PDF image does not make it accessible merely because it is visible on a screen. The text must be recognizable by a screen reader and possess a correct reading order. Similarly, automatic captions may be insufficient for video. Errors in names, punctuation, disciplinary terminology, and Turkish suffixes may alter meaning. Teachers should evaluate digital resources not only according to whether they open on their own screens but also in relation

to different devices, magnification, keyboard navigation, and, where possible, screen-reader compatibility. Meeting technical criteria does not ensure that every cognitive and linguistic need has been addressed, but it is a necessary starting point for digital accessibility.

Assistive technology occupies an important place in the individualized-support dimension of inclusive learning environments. Screen readers, Braille displays, magnification software, alternative keyboards, hearing-assistance systems, audiobooks, text-to-speech and speech-to-text tools, and augmentative and alternative communication systems can increase access and independence. A systematic review examining assistive technology's contribution to access, participation, and independence among students with disabilities reported positive outcomes but also found that insufficient teacher education, limited access to devices, and inadequate technical knowledge restricted implementation (Fernández-Batanero et al., 2022).

Possessing an assistive device does not mean that a student can use it educationally and functionally. The tool must be selected according to the fit among the student, task, and environment; the student's views must be sought; instruction in its use and technical maintenance must be provided. Speech-to-text software that cannot function in a noisy classroom, a screen reader unable to process a teacher-prepared document, or a device given to a student during an examination without prior instruction does not provide access. Assistive technology should also avoid visibly labelling the student. Where possible, comparable tools should be offered among options available to the entire class.

Inclusive planning does not require the teacher to prepare an entirely different lesson for every student. Teachers should first identify the shared learning objective and then anticipate high-probability barriers within the materials and activities. During planning, they should consider how students may vary, whether instructions are offered through only one mode, for whom a text may create perceptual or linguistic barriers, whether meaningful options for engagement and expression are available, and whether a form of support might benefit more than one student. Plans should subsequently be revised in response to classroom observations, student work, and student feedback.

To keep this process manageable, teachers should not attempt to use every possible option in every lesson. Numerous tools unrelated to the objective may increase teacher workload and distract students. Teachers can instead develop high-impact arrangements that can be reused across lessons, such as explicit instructions, accessible digital texts, vocabulary support, graphic organizers, and several response options. They should monitor who uses each option, for what purpose, and revise practices that prove ineffective. Universal Design for

Learning is not the complete implementation of a checklist but an ongoing process of identifying and reducing barriers to learning.

This approach can be illustrated through an informational-text activity in a Turkish language lesson. The shared objective is for students to identify the text's central claim and explain the evidence supporting it. The teacher first explains the objective in student-friendly language and makes the lesson stages visible. Students choose among several topics represented by texts with comparable structural characteristics, thereby supporting engagement without altering the objective. The teacher provides printed and accessible digital versions, an audio-reading option, explanations of key vocabulary, and a graphic organizer showing the claim–evidence relationship.

Students first examine the text independently and then compare evidence in flexible groups. Group roles contain cognitive responsibilities and rotate among students. Students may demonstrate their conclusions through an explanatory paragraph, an annotated concept map accompanied by an audio recording, or a brief oral presentation because the principal construct is the ability to establish the relationship between claim and evidence rather than handwriting or public speaking. If written justification is also an objective, every student is expected to produce a written response using accessible tools. Individual requirements such as Braille, sign-language support, or a personalized communication device are added to the shared design.

In conclusion, designing an inclusive learning environment encompasses considerably more than changing the classroom's physical arrangement or adding technological tools to instruction. It requires learner variability to become the starting point of planning; belonging and safety to be treated as dimensions of instructional quality; objectives, methods, and assessment to be aligned explicitly; and texts, materials, and digital content to be made accessible. Universal Design for Learning offers a framework for reducing shared barriers in advance, while differentiated instruction, reasonable accommodation, assistive technology, and individualized support respond to more specific student needs. Inclusion should be measured not by the number of options available in the classroom but by the extent to which those options strengthen students' access to Turkish language lessons, meaningful participation, independence, and achievement of learning objectives.

6.1. Differentiated Instruction

Differentiated instruction refers to the planned, flexible, and evidence-informed adaptation of teaching within a shared curriculum to respond to learner diversity. Students' placement within the same age group or grade level does not

mean that they have identical prior knowledge, language proficiency, interests, learning rates, strengths, or needs. When instruction provides only one pathway for every student, these differences may become barriers that restrict participation in learning. Differentiated instruction seeks to diversify the pathways through which students achieve shared, high-quality learning objectives without abandoning those objectives (Tomlinson, 2017).

Differentiation extends beyond providing immediate assistance to a student who experiences difficulty during a lesson. It requires teachers to anticipate learner diversity, identify probable barriers to learning, plan instructional options, and continually evaluate their effects. Differentiated instruction is therefore both an educational philosophy and a process of classroom decision-making. Its value base comprises teachers' belief that all students can develop, their refusal to interpret student differences as deficiencies, and their recognition of equitable learning opportunities as a professional responsibility. Research similarly indicates that teachers' growth-oriented beliefs and student-centred ethical orientations influence how frequently they adapt everyday instruction to student differences (Gheysens et al., 2022).

Differentiated instruction does not mean preparing an entirely separate lesson plan for every student. Such an interpretation may weaken the classroom's shared learning experience and create an unsustainable workload for teachers. Differentiation purposefully combines whole-class instruction, flexible grouping, paired work, and individualized support within the same lesson. Students may work on a shared text during some activities, form temporary groups according to particular needs during others, and use different forms of support to demonstrate learning. The principal criterion is whether the variation provided enables students to participate more effectively in the shared learning community rather than separating them from it.

Differentiated instruction must also be distinguished from individualization, accessibility accommodations, and modifications to learning objectives. Individualization generally refers to a personalized instructional plan developed according to the characteristics of a particular student, whereas differentiation may occur at classroom, group, or individual levels. Accessibility arrangements—such as increasing font size, providing digital texts compatible with screen readers, allowing additional time, or permitting the use of an alternative keyboard—do not alter the learning objective. Changing the scope or level of difficulty of the objective, by contrast, may constitute a curricular adaptation or modification. Teachers must determine explicitly whether an arrangement changes only how the material is presented, diversifies the pathway through which the student reaches the objective, or changes the objective itself.

Differentiated instruction and Universal Design for Learning are complementary rather than competing approaches. Universal Design for Learning anticipates learner diversity from the outset and recommends flexible options for engagement, representation, and action and expression. Differentiated instruction determines how and to what extent those options should be adapted in response to current evidence of student learning. Universal design seeks to reduce as many barriers as possible before instruction begins, while differentiation enables teachers to respond to needs emerging during instruction (CAST, 2024).

Within the classical framework of differentiated instruction, teachers are expected to consider students' readiness, interests, and learner characteristics. Readiness refers to students' current knowledge and skills in relation to a particular learning objective. It is not a general and immutable "achievement level"; it may vary according to the task and skill domain. A student with strong reading fluency may require support in inferential comprehension, while another with advanced oral expression may experience difficulty transforming ideas into written text. Interest relates to topics, texts, activities, and experiences that affect students' attention, curiosity, and willingness to invest in learning. Learner characteristics should be treated as dynamic and should encompass students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds, prior experiences, access requirements, working habits, and social-interaction preferences.

Learner characteristics should not become a justification for placing students into fixed learning-style categories such as "visual," "auditory," or "kinaesthetic" learners. Students may prefer particular forms of presentation, but evidence that matching instruction to fixed learning styles reliably improves learning remains insufficient. A recent meta-analysis found a small overall effect in favour of matching instructional methods with learning styles, but only approximately one-quarter of the measures examined demonstrated a pattern supporting the matching hypothesis. Given study quality and implementation costs, the authors did not recommend widespread instructional matching based on learning styles (Clinton-Lisell & Litzinger, 2024). The rationale for using text, audio, visuals, and movement in Turkish language teaching should therefore be to improve the accessibility and comprehension of linguistic content and its transfer across contexts, not to classify students into permanent types.

Effective differentiation begins with a clear learning objective. Teachers must first determine the knowledge, skill, or understanding students are expected to develop by the end of the lesson and define the success criteria demonstrating achievement of that objective. Without a clear learning objective, varied activities cannot be connected to a pedagogical purpose, and differentiation may be reduced to distributing unrelated worksheets. If the objective in a Turkish language lesson

is to identify the main idea of a story, the text's length, vocabulary support, reading time, and response mode may be differentiated. If some students are asked to identify the main idea while others merely mark familiar words, however, the students are not working towards the same learning objective despite appearing to participate in the same activity.

Diagnostic and formative assessment provides the principal foundation for differentiation. Before a lesson or unit, teachers may identify students' current performance through brief reading tasks, writing samples, concept maps, student interviews, observations, reviews of previous work, or introductory questions. Responses during instruction, draft texts, reading records, exit tickets, and student self-assessments can also inform subsequent decisions. This evidence should be used less for grading than for understanding what students can do independently, where they require support, and where they are ready for more advanced work. Differentiation thereby moves beyond a one-time placement procedure and becomes a cyclical process of gathering evidence, making decisions, implementing support, monitoring effects, and revising instruction.

Differentiating content involves adapting which information and texts students encounter or how they access that information. In Turkish language lessons, the same skill may be addressed through texts of different lengths or linguistic density; texts may be divided into sections; background-knowledge activities may be conducted; key vocabulary may be explained in context; audio versions may be provided; or font size, line spacing, and contrast may be adjusted in digital texts. A student with a visual impairment may receive accessible digital or Braille materials, a student with a hearing impairment may use captions or written instructions, and a student learning Turkish as an additional language may receive visual and multilingual vocabulary support.

The relationship between these arrangements and the learning objective must be evaluated carefully. During an activity assessing independent word decoding, listening to the text may alter the intended skill. During an activity focusing on a story's plot or theme, however, an audio version may prevent decoding difficulty from obstructing meaning-making.

When differentiating content in Turkish language teaching, layered support that preserves a shared textual experience is often more inclusive than continually directing students towards different texts. Assigning texts classified only as "easy," "moderate," and "difficult" may repeatedly exclude some students from high-quality children's literature, culturally meaningful content, and classroom discussion. A stronger shared foundation may be created when the class studies one central text while some students receive visual context, key vocabulary, an audio version, segmentation, or guiding questions. For more advanced students,

depth can be increased through activities involving intertextual relationships, narrator reliability, comparison of alternative interpretations, or analysis of linguistic and aesthetic features rather than merely assigning a longer text.

Differentiating process concerns how students engage with and interpret learning content. Teacher modelling, think-alouds, sequenced instructions, graphic organizers, guiding questions, prompts, model products, controlled practice, peer support, and flexible grouping may all be used. When teaching inferencing, for example, the teacher may first model aloud how textual clues are connected with prior knowledge. Some students may work with colour-coded clues or an inference organizer, while others compare the reliability of different pieces of evidence. Instructional support should not create permanent dependence; it should be gradually reduced as students' competence increases. The objective is not to complete the task for the student but to enable progressively greater independence.

Flexible grouping is an important tool for differentiating process, but dividing students into groups according to achievement is not, by itself, differentiated instruction. Groups should change according to the targeted skill, current performance, and nature of the activity. The same students should not continually remain in "low" or "advanced" groups. A student requiring teacher support in one activity may contribute expertise to peers in another. Systematic reviews indicate that homogeneous within-class or between-class achievement grouping alone does not constitute effective differentiation and may produce adverse outcomes for students placed in lower-achieving groups (Deunk et al., 2018). Grouping should therefore be temporary, purposeful, permeable, and designed to prevent stigmatization.

Differentiating product concerns the means through which students make their learning visible. Students may demonstrate their understanding of a text through written analysis, an oral presentation, a concept map, a digital story, a visual narrative, or dramatization. Product variation should not, however, be treated as unrestricted choice. The selected product must validly represent the learning objective. If the objective concerns reading comprehension or identifying causal relationships within a text, an oral explanation or concept map may provide valid evidence. If the objective is to organize ideas into a coherent written paragraph, an oral presentation cannot replace writing; it may only support planning before writing.

Similarly, speech-to-text technology may enable a student with a physical impairment to transform ideas into a written text. If the intended skill is the independent application of spelling conventions, however, the permitted

functions of the technology must be determined separately. Product choice must be aligned with the construct being assessed.

Differentiating the learning environment involves more than rearranging desks. It requires examining how physical, sensory, social, and digital conditions affect participation. Reducing noise, arranging seating so that students can see the teacher and classmates, ensuring wheelchair access, providing appropriate lighting, allowing movement breaks, creating quiet working areas, and making materials readily accessible are examples of physical arrangements. Explicit lesson routines, visual schedules, advance notice of changes, and predictable task stages may particularly support students requiring assistance with attention, executive functioning, or sensory regulation. Digital accessibility requires more than presenting a file electronically; materials must be compatible with screen readers, provide alternative text for images and captions for videos, and use readable page layouts.

The social quality of the learning environment is also inseparable from differentiation. Technical options are insufficient in a classroom where students are humiliated for making errors, mocked because of their language or dialect, or discouraged from requesting assistance. When students work on different tasks, those arrangements should not imply that some have been assigned less valuable activities. Every task should be meaningful, age-appropriate, and intellectually respectful. The amount of support may differ, but students' classroom status and right to learn should remain equal.

Differentiating reading instruction involves more than changing text length or readability. Word recognition, fluency, vocabulary, inferencing, recognition of textual structure, critical reading, and intertextual thinking should be examined separately. While students work on the same text, some may receive key-vocabulary support and guiding questions, while others analyse implicit meanings, perspective, or ideological positioning. Support should not construct meaning on the student's behalf; it should enable the student to interact with the text. A meta-analysis of 18 studies on differentiated literacy instruction found generally positive outcomes, although the mean effect remained small. Differentiation can therefore support literacy achievement, but not every implementation automatically produces strong outcomes (Puzio et al., 2020).

Differentiation in writing instruction should extend across planning, drafting, reviewing, and revising rather than being confined to the final written product. Some students may benefit from graphic organizers, question frameworks, model texts, word banks, or sentence starters. Some may rehearse a draft orally before writing, while others may use writing conferences and peer feedback. For more advanced students, qualitative enrichment may involve experimenting with

different narrators, developing style, synthesizing sources, adapting discourse to a particular audience, or reconstructing a text in another genre rather than writing additional paragraphs. Assessment criteria should be stated explicitly at the beginning of the task, and teachers should determine whether the support provided affects particular criteria.

In listening and viewing activities, recordings may be replayed, playback speed adjusted, visual context provided, key concepts introduced in advance, captions added, or content presented in short sections. If the intended construct is identifying details through listening alone, however, providing a complete transcript may alter the assessment. In speaking instruction, students may receive preparation time, keyword cards, rehearsal opportunities, paired discussion, or participation pathways progressing from small groups to the whole class. Requiring a student who is learning Turkish as an additional language, experiences speaking anxiety, or uses communication support to speak before the class without preparation may increase anxiety rather than develop speaking ability. Differentiation should preserve the speaking objective while enabling students to approach it safely and progressively.

The same explanation and number of exercises may not be sufficient for every student during grammar and vocabulary instruction. Some students may benefit from colour coding morphemes, constructing word families, and comparing forms in context. Students learning Turkish as a second or additional language should examine not only dictionary definitions but also collocations, figurative uses, morphological derivatives, and functions across contexts. Students with advanced grammatical knowledge may analyse usage choices in different texts, relationships between form and meaning, or the effects of an author's linguistic choices on the reader rather than repeatedly applying the same rule. Support and enrichment then become qualitative adaptations to student needs rather than simple reductions or increases in the quantity of an objective.

Differentiated instruction should not be designed only for students experiencing learning difficulties. Requiring high-achieving and gifted students to repeat familiar content continually or assist classmates whenever they finish early may also restrict their right to learn. Curriculum compacting, more complex texts, independent research, creative production, intertextual comparison, and writing for authentic audiences may be used with these students. A systematic review of 49 studies involving high-achieving students found predominantly positive academic and motivational-affective outcomes from differentiated instruction, although considerable variation existed among studies. The review also found that teachers generally did not use differentiation for these students regularly or proactively (Ziernwald et al., 2022).

Research on differentiated instruction is generally promising but does not support claims of unconditional success. Reviewing 21 studies at the primary level, Deunk et al. (2018) found small-to-moderate positive effects when differentiation was implemented as part of a broader instructional programme and when technology was used to support decision-making. Merely creating achievement groups did not constitute effective differentiation. Literacy research likewise indicates that outcomes are predominantly positive but that the overall effect remains limited (Deunk et al., 2018; Puzio et al., 2020). The effectiveness of differentiation depends on the accurate identification of student needs, alignment between the arrangement and learning objective, implementation quality, and the teacher's ability to monitor results and revise decisions.

Implementing differentiated instruction is too complex to be left solely to individual teacher effort. Preparation time, overcrowded classrooms, curriculum intensity, assessment pressure, shortages of support personnel, and limited teacher education may impede implementation. Synthesizing teacher perspectives from Türkiye, Uçarkuş (2024) found that teachers regarded differentiated instruction as beneficial for students and teachers but identified limited knowledge and problems arising from educational policies and stakeholders as significant barriers. An international meta-analysis found that professional development programmes on differentiated instruction produced moderate improvements in teachers' knowledge, attitudes, and practices. Subject-specific professional learning was more effective than general training, although direct effects on student learning had not yet been demonstrated clearly (Kahmann et al., 2022). Professional learning for Turkish language teachers should therefore extend beyond general principles and use authentic texts, student work, and practices specific to listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

The Türkiye Century Education Model similarly defines differentiation as the flexible adaptation of content, process, and product according to students' readiness, interests, and needs and emphasizes continuous assessment, support, and enrichment (Ministry of National Education, 2024). Including differentiation within the curriculum does not, however, automatically ensure high-quality classroom implementation. Teachers' subject knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, access to accessible materials, collegial collaboration, and the time and resources provided by school administrators remain decisive.

When planning a differentiated Turkish language lesson, teachers should first identify the essential learning outcome and success criteria to be preserved for every student. They should then gather evidence of current performance through brief, low-stakes assessments and investigate whether observed difficulty relates to vocabulary, background knowledge, decoding, fluency, attention, language

proficiency, access, or comprehension of the task. The teacher can subsequently determine whether an adaptation is needed in content, process, product, or the learning environment. It is unnecessary to alter all four dimensions during every lesson. Teachers may begin with one or two meaningful adaptations and maintain, reduce, or revise support after monitoring participation and learning. Incorporating student perspectives enables the effectiveness of support to be evaluated through student experience as well as teacher assumptions.

In conclusion, differentiated instruction is not a technique involving worksheets printed on different pages, fewer questions for some students and more for others, or the division of a class into fixed achievement groups. It is a systematic relationship among instructional objectives, evidence of student learning, accessibility, high expectations, and continuous assessment. In Turkish language teaching, its fundamental purpose is not to require every student to complete the same activity in the same manner but to enable all students to encounter high-quality texts, develop language skills, express their thinking, and participate actively in the shared learning community. Its success should therefore be evaluated not by the number of options provided but by their alignment with the learning objective and the extent to which they develop student independence.

6.1.1. Flexible Grouping

Flexible grouping involves forming groups that change according to the purpose of the activity, students' interests and readiness, or the support they require, rather than keeping students permanently within the same achievement or proficiency group.

Fixed achievement groups may lead to students being labelled as "high," "average," or "low" performers. Over time, a student's position within a group may become an immutable identity. Under flexible grouping, the same student may require support during one activity and lead the group during another.

Groups may be formed according to:

- Shared interests;
- Different strengths;
- Similar support needs;
- Random selection;
- Student preferences;
- Purposeful allocation by the teacher.

Example from a Turkish language lesson: When analysing a story, the class may be divided into four groups:

- A group identifying the plot;
- A group analysing the characters;
- A group examining setting and time;
- A group analysing the text's language and narrative features.

For the subsequent activity, the groups are reorganized so that each new group contains a student who completed each of the previous tasks. Students thereby share their knowledge without creating fixed achievement groups.

6.1.2. Cooperative Learning

Merely seating students at the same table or asking them to prepare a product together does not constitute cooperative learning. Effective cooperative learning requires a shared objective, individual accountability, reciprocal support, and balanced participation.

The teacher:

- Explains the purpose of the group task;
- Assigns every student a meaningful role;
- Avoids permanently assigning roles according to student characteristics;
- Makes individual contributions visible;
- Teaches collaboration skills;
- Observes interactions within the group;
- Considers both process and product during assessment.
- Practices to avoid include:
 - Allowing the highest-achieving student to complete the entire task;
 - Assigning a student with special educational needs only decorative or material-handling tasks;
 - Allowing a student learning Turkish as an additional language to remain silent;
 - Continually assigning the same student as group spokesperson;
 - Failing to intervene in exclusionary behaviour within the group.

Providing every student with an identical amount of speaking time may not always be possible or necessary. Every student must, however, make a genuine and meaningful contribution to the shared product.

6.1.3. Preparing Accessible Printed Materials

Accessible materials do not make it unnecessarily difficult for students to perceive and use information.

Typography and page layout:

- Use legible typefaces.

- Select a font size appropriate to the target group.
- Avoid excessively compressed line spacing.
- Be aware of irregular spaces that may occur in fully justified text.
- Use headings according to a consistent hierarchy.
- Avoid filling pages with unnecessary images and decorative elements.
- Do not communicate important information through colour alone.

Language and expression:

- Use clear and direct instructions.
- Avoid unnecessarily lengthy sentences.
- Explain technical concepts.
- Number tasks or divide them into stages.
- Reduce ambiguous pronouns and references.
- Provide a model product or demonstrate the expected response format.

Visual materials:

- Ensure that visuals are relevant to the learning objective.
- Explain important visual information within the accompanying text.
- Provide titles for graphs and diagrams.
- Use sufficient colour contrast.
- Evaluate visuals in relation to cultural representation and stereotypes.

6.1.4. Digital Accessibility

A material is not automatically accessible merely because it is digital. Scanned text may be unreadable by a screen reader, a video without captions may be inaccessible to a student with a hearing impairment, and insufficient colour contrast may create barriers for students with visual impairments.

The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.2 recommend evaluating digital content according to four principles: perceivable, operable, understandable, and robust (World Wide Web Consortium, 2023).

Perceivable: Information must be presented in a form students can perceive.

- Add alternative text to images.
- Provide accurate, synchronized captions for videos.
- Provide written transcripts for audio content.
- Use sufficient colour contrast.
- Ensure that font size can be increased.

Operable: Students must be able to use and navigate the content.

- Avoid requiring mouse-only operation.
- Enable keyboard navigation.

- Give links descriptive names.
- Allow sufficient time to complete actions.
- Avoid flashing and distracting content.

Understandable: The content and means of using it must be clear.

- Use consistent page layouts.
- Provide explicit instructions.
- Write error messages in comprehensible language.
- Avoid complex menus and link structures.

Robust: Content must be compatible with different devices and assistive technologies.

- Use structural headings.
- Prepare documents for screen-reader compatibility.
- Avoid presenting text exclusively as an image.
- Use appropriate file formats.

UNICEF's work on accessible digital textbooks demonstrates that options such as text-to-speech, structured page layouts, adjustable font sizes, sign-language videos, and interactive content may enable students to engage with materials in different ways (UNICEF, n.d.).

6.1.5. The Physical Learning Environment

Inclusive classroom design should consider whether students can:

- Enter and move through the classroom and reach their desks;
- See the board and teacher;
- Hear classroom communication;
- Access materials independently;
- Work in a quiet area when necessary;
- Move safely.

Seating arrangements should not be determined solely according to diagnosis. A student with a visual impairment may need to sit near the board but should not be continually separated in ways that prevent interaction with peers. Seating can be modified according to lesson requirements and in consultation with the student.

6.2. A Safe Classroom Climate and Belonging

Accessible materials alone cannot secure participation if students believe they will be mocked for making mistakes or devalued because of their differences. An inclusive learning environment also requires psychological and social safety.

Teachers who support belonging:

- Pronounce students' names correctly;
- Communicate respectfully with every student;
- Treat errors as a natural part of learning;
- Intervene in discriminatory and derogatory language;
- Develop classroom rules with students;
- Distribute opportunities to contribute equitably;
- Teach students to listen to one another;
- Support socially isolated students' participation in group processes;
- Make students' identities and lived experiences visible in texts.

Examples of inclusive classroom rules include:

- We listen attentively to the person speaking.
- We do not disparage different views.
- We do not ridicule anyone's name, language, accent, appearance, or needs.
- We recognize that requesting assistance and making mistakes are part of learning.
- We understand that people may learn differently and require different forms of support.
- We ask for a classmate's view before speaking on their behalf.

6.3. Monitoring Participation

Teachers should not evaluate a lesson's success solely according to the number of students who completed the activity. They should also examine who participated and in what ways.

The following questions may be used to monitor participation:

- Who spoke most frequently during the lesson?
- Who did not contribute orally?
- Which students participated only when invited by the teacher?
- How were responsibilities distributed during group work?
- Which students experienced difficulty accessing the materials?
- Which students discontinued the task early?
- Were students able to ask questions?
- Were students' preferences and perspectives considered?

Teachers may maintain a simple participation record. This should be used to evaluate lesson design, not to label students as having "participated" or "not participated."

6.4. An Inclusive Turkish Language Lesson Planning Model

An inclusive lesson plan may be prepared through the following stages.

Identifying the learning objective: The objective should be explicit, measurable, and written to demonstrate what the student will learn.

Example: The student identifies the main idea and supporting ideas in an informational text.

Evaluating learner variability:

- How do students' reading levels differ?
- Are there students learning Turkish as an additional language?
- Do students have visual, auditory, or physical access requirements?
- Which students experience difficulty sustaining attention during lengthy texts?
- What prior knowledge do students have about the subject?

Identifying potential barriers:

- Text length;
- Unfamiliar vocabulary;
- Small font size;
- Instructions provided only in writing;
- A requirement to respond through a single format;
- Limited working time.

Creating multiple means of access:

- Printed text;
- Audio text;
- Accessible digital text;
- A list of key vocabulary;
- A diagram illustrating the text's structure.

Creating multiple means of engagement:

- Brief sharing of relevant experiences;
- A choice of texts;
- Paired or individual reading;
- Dividing the task into stages.

Creating multiple means of expression:

Students may demonstrate the main and supporting ideas through:

- A paragraph;
- A concept map;
- An oral explanation;
- An annotated copy of the text.

Because written expression is not the learning objective in this example, different products may be permitted.

Identifying individualized accommodations:

- Additional time;
- Braille text;
- Assistive technology;
- Individual clarification of instructions;
- A quiet working area.

Assessment and feedback:

- Did the student identify the main idea accurately?
- Could the student establish relationships with the supporting ideas?
- Did the selected tool make it easier for the student to demonstrate the intended skill?
- Which barriers remained?
- What should be changed in the next lesson?

6.5. Sample Inclusive Turkish Language Lesson

Lesson topic: Main and supporting ideas in an informational text

Learning objective: The student identifies the main idea of the text and explains at least two supporting details.

Preparation before the lesson:

- Prepare two texts of different lengths addressing the same topic.
- Produce printed, audio, and accessible digital versions of the texts.
- Explain key vocabulary through visual support.
- Prepare a graphic organizer for the main and supporting ideas.
- Add captions if video content will be used.

Introduction: The teacher shows students an image related to the topic. Students express their ideas orally, through brief notes, or by sharing with a peer.

Modelling: Using a short paragraph, the teacher conducts a think-aloud to demonstrate how the main idea is identified. The teacher marks important expressions and explains the relationships among them.

Practice: Students read the text individually or in pairs. They use printed, audio, or digital versions and record key information in the graphic organizer.

Product: Students demonstrate the main and supporting ideas through:

- A brief paragraph;
- A concept map;
- An oral explanation; or
- Colour-coded annotation of the text.

Assessment criteria:

- The main idea relates to the text as a whole.
- At least two appropriate supporting details are identified.
- The relationship between the main idea and supporting details is explained.
- Although product formats differ, every student is assessed according to the same fundamental criteria.

6.6. Common Implementation Errors

Offering too many options without a clear purpose: Options should be related to the learning objective. Using numerous tools merely to make a lesson appear entertaining may distract students.

Unintentionally changing the learning objective: When offering product options, teachers must retain clarity about the skill being assessed. If speaking ability is being evaluated, a written product alone is insufficient.

Fixing groups: Continually retaining students in the same ability-level groups may result in labelling. Groups should change according to the objective and student development.

Equating technology with accessibility: A digital tool may create new barriers when it is not designed accessibly. The purpose and accessibility of technology should be evaluated together.

Requiring every student to use every option: Multiple means of representation do not require every student to use all available materials. Students should be able to access options suited to their needs.

Overlooking individual needs: Universal design can reduce many barriers but does not replace every individualized accommodation.

CHAPTER 7

7. Foundations of Inclusive Turkish Language Teaching

Turkish language education is not merely one of the subjects in which inclusive education is implemented; it is a fundamental domain in which students develop the linguistic competencies required to exercise their right to education effectively. Language is both the object of learning in Turkish lessons and the principal means of accessing information, developing ideas, asking questions, expressing opinions, and making learning visible across the curriculum. A student who experiences difficulty comprehending texts, following oral instructions, using academic vocabulary, or structuring ideas in writing may encounter barriers to participation not only in Turkish but also in subjects ranging from mathematics to the social sciences. Inclusive Turkish language teaching therefore seeks not merely to reduce differences in achievement within Turkish lessons but to establish the linguistic conditions required for students to participate in all the school's processes of knowledge construction and communication.

This approach regards learner diversity not as a justification for adaptations to be introduced after instruction but as a starting variable of instructional design. Students enter the classroom with different levels of vocabulary, oral-language experience, reading fluency, written-expression proficiency, cultural knowledge, attention, and self-regulation. These differences may intersect with disability, learning difficulties, bilingualism or multilingualism, socioeconomic circumstances, migration experiences, and access to education. None of these characteristics, however, should be treated as an immutable deficit that predetermines a student's capacity to learn language. Instructional decisions should focus not on the category to which a student belongs but on the processes that facilitate or restrict participation in a particular language task.

This perspective requires recognition that an unsuccessful outcome in a Turkish language lesson cannot be attributed to a single cause. A student may be unable to answer a question about a text because they cannot decode a word accurately, have not developed sufficient reading fluency, do not understand the vocabulary or grammatical structures, lack relevant background knowledge, cannot draw the required inference, experience difficulty sustaining attention, or cannot express the answer in the expected format. Current models of reading similarly demonstrate that reading cannot be understood solely as a two-component process comprising word decoding and linguistic comprehension. Interacting processes such as vocabulary, morphology, fluency, cognitive flexibility, motivation, strategy use, and self-regulation must also be considered (Duke & Cartwright, 2021). Inclusive teachers therefore seek to distinguish the

linguistic and cognitive processes underlying the student's performance and plan support according to the identified barrier rather than a generalized label of "failure."

This distinction is particularly important in reading instruction. Although Turkish has a relatively transparent orthography with largely regular sound–letter correspondences, its agglutinative structure produces morphologically complex words. Turkish reading instruction should therefore not focus exclusively on letter–sound correspondence. It must also address recognition of word roots and suffixes, the changes suffixes create in word meaning and grammatical function, fluent processing of lengthy word forms, and semantic relationships among words. Recent research involving readers of Turkish demonstrates that orthographic transparency does not ensure automatic, fluent, and accurate reading for every student. Students experiencing learning difficulties may display decoding errors concentrated particularly in suffixes (Alathı, 2026). The importance of morphological knowledge in explaining Turkish reading-comprehension difficulties further strengthens the role of morphological awareness in inclusive reading instruction (Kargın et al., 2023).

These characteristics demonstrate why findings from reading research in other languages should not be transferred directly to Turkish language teaching. Research involving multilingual students recommends supporting oral language, phonological awareness, word decoding, fluency, and comprehension together (Kittle et al., 2024). A substantial proportion of this research, however, has been conducted in languages such as English and Spanish. Transferring findings without considering Turkish phonological transparency, agglutinative morphology, and word order may lead to inaccurate identification of the student's actual difficulty. Inclusive Turkish language teaching must therefore adopt an assessment approach that considers both the shared cognitive components of reading and the structural characteristics specific to Turkish.

The nature of an adaptation in a reading activity must first be determined according to the skill being developed or assessed. If the objective is to construct meaning, draw inferences, or evaluate the author's perspective, providing an audio version may prevent decoding difficulty from invalidating evidence of comprehension. If the objective is accurate and fluent oral reading, however, an audio recording cannot replace the student's performance, although it may be used for modelled reading, repeated reading, and self-assessment. Additional time, digital texts, adjustable font sizes, modified line spacing, explanations of key vocabulary, and segmentation of the text likewise serve different functions under different conditions. An adaptation is inclusive when it facilitates access to the learning objective without removing the central skill being assessed.

Making a text accessible does not necessarily mean simplifying it linguistically or intellectually. Removing every unfamiliar word, continually reducing complex sentences to short structures, or eliminating the expressive features of a literary text may provide immediate ease while distancing students from sophisticated language. A more functional approach is to preserve the linguistic and aesthetic integrity of the original text wherever possible while developing layered means of access that support meaning-making. Activating necessary background knowledge before reading, explaining a limited number of key words in context, making root-suffix relationships visible, providing cues concerning textual structure, and modelling thinking processes during reading all reflect this approach. Support then ceases to be a permanent facilitation that assumes the student's cognitive responsibility and becomes instructional scaffolding that can gradually be withdrawn.

In relation to listening/viewing and speaking, inclusion is closely associated with how opportunities to contribute and construct meaning are distributed. A Turkish language classroom in which a few students continually speak while others provide only brief responses to teacher questions may appear interactive without being inclusive. Silence does not necessarily demonstrate an absence of knowledge. A need for additional thinking time, fear of making mistakes, concern about peer reactions, insecurity concerning the variety of Turkish used, speech difficulties, or classroom power relations may affect oral participation. An intervention study seeking to distribute participation in classroom dialogue more equitably found that teachers' use of open-ended and follow-up questions with previously silent students could increase both brief and extended oral contributions (Sedova et al., 2025). Participation in speaking is therefore influenced not only by student motivation or personality but also by the interactional arrangements established by the teacher.

An inclusive oral communication environment does not require every student to speak with identical frequency or through the same mode. Allowing students to write their ideas first, rehearse with a peer, discuss them in a small group before presenting to the class, use visual support, or employ augmentative and alternative communication when necessary may improve the quality of oral participation. The decisive issue is not merely whether the student produces speech but whether their view is heard, contributes to the class's shared construction of meaning, and enables them to respond to others. Listening should likewise be treated not as passive waiting but as a process of following another person's thinking, generating questions, making comparisons, and formulating responses.

Preventing students from being devalued because of their dialects, regional varieties, accents, or home languages is another fundamental condition of inclusive Turkish language teaching. Teaching standard Turkish does not require rejection of students' linguistic identities. Rather than interpreting different forms of language use as direct evidence of limited thinking, teachers should develop students' ability to use language appropriately across contexts. Teachers can explain the communicative situations in which standard language is expected and compare everyday conversation, academic expression, and literary discourse. This approach enables students to expand their academic Turkish repertoires without excluding the home language or Turkish variety they already use. The current Universal Design for Learning Guidelines explicitly emphasize developing understanding and respect across languages and dialects and interrogating bias within language and symbols (CAST, 2024).

In writing instruction, inclusion requires distinctions between the surface features of the written product and the capacity to construct a text. Difficulty with handwriting, writing speed, spelling, or keyboard use may obscure a student's ability to develop a topic, organize ideas, and construct discourse appropriate to a genre. Teachers should therefore structure writing as a process involving planning, drafting, receiving feedback, reviewing, revising, and publishing rather than assessing only the final product. Explaining the function and intended audience of a genre, analysing model texts collaboratively, making textual structures visible, and basing feedback on explicit criteria can support students' authorial decisions. Technologies such as speech-to-text tools, adapted keyboards, and spelling support should be used only to the extent that they preserve the student's authorship and do not eliminate the intended skill. If the objective is to structure ideas coherently, for example, keyboard use may increase access. If spelling conventions are being assessed, the influence of automatic correction must be considered separately.

Contemporary Turkish language teaching cannot be restricted to printed and oral texts. Students construct meaning through multimodal texts combining writing, images, sound, movement, colour, typography, and spatial organization. Audio texts, captioned videos, infographics, and digital stories should therefore not be regarded merely as supplementary materials that make lessons more interesting. Contemporary Turkish language education includes examining how different modes alter meaning, questioning which perspective an image foregrounds, and establishing coherent relationships among modes when producing multimodal texts. A systematic review of multimodal instruction in language classrooms found that critical and culturally responsive multimodal activities connected with students' lifeworlds could expand learning

opportunities. It also identified a need for clearer criteria for assessing multimodal products (Lim et al., 2022).

Multimodal presentation does not independently guarantee inclusion. Digital materials containing visual density, simultaneous sound and movement, or unnecessary hyperlinks may increase cognitive load. Content without captions, transcripts, alternative text, or keyboard access may create new accessibility barriers. A systematic review finding that technology in UDL implementation was used primarily to represent content in different forms, while student engagement, self-regulation, and opportunities for expression received less attention, demonstrates that pedagogical design must precede technological choice (Bray et al., 2024). The fundamental question for inclusive Turkish language teachers is therefore not how many different materials they use but which meaning-making process each material supports.

For students learning Turkish as an additional language and for bilingual or multilingual students, inclusion requires treating the entire linguistic repertoire as a resource for learning. Allowing students to consider a concept first in a more familiar language, compare vocabulary or affix structures across languages, use multilingual dictionaries, or negotiate meaning briefly with a peer in a home language before producing work in Turkish does not represent an abandonment of Turkish language learning. These are temporary and purposeful forms of support that establish a bridge from existing linguistic knowledge to Turkish. A recent systematic review of 34 studies found that multilingual pedagogies based on translanguaging, linguistically affirming practices, scaffolding, and cross-linguistic comparison could support cognitive and social-emotional outcomes (Veerman et al., 2026).

Findings concerning multilingualism should not, however, be used under the assumption that every linguistic and educational context will produce identical outcomes. A recent study involving Kurdish–Turkish bilingual and monolingual primary students found that reading fluency among bilingual students was associated with reading comprehension in Turkish but cautioned against interpreting observed differences as deficiencies inherent in bilingualism (Güldenöğlu et al., 2026). Assessing students solely through the label “bilingual,” without considering duration of exposure to Turkish, familiarity with text types, educational history, and socioeconomic circumstances, may cause linguistic difference to be conflated with learning difficulty. Teachers should not attempt to diagnose but should determine instructional support by observing students’ strengths in Turkish and other languages they know.

Text selection is another dimension of inclusive Turkish language teaching. Inclusion is not achieved merely by making diverse student groups visible in

textbooks. Representing different identities as passive, dependent, problematic, or exceptionally successful may increase visibility while reproducing stereotypes. Teachers should examine with students the narrator's perspective, who is permitted to speak, who is silenced, which experiences are treated as normative, and which words are used to name differences. It is important both for students to relate texts to their own experiences and to encounter lives different from their own. The current CAST guidelines' emphasis on the authentic representation of diverse identities and perspectives makes visible the cultural and discursive dimensions of accessibility (CAST, 2024).

Assessment is not the final stage of inclusive Turkish language teaching but a continuous process of gathering evidence to guide instructional decisions. The fundamental principle is that the instrument should measure the intended language skill and that performance should not be determined by barriers unrelated to that skill. When assessing reading comprehension, oral or written responses may be acceptable under certain conditions. When assessing written expression, however, an oral presentation does not represent the same construct. Visual support, vocabulary explanations, or use of a home language may make comprehension visible, but teachers must determine whether the support changes the construct being assessed. Research on linguistically responsive formative assessment indicates that drawing on students' home languages may support strengths-based evidence gathering. It also demonstrates that research in this area remains limited and is based largely on qualitative studies (Robinson-Jones et al., 2026). Inclusive assessment does not involve assigning arbitrarily different tasks to every student; it requires a transparent relationship among the objective, support, and success criteria.

Current Turkish language curricula for primary and lower-secondary education in Türkiye incorporate differentiation, support, enrichment, process-based assessment, and the use of multiple sources of learning evidence (MoNE, 2024a, 2024b). This framework provides curricular opportunities for inclusive practice. Its classroom significance nevertheless depends on the teacher's ability to define the learning outcome explicitly, gather evidence about the source of difficulty, select appropriate support, and monitor its effects. Inclusive Turkish language teaching does not involve waiting for failure and subsequently assigning a simplified, separate activity. It involves maintaining shared and high-quality language objectives while designing accessible, flexible, and valid pathways in advance and refining those pathways in response to evidence obtained during instruction.

Within this framework, Turkish language teachers are not merely transmitters of language rules and fundamental language skills. They are powerful educational

actors who influence which uses of language are valued, whose voices are heard, which texts are considered worthy of study, and how students can demonstrate their knowledge. Inclusive Turkish language teaching should therefore be understood as a subject-specific pedagogy that diversifies support without lowering academic expectations, treats students' linguistic identities as learning resources, combines accessible materials with high-quality textual experiences, and bases assessment decisions on valid evidence of learning.

Inclusive Turkish language teaching seeks answers to four fundamental questions:

- Access: Can the student access the text, instructions, visuals, audio recordings, and other materials?
- Participation: Can the student participate meaningfully in listening, speaking, reading, and writing activities?
- Learning: Can the student develop language skills in relation to their starting point?
- Belonging: Are the student's language, identity, experiences, and modes of expression respected in the classroom?

An evaluation based on only one of these questions may remain incomplete. A student may have technical access to a digital version of a text but receive no support in understanding its cultural references. Similarly, a student may be physically present during a speaking activity but lack any opportunity to contribute, resulting in physical participation without communicative participation.

Turkish language lessons develop fundamental language skills affecting not only achievement in one subject but also learning throughout the curriculum. Understanding questions, interpreting information, following instructions, explaining ideas, and completing assessment tasks depend substantially on language skills.

Barriers to access or participation in Turkish language lessons may consequently affect learning in other subjects. A student experiencing reading-comprehension difficulties may struggle to understand science or social studies texts, while a student experiencing difficulty with written expression may be unable to demonstrate knowledge in different subjects.

The distinctive importance of Turkish language education for inclusion is evident in the following areas:

- Access to the language of education;
- Expression of ideas;
- Understanding other people's perspectives;

- Development of literacy skills;
- Participation in academic learning;
- Construction of identity and belonging;
- Recognition of diverse life experiences;
- Critical examination of discriminatory and exclusionary language;
- Participation in social communication.

Turkish language teachers are therefore not merely instructors of grammatical rules and textual genres. They are among the principal teachers supporting students' participation in the school's communicative and meaning-making world.

Language is one of the fundamental tools through which students interpret information, ask questions, establish relationships, and make learning visible. Limited proficiency in the language of schooling may make it difficult for students to demonstrate their existing knowledge and skills.

This is particularly important for students learning Turkish as an additional language. A student may possess knowledge about a subject but not yet have developed the vocabulary and sentence structures required to explain it in Turkish. Inferring limited subject knowledge solely from production in Turkish may result in inaccurate assessment.

Similarly, the level of thinking of a student with a speech disorder, writing difficulty, or reliance on augmentative communication should not be reduced to the fluency of the expressive mode used.

The following distinctions are important in inclusive Turkish language teaching:

- The quality of an idea and the level at which it can be expressed in Turkish;
- Text comprehension and fluent oral reading;
- Subject knowledge and spelling accuracy;
- Willingness to communicate and speech fluency;
- Linguistic difference and language disorder;
- Everyday communicative competence and academic language proficiency.

Teachers must identify explicitly which skill they are observing and avoid generalizing difficulty in one skill to the student's overall linguistic or cognitive competence.

Language is an important component not only of how individuals understand themselves and their surroundings but also of identity and social belonging. The language students use at home, dialectal characteristics, accents, lexical choices, and modes of expression are related to personal and social experience.

Turkish language lessons seek to develop effective use of standard Turkish. This objective does not require devaluing varieties used by students at home or within their communities. Teachers can explain where and why standard language is used and develop new language practices without presenting students' existing linguistic resources as errors or deficiencies.

The following classroom behaviours may undermine students' linguistic belonging:

- Permitting ridicule of accents or dialectal features;
- Pronouncing students' names or surnames carelessly;
- Claiming that a home language obstructs learning;
- Punishing students for speaking their first language;
- Associating particular forms of speech with intelligence or educational attainment;
- Expecting students to represent an entire culture;
- Correcting language errors publicly in a disparaging manner.

Inclusive teachers respect linguistic diversity while teaching standard Turkish. Instead of saying, "Do not speak like that; it is wrong," a teacher might provide a contextualized explanation: "You may use that expression in everyday conversation. In written and formal communication, we use this form."

A monolingual classroom assumption treats every student as using Turkish at the same level and in the same manner. A classroom may instead include students who:

- Use Turkish as a first language;
- Are learning Turkish as a second or additional language;
- Use a language other than Turkish at home;
- Use multiple languages at different levels;
- Use different dialectal varieties;
- Use sign language;
- Use augmentative and alternative communication.

UNESCO regards multilingualism as a fundamental characteristic of human communities and an important resource for inclusive education. Drawing on languages students understand and their existing linguistic knowledge may support connections between new learning and previous experience (UNESCO, 2025).

Bilingual and multilingual students should not be expected to express everything they know at the same level in every language. Vocabulary knowledge and language use may be distributed across their languages. Students may find it

easier to discuss particular subjects in one language and different experiences in another.

Inclusive Turkish language teachers:

- Do not disregard students' other languages;
- May use cross-linguistic comparisons for learning;
- Activate students' prior linguistic knowledge;
- Do not use proficiency in Turkish as an indicator of intellectual capacity;
- Treat language errors as evidence within the learning process;
- Allow students time to prepare to speak;
- Do not automatically prohibit first-language use while students learn Turkish.

The objective is not to abandon Turkish language teaching but to support learning by drawing on students' existing linguistic resources.

A student's ability to participate comfortably in everyday conversation does not demonstrate equivalent proficiency in academic Turkish. Everyday communication may be supported by context, gestures, facial expressions, shared experiences, and brief utterances. Academic language may contain more abstract concepts, subject-specific terminology, complex sentence structures, and intertextual relationships.

A student may speak Turkish fluently with peers during breaks while requiring support to:

- Explain a text's main idea;
- Establish causal relationships;
- Support an opinion with evidence;
- Write a comparative paragraph;
- Interpret figurative expressions;
- Understand academic instructions.

Teachers should not interpret these needs as unwillingness or inattentiveness. Academic language must be taught explicitly to all students.

To support academic language:

- Identify key vocabulary before the lesson.
- Teach words through context and examples rather than definitions alone.
- Use diagrams showing relationships among concepts.
- Provide sentence starters.
- Analyse model texts collaboratively.
- Model reasoning through think-alouds.
- Use oral rehearsal before written production.
- Compare everyday and academic forms of expression.

Examples of sentence support

Expressing an opinion:

- According to this text ...
- In my view, the author's central idea is ...
- I agree/disagree with this view because ...

Making comparisons:

- In both texts ...
- Unlike the first text, the second text ...
- The texts are similar in terms of ... but differ in terms of ...

Providing evidence:

- The expression supporting this idea is ...
- The example provided in the ... section of the text ...
- The author's statement that ... supports this conclusion.

These frames do not think on the student's behalf. They provide temporary support for expressing ideas within an academic structure and can be withdrawn as proficiency develops.

Learner diversity in the Turkish language classroom extends beyond differences in achievement. Students may differ in:

- Listening comprehension;
- Oral expression;
- Vocabulary;
- Reading accuracy and fluency;
- Reading comprehension;
- Writing speed;
- Planning written expression;
- Grammatical awareness;
- Duration of Turkish-language use;
- Knowledge of other languages;
- Communication preferences;
- Ability to sustain attention;
- Anxiety levels;
- Visual and auditory access;
- Mobility and assistive-technology needs;
- Interest in different text types;
- Previous literacy experiences.

The same student may demonstrate advanced performance in one skill while requiring support in another. A fluent reader may experience difficulty drawing

inferences. A student who explains ideas orally and in detail may struggle to organize a written text. A student learning Turkish as an additional language may participate in everyday conversation while requiring support with academic vocabulary.

Classifying students generally as “strong” or “weak” is therefore insufficient for instructional planning. Teachers must collect performance evidence specific to individual skill domains.

7.1. Core Principles of Inclusive Turkish Language Teaching

Common goals, multiple pathways: Students should be allowed to achieve a shared learning objective through different materials, time allocations, forms of support, and product options.

Building on students’ strengths: Instruction should not be planned solely around what students cannot yet do. A student with strong visual expression skills may plan a text using a diagram, while a student with strong oral expression skills may organise pre-writing ideas through an audio recording.

Explicit instruction: The thinking and language processes expected of students should be made visible. Instead of simply instructing students to “Interpret the text,” the teacher should model the steps involved in interpretation.

Scaffolded support: The teacher initially models the task, then works collaboratively with the student, and gradually withdraws support as the student becomes more independent.

Accessible materials: Texts, audio recordings, videos, visual resources, and worksheets should be designed so that students with diverse characteristics can use them.

Meaningful participation: Merely keeping students occupied during an activity is insufficient. The task must be related to the learning objective, and the student’s contribution must be meaningful.

Linguistic and cultural respect: Students’ languages, accents, names, cultural experiences, and modes of expression should not be disparaged. Standard Turkish should be taught with reference to the contexts in which it is used.

Process-oriented assessment: Assessment should address not only the final product but also the processes of preparation, experimentation, feedback, and revision.

Student involvement: Students should be able to express their views regarding text, task, and product options and explain which forms of support are effective for them.

High yet attainable expectations: Providing support does not mean giving up on a student or lowering the learning objective unnecessarily. Expectations should remain realistic while promoting the student's continued development.

7.2. Inclusive Design for Oral Language Skills: Listening/Viewing and Speaking

Listening/viewing and speaking are complementary oral language skills in Turkish language teaching. During listening/viewing, students construct meaning from oral, visual, and multimodal messages; during speaking, they organise their ideas, transform them into linguistic products, and interact with others. However, it cannot be assumed that all students hear, see, linguistically process, and remember the same content equally. Hearing and visual characteristics, attention and working memory, vocabulary knowledge, prior experiences, proficiency in Turkish, speaking anxiety, and the quality of the technology used may affect students' participation in oral language processes in different ways.

Inclusive listening/viewing instruction begins before students encounter the content. Explaining the purpose of listening, activating relevant prior knowledge, and introducing key vocabulary essential to comprehension help direct students' attention towards pertinent information. However, explaining every word in advance may deprive students of opportunities to infer meaning from context. Pre-teaching should therefore be limited to concepts that are indispensable for achieving the listening objective; the meanings of other words should be explored during or after listening by drawing on textual cues. CAST's Universal Design for Learning Guidelines 3.0 similarly identify clarifying objectives, connecting new learning with prior knowledge, explaining linguistic structures, and presenting information through multiple forms of representation as fundamental means of reducing barriers to learning (CAST, 2024).

The technical quality of listening/viewing materials cannot be separated from their instructional quality. Poor audio quality, differences in volume between speakers, background noise, rapid speech, a lack of synchronisation between captions and audio, or visual information conveyed solely through colour may restrict some students' access to content. Teachers should therefore review materials before the lesson and check the intelligibility of the audio, the rate of speech, the synchronisation of sound and image, and the developmental appropriateness of the content. When automatically generated captions are used, errors involving proper names, technical terms, and the agglutinative structure of Turkish should be corrected.

In prerecorded videos, synchronised captions should represent not only speech but also meaningful elements such as music, warning sounds, laughter, and

ambient noise. Where visual content is essential to meaning, audio description or an annotated transcript incorporating the relevant visual information should be provided. The World Wide Web Consortium's accessible media guidance states that captions should convey spoken and meaningful auditory information in synchronisation with the video, whereas transcripts should provide access to the full audio content (World Wide Web Consortium, n.d.). Although these arrangements may be essential for students with hearing or visual impairments, they may also support students learning Turkish, those experiencing auditory-processing difficulties, and those who need to review the content.

Dividing long audio and video materials into meaningful segments, allowing brief periods for reflection after each segment, and permitting replay when necessary can help manage cognitive load. Students may be provided with a note-taking framework aligned with the listening objective, focusing, for example, on the main idea, supporting details, the speaker's stance, or the sequence of events. The note-taking tool should not, however, require students to perform too many processes simultaneously. A student expected to write lengthy sentences while listening must divide attention between the content and the writing task. A template allowing the use of keywords, symbols, brief expressions, or visual relationships can reduce this burden.

The use of supports such as transcripts, captions, replay, and adjustable playback speed should be evaluated in relation to the learning objective. When the aim is to acquire information about a topic or compare views expressed in an oral text, a transcript can facilitate access to the content. By contrast, when the intended construct is the student's ability to draw on auditory cues to construct meaning, providing a complete transcript during listening may alter the skill being assessed. In such cases, more appropriate supports may include using a shorter recording, allowing a predetermined number of replays, improving audio quality, or providing additional thinking time before students respond. The fundamental principle is that support should remove unnecessary barriers to access without performing the targeted listening process on the student's behalf.

In speaking instruction, rapid and unprepared speech should not be treated as the only legitimate form of oral participation. Speaking anxiety, stuttering or another communication difficulty, learning Turkish as an additional language, hearing characteristics, word-retrieval difficulties, and culturally shaped interaction patterns may affect students' oral performance before the class. A student's silence does not necessarily indicate an absence of ideas, just as reluctance to speak does not necessarily indicate disengagement from learning. Teachers should therefore develop oral participation progressively rather than organising it solely as an impromptu, highly visible performance.

Sharing the speaking topic and assessment criteria in advance allows students to plan their ideas. A structure progressing from individual preparation to paired conversation, small-group interaction, and whole-class presentation can gradually broaden oral participation. Keyword cards, visual flowcharts, brief notes, and oral rehearsal can help students focus on the content. An audio- or video-recorded presentation may be appropriate, particularly when the learning objective is to produce an organised and intelligible oral text. However, when the objective involves spontaneous oral interaction, responding to another person's views, or answering questions from an audience, a recorded presentation should not entirely replace live interaction. Students may first build confidence through a recorded presentation and subsequently participate in supported interactive activities.

An inclusive speaking environment is created not only through individual supports but also through classroom communication norms. Interrupting, mocking accents or speech errors, completing students' sentences for them, and allowing the same students to dominate discussion restrict the space available for oral participation. Teachers should develop a classroom discourse in which thinking time is regarded as normal and students clarify one another's views and establish relationships among different responses. In a study conducted across 72 classrooms, Howe and colleagues found that teacher–student dialogue in which students participated extensively and earlier contributions were elaborated and questioned was positively associated with curriculum attainment and certain student attitudes. These findings indicate that what matters is not simply the number of questions teachers ask, but how students' ideas are taken up and developed in classroom interaction (Howe et al., 2019).

In speaking assessment, behaviours such as speech rate, volume, and eye contact—which may vary according to cultural and individual characteristics—can be misleading when treated as the sole indicators of success. Assessment should distinguish among dimensions such as the relevance of the content to the communicative purpose, the organisation and justification of ideas, intelligibility, vocabulary choice, interaction with the audience, and the ability to reformulate speech when necessary. When assessing fluency, students' accents, linguistic identities, or temporary hesitations should not automatically be interpreted as deficiencies. Even when the instructional objective is the contextually appropriate use of standard Turkish, movement between language varieties should be taught without disparaging the variety used by the student at home or within the community. Inclusive speaking instruction observes the distinction between forcing students to speak and supporting their oral participation: it does not allow

silence to become permanent but creates conditions in which students can contribute safely and progressively.

7.3. Inclusive Design for Written Language Skills: Reading and Writing

Reading is not merely the vocalisation of written words, nor is writing simply the transfer of ideas onto paper. Both skills require linguistic, cognitive, affective, and social processes to operate simultaneously. Attributing a student's reading or writing difficulty to a single cause may therefore result in the need being misidentified and ineffective support being provided. Inclusive instruction seeks not to define a student through a general label such as a "weak reader" or an "inadequate writer," but to identify the component and conditions under which the difficulty arises.

Contemporary models of reading demonstrate that, in addition to word recognition and language comprehension, numerous processes contribute to reading achievement, including phonological awareness, fluency, vocabulary, grammatical knowledge, prior knowledge, inference, cognitive flexibility, comprehension monitoring, attention, and self-regulation. Duke and Cartwright's (2021) Active View of Reading indicates that reading difficulties cannot be explained solely by limitations in word recognition or listening comprehension; the relationships among these processes and the reader's active self-regulation must also be considered (Duke & Cartwright, 2021). It should therefore not be assumed that a student who does not read fluently has failed to understand the text or that a student who reads aloud fluently has necessarily comprehended it.

Text difficulty cannot be reduced solely to word or sentence length. The text's structure, cohesion, level of abstraction, vocabulary, cultural references, demands on prior knowledge, page layout, and the cognitive processes required by the task must be evaluated together. A student who lacks sufficient prior knowledge about a topic remote from their everyday experience may struggle to understand a text that appears linguistically simple. Conversely, the same student may establish a meaningful relationship with a more complex text concerning a topic in which they are interested and knowledgeable. Teachers should therefore move beyond merely seeking a "text appropriate to the student's level" and examine the relationship among the reader, text, task, and context.

Before reading, examining the title, visuals, and text type, activating relevant prior knowledge, and explaining key concepts can facilitate students' initial engagement with the text. During reading, the teacher may model thinking processes aloud, make the structure of the text visible, and divide a lengthy text into sections that preserve its coherence. Graphic organisers can help students identify relationships involving events, cause and effect, comparison, problem

and solution, or main and supporting ideas. After reading, questions should address not only the recall of explicitly stated information but also inference, use of textual evidence, evaluation of the author's choices, and comparison of different perspectives.

Accessible digital versions of printed texts, adjustable font size and contrast, screen-reader compatibility, and audio versions may facilitate some students' access to content. However, the purpose of using an audio version must be clear. If the skill being assessed is the construction of meaning from a text, audio presentation may prevent word-decoding difficulties from completely obscuring comprehension. If the objective is to examine the development of independent word recognition or reading fluency, however, an audio version should not replace those skills. Teachers can distinguish between fluency and comprehension by assessing them through separate tasks, thereby developing a more accurate profile of the student's performance.

Requiring students to read aloud without preparation before the class must also be approached cautiously. Oral reading can be useful for modelling, developing fluency, and monitoring performance. However, requiring a student to read an unfamiliar text in front of peers may generate embarrassment and avoidance rather than useful instructional evidence, particularly for students who experience reading difficulties or speaking anxiety. Paired reading, echo reading, individual work with the teacher, and sharing brief passages prepared in advance offer safer alternatives.

Writing is a recursive process in which generating ideas, planning, making decisions about text type and audience, drafting, revising, editing, and sharing continually influence one another. Students may not demonstrate the same level of proficiency at every stage. A student who can explain ideas orally in considerable detail may struggle to organise them in writing, while another student who develops an original narrative may experience difficulty with spelling, punctuation, or handwriting. Rather than explaining all difficulties in a written product through a general judgement that the student "cannot write," teachers should examine separately the processes of idea generation, organisation, sentence construction, vocabulary selection, transcription, and revision.

In inclusive writing instruction, students should examine high-quality examples of the text type they are expected to produce, and the decisions made by the writers of those texts should be made visible. Through think-aloud modelling, the teacher can demonstrate how an idea is narrowed, how points are sequenced, and how a draft is revised. Graphic organisers, question prompts, oral rehearsal, shared writing, word banks, and options for transitional expressions

can provide initial support. These supports should not produce the text on the student's behalf; responsibility for writing should be transferred progressively to the student.

Graham and colleagues' 2025 best-evidence meta-analysis of writing instruction in Grades 6–12 encompassed 148 independent comparisons and 22,838 students. The study found that writing instruction had positive effects on student performance and that process-based writing, strategy instruction, transcription instruction, pre-writing activities, feedback, and peer support yielded positive outcomes across a sufficient number of studies (Graham et al., 2025). These findings reinforce the need to approach writing not merely as a task in which the final product is scored, but as a process that can be explicitly taught and supported.

Keyboards, adapted keyboards, word-prediction software, spell-checking tools, and speech-to-text technologies may prevent motor or transcription difficulties from obscuring a student's ability to develop ideas. Nevertheless, tool selection must remain aligned with the learning objective. If the objective is to organise ideas into a coherent text, speech-to-text technology may be used, although the student should remain responsible for reviewing and revising the resulting text. If the objective is to apply spelling conventions independently, automated correction may need to be restricted during assessment. The use of assistive technology does not eliminate assessment criteria; it prevents an unrelated difficulty from rendering the target skill invisible.

When written products are assessed, content, text structure, coherence, expression, vocabulary, spelling, and punctuation should be considered through distinct criteria. A high frequency of spelling errors should not obscure a student's original ideas or capacity for justification. At the same time, spelling and punctuation should not be treated as though they are never important. The weighting of criteria should be determined by the purpose of the task. Initial drafts may place greater emphasis on developing and organising ideas, whereas subsequent drafts may focus more extensively on expression, spelling, and punctuation. In this way, students are shown not merely how many errors they have made but the steps through which they can improve their texts.

Reading and writing processes should not be organised in isolation from one another in inclusive instruction. High-quality texts can serve as models through which students examine text structure, authorial choices, and alternative possibilities for expression. Activities such as rewriting a text from a different character's perspective, summarising the ideas in an informational text through a visual organiser, or comparing claims across two texts using evidence integrate comprehension and expression. Allowing students first to develop their ideas

orally and then to draw on textual evidence when producing a written text supports the transition between oral and written language.

7.4. Accessibility, Representation, and Critical Reading in Text Selection

In Turkish language classes, texts are not neutral instruments used merely to teach particular words or grammatical structures. Explicitly or implicitly, texts communicate which experiences are considered worth narrating, who is represented as an active agent, which ways of life are treated as normative, and which language varieties are regarded as legitimate. Inclusive text selection must therefore consider the text's alignment with the instructional objective, accessibility, quality of representation, and potential to foster critical thinking.

Accessibility does not simply mean that a text is short or easy. Typeface, font size, line spacing, colour contrast, page density, the placement of visuals, and the compatibility of digital documents with screen readers affect physical and perceptual access. Linguistic accessibility concerns vocabulary, sentence structure, cohesive relationships, abstraction, text type, and cultural references. Making a text accessible does not always require simplifying it. Excessive simplification may diminish its aesthetic and intellectual qualities and restrict students' right to encounter rich examples of language. Instead, access to the original text may be supported through annotated vocabulary assistance, brief contextual notes, an audio version, an accessible digital format, or segmentation.

Representation in text selection cannot be evaluated simply by determining whether diverse identities are visible in the classroom materials. It is necessary to examine the roles assigned to characters, whether they can make their own decisions, whether they act meaningfully in the development of events, and whether their entire identities are reduced to a single characteristic. Representing a disabled character solely as someone in need of assistance or whose value derives from extraordinary achievement, associating a migrant character exclusively with language difficulties and poverty, or depicting a child affected by disaster or exposed to violence only as a victim may create visibility while reproducing stereotypes. Similarly, the persistent restriction of female and male characters to traditional roles, the complete absence of diverse family structures and ways of life, and the portrayal of children as passive objects of adult decisions require critical consideration.

CAST's 2024 Guidelines recommend authentically representing diverse identities, perspectives, and narratives and interrogating biases embedded in language and symbols (CAST, 2024). Heineke, Papola-Ellis, and Elliott (2022) similarly argue that texts reflecting students' complex and intersecting identities can contribute meaningfully to classroom community, reading engagement,

identity development, and relationships with families. Their framework recommends connecting text selection with the processes of knowing students, identifying the learning objective, selecting texts that offer authentic representation, and incorporating those texts into instruction through meaningful activities (Heineke et al., 2022).

Although it is important for students to see themselves represented in texts, text selection should not be limited to reflecting the classroom's existing demographic characteristics. Alongside texts that enable students to recognise their own experiences, students should encounter texts that allow them to understand lives different from their own. However, a single text selected to introduce another group should not be treated as representing that group's entire range of experience. Textual diversity should include characters from the same social or cultural communities who display different personalities, living conditions, and preferences. This can prevent particular identities from becoming automatically associated with specific behaviours, problems, or ways of life.

Texts containing problematic representations or the discriminatory language of a historical period do not necessarily need to be excluded from instruction. When appropriate to students' age, classroom readiness, and the learning objective, such texts can offer valuable opportunities for critical reading. Teachers should not leave exclusionary expressions uninterrogated but should examine with students who uses them, in what context, and with what consequences. Students may question who is permitted to speak in the text, who is spoken for by others, which perspectives are absent, and how the same event might be narrated by another character. When texts address sensitive experiences such as violence, disaster, migration, loss, or abuse, however, students should not be compelled to disclose personal experiences before the class. Critical discussion must be distinguished from personal disclosure that violates students' privacy.

Text selection should not be regarded as a fixed, one-off decision made solely by the teacher. Students should be invited to provide feedback on how they relate to the text, where they experience difficulty in understanding it, how they see themselves represented, and which perspectives they believe are missing. Such feedback does not mean accepting every student request unconditionally; rather, it enables the text to be reconsidered in relation to the instructional objective, aesthetic quality, age appropriateness, accessibility, and representation. The purpose of inclusive text selection is not merely to provide content that makes students comfortable, but to enable them to engage with intellectually challenging texts through appropriate support and safe conditions for discussion.

7.5. Organising Classroom Discourse: Questioning, Error, and Feedback

The questions teachers ask do more than assess learning; they also determine who can speak, which forms of thinking are valued, and how knowledge is constructed in the classroom. Questions posed rapidly and organised around a single correct answer tend to make visible only a small group of students who are immediately ready to speak. Inclusive questioning seeks instead to create a classroom discourse in which students have time to think, formulate a response, listen to others' views, and revise their own ideas.

Question design should begin with the learning objective. Teachers should determine whether a question requires students to recall explicitly stated information, establish connections within the text, draw inferences, evaluate evidence, or compare different perspectives. Complex language structures or unfamiliar technical vocabulary should not obscure the question's primary cognitive demand. When necessary, a question may be divided into shorter sentences without lowering the level of thinking expected from students.

A sequenced set of questions may progress from explicitly stated information towards critical evaluation. Students may first identify information directly presented in the text. They may then combine different pieces of information to draw an inference, discuss why the author used a particular expression, and examine the evidence supporting the position presented in the text. At a subsequent stage, they may investigate perspectives absent from the text and consider how its meaning would change if the narrator or focal character were different. Such progression makes the cognitive steps required for thinking visible instead of expecting every student to answer the most complex question immediately.

Providing wait time after posing a question to the whole class is not merely an accommodation for students who formulate responses more slowly; it is an instructional arrangement that can improve the quality of responses. Students may take brief notes, discuss their ideas with a partner, or formulate a response using a graphic organiser. Rather than continually selecting students who volunteer, teachers should monitor patterns of participation across the classroom. At the same time, unannounced random nomination that catches students unprepared may increase speaking anxiety. Classrooms can establish transparent and equitable participation procedures through which students know how they may be invited to contribute, can request additional time when necessary, and have a limited right to "pass for now."

Responding to a student's answer only with "correct" or "incorrect" gives the teacher limited information about the student's thinking. Students may instead be asked to explain the evidence supporting their response, relate their ideas to those

of another student, or revise their initial answer in light of new information. Rather than rejecting a partially correct response in its entirety because of an erroneous component, the teacher can identify and develop the productive thinking it contains. Error thus becomes not a public demonstration of inadequacy but evidence through which collective thinking can progress.

Errors occurring during language learning may reveal not only what students do not know but also how they are making sense of the language system. Teachers therefore need not respond to every error immediately or in the same manner. Decisions about correction should consider the purpose of the activity, whether the error interferes with communication, the student's developmental level, whether the error is isolated or part of a recurring pattern, and the potential effect of the intervention on the student's willingness to speak or write. During an activity intended to develop fluency, immediately correcting every grammatical error that does not impede communication may disrupt the student's flow of thought. By contrast, the same error may become the focus of instruction during practice centred on a particular language structure.

The method of correction should also vary according to the nature of the error. The teacher may provide brief wait time so that the student can notice the error independently, repeat the relevant portion, or offer an explanatory prompt. An error shared by many students may be addressed with the whole class without identifying an individual student's work. An individual or sensitive difficulty should be addressed through private feedback that does not expose the student. Developmental language errors made by multilingual students should not be interpreted as evidence of limited intelligence or effort, and features of the languages they use at home should not become targets of ridicule or punishment.

Effective feedback targets modifiable features of performance rather than the student's personality. In a meta-analysis encompassing 435 studies, Wisniewski, Zierer, and Hattie found that feedback had an overall positive effect on learning, but that its effects varied considerably according to the information it contained and how it was delivered. These findings indicate that not every form of praise or correction is equally effective and that students particularly benefit from information clarifying the distance between their current performance and the objective, as well as the next steps they can take (Wisniewski et al., 2020).

Accordingly, feedback should first identify a specific successful feature related to the learning objective, then indicate clearly what needs to be developed, and finally provide an actionable means of making that improvement. If students are not given an opportunity to revise and try again, feedback remains merely a statement about past performance. For example, the feedback, "You have established the sequence of events clearly in your text. The temporal relationship

between the second and third paragraphs is not yet clear. You can revise the paragraph by considering whether ‘the next day’ or ‘after some time’ is more appropriate for your narrative,” makes the possible revision visible without producing a personal judgement.

7.6. A Framework for Inclusive Assessment and Instructional Decision-Making

Inclusive assessment does not mean giving every student easier tasks or making assessment criteria ambiguous. Its purpose is to enable students to demonstrate the targeted knowledge and skills without their performance being obscured by barriers irrelevant to the assessment objective. The Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing identify accessibility and fairness as essential conditions for valid score interpretation (AERA, APA, & NCME, 2014). The Ministry of National Education’s 2024 Middle School Turkish Language Curriculum similarly requires the continuous monitoring of development in listening/viewing, speaking, reading, and writing; the diversification of assessment methods according to students’ needs and individual circumstances; and the provision of non-judgemental feedback that supports development (MoNE, 2024).

The first step in assessment design is to define clearly the core construct to be measured. In addition to the targeted skill, a task often imposes supplementary demands involving reading speed, handwriting, memory, confidence in speaking, technology use, or familiarity with a particular cultural experience. When these demands are not part of the assessment objective, they may prevent some students from demonstrating what they have actually learned. Teachers should therefore ask not only, “What am I primarily measuring in this task?” but also, “What else does this task require from the student?”

The appropriateness of an accommodation should be determined by its relationship to the skill being measured rather than by the student’s diagnosis. If the objective is to infer a character trait from the character’s behaviour in a story, using large-print text, a screen reader, an audio version, additional time, or a digital response tool does not necessarily alter the targeted inferential skill. If the objective is to measure independent reading fluency, however, presenting the entire text orally eliminates the target skill. Similarly, a keyboard or speech-to-text tool may be used when assessing the organisation of ideas in writing, whereas automated correction may need to be restricted when spelling accuracy is being assessed. The same distinction applies to providing a full transcript during the assessment of listening skills or using a prerecorded presentation when evaluating spoken interaction.

Inclusive assessment should collect evidence of students' development rather than focus exclusively on the final product. Examining students' initial and subsequent writing drafts, reading records, oral presentations, self-assessments, teacher observations, and portfolios together can produce a performance profile of a depth that no single examination can provide. Analytic scoring rubrics can distinguish dimensions such as content, organisation, use of evidence, expression, fluency, and mechanical accuracy. Criteria should be shared with students before the task, explained in ways appropriate to their age and language proficiency, and, where possible, illustrated through sample products.

Instructional decision-making should not be reduced to marking a disconnected series of checklist questions. The core language skill and the evidence of success must first be identified. The text and materials should then be examined in relation to students' strengths, prior knowledge, linguistic repertoires, and access requirements. After considering the text's alignment with the instructional objective, linguistic demands, accessible formats, and quality of representation, the teacher can plan modelling, task sequencing, rehearsal, individual work, and collaborative options. The next stage involves determining who will be able to speak in the classroom, how group responsibilities will be distributed, the ways in which students may demonstrate their learning, and how assistive technologies relate to the target skill. Finally, assessment criteria, accommodations, and feedback processes are planned.

Post-lesson reflection completes the inclusive decision-making framework. Teachers should examine not only how many students answered correctly but also which students were unable to participate and the possible reasons for their exclusion. The learning objective may not have been sufficiently clear, the text may have demanded extensive prior knowledge that some students did not possess, the instructions may have contained unnecessary linguistic complexity, or the group structure may have rendered certain students passive. This examination does not remove all responsibility from students, but it makes visible the variables the teacher can influence. When the subsequent lesson is revised on the basis of this evidence, assessment ceases to be a separate scoring procedure and becomes part of instructional decision-making.

An inclusive decision-making framework does not require an unlimited number of separate lessons to be prepared for every student. Teachers should first plan common arrangements from which multiple students can benefit, incorporating clear objectives, accessible materials, sequenced instructions, preparation time, and multiple pathways for participation from the outset. Additional accommodations can then be provided for individual needs not addressed by these options. Inclusion thus ceases to be the sum of interventions

added only for particular students after difficulties arise and becomes a principle of instructional design.

7.7. Example of Practice: Multiple Pathways to the Same Text

For an activity involving a story at the seventh-grade level, the central objective may be for students to establish an evidence-based relationship between a character's behaviour and character traits. This objective requires students not merely to describe the character but to examine the behaviour in context, infer a possible character trait, and justify the interpretation with textual evidence. The activity therefore centres on textual inference and justification rather than reading speed, handwriting, or spelling accuracy.

During planning, the teacher examines the text's length, vocabulary, cultural references, typography, page layout, and response requirements. Small print may restrict physical access for some students, while unfamiliar vocabulary and unexplained cultural references may limit linguistic and conceptual access. Requiring only independent silent reading may prevent a student who experiences difficulty with word recognition from demonstrating inferential ability. Requiring lengthy written responses from every student may similarly allow transcription difficulties to overshadow the targeted textual reasoning.

These barriers can be reduced while preserving the shared learning objective. The text is prepared in print, accessible digital, and audio formats. Because the activity assesses inference rather than decoding, the audio version may be used to provide access to the text's content. The teacher explains a limited number of words central to meaning through context and examples and provides brief background information about cultural references without predetermining the interpretation of the text. Students may read individually or in pairs, provided that each student participates actively in the thinking process.

During modelling, the teacher uses a brief section of the text to identify an observable behaviour and then explains the context in which it occurs. The teacher subsequently states a character trait that might be inferred from that behaviour and connects the interpretation to textual evidence. By showing that the same behaviour may be interpreted differently depending on its context, the teacher emphasises that a character trait is not a definitive fact stated directly in the text but an evidence-based inference. The thinking process expected from students is thereby made visible.

During independent work, students establish relationships among the character's behaviour, the relevant textual evidence, a possible character trait, and the justification connecting them. Students may write their ideas using a printed or digital organiser, explain them orally before transforming them into a brief

written text, or use assistive technology. If an audio recording is used as the response format, the student must still explain clearly the relationship among the behaviour, evidence, character trait, and justification. Every option should make the same cognitive process visible; no option should involve a lower level of cognitive demand than another.

The principal assessment criteria are the accurate identification of behaviour from the text, the selection of appropriate evidence, the establishment of a logical relationship between the behaviour and the character trait, and the justification of the interpretation. Because spelling and punctuation are not the primary objectives of this activity, students may receive separate feedback in these areas, but mechanical errors should not disproportionately affect the inference score. After reviewing students' responses, the teacher determines not only who reached the correct conclusion but also the stage at which each difficulty arose. A student who identifies the behaviour but cannot infer a character trait may benefit from additional modelling of inference; a student who cannot select appropriate evidence may need a strategy for returning to the text; and a student who cannot explain the justification may benefit from a sentence frame connecting the behaviour with the interpretation.

The inclusive quality of this activity derives not from the number of material options but from the coherence between the learning objective and the pathways to access. Students work with the same text and towards a shared cognitive objective while using different tools that reduce perceptual, motor, or linguistic barriers unrelated to that objective. At the end of the lesson, students may be asked which access pathway they selected, why they selected it, and which support facilitated their thinking. This information can inform subsequent instructional decisions. The activity thus ceases to be a fixed list of predetermined accommodations and becomes an inclusive instructional process that develops in response to student performance and perspectives.

7.8. Practices to Avoid in Inclusive Turkish Language Teaching

Exclusion in inclusive Turkish language teaching does not always take the form of overt discrimination or denial of access to an educational activity. Some practices intended to protect students, help them, or make instruction easier may also distance them from academic expectations, classroom interaction, and decision-making processes. The inclusiveness of a practice should therefore be evaluated not merely according to the teacher's good intentions but according to its consequences for students' learning opportunities, independence, right to communicate, privacy, and sense of belonging.

One of the principal practices to avoid is continually assigning easy, cognitively undemanding tasks to students who require support. A student's difficulty in reading a lengthy text independently does not mean that the student should work exclusively with short and superficial texts. Similarly, continually requiring one-sentence responses from a student who experiences difficulty with writing may restrict opportunities to develop ideas and compose texts. Rather than unnecessarily reducing the intellectual demand of a task, an inclusive approach organises support that enables the student to meet that demand. The text may be segmented, presented in audio or accessible digital form, accompanied by explanations of key concepts or a graphic organiser, and supplemented with additional time. With appropriate support, however, expectations that students will identify the main idea, draw inferences, provide evidence, or produce a reasoned text should be maintained.

Arrangements that alter learning objectives must be distinguished from accommodations that facilitate access to the same objective. A study drawing on data from 110 lower-secondary classrooms in Switzerland found that teachers systematically underestimated the cognitive abilities of students working towards reduced learning objectives or receiving individual support from a special education teacher. The same pattern was not observed among students who received only accommodations related to assessment and learning conditions. Although the correlational findings do not establish direct causality, they indicate that certain forms of support should be considered in relation to the risks of lowered expectations and labelling (Sahli Lozano et al., 2022). Reducing the learning objective should therefore not be treated as an automatic first option; the student's capacity to achieve the objective with appropriate support should first be investigated.

High expectations do not mean assigning the same unsupported task to every student. They require recognition that students can develop when provided with suitable time, tools, and instructional support. In Florian and Black-Hawkins's conception of inclusive pedagogy, teaching seeks to expand the learning opportunities available to everyone in the classroom rather than creating a separate and restricted domain for certain students from the outset (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011). Inclusive Turkish language teachers should therefore not exclude students from challenging but attainable tasks; instead, they should establish a functional balance between task difficulty and the level of support provided.

Speaking on behalf of students or completing tasks for them may also restrict participation under the appearance of assistance. Continually allowing a teacher or peer to complete the sentences of a student who needs more time to speak,

experiences word-retrieval difficulties, or uses an augmentative and alternative communication system weakens the student's right to express ideas in a personally chosen manner. Rather than attempting to accelerate communication, teachers should provide sufficient wait time, understand the student's communication system, and ask whether assistance is needed. Anticipating the student's message and speaking on their behalf restricts not only communication development but also the student's ability to exercise a voice in the classroom.

A similar risk arises in reading and writing activities. Extensively rewriting a student's text, supplying every word in advance, or organising all ideas on the student's behalf may produce a more accurate final product, but that product does not represent the student's independent performance. Support should temporarily enable a process that the student cannot yet complete independently and should be gradually withdrawn as proficiency develops. CAST's Universal Design for Learning Guidelines 3.0 emphasise not only the use of different tools and scaffolded supports but also the development of students' capacity to set goals, monitor progress, and make decisions about their own learning (CAST, 2024). Teachers should therefore ask not only, "Did the student complete the task?" but also, "Did this support help the student complete a similar task more independently in the future?"

Teachers should also avoid transforming language errors into judgements about students' personalities or work ethic. Descriptions such as "careless," "sloppy," "lazy," "speaks poor Turkish," or "cannot express themselves" neither explain the observable features of the student's performance nor identify a clear area for instructional intervention. A student cannot be judged careless without determining the contexts in which frequent errors involving suffixes, word choice, or punctuation occur. If a student can organise ideas orally but struggles to transfer them into writing, planning and transcription skills must be examined separately. Inclusive teachers describe observable performance rather than making personality judgements and investigate the error's effect on communication, frequency of recurrence, and possible instructional causes.

Equating Turkish proficiency with general intelligence, subject knowledge, or thinking capacity constitutes a particularly serious assessment error for multilingual students. A student who is beginning to learn Turkish may possess extensive knowledge of a subject but express it in Turkish through brief, hesitant, or grammatically inaccurate statements. Such performance may indicate not an inability to think about the subject but a continuing need for support in expressing existing knowledge in the language of instruction. Teachers should allow students to demonstrate knowledge through visuals, keywords, drawings, examples, other known languages, or scaffolded oral expression. Research involving multilingual

students indicates that they can use their known languages as resources for making sense of new learning (Smythe, 2023). Drawing on other languages should therefore not be interpreted as resistance to learning Turkish.

Continual and highly visible correction of developmental errors made while learning Turkish may also reduce students' willingness to produce oral and written language. Rather than responding to every error in the same way, teachers should consider the purpose of the activity. During an activity intended to promote fluency and idea development, immediately correcting every error that does not impede communication may disrupt the student's flow of expression. In an activity focused on a particular language structure, however, the same error may become the focus of instruction. Correction should target modifiable language use rather than the student's personality and should allow the student to notice the error, try again, and improve the product.

Automatically interpreting silence as disinterest, lack of preparation, or unwillingness may likewise produce exclusionary consequences. A student may need more time to understand the question, formulate a response in Turkish, or manage the anxiety associated with speaking before the class. How errors and ridicule are handled in the classroom also influences the decision to contribute. An inclusive approach should not, however, accept the student's continued silence as an immutable characteristic. The student may first be allowed to take brief notes, think with a partner, rehearse in a small group, use visual support, or prepare a recorded response, followed by a gradual progression towards more visible oral participation. The student is thus neither forced to speak without preparation nor permanently excluded from the classroom's oral learning space.

Providing every student with the same support may appear equitable but fail to address different needs. An audio version may facilitate one student's access to reading comprehension, while another may not require it. A detailed writing template may help some students organise ideas but unnecessarily restrict the expressive choices of those capable of writing more independently. Using the same support for an extended period without evaluating its effects may also impede the development of independence. Supports should therefore be selected in response to the individual student, their effects should be monitored, and they should be gradually withdrawn as proficiency develops. Withdrawing support does not mean depriving the student of assistance altogether; it means transferring responsibility to the student in a planned manner.

Accommodations should not be explained before the class in ways that emphasise a student's difference. Statements such as "I am giving you an easy text because you are different from the others" or "This student will receive more time because they cannot do the task" may violate privacy and turn support into

a visible marker of inadequacy. Information about learning needs that is not educationally necessary should not be shared with peers. Options involving materials, working arrangements, and response formats should be incorporated as far as possible into ordinary classroom practice, and students should participate in decisions concerning which support they use and when and how they use it.

A systematic review examining stigma and stereotypes associated with specific learning difficulties found a moderately negative relationship between perceived stigma and self-esteem, while evidence concerning other psychological and academic outcomes was more limited and variable (Haft et al., 2023). This finding does not demonstrate that every visible accommodation necessarily causes stigmatisation. It does, however, underscore the need to examine carefully the language teachers use when providing support, the consequences of explaining a student's differences before peers, and the relationship between assistance and lowered expectations. The aim of inclusive practice is not to conceal support but to make receiving support an ordinary and respected part of classroom life.

It is also inappropriate for teachers to prescribe standard support for every student with the same diagnosis, language background, or type of difficulty. A diagnosis may provide initial information about possible needs, but it cannot by itself determine which text format, amount of preparation time, or communication system will benefit a particular student. The student's performance, views, prior learning experiences, and participation across different contexts should be considered. Evaluating support decisions with students rather than having them determined exclusively by a teacher or specialist can strengthen both the functionality of the support and the student's capacity for self-determination.

Allowing discriminatory, demeaning, or stereotypical expressions in texts to pass without discussion on the grounds that they are natural features of historical or literary works is likewise inconsistent with inclusive Turkish language teaching. Leaving problematic discourse unexamined may be interpreted by students as approval or normalisation. The solution, however, is not automatically to exclude every text containing such features from instruction. Provided the text is appropriate to students' age and the learning objective, critical reading can examine the historical context of exclusionary expressions, the position of the speaker, who is absent from the representation, and the possible effects of the language on different groups.

Text selection must also distinguish between visibility and high-quality representation. The inclusion of a disabled, migrant, economically disadvantaged, or disaster-affected character does not automatically make representation inclusive. Defining the character solely through victimhood, assistance, or

extraordinary achievement may reproduce stereotypes. Heineke and colleagues argue that inclusive texts should authentically reflect students' multidimensional and intersecting identities and that the purposeful integration of such texts into everyday instruction can contribute meaningfully to belonging, reading engagement, and classroom community (Heineke et al., 2022). Teachers should therefore examine not merely the numerical visibility of diversity in a text but also the agency afforded to characters and the perspectives legitimised by the narrative.

In conclusion, practices to avoid in inclusive Turkish language teaching generally become problematic not because support is present but because of its purpose and mode of delivery. Lowering cognitive expectations in the name of facilitation, making decisions on behalf of students in the name of assistance, devaluing linguistic identity in the name of correction, and visibly labelling students in the name of accommodation all conflict with the aims of inclusion. When deciding on a practice, teachers should determine whether it preserves the shared learning objective, promotes the student's independence, respects communication and choice, and provides support without producing stigma. The fundamental criterion of inclusive support is not whether the student temporarily completes a task but whether the student becomes an increasingly active, capable, and independent agent within the learning community.

7.9. Inclusive Turkish Language Lesson Checklist for Teachers

Objectives and planning;

- I clearly identified the core learning objective.
- I identified unnecessary barriers unrelated to the objective.
- I considered students' prior knowledge and language proficiency.
- I planned the necessary individual accommodations.

Texts and materials;

- I examined the text's language and readability level.
- I identified unfamiliar vocabulary.
- I prepared accessible versions of the text.
- I provided descriptions for visuals.
- I examined the text for representation and stereotypes.
- I provided the necessary context for cultural references.

Instruction;

- I presented instructions clearly and in sequenced stages.
- I modelled the expected skill.
- I gave students time for preparation and rehearsal.

- I used individual, paired, and group work in ways aligned with the objective.
- I provided the necessary linguistic supports.
- I did not devalue the other languages students know.

Participation;

- I distributed opportunities to speak equitably.
- I gave students time to think.
- I provided preparatory pathways through which students could participate without immediately speaking.
- I assigned every student a meaningful role in group activities.
- I intervened when discriminatory or demeaning language was used.

Assessment;

- I checked that the assessment instrument was aligned with the core skill.
- I reduced unnecessary writing, reading, or technology demands.
- I monitored students' development throughout the learning process.
- I used clear assessment criteria.
- I gave students opportunities to revise and try again.
- I provided feedback that made each student's next step visible.

CHAPTER 8

8. Institutionalising Inclusive Turkish Language Teaching: School Culture and Professional Development

The quality of inclusive education is often evaluated through classroom teaching practices. Teachers' approaches to student differences, the language they use, their selection of texts and materials, the ways in which they organise classroom interaction, the support they provide, and the assessment methods they employ constitute the most visible manifestations of inclusion in students' everyday educational experiences. However, making inclusive education dependent solely on individual teachers' knowledge, sensitivity, and effort may limit the scope and continuity of classroom practices. The time and resources available to teachers, opportunities for collaborative planning with colleagues, school leadership priorities, the functioning of support services, the quality of communication with families, and the prevailing conception of achievement within the school directly shape the conditions under which inclusive teaching can occur.

In schools where inclusive practices depend entirely on the personal efforts of particular teachers, students' educational experiences may vary considerably from one teacher to another. A student may have access to accessible materials, flexible response options, and supportive peer relationships in one lesson but not in another. Similarly, when a teacher who implements inclusive practices leaves the school or is reassigned, the arrangements that have been established may disappear entirely. Despite the existence of good practices, such circumstances indicate that inclusion has not yet acquired an institutional character. Institutionalising inclusion requires practices to cease being dependent on particular individuals and become embedded in the school's shared values, decision-making processes, allocation of resources, and forms of professional work.

Institutionalisation in this sense does not mean reducing inclusive education to bureaucratic procedures, formal documents, or standard checklists completed for inspection purposes. Its central purpose is to ensure that valuing student diversity, assuming responsibility for reducing exclusion, and recognising every student's right to a high-quality learning experience become enduring features of the school's everyday functioning. UNESCO's guidance on inclusion and equity conceptualises inclusive transformation through alignment among concepts, policy statements, structures and systems, and practices. This framework demonstrates that inclusion cannot be achieved through school documents that merely express positive attitudes; these values must also be reflected in

organisational structures, resource allocation, and instructional processes (UNESCO, 2017).

Turkish language teaching occupies a distinctive position within this institutional transformation. School culture is largely created, sustained, and made visible through language. How students are addressed, how different linguistic characteristics are evaluated, the language through which success and failure are explained, who is represented in the school's written and digital texts, whose views are heard, and which narratives are legitimised all communicate powerful messages about who is valued and considered to belong. Inclusive Turkish language teaching therefore cannot be restricted to reading, listening, speaking, and writing activities conducted during Turkish lessons. The school's language of communication, reading culture, library organisation, student publications, ceremonial texts, social activities, and communication with families must also be considered within the institutional context of inclusive Turkish language education.

The Turkish language teacher's role in this process is not to resolve every communication and inclusion problem in the school single-handedly. Turkish language teachers possess distinctive expertise in analysing relationships constructed through language, evaluating explicit and implicit messages in texts, incorporating different forms of expression into instruction, and creating spaces in which students can express themselves. However, whether this expertise can contribute to institutional transformation depends on support from school leaders and other teachers, the allocation of time for collaborative work, and recognition of inclusion as a whole-school responsibility.

8.1. Embedding Inclusion in School Culture

School culture is broader than a school's formal objectives and written rules. It encompasses the values, expectations, relationship patterns, everyday habits, and often unspoken assumptions shared by students, teachers, administrators, and families. Expectations regarding which students will succeed, which differences are regarded as ordinary, who is considered deserving of support, which behaviours are labelled problematic, and how failure is explained are all shaped within school culture. School culture can therefore be understood not only through what a school says but also through how it distributes time, space, resources, and opportunities to learn.

The inclusion of the statement "every student is valued" in a school's mission does not in itself demonstrate the existence of an inclusive culture. This principle must be reflected in class placement, access to support services, participation in social activities, use of the school library, disciplinary practices, and teacher

expectations. When the distance between declared values and everyday practices becomes too wide, inclusion remains symbolic. For this reason, Booth and Ainscow's Index for Inclusion conceptualises inclusive school development through the relationship among cultures, policies, and practices. Supporting inclusive values through school policies and translating them into concrete practices requires the school to engage in continual self-examination (Booth & Ainscow, 2011).

An inclusive school culture does not regard student diversity as a disruption that must be eliminated. Differences in students' linguistic, cultural, cognitive, physical, emotional, and social characteristics are recognised as ordinary conditions of education. This recognition allows schools to move beyond the assumption that all students will benefit equally from identical instructional arrangements. UNESCO's 2020 Global Education Monitoring Report similarly states that inclusion is not limited to adding a particular group of students to an existing system; education systems must understand diversity not as a problem but as a natural feature of the learning community. The report emphasises that inclusion requires transformation across interconnected domains, including legislation, financing, curricula, materials, teacher education, physical environments, and social attitudes (Global Education Monitoring Report Team, 2020).

A school's inclusiveness cannot be evaluated merely by whether students with different characteristics are educated in the same building. In addition to being present at school, students must be able to participate in lessons, peer relationships, social activities, and decisions that affect them. A student who is physically present in the classroom but remains continually silent, is assigned passive roles in group work, is excluded from social activities, or encounters only cognitively undemanding tasks may have gained access to school while still experiencing restricted participation and learning. Ainscow describes inclusive development as a continuous process of school improvement requiring the combined examination of evidence concerning students' presence, participation, and achievement. This understanding shows that inclusion is neither a one-off project nor a fixed state that can be considered complete once achieved (Ainscow, 2020).

Belonging is an additional fundamental dimension of this evaluation. A student may attend lessons and complete academic tasks while feeling that they are not accepted as a valued member of the school community. Students who are continually excluded by peers, mocked for the way they speak, exposed to disparagement of their families' cultural characteristics, or positioned solely as recipients of assistance because of their needs may struggle to develop a sense of

belonging. Belonging does not require differences to be made invisible; it requires students to receive equal respect together with those differences. Assessments of school inclusion should therefore examine not only attendance and examination results but also whether students feel safe, heard, and accepted.

The inclusive quality of school culture can also be read through the hidden curriculum. Although the formal curriculum may state that all students are equal, everyday school practices may communicate different messages. Continually assigning the same students roles in school ceremonies, restricting student representation to those with high academic achievement, privileging particular text types and cultural experiences in reading activities, or giving students who require support only symbolic responsibilities reproduces an implicit hierarchy of achievement and worth. An inclusive school culture recognises that these routines are not neutral and questions whose voices, visibility, and opportunities for development they privilege.

This questioning also encompasses the development of high expectations for students. High expectations do not mean requiring every student to perform in the same way and within the same period. They mean recognising that students can develop when provided with appropriate support, time, and instructional arrangements. Continually assigning easier tasks to a student, excluding the student from activities requiring complex thought, or allowing peers to speak on the student's behalf may appear to be well-intentioned protection but may ultimately restrict learning opportunities. In their review of research on teacher attitudes and implicit stereotypes, Denessen and colleagues found that teachers' unconscious group associations may be related to their practices towards different students and to student outcomes. The researchers nevertheless emphasised that these relationships may vary by context and that measures of implicit attitudes must be interpreted cautiously (Denessen et al., 2022). These findings demonstrate that an inclusive school culture must do more than prevent overt discrimination; it must also examine teacher expectations, the distribution of tasks, and interpretations of achievement critically.

The language used within the school is one of the strongest carriers of these implicit expectations. Expressions that define students through fixed categories such as "normal," "problematic," "weak," "maladjusted," "lazy," or "unsuccessful" may obscure the contextual causes of the difficulty being experienced. Over time, such expressions may become institutional labels that affect the learning opportunities teachers provide, peers' attitudes towards the student, and the student's perception of their own competence. Inclusive language does not mean concealing difficulties or describing every situation in positive terms. It requires observable performance, context, and support needs to be stated

clearly rather than defining the student through a fixed identity. Instead of judging that “the student does not understand what they read,” stating that the student can identify explicitly presented information but requires support in drawing inferences is both more accurate and more instructionally useful.

Turkish language teachers can make an important contribution to examining the school’s institutional language. School announcements, ceremonial speeches, disciplinary notices, student progress reports, communications sent to families, the school website, social media posts, and classroom displays can be reviewed for linguistic accessibility and representation. Such texts should be evaluated not only for grammatical accuracy but also for the audience they presume, the family and student experiences they exclude, whether they contain unnecessarily complex language, and whether they address different access requirements. Inclusive communication may require the use of clear Turkish, the provision of visual, audio, and digital options when necessary, alternative text for images, captions for videos, and communication methods responsive to families’ linguistic needs.

Approaches to linguistic diversity constitute another area that determines the inclusiveness of school culture. Developing Turkish as the language of instruction and shared communication is not incompatible with respecting the languages students use at home. Prohibiting students’ known languages or presenting them as obstacles to learning may create distance between students’ identities and the school. Smythe’s study with migrant students in France and New Zealand found that students could spontaneously use their first and shared languages as resources for making sense of new learning. The study indicates that practices allowing multilingual students to draw on their entire linguistic repertoires can contribute to inclusive learning environments (Smythe, 2023).

Accordingly, school culture should not interpret a student’s accent, vocabulary choices, or developmental errors in Turkish as indicators of intelligence, effort, or academic capacity. While developing students’ proficiency in Turkish, Turkish language teachers may enable them to use their other known languages, compare concepts across languages, and draw on previous literacy experiences. This responsibility cannot, however, be assigned solely to Turkish language teachers. Because academic language is used across the curriculum, teachers of science, mathematics, and social studies are also responsible for making the text structures, concepts, and discourse forms specific to their disciplines accessible. Turkish language teachers may provide linguistic support to colleagues in this process, but they should not be positioned as informal interpreters responsible for resolving every language-related issue in the school.

The texts used by a school also indicate which lives are considered worth narrating. Schools should examine how texts used in lessons, ceremonies, displays, school newspapers, and social activities represent diverse cultural communities, experiences of disability, migration and displacement, rural and urban life, people affected by disasters, and different socioeconomic conditions. Representation alone is insufficient. Continually depicting students with particular identities as victims, people in need of assistance, heroes, or sources of difficulty may reproduce stereotypes. Inclusive text selection requires works that present diverse experiences as ordinary dimensions of human life, give characters multidimensional identities, and create opportunities for critical reading.

It is therefore important for Turkish lessons to analyse not only the events and characters represented in texts but also the discourse through which they are constructed. Students can examine who is permitted to speak, who is spoken for by others, which characters are represented as active agents, and which differences are problematised. Inclusive education can thereby move beyond the direct transmission of particular values and enable students to question the relationship between language and power. Critical reading supports students in recognising discriminatory, stigmatising, or exclusionary expressions encountered at school and in society and in developing reasoned responses to them.

The school library can become both a physical and symbolic centre of inclusive school culture. If the library is used only by students with high academic achievement or an established interest in reading, the school's reading culture cannot extend to the entire community. The library's physical accessibility, the usability of its catalogue, the diversity of books in terms of subject and readability, the availability of audio and accessible digital texts alongside printed resources, and student participation in selecting works are directly related to an inclusive culture. The 2025 IFLA–UNESCO School Library Manifesto positions school libraries as educational environments that support literacy, critical thinking, creativity, and learning throughout the school community. It states that, to support high-quality and inclusive education, school libraries should collaborate with teachers, provide access to physical and digital resources, and respond to changing social and technological conditions (IFLA & UNESCO, 2025).

In accordance with this understanding, Turkish language teachers can help transform the library from a resource room supplementing the textbook into a shared cultural space where students meet, converse, recommend works, and develop personal relationships with diverse texts. Reading communities, student book recommendations, audiobook activities, text collections offering different

levels of support, and student-produced digital book presentations can diversify the use of this space. However, directing students only towards a restricted range of texts considered appropriate to their “level” may create a new form of segregation. Students should also be able to access more complex texts that interest them through support such as audiobooks, paired reading, or annotated editions.

Student participation in shaping school culture is a fundamental condition for institutionalising inclusion. Student voice should not be restricted to end-of-term satisfaction surveys or the symbolic invitation of a student representative to meetings. Students possess direct knowledge of where they feel safe at school, which texts and activities represent them, who is able to speak more frequently in lessons, and which practices produce exclusion. The European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education’s current framework on learner participation similarly emphasises that student voice should be incorporated systematically into processes for monitoring and evaluating inclusive education (European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2026).

Messiou and Ainscow’s Inclusive Inquiry project, conducted in schools across several European countries, demonstrated that processes in which students collected peers’ views, observed lessons, and engaged in dialogue with teachers about instructional practices could produce changes in teachers’ thinking and student participation. Particularly noteworthy was the positioning of students not merely as sources of information but as research partners contributing to instructional improvement (Messiou & Ainscow, 2020). For student participation to be genuinely inclusive, however, it cannot rely solely on the views of students who express themselves comfortably through speech. Different pathways should be offered, including written responses, audio recordings, visual expression, individual interviews, and small-group work. To preserve trust, students should also be informed about which decisions changed following their feedback and why certain requests could not be met.

Relationships with families also reflect the inclusive quality of school culture. A communication system in which families are contacted only when difficulties arise, confronted with complex educational terminology, or held responsible for their children’s lack of success does not constitute an equitable partnership. Before interpreting a family’s inability to attend meetings as disinterest, schools should consider working hours, transport, caring responsibilities, linguistic differences, access to digital tools, and previous school experiences. Schools should diversify communication channels according to families’ circumstances and provide clear language, translation, or visual support when necessary. Families’ knowledge of students can contribute to instructional decisions, but

family participation should not be used to transfer teachers' professional responsibilities to families.

Leadership is decisive in developing an inclusive school culture, although it cannot be reduced to the personal sensitivity of the headteacher. Inclusive leadership requires the shared performance of functions such as establishing a common direction, focusing on teaching and learning, promoting collaboration, developing staff capacity, and using resources equitably. UNESCO's 2024/5 Global Education Monitoring Report moves away from the idea of a single "heroic leader" and conceptualises effective educational leadership as a social and organisational function distributed according to context. The report identifies setting direction, focusing on learning, fostering collaboration, and developing people as fundamental dimensions of leadership (Global Education Monitoring Report Team, 2024).

The European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education similarly associates inclusive school leadership with reducing inequalities, supporting the full participation of all students, and developing the collective capacity of the school community. From this perspective, the responsibility of school leaders is not merely to respond to problems once they arise but to identify organisational conditions that may generate exclusion. Timetabling, the organisation of support services, teacher workload, time for collaborative planning, and resource allocation are all components of this responsibility (European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2021).

In a correlational study involving 343 teachers from public schools in Türkiye, Cülha and Yücel found a positive relationship between teachers' perceptions of headteachers' inclusive leadership behaviours and their school culture scores. Because the research was based on teacher perceptions and a correlational design, the results should not be interpreted as direct evidence of causality. Nevertheless, the findings provide important evidence from the Turkish context regarding the relationship between school culture and leaders' efforts to involve teachers in decision-making, listen to diverse views, and establish supportive relationships (Cülha & Yücel, 2024).

Inclusive leadership cannot merely expect teachers to collaborate; it must also establish the organisational conditions that make collaboration possible. Teachers require protected time to plan lessons together, examine student work, observe one another's classes, and evaluate support practices. Expecting teachers continually to undertake additional work without allocating time for collaborative planning turns inclusion into a matter of individual sacrifice. Similarly, reducing professional development to general seminars or one-off information sessions is unlikely to produce lasting changes in classroom practice. The European Agency

for Special Needs and Inclusive Education's profile of professional learning for inclusive teachers states that professional development should be organised as a career-long, collaborative process involving the entire school community (European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2022).

Professional collaboration among Turkish language teachers should not be restricted to preparing common examinations or aligning annual plans. Its instructional quality can be strengthened by jointly examining student texts, investigating the conditions under which reading and writing difficulties emerge, sharing differentiated materials, and evaluating the representational qualities of texts. A student's difficulty with written expression may be examined not merely as an individual deficit but in relation to the clarity of the instructions, the sequencing of the task, the quality of feedback, and the student's previous language experiences. Such professional inquiry should not serve as a means for teachers to inspect one another but as a process for developing evidence-informed solutions to shared problems.

The use of data to develop a more inclusive school culture should not be limited to examination scores. Attendance, classroom participation, disciplinary procedures, access to support services, participation in clubs and social activities, library use, reading and writing development, and student and family views should be considered together. Aggregated findings may reveal that particular groups of students are continually excluded from certain areas. Data should not, however, be used to relabel students; they should help answer which school practices facilitate or impede participation. As Ainscow argues, evidence is indispensable to inclusive development, but focusing only on easily measurable outcomes can make broader objectives related to participation and belonging invisible (Ainscow, 2020).

When interpreting data, schools must maintain a balance between making differences among student groups visible and avoiding stigmatisation. Examining the reading performance of students learning Turkish as an additional language, for example, should serve to evaluate the adequacy of texts and instructional supports rather than define the group as unsuccessful. Similarly, the overrepresentation of particular student groups in disciplinary records should not be explained solely through their behaviour; schools should also examine how rules are applied, teacher expectations, and the channels available for students to express themselves. Personal information should be shared only for educational purposes, with those who need it, and in accordance with principles of privacy.

An inclusive school culture does not require everyone to hold the same views or differences to remain undiscussed. Tensions may arise between maintaining academic standards and providing flexibility, offering support without visibly

labelling students, and monitoring the needs of particular groups without creating permanent categories. Teachers may disagree about the value of a practice, family expectations may not correspond with school priorities, and student requests may not be fully achievable with available resources. Azorín and Ainscow identify challenges in generating trustworthy evidence, interpreting evidence collaboratively, establishing trust among stakeholders, addressing contradictions, and setting priorities during schools' development towards inclusion (Azorín & Ainscow, 2020). An inclusive school should therefore not conceal tensions but provide an environment in which different views can be expressed and the reasons underlying decisions can be discussed.

Developing school culture requires a coherent process of institutional inquiry rather than the proliferation of disconnected activities. Schools should first clarify their shared values concerning inclusion and then examine their current position in relation to presence, participation, learning, and belonging. Student, teacher, and family views should be considered alongside school records to identify a limited number of priorities. Responsibilities, time, and resources should then be allocated explicitly. The effects of implemented practices should be reviewed periodically, and ineffective arrangements should be open to revision. This cycle transforms inclusion from a project to be completed into an approach to continuous school improvement.

Turkish language teachers can lead initiatives examining the school's language, texts, and channels for participation. For example, school announcements and communications with families can be reviewed for accessibility; the representation of different life experiences in ceremonies and student publications can be evaluated; student views on use of the library can be collected; and the distribution of speaking opportunities in classroom discussions can be observed. A school newspaper or digital publication produced by students can become a participatory communication space incorporating different forms of expression, audio content, and accessible texts. Such work should not, however, remain an individual project of the Turkish language teacher; it must be connected to the school development plan, resource allocation, and collaborative professional learning.

In conclusion, an inclusive school culture is understood less through the positive adjectives a school uses to describe itself than through the effects of its everyday decisions on students. A practice's inclusiveness can be evaluated by examining who can access the school and learning, who is able to speak, who is represented in texts, who encounters intellectually demanding tasks, who is labelled while receiving support, and which students remain outside decision-making processes. Inclusion begins to become institutionalised when it continues

even in the absence of a particular project or teacher and when it is reflected in collaborative planning, resource allocation, communication, student participation, and professional learning. The fundamental contribution of Turkish language teaching to this process is to approach language not merely as a skill to be taught but as a central social medium through which belonging, participation, representation, and justice are constructed at school.

8.2. Collaboration, Student Participation, and Relationships with Families

In inclusive education, collaboration does not mean transferring responsibility for a student's difficulty to another professional. Referring a student to the school counselling service or a special education teacher may sometimes be necessary, but referral does not eliminate the Turkish language teacher's responsibility for the student's learning and participation in Turkish lessons. Relationships among professional areas should be based on sharing knowledge and pedagogical decisions rather than transferring responsibility.

Turkish language teachers can observe students' behaviour during listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Special education teachers can provide expertise concerning accessibility and individualised support. School counsellors can contribute to understanding students' emotional and social experiences. School leaders can arrange the necessary time and resources. Families can provide information unavailable to teachers regarding the languages students use outside school, their interests, previous learning experiences, and ways of coping with difficulties. Bringing this information together prevents students from being evaluated solely through a single lesson or behaviour.

For collaboration to be inclusive, meetings should not become settings in which students' deficits are merely listed. Discussion should also address what the student can do, the conditions under which the student participates more effectively, and the support from which the student benefits. Continually explaining difficulties through family structure, first language, disability, or economic circumstances may make the roles of the school and instruction invisible. The primary purpose of discussions among teachers should not be to determine the category in which a student belongs but to identify barriers that can be reduced within the existing learning environment.

The European Agency's profile, which conceptualises inclusive teacher competence through values, knowledge, skills, and professional responsibilities, defines valuing learner diversity, supporting all learners, working with others, and continuing personal professional development as interconnected areas of competence. It is therefore important to understand collaboration not as a separate

technical skill but as one of the foundational values of inclusive teaching (European Agency, 2012).

Collaboration among Turkish language teachers should extend beyond preparing common examinations or coordinating annual plans. Students' relationships with texts, their modes of participation in classroom talk, development evident in written products, and barriers encountered by particular student groups can become shared subjects of inquiry. Teachers can jointly evaluate how the same text is received in different classes, which questions encourage more students to contribute, or which forms of feedback help students improve their writing. Such collaboration does not seek to standardise teachers' practices but to generate shared professional knowledge from diverse experiences.

Within an inclusive school culture, students are not merely people about whom decisions are made. They are actors capable of producing knowledge about their learning experiences and contributing to the improvement of school life. Seeking student views means more than asking which activities they enjoy or measuring satisfaction at the end of a term. Students should be able to express where they feel excluded from the class, which texts they can relate to, which interactional arrangements silence particular students, and how they wish to participate in the school's reading culture.

Student participation does not require teachers or school leaders to relinquish all decision-making authority. Educational objectives, ethical responsibilities, and existing conditions continue to guide professional decisions. Nevertheless, processes can be created in which students understand the reasons for decisions, propose alternatives, and see how their suggestions are evaluated. Students can take active roles in selecting books for the school library, organising reading activities, preparing the student magazine, or developing rules for classroom discussion.

Seeking views solely from students who express themselves confidently and are considered successful by the school may reproduce existing inequalities. Alternative pathways should be created for students who do not wish to speak before large groups, have difficulty using the language of instruction, or believe that their views have previously been disregarded. Written responses, small-group discussions, individual interviews, and anonymous feedback can provide access to the experiences of different students. The essential requirement is that student voice should not become tokenistic and that the information obtained should influence school decisions.

Relationships with families are another central component of an inclusive school culture. Defining family participation solely as attending meetings,

monitoring homework, or implementing decisions made by the school creates a one-directional relationship. Within an inclusive approach, families are educational stakeholders who possess knowledge about students' lives and learning experiences. Rather than merely asking families to meet school expectations, teachers should seek information about students' strengths, interests, language use, and the conditions affecting their learning.

The language used in communication with families is particularly important. Communication saturated with educational terminology, focused exclusively on the student's deficits, or likely to make families defensive impedes collaboration. Meetings should address students' strengths alongside their support needs, explain the arrangements made by the school, and listen to family views. Creating accessible communication channels for families who are not proficient in the language of instruction is also the school's responsibility. Continually positioning the student as an interpreter between the family and the school, particularly in sensitive discussions, may create ethical and communicative difficulties.

Disagreements between families and schools should not automatically be interpreted as disinterest or unwillingness to collaborate. Families' previous school experiences, working conditions, financial resources, and trust in the education system may affect how they participate in the relationship. Considering these circumstances does not mean removing all expectations of families; it prevents the relationship from being evaluated according to a single model of family participation. Inclusive schools regard families not as external stakeholders expected to adapt to school culture but as members of the school community who contribute different forms of knowledge and experience.

8.3. Professional Learning and the Development of Inclusive Teaching

The sustainability of an inclusive school culture is directly related to teachers' opportunities for professional learning. Because student diversity, language use, curricula, and learning environments change over time, inclusive teaching cannot be regarded as a completed competence. Increasing teaching experience is important, but experience does not automatically become inclusive practice. It must be examined alongside observation, evidence, colleagues' perspectives, and theoretical knowledge.

Short-term in-service training based on one-directional information transfer may introduce teachers to new concepts but is often insufficient to produce lasting changes in classroom practice. Desimone (2009) characterises effective professional development through features such as a focus on content, active learning, coherence with existing objectives and practices, sufficient duration, and the collective participation of teachers. This framework indicates that

professional development should be organised not as brief activities in which teachers remain passive listeners but as sustained processes through which they work on their own instructional practices (Desimone, 2009).

Avalos's (2011) review of research on teacher professional development similarly demonstrates that teacher learning extends beyond individual knowledge acquisition and occurs within the relationships among practice, professional identity, working environment, and other teachers. Inclusive teacher development therefore cannot be limited to introducing new techniques. Teachers must also be able to examine their beliefs about student differences, expectations of achievement, and the possibility that their own practices may produce exclusion (Avalos, 2011).

In their systematic review of professional development research on inclusive education, Waitoller and Artiles (2013) identify the treatment of difference through a single category as an important limitation. A student's school experience cannot be explained solely by disability, language, gender, migration, or economic circumstances. These characteristics may interact with one another and with school structures in shaping educational experience. Teacher education should therefore examine the multidimensional relationship between difference and exclusion rather than provide disconnected packages of methods for separate groups of students (Waitoller & Artiles, 2013).

Professional learning for Turkish language teachers should be organised around questions specific to the discipline. Although general principles of inclusive education are important, their implications for Turkish language teaching require separate examination. Turkish language teachers can investigate which student experiences are made visible through text selection, how speaking opportunities are distributed in classroom interaction, how different linguistic repertoires are treated, whether reading difficulty is confused with the ability to interpret texts, and whether formal accuracy overshadows intellectual content in the assessment of writing.

Student work constitutes a powerful source of professional learning. Instead of merely comparing assigned grades, teachers can examine how students construct meaning from texts, which ideas they are able to develop, where they encounter similar difficulties, and how instructional support is reflected in their products. Differences between the same student's oral and written expression, performance across text types, and use of feedback can also inform the evaluation of instructional decisions. Approaching student work in this way redirects professional dialogue from abstract recommendations towards classroom evidence.

Peer observation is another means of inclusive professional learning. However, observation intended to inspect teachers or identify their deficiencies may create a defensive environment. Observation should focus on a specific inquiry question. Teachers may examine which students participate in classroom talk, how wait time affects students' responses, or how responsibilities are distributed in group work. Following the observation, teachers can discuss the evidence rather than making general judgements that the practice was successful or unsuccessful.

Florian and Spratt's (2013) framework for examining inclusive pedagogy in practice considers the relationships among teachers' beliefs, professional knowledge, and actions. This approach demonstrates that inclusion cannot be understood simply by identifying whether particular techniques are used. The same method may produce different outcomes when based on different assumptions about students. Organising group work is not in itself an indicator of inclusion; it is also necessary to examine which students undertake which roles and how the group contributes to shared learning (Florian & Spratt, 2013).

Professional learning communities can enable teachers to conduct such inquiries continuously. Vescio, Ross, and Adams's (2008) research review found that well-structured professional learning communities were associated with positive changes in teaching practice and, in some studies, student learning. Regular meetings alone, however, do not constitute a professional learning community. Meetings must focus on student learning, enable teachers to examine their own practices, and influence classroom decisions (Vescio et al., 2008).

For Turkish language teachers, professional learning communities should extend beyond sharing texts and activities. Teachers may jointly examine the accessibility and representational qualities of school texts, develop shared feedback approaches based on student writing, or conduct small-scale action research aimed at increasing particular students' participation in speaking activities. A practice may be implemented for a defined period, data on student participation may be collected, and the practice may then be revised in response to the findings. Professional development thereby ceases to be knowledge delivered externally to teachers and becomes systematic learning generated from the school's own practices.

School leadership must provide teachers with time, trust, and professional autonomy for such work. Expecting continual innovation without allocating time for collaboration turns professional development into a personal burden. Similarly, if teachers fear being judged or blamed when discussing their practices openly, the honest inquiry on which professional learning depends will be inhibited. In an inclusive school culture, error should be treated not as an

inadequacy to conceal but as evidence that can be used to understand and improve teaching.

The development of inclusive teaching also encompasses initial teacher education. Addressing inclusive education solely in a discrete course related to special education may lead prospective teachers to regard inclusion as separate from subject teaching. The European Agency's inclusive teacher profile emphasises that inclusive competencies are required of every prospective teacher, regardless of discipline or educational level. Prospective Turkish language teachers should therefore not only learn about inclusion theoretically but also develop decisions responsive to student diversity in methodology courses addressing reading, writing, listening, and speaking instruction.

School-based experiences for prospective teachers should be organised according to the same understanding. Inclusion is not an issue to be observed only in specialist settings attended by particular students. Prospective teachers should be able to examine how participation is distributed in every classroom, how teacher language positions students, and how barriers arise within learning environments. Collaboration between universities and placement schools should support prospective teachers in connecting theoretical knowledge with classroom realities.

Türkiye's General Competencies for the Teaching Profession address understanding learners, creating learning environments, managing teaching and learning, assessment and evaluation, collaboration with stakeholders, and personal and professional development as an integrated whole. This framework provides an important national foundation for developing inclusive teachers (MoNE, 2017). However, including competencies in a formal document does not mean that they will automatically be realised in practice. Teacher education programmes, professional development initiatives, and school leadership must transform these competencies into a mutually supportive structure.

8.4. The Sustainability of Inclusive Turkish Language Teaching

The sustainability of inclusive Turkish language teaching does not mean applying a particular method, material, or project unchanged over an extended period. In education, sustainability concerns a school's capacity to recognise changing student characteristics, examine the effects of its practices through evidence, identify emerging barriers to learning and participation, and revise instruction accordingly. Sustainable inclusion therefore depends not on preserving practices unchanged but on maintaining inclusive values while developing practices in response to changing needs.

Short-term projects can generate important innovations in classroom practice. However, inclusion cannot be considered institutionalised if these gains disappear when a project ends, the teacher responsible leaves the school, or dedicated resources are withdrawn. The primary indicator of sustainability is not the uninterrupted continuation of a particular practice but whether the knowledge and experience generated in the school are shared among teachers, transferred to new staff, embedded in decision-making, and recreated under changing conditions. An inclusive school is therefore not an institution that has solved every problem but a learning community that continually investigates whom its practices support, whose participation they restrict, and for whom they create new barriers.

The historical development of inclusive education reflects an important movement away from exclusionary and segregated approaches towards educating students in shared settings. Placing students in the same school or classroom, however, does not mean that this transformation is complete. As UNESCO's framework for inclusion and equity emphasises, providing access alone is insufficient; policy, structures, and practices must be transformed together if education systems are to respond to student diversity (UNESCO, 2017). Sustainable inclusion should therefore be evaluated not by whether students can adapt to the existing educational structure but by the extent to which the environment supports the presence, participation, learning, and belonging of diverse students.

Ainscow (2020) conceptualises inclusion as a continuous process of school improvement requiring the systematic examination of evidence concerning students' presence, participation, and achievement. This approach demonstrates that inclusion is not a fixed condition completed once it has been achieved. As student populations, social conditions, technological opportunities, and educational expectations change, so do barriers to learning. A practice that was effective in the past cannot be assumed to produce the same outcome for a new group of students or in a different learning environment. Sustainability is therefore less about adherence to particular methods than about institutional capacity to question and, when necessary, change existing practices (Ainscow, 2020).

This approach does not deny the reality of difficulties experienced by students, but it rejects interpreting those difficulties independently of the educational environment. The same student may participate only to a limited extent when unable to read small print, follow lengthy and complex instructions, or speak without preparation. The student may demonstrate a different level of performance when the text is presented accessibly, the task is sequenced, thinking time is provided, or a safe form of expression is available. Changes in

participation despite unchanged individual characteristics demonstrate that the difficulty does not belong solely to the student but emerges through interaction between the student and the instructional environment. Sustainable inclusive teaching should therefore examine regularly the barriers produced by instructional conditions rather than defining students through fixed categories of inability.

Turkish language teaching is one of the areas in which the relationship between individual characteristics and environmental conditions is most visible. Language is not merely a means through which students access information; it is a primary domain of participation through which they construct identities, make sense of experience, share ideas, and establish a place within the school community. Turkish lessons may reproduce exclusion when students' language is assessed solely through errors, linguistic difference is interpreted as academic inadequacy, or some students' contributions are systematically treated as less valuable than those of others. Conversely, Turkish language teaching that enables diverse students to participate meaningfully in listening, speaking, reading, and writing not only develops language skills but also supports students in perceiving themselves as valued members of the school community.

The sustainability of inclusive Turkish language teaching requires distinguishing shared learning objectives from the pathways used to achieve them. Students have a right to encounter high-quality texts, engage in critical reading, justify their ideas, and use Turkish effectively. Inclusion therefore does not mean lowering academic expectations or continually assigning some students easier and more restricted tasks. Low expectations may narrow learning opportunities under the appearance of support. The objective is not to eliminate learning goals but to reduce barriers in presentation, participation, and assessment that make achieving them unnecessarily difficult.

Florian and Black-Hawkins's (2011) inclusive pedagogy approach proposes expanding the learning opportunities available to everyone in the classroom rather than developing separate activities solely for particular students. In their study of the practices of 11 teachers working in two Scottish primary schools, the distinguishing feature of inclusive pedagogy was described as increasing the instructional options available to all students rather than creating entirely separate work for some (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011). In Turkish lessons, this approach may involve preparing audio and digital versions of written texts, sequencing instructions, explaining concepts through examples, offering individual or paired options for working with texts, and adapting feedback to students' developmental processes. Nevertheless, some students may require individual arrangements such as Braille texts, sign-language support,

augmentative and alternative communication systems, or personalised assistive technologies. Expanding options for everyone does not eliminate the need for individual support.

Sustainable teaching cannot depend on preparing accessible materials anew for every lesson. Turkish language teachers should be able to share accessible digital formats and audio versions of texts, annotated vocabulary lists, graphic organisers, and activities offering different levels of support through a common resource bank. Such a collection should not become a static archive from which materials are used without critical examination. Materials must be reviewed regularly in relation to grade level, students' linguistic and cultural characteristics, accessibility standards, and changing technological requirements. Institutional memory is created not merely by storing materials but by documenting the conditions under which they were effective and the students for whom they generated new barriers.

Continuity of support when a student changes class or school is another important dimension of sustainability. The tools a student uses, effective instructional approaches, and areas of progress should not remain the personal knowledge of the teacher responsible for the student in a particular year. Information conveyed to a new teacher should include not only diagnosis, difficulties, or low scores but also strengths, strategies, effective supports, and the student's views on their own learning. Such sharing should occur solely for educational purposes, in accordance with privacy principles, and without confining the student to a fixed profile. The purpose is not to create a prejudgement about the student but to prevent the loss of previously acquired educational knowledge.

Assessment results must also be used to improve instruction if inclusive practices are to be sustained. Examining only end-of-term grades in Turkish may not reveal the processes in listening, speaking, reading, and writing for which a student requires support. Development can be monitored in greater detail when student products, reading records, writing drafts, observation notes, self-assessments, and portfolios are considered together. The purpose of collecting data is not to subject students to continual measurement or classification but to determine which dimensions of instruction are effective. If particular students continually perform poorly on an assessment, the teacher should examine not only student characteristics but also the language of the text, clarity of instructions, time provided, response format, and assessment criteria.

Monitoring inclusion should not be restricted to academic achievement data. Participation in lessons, the distribution of speaking opportunities, roles undertaken in group work, library use, voluntary participation in reading

activities, attendance, peer relationships, and students' perceptions of belonging must also be considered. An improvement in examination results is important, but inclusion remains incomplete if the student cannot express ideas in class or remains excluded from social relationships. School data should therefore be used to identify barriers to learning and participation rather than rank students. Examining data by student group can make inequalities visible, but it should not turn groups into permanent categories of failure or violate ethical principles concerning the protection of personal information.

Student voice is one of the principal sources of evidence supporting the sustainability of inclusive Turkish language teaching. Students can explain which texts represent them, in which activities they can speak, which forms of feedback facilitate learning, and which supports visibly label them before their peers. Messiou and Ainscow's (2020) Inclusive Inquiry project, conducted across different countries, demonstrated that involving students in collecting peers' views, observing lessons, and discussing practices with teachers could change teacher thinking and classroom participation (Messiou & Ainscow, 2020). For student voice to become part of sustainable monitoring, schools should not rely solely on the views of students who speak confidently or achieve highly. Written, oral, visual, and digital response options should be provided. Explaining which recommendations were implemented and why others could not be implemented also prevents participation from remaining symbolic.

Teachers' continuing professional learning is decisive for the sustainability of inclusive Turkish language teaching. An inclusive teacher is not a flawless expert capable of meeting every need of every student alone. An inclusive teacher recognises the limits of their knowledge, learns from students and colleagues, seeks specialist support when necessary, examines the effects of practice, and changes methods that do not produce results. Professional development should therefore not be regarded as a series of occasional general seminars. It requires sustained professional learning through which authentic classroom problems are examined collaboratively, student work is evaluated, materials are developed, and the outcomes of practice are discussed.

The European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education's framework for the professional learning of inclusive teachers states that inclusive competencies cannot be developed solely during initial teacher education. It calls for a career-long, school-community-based approach to professional learning that encompasses all educational staff (European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2022). This requires not only individual teachers to update their knowledge of inclusion but also schools to develop shared capacity for inclusive practice. Turkish language teachers can jointly examine student texts,

identify barriers in reading and writing, develop differentiated materials, and discuss the accessibility of assessment instruments. Such work should be conducted for collaborative learning and professional support rather than inspection.

Zorde and Lapidot-Lefler's (2025) qualitative study involving 156 educators from ten professional learning communities that met regularly throughout an academic year found that sustained professional communities could enable teachers to question assumptions about inclusion, develop non-judgemental professional language, and revise their practices. Although this study was conducted in a single context and cannot be generalised directly to all education systems, it indicates that professional development may create a more enduring learning infrastructure when based on teachers' collaborative examination of their own practices rather than the transmission of theoretical knowledge alone (Zorde & Lapidot-Lefler, 2025).

Teachers must be allocated time for collaborative planning and evaluation if professional collaboration is to be sustainable. Expecting teachers continually to prepare additional materials, monitor students individually, and communicate intensively with families without creating institutional time for collaboration turns inclusion into personal sacrifice. This may increase workload, feelings of inadequacy, and burnout while weakening the continuity of the practices developed. Inclusion should not impose unlimited individual responsibility on teachers; teachers' pedagogical responsibilities must be situated within the shared responsibilities of the school and education system.

School leaders should do more than declare support for inclusive values. Time for collaborative planning, budgets for accessible materials, maintenance and updating of assistive technologies, access to specialist support, induction of new teachers, and the distribution of responsibilities among staff are organisational conditions for sustainability. Inclusive practices may remain individual teacher initiatives unless they are reflected in the school development plan, budget, professional learning programme, and monitoring processes. Similarly, beginning to use accessible digital materials is insufficient; those materials must remain compatible with different devices, be regularly updated, protect students' personal data, and remain usable when technical difficulties arise.

Strengthening inclusive Turkish language teaching in Türkiye depends on alignment among curricula, teacher education, school leadership, material development, assessment, and professional development policies. The 2024 Middle School Turkish Language Curriculum calls for a classroom climate in which students can participate actively and share their views freely, the development of different materials according to readiness levels, diversification

of assessment methods in response to student needs, ongoing monitoring of learning development, and collaboration among teachers. It also addresses support and enrichment practices as a distinct area (Ministry of National Education, 2024).

These provisions create important scope for inclusive Turkish language teaching. Their inclusion in the curriculum, however, does not guarantee automatic implementation in classrooms. Teachers must be able to understand student diversity, access accessible materials, plan differentiated instruction, and use assessment results to improve teaching. Assigning these responsibilities solely to teachers without considering lesson duration, class size, technological resources, and access to support services may create a gap between policy and practice. Curriculum implementation should therefore be evaluated through regular monitoring that incorporates teacher and student perspectives.

The belief that inclusion can be achieved solely through teacher education places school- and system-level barriers on teachers' shoulders. Conversely, assigning all responsibility to policy documents, curricula, or school leaders diminishes the importance of everyday pedagogical decisions in the classroom. UNESCO's 2020 Global Education Monitoring Report demonstrates that inclusive education requires coherent transformation across interconnected components such as legislation, financing, governance, curricula, materials, teacher education, physical environments, and social attitudes (Global Education Monitoring Report Team, 2020). Education policy should establish an inclusive direction, schools should translate this direction into organisational structures and working conditions, and teachers should enact it through everyday relationships and instructional decisions. Experience and evidence generated in classrooms should, in turn, inform decisions at school and policy levels.

The adaptability required for sustainability does not mean that the fundamental ethical principles of inclusive education may be altered according to circumstances. Instructional methods, materials, and assessment formats may change, but respect for students' dignity, prevention of discrimination, maintenance of high and attainable expectations, protection of privacy, consideration of student voice, and the right to high-quality education are non-negotiable. This distinction is essential: sustainable inclusion requires continuity in fundamental rights and values, together with evidence-informed flexibility in the practices through which those values are realised.

In conclusion, inclusive Turkish language teaching is not the sum of additional practices developed for particular student groups. It is a way of rethinking language teaching through the rights to access, participation, representation, learning, and belonging. It does not seek to eliminate differences among students

but to prevent those differences from becoming grounds for educational exclusion. Change initiated by teachers in the classroom becomes enduring when supported by school culture, collaborative professional learning, accessible resources, student participation, and coherent educational policies.

There is no definitive stage at which inclusive education can be considered complete. As students, technologies, social conditions, and educational expectations change, new barriers and new opportunities for participation will emerge. Inclusion is therefore not an immutable outcome that can be reached once and for all, but an ethical, pedagogical, and institutional orientation requiring schools continually to review themselves. The fundamental responsibility of Turkish language teaching within this orientation is to ensure not only that every student can learn Turkish but also that every student can think through language, express themselves, establish meaningful relationships with others, and be seen and heard. The genuine sustainability of inclusive Turkish language teaching is realised when students establish their place in the educational community not as recipients of temporary support but as agents possessing equal rights and an enduring sense of belonging.

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