Examining the Role of English Teachers in Creating Inclusive Classrooms That Support Linguistic Growth and Emotional Wellbeing: A Mixed Methods Study in Dubai, UAE

Bothaina Ghanem Al Mazrouei[1]*

[1] G.bothaina@cu.ac.ae; https://orcid.org/0009-0005-5252-9242; Curriculum & Educational Technology Specialist, Canadian University Dubai, United Arab Emirates

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ABSTRACT:

Educational change toward inclusion requires teachers to integrate instructional, social–emotional, and contextual practices in ways that promote equity for diverse learners. This convergent mixed methods study examines how English teachers in Dubai's private schools enact inclusive practices that support both linguistic development and emotional well-being. Survey data from 1,700 teachers using the 25 item ITEC instrument indicate moderate to high levels of implementation, with Emotional Wellbeing Facilitation receiving the highest mean score and Linguistic Support Practices showing greater variability. Chi square analyses reveal significant associations between inclusive practice implementation and certification type, professional development hours, and curriculum type; years of experience were not significant. Semi structured interviews with 45 teachers produced nine themes describing the day to day work of inclusion, including differentiated instruction, culturally responsive teaching, social emotional learning integration, collaborative structures, and the navigation of systemic constraints. The findings demonstrate that teacher agency is central to inclusive educational change, but its expression depends heavily on structural supports such as preparation, professional development, and resource conditions. The study contributes to educational change scholarship by identifying leverage points for improving inclusive practice in multilingual settings and by conceptualizing inclusion as the combined work of pedagogy and wellbeing.

Keywords: Inclusive education; Educational change; English teachers; Linguistic support; Emotional wellbeing; Mixed methods; Dubai; Private schools

1. Introduction

The necessity to incorporate education has become more of a steam in contemporary educational discourse, particularly considering the growing diversity in the classroom with regard to language, cultural, and ability make-ups. In its idealistic and narrow use of the term, inclusive education refers to the practice of ensuring that all people, regardless of their backgrounds or capabilities, can be involved in learning activities in a full and meaningful way (Stainback and Stainback, 1990). English teachers have a special role to play in this bigger picture, as it is in their classrooms that language development, identity formation, and social-emotional learning interact.

There is a shift in the demographic condition of schools in the United Arab Emirates and Dubai in particular. The multilingual student body in Dubai schools is the strength of the private schools, which accommodate the diversity of various languages and cultures, which has created an opportunity and a challenge to inclusive education. The research has also indicated the necessity to conduct research on the perceived ability of educators to implement inclusive education practices in the UAE setting (Loyd et al., 2024).

The concept of inclusive education has been transformed immensely since its inception as a concept regarding the inclusion of students with disabilities in the mainstream classes. Contemporary

theories have recognized inclusion as a multifaceted phenomenon that extends beyond access to general education conditions to encompass high levels of participation, academic achievement, and social integration of all students (Tichá, Abery, and Johnstone, 2019). This widening of mind is in line with international policy frameworks and appeals to the growing consciousness of the fact that educational equity must be viewed not only in the cognitive but also in the affective terms of students' development.

There are certain opportunities and challenges of inclusive practice in English classrooms. The character of the language arts teaching presupposes personal expressiveness, identity discovery, and social interaction, and, therefore, the spaces are especially significant to the emotional wellbeing of students (Riser, 2025). Concurrently, language demands of the English curriculum might be a challenge to students who are yet to attain English language competency or students with language-based learning differences. The English teachers therefore must balance the two aspects of encouraging language development and at the same time building classroom communities where each student feels valued, motivated and capable of performing. Alasuutari, Savolainen, & Engelbrecht (2024) argue that teachers play a crucial role in ensuring that learning is provided to all students in an inclusive learning setting (Ackah-Jnr, Appiah, &Kwao, 2020).

The emotional wellbeing of the students has become a scalding point in the research and practice in education (Miao et al., 2025). The paradigms of social-emotional learning are already trending, and the issue of how to effectively integrate these frameworks in the academic learning process particularly with linguistically diverse learners still lingers (Samokhin et al., 2017). The new study emphasized the importance of culturally sensitive social-emotional instructional practices that acknowledge student identities and lived experiences and support wellbeing and academic development (Garcia & Santi, 2025).

The policy frameworks in Dubai have provided expectations of inclusive education, although this has not been enforced in all schools equally. Research on teacher perceived competence to enact inclusive education practices in the UAE has established that there exist considerable differences between the policy requirements and the classroom realities (Loyd et al., 2024). The vital role of teachers in inclusive education is widely recorded at the international level, and researchers state that the elements of teacher training and lifelong learning are the significant elements of successful inclusion (Alasuutari, Savolainen, and Engelbrecht, 2024).

This study addresses these gaps by investigating the following research questions:

1. What inclusive teaching practices do English teachers in Dubai employ to support linguistic growth and emotional wellbeing?

2. What is the relationship between teacher characteristics (preparation, experience, school context) and the implementation of inclusive practices?

3. How do English teachers perceive their role in fostering inclusive classrooms that address both linguistic and emotional dimensions of student development?

This study will provide a comprehensive view of the present situation of inclusive practice in Dubai English classrooms, with both quantitative survey data (n= 1,700 teachers) and qualitative interviews (n= 45 teachers). The findings are not only useful to the scholarly understanding of the subject of inclusive education but also, they offer a practical implication to teacher preparation, professional development, and educational policy in Dubai and the UAE overall.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Foundations of Inclusive Education

Inclusive education emerged from advocacy for the rights of students with disabilities to access mainstream schooling. Early work by Stainback & Stainback (1990) emphasized support systems that enable meaningful participation for all learners, forming the foundation for practices such as heterogeneous grouping, collaboration, and individualized support.

In the UAE, inclusive education has become a key policy priority. Research shows that while teachers generally hold positive attitudes, their confidence in implementation varies, highlighting the link between perceived competence and actual practice (Loyd et al., 2024).

Scholars consistently emphasize the central role of teachers in inclusion, noting that policies and resources alone are insufficient without adequately prepared and skilled educators (Alasuutari, Savolainen, & Engelbrecht, 2024).

2.2 English Teachers and Linguistic Diversity

Language teachers in multilingual classrooms face the dual challenge of supporting language development while meeting grade-level academic demands—an issue particularly pronounced in Dubai's linguistically diverse expatriate context. Inclusive language practices are recognized as important pedagogical and motivational tools, though their application must remain context-sensitive (Ackah-Jnr, Appiah, & Kwao, 2020).

Research identifies several effective strategies. Differentiated instruction—adapting content,

processes, and assessment to student needs supports diverse learners (Sandra & Kurniawati, 2021), while cooperative learning promotes language use and peer support (Arra, Antonio, & Antonio, 2017; Slavin, 2017). Project-based learning enhances conceptual understanding and real-life language application (Barenti, Hasan, & Mahidin, 2017), and culturally relevant resources such as songs can strengthen identity and engagement (Samokhin et al., 2017).

Students with developmental differences, including autism, require tailored strategies such as visual supports, structured routines, and individualized accommodations (Sandra & Kurniawati, 2021; Seymour, 2017). Overall, inclusive language practices play a critical role in shaping equitable learning environments, particularly in linguistically diverse settings like Dubai (Ackah-Jnr, Appiah, & Kwao, 2020).

2.3 Emotional Wellbeing in Educational Contexts

The importance of emotional wellbeing of students has become the center of increasing educational research and policy because of the realization that academic success cannot be separated from social-emotional development (Loyd et al., 2024). Such competencies as self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making are usually addressed within social-emotional learning models. Even though standalone SEL programs have proven to be effective, researchers have called to pay increased attention to the opportunity to inculcate the principles of SEL into academic teaching (Samokhin et al., 2017).

The empirical research on the second/foreign language teaching and learning reviewed in a systematic way by Miao et al. (2025) were evaluated through the lens of positive psychology which demonstrated the growing interest in emotional aspects of language teaching and learning (Garcia and Santi, 2025). The results are of particular importance to English teachers in Dubai who must address the needs of students who must manage with the multi-language and multi-cultural environment (Riser, 2025).

2.4 Teacher Preparation and Professional Development for Inclusive Practice

The performance of the inclusive education is dependent on the knowledge, skills and dispositions of teachers. It is constantly demonstrated that many teachers think that they are not prepared enough to address the needs of students with disabilities in their classrooms, that is why proper preparation and ongoing professional development is important (Damayanti, Lintangsari, &Kusumawardani, 2022).

Loyd et al. (2024) examined the perceived teacher competence to use inclusive education practice in the context of the UAE and found out that the confidence of teachers regarding different aspects of inclusive practice was significantly different.

Inclusive education in Dubai can be offered by various providers in terms of professional development. However, the studies indicate that the quality of professional development is not evenly distributed across schools, and many teachers report that they need more help in translating the principles of inclusion to practice (Loyd et al., 2024).

2.5 Barriers to Inclusive Practice Implementation

The evidence base of inclusive practices is ever growing, but there are still barriers to practice at multiple levels. On the systemic level, the lack of resources, many students in a classroom, and contradictory policy demands can restrict the ability of teachers to serve the needs of the diverse students in an effective manner. Engelbrecht and colleagues (2016) found the discrepancy between the idealistic impressions of the inclusive education policies and the real-life situation in schools and teachers in South Africa and can be repeated in other countries and areas like the UAE.

Supportive personnel, time to plan collectively, and the availability of appropriate instructional tools will influence the adoption of inclusive practice at the school level. Teachers in the schools where the administrative support, professional cultures, and access to specialists are well-developed claim that they are more capable of meeting the needs of various students (Seymour, 2017).

The research carried out in the UAE has shown some barriers to the adoption of the inclusive. Loyd et al. (2024) have found that educators reported challenges in the areas of large classes, insufficient time to plan and collaborate, insufficient resources and materials, and varying levels of administrative support.

Other barriers in the case of English teachers specifically may also include the inability to access the relevant texts and materials to support the needs of diverse students, the inability to train how to integrate language development with content instruction as well as the confusion of how to integrate social-emotional learning into the English language arts programs. Hidayah & Morganna (2019) examined the problems of supporting the needs of the various students in the English as foreign language inclusive classes and discovered that the strategies and flexible approaches of differentiation are necessary.

2.6 Inclusive Education In Dubai

Dubai provides a special setting for learning inclusive education practices. As one of the most diverse cities in the world as far as demographics are concerned, the schools of Dubai include the students with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. This diversity does not only provide opportunities for inclusive education, but it also challenges it.

The articles which dwell on teacher perceived competence in the implementation of inclusive education practices in the UAE have provided

meaningful information on the current state of inclusive education in the region (Loyd et al., 2024). The recent scholarly sources have underlined the importance of the inclusive language use in education (Ackah-Jnr, Appiah, &Kwao, 2020) and the role of positive psychology in the process of teaching and learning the language (Miao et al., 2025).

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study design applied in the current research was convergent mixed methods, which integrated the quantitative and qualitative approach to provide a thorough understanding of the role of English teachers in building inclusive classrooms (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Mixed methods research is particularly appropriate in the case of studying the multifaceted educational phenomenon since it allows not only covering the phenomenon with the help of the vast number of quantitative data but also the depth of knowledge through the qualitative research (Creswell, 2014).The quantitative section was done through a cross-sectional survey designed to obtain data on inclusive practices, preparation, and teacher perceptions about the large sample of Dubai private schools.

3.2 Sampling and Participants

Quantitative Sample: The sample was 1,700 English teachers at the private schools in Dubai. The stratification of sampling was aimed at representing the various kinds of curriculum (British, American, IB, Indian, etc.), school size, and the student demographic. English teachers (6-12) of the selected schools participated in the online survey.

The sample size of 1,700 was determined using power analysis to identify a small to medium effect in chi-square analysis and other statistical tests. It is a big sample size that has the required minimum frequencies of chi-square analysis of five or more anticipated frequencies in at least 80 percent of the cells (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2011). The sample obtained is statistically powerful enough to examine the relationships between teacher attributes and the inclusion practice implementation.

The sample of the participants was representative of the general population of Dubai English teachers. It was composed of 78 percent female and 22 percent male teachers with the teaching experience of 1 to 42 years (M = 11.4, SD = 8.2). In terms of preparation, 62 percent of those who had regular teaching certification in English language arts, 18 percent had bilingual or ESL certification, and 20 percent had special education certification or endorsement. School settings were 55% British curriculum, 20% American curriculum, 15% IB curriculum and 10% other curricula (Indian, French, etc.).

QualitativeSample: The respondents of the survey were sampled purposely to participate in semi-structured interviews (45 teachers). The selection criterion was to be diverse in terms of the type of curriculum, level of experience, type of certification and school setting. Qualitative data sample included 28 schools of teachers, and British, American, and IB curricula were used to represent the sample. The experience level was 2-35 years, and the novice teachers (less than 5 years), mid-career teachers (5-15 years) and veteran teachers (more than 15 years) were represented.

3.3 Quantitative Measures

In this research, the survey on Inclusive Teaching in English Classrooms (ITEC) was created due to the careful analysis of the literature regarding inclusive education, English teaching, and social-emotional learning with the adaptations to the Dubai context. The questionnaire consisted of a 25-item questionnaire on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, 5 = always), and was split into three subscales:

Linguistic Support Practices (9 items): Items assessed the use of the strategies by teachers to facilitate language development including differentiation of English learners, scaffolding (Fig. 1) of complex texts, multiple modalities to show learning, and integration of language goals with teaching content. Among the examples were such items as I can distinguish instructional materials by the level of language proficiency of students and I can teach students explicitly the features of academic language.

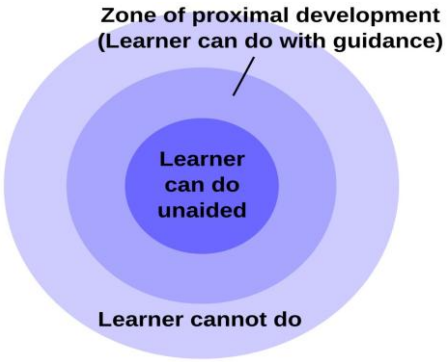

Fig.1. Scaffolding Instructional Strategy-Teacher's Support and Guidance In Linguistics Learning in Education

- **Validity Evidence for the Inclusive Teaching in English Classrooms (ITEC) Survey**

To calculate the content validity, a sample of 35 items was considered by a panel of five experts in inclusive education, English language teaching and measurement in education. The experts rated each item on a four-point scale based on relevance, clarity, and representation and calculated the Content Validity Index (CVI). The final 25-item tool was made after amending and dropping products whose CVI scores were below 0.80. The construct validity was assessed through the assistance of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using Mplus version 8. The pilot sample data (N = 45) and subsequently the whole sample (N = 1,700) were used to validate the three-factor hypothesis (Linguistic Support Practices, Emotional Wellbeing Facilitation, and Inclusive Classroom Management). The measures of model fit were acceptable to excellent: 2/df = 2.84, CFI = 0.92, TLI = 0.91, RMSEA = 0.06 (90% CI [0.05, 0.07]) and SRMR = 0.05. The factor loadings were statistically significant (p <.001) and larger than the suggested value of 0.50 (0.63- 0.89). The findings of this study are positive signs that the ITEC survey is a good measure of the three various, but interrelated dimensions of inclusive teaching of English classrooms.

Pilot tests on 45 teachers who did not form part of the final sample gave acceptable internal consistency reliability among all subscales (Cronbachs alpha =.87 linguistic support, .89 emotional wellbeing facilitation, .82 inclusive management). Confirmatory factor analysis supported the three-factor instrument.

3.4 Qualitative Data Collection

The participants were interviewed in semi-structured interviews (face-to-face or via a video conversation) in total (n=45) teachers depending on the choice of the respondents and the geographical location. The interviews were between 45 and 90 minutes and were done following a protocol that sought to get deep into the experiences, practices and perceptions of teachers.

The areas included in the interview guide were the knowledge of inclusive education and policy frameworks in Dubai; specific approaches to linguistic development and emotional wellbeing; preparation and professional development experiences; the challenges associated with the implementation of the inclusive practices; the contextual issues such as the school resources and administrative support; and the recommendations of how to improve the inclusive education in English classes in Dubai.

The interviews were taped and transcribed verbatim and the outcome was approximately 1,200 pages of transcript data. Member checking was employed, and the respondents were encouraged to read their transcripts and make corrections or elaborate on them (Creswell, 2014).

3.5 Quantitative Data Analysis

Quantitative data was analyzed by the SPSS version 28. All subscales and survey items were calculated with the help of the descriptive statistics and provided a profile of what teachers reported. Means and standard deviations of individual items and means and standard deviations of aggregates of subscale were calculated.

Chi-square tests of independence were conducted to examine relationships between teacher characteristics (experience level, certification type, professional development participation, school curriculum type) and inclusive practice implementation. For these analyses, inclusive practice scores were categorized into low, medium, and high implementation levels based on tertile splits. The chi-square test statistic was calculated as $\chi^2 = \Sigma(O-E)^2/E$, where O represents observed frequencies and E represents expected frequencies under the null hypothesis of independence.

Effect sizes were calculated using Cramer's V to interpret the strength of associations. Statistical significance was set at $p < .05$, with adjustment for multiple comparisons where appropriate.

Assumptions for chi-square analysis were assessed and met. Expected frequencies exceeded five in all cells, satisfying the requirement for reliable chi-square calculation (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011).

3.6 Qualitative Data Analysis

The qualitative data underwent the reflexive thematic analysis in line with the six stages of the approach outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006, 2013). This approach provides a methodological but flexible framework of identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns in qualitative data.

Phase 1: Familiarizing with the data. Repeated reading of the interview transcripts, listening to audio recordings, and preliminary notes on interesting aspects of the data were done by the research team. The immersion process ensured that they were familiar with the dataset before formal coding began.

Phase 2: The creation of first codes. The coding was done line-by-line using NVivo qualitative data analysis software. Semantic (explicit meanings) and latent content (underlying assumptions and implicit meanings) were captured using codes. The coding was repeated and as the analysis went on, codes were narrowed and explained.

Phase 3: Searching for themes. Analysis of codes was conducted to identify a broader meaning pattern. Related codes were placed in the same group, and each group received a temporary theme name. The visual mapping techniques were used to investigate the relationships among potential themes.

Phase 4: Reviewing themes. Coded extracts and the whole dataset were compared to themes to facilitate coherence and uniqueness. This action involved

refining, dividing, integrating, and removing themes where needed. The thematic map was designed to demonstrate the connections between themes.

Phase 5: Themes definition and naming. The themes were formulated by formulating clear definitions that described their nature and scope. Theme names have been developed to describe complex ideas in a brief and suggestive manner.

Phase 6: Producing the report. An analysis was then written up, and the interesting extracts were selected to represent each theme. The research questions and the literature were related to the themes.

- **Researcher Positionality and Reflexivity**

In accordance with the principles of reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2013, 2022), we acknowledge that our positionalities as researchers inevitably shaped the data collection, analysis, and interpretation. The research team comprised investigators with background in English language education and inclusive pedagogy (with collective teaching experience in UAE private schools) and expertise in educational psychology. Also, the team has a substantial experience in teaching English language and inclusive instruction (with the total teaching experience in UAE-based private schools) We have been engaged in a continuous reflexive dialogue as a part of the analysis process, and we have kept personal reflexive journals, which document our assumptions, reactions and interpretive choices.

3.7 Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Data

It was integrated at the interpretive level where the quantitative and qualitative outcomes were compared to arrive at the general picture of the inclusive practice in the Dubai English classrooms. A combination display table was developed to arrange quantitative outcomes and qualitative themes and find out convergence, divergence, and complementary issues between data sets.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

All the participants gave informed consent after receiving information on purpose of the study, procedures, risks and benefits of the study. The anonymity was ensured by the pseudonyms and removal of any identifying data in all data files. The subjects were informed that they can withdraw without any penalty.

4. Results

4.1 Quantitative Results

4.1.1 Descriptive Statistics for Inclusive Practices

The descriptive statistics of three subscales of Inclusive Teaching in English Classrooms survey is given in Table 1 (Fig.2). The teachers reported moderate to high scores for the implementation of inclusive practices, and the average scores of all the subscales were above the midpoint of the scale.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Inclusive Practice Subscales

Subscale	N	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Linguistic Support Practices	1,700	3.89	0.61	1.92	5.00
Emotional Wellbeing Facilitation	1,700	4.14	0.57	2.15	5.00
Inclusive Classroom Management	1,700	3.96	0.58	2.05	5.00

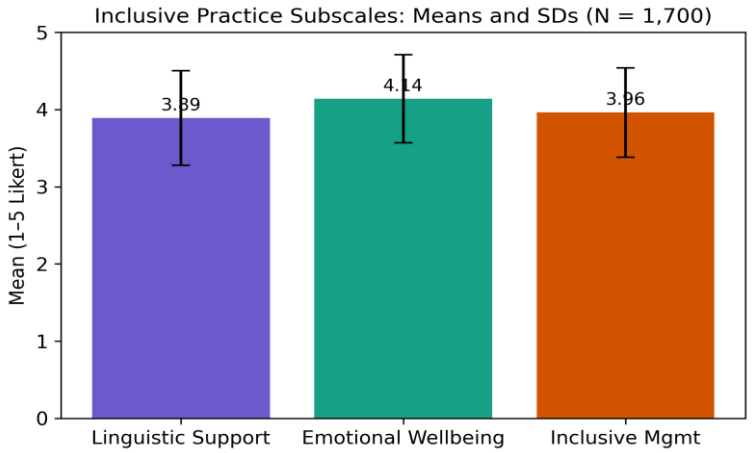

Fig.2. Descriptive statistics of three subscales of Inclusive Teaching in English Classrooms survey

4.1.2 Chi-Square Analyses of Teacher Characteristics and Inclusive Practices

Chi-square tests of independence were conducted to examine relationships between teacher characteristics and inclusive practice implementation. For these analyses, inclusive practice scores were categorized into low (bottom tertile), medium (middle tertile), and high (top tertile) implementation levels.

- **Teacher Preparation and Inclusive Practice Implementation**

A significant association was found between teacher preparation (certification type) and overall inclusive practice implementation ($\chi^2 = 24.36$, df = 8, $p < .01$, Cramer's V = .12). Teachers(Table 2; Fig 2) holding bilingual or ESL certifications were overrepresented in the high implementation category, while teachers with standard English certification only were overrepresented in the low implementation category. Teachers holding special education certifications showed intermediate patterns.

Table 2: Cross-Tabulation of Certification Type and Inclusive Practice Implementation

Certification Type	Low Implementation	Medium Implementation	High Implementation	Total
English Only	245 (23.2%)	412 (39.1%)	397 (37.7%)	1,054
Bilingual/ESL	42 (13.7%)	112 (36.6%)	152 (49.7%)	306
Special Education	38 (17.8%)	84 (39.3%)	92 (43.0%)	214
Multiple Certifications	15 (11.9%)	48 (38.1%)	63 (50.0%)	126
Total	340 (20.0%)	656 (38.6%)	704 (41.4%)	1,700

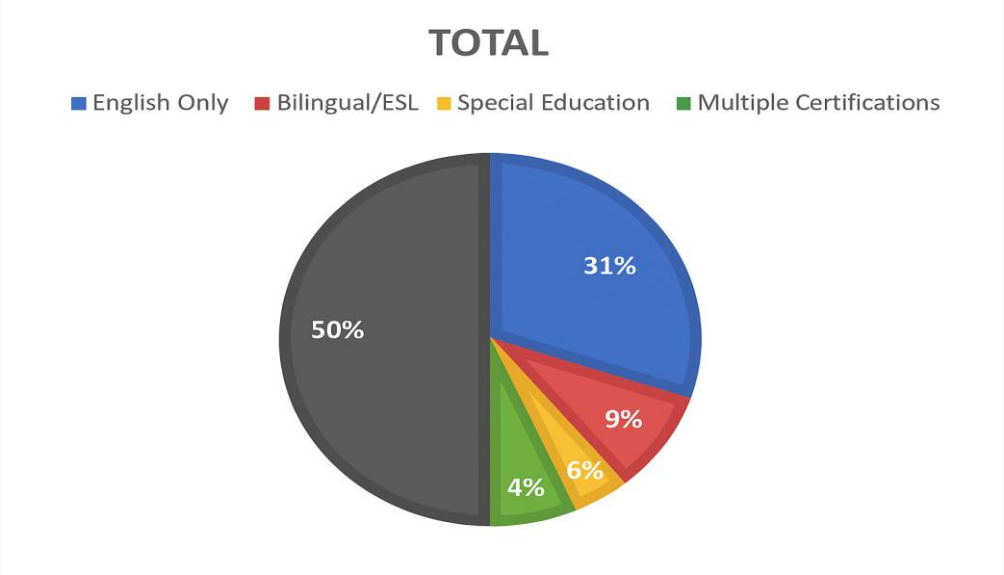

Fig.3. Total of Cross-Tabulation of Certification Type and Inclusive Practice Implementation

- **Professional Development Participation and Inclusive Practice Implementation**

A significant association was found between participation in inclusive education professional development and inclusive practice implementation ($\chi^2 = 31.82$, df = 6, $p < .001$, Cramer's V = .14). Teachers who had participated in 20 or more hours of relevant professional development in the past three years were substantially more likely to be in the high implementation category compared to teachers with less professional development.

Table 3: Cross Tabulation of Professional Development Hours and Inclusive Practice Implementation

PD Hours	Low Implementation	Medium Implementation	High Implementation	Total
0-5 hours	142 (31.6%)	168 (37.3%)	140 (31.1%)	450
6-10 hours	98 (20.9%)	184 (39.2%)	187 (39.9%)	469
11-19 hours	62 (16.5%)	152 (40.5%)	161 (43.0%)	375
20+ hours	38 (9.4%)	152 (37.5%)	216 (53.1%)	406

Total	340 (20.0%)	656 (38.6%)	704 (41.4%)	1,700

The tendency of the results shows a specific correlation, and the more the time spent on professional development, the more the implementation is likely to be high. The teachers with 20 or more hours of professional development were in the high implementation category (53.1), compared to 31.1 of the teachers with 0-5 hours.

- **School Curriculum Type and Inclusive Practice Implementation**

A significant association was found between school curriculum type (British, American, IB, other) and inclusive practice implementation ($\chi^2 = 16.84$, df = 6, $p < .01$, Cramer's V = .08). Teachers in IB curriculum schools were most likely to be in the high implementation category (48.2%), followed by British curriculum schools (41.5%), American curriculum schools (38.7%), and other curricula (35.1%).

Table 4: Cross Tabulation of School Curriculum and Inclusive Practice Implementation

Curriculum Type	Low Implementation	Medium Implementation	High Implementation	Total
British	168 (18.0%)	378 (40.5%)	388 (41.5%)	934
American	82 (24.1%)	126 (37.1%)	132 (38.8%)	340
IB	44 (17.3%)	88 (34.5%)	123 (48.2%)	255
Other	46 (27.1%)	64 (37.6%)	61 (35.3%)	171
Total	340 (20.0%)	656 (38.6%)	704 (41.4%)	1,700

The teachers in the American and other curriculum schools were the most represented in the low implementation category and the IB teachers in the high implementation category. This may be a sign of various priorities towards the inclusive education in the context of curriculum and the requirements of professional development.

Teaching Experience and Inclusive Practice Implementation

No significant association was found between years of teaching experience and inclusive practice implementation ($\chi^2 = 8.42$, df = 6, $p = .21$). Novice teachers (0-5 years), mid-career teachers (6-15 years), and veteran teachers (16+ years) showed similar distributions across implementation categories. This finding suggests that experience alone does not guarantee inclusive practice development; rather, targeted preparation and professional development appear more influential, consistent with research emphasizing the essential role of teacher preparation in inclusive education (Alasuutari, Savolainen, & Engelbrecht, 2024).

4.2 Qualitative Results: Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis of an interview transcript of 45 English teachers in Dubai resulted in the generation of nine themes which included the experiences, practices and perceptions of the participants on how to achieve inclusive classrooms that support the linguistic development and emotional wellbeing of the participants. The examples of quotations are discussed to address the following themes.

Theme 1: Differentiated Instruction Practices

In their inclusive practice, teachers always discussed differentiation as the key. This theme entails a process of changing content, processes, products and learning environments to suit various student needs, interests and levels of readiness. The participants pointed out that linguistic diversity in the English classroom ought to be accorded special attention as other forms of student difference are considered.

One of the teachers at a British curriculum school who has worked long enough explained it in the following way: Differentiation is not a thing that I do every now and then, it is how I plan everything. My Dubai classroom may be composed of ten students speaking ten languages. I keep on asking myself, how do I provide this to my English learners, students with special needs learners, and my high-achieving students? That may be having more than one text on the same topic at various levels of reading or providing the students with choices on how to demonstrate their understanding.

The other teacher described the ways she has applied technology to make the process of differentiation easier: I have online platforms where I can provide different materials to different students based on their requirements. Students might be using vocabulary aids, others using extended reading, others using different writing prompts. It can be handled with the aid of the technology, but the thing is that I should be aware of my students making such decisions.

Theme 2: Culturally Responsive Teaching

The work of teachers trying to recognize, value and integrate the cultural backgrounds, experiences and

identities of students into English teaching is covered by this theme. The respondents described culturally responsive teaching as a philosophy and a collection of practical interventions that can be implemented to attain the inclusive classrooms in the Dubai multicultural setting.

One of the teachers in the American curriculum stated: My students are spread globally, India, Pakistan, Egypt, Philippines, UK, US, UAE nationals. The English curriculum should be able to reflect that diversity. I have tried to make the books we read more diverse, in order raise of voices representing other cultures, to choose the literature that reflects the students. Students will respond differently when they observe themselves on what we read.

Besides the choice of texts, teachers elaborated on culturally responsive practices during discussion, instruction on writing and interaction with the classroom. One of the teachers of a British curriculum explained it in the following way: I believe that culture affects the manner of communication. My other students are of a different cultural background in which group storytelling is more valued than individual analysis. I structure conversations in a manner that I do not disrespect those other forms of engaging with text.

Educators emphasized that culturally responsive teaching implies the ongoing learning of information regarding the culture and communities of the students. One of the Indian curriculaschoolteachers commented: I have students who are a representative of the whole subcontinent and even beyond. I have had to play the role of researching the lives of my students, their families, their communities. You cannot be culturally responsive without even knowing what cultures you are trying to respond to. This approach aligns with the research on inclusive language as a pedagogical approach that may help students identify themselves (Ackah-Jnr, Appiah, &Kwao, 2020).

Theme 3: Social-Emotional Learning Integration

This theme is the attempts of the teachers to intentionally integrate social-emotional learning into English language arts teaching. The participants also discussed their intention to go beyond single SEL programs to incorporate emotional wellbeing supports into their curriculum and practice and perceived the benefit of positive psychology in language learning (Miao et al., 2025).

One of the IB teachers, who teaches in the middle of the career, explained it as follows: Social-emotional learning is not something we do in English, it is the essence of it. When we read a piece of literature, we read the emotions, the impulses, the thought associations of the characters. That is where one can speak about personal emotional life of students. Writing provides the students with an outlet for expressing and processing their emotions. It is a significant emotional piece in Dubai where there are many students who are not home.

Educators described specific ways of integrating SEL like literature as the tool of discussing emotions, reflection and journaling, group work as the tool of learning how to communicate and cooperate, and talking about such aspects directly as empathy, perspective-taking, and responsible decision-making.

A long-term teacher of the British curriculum commented: The books we read give us a way of talking about problematic things without referring to them directly. One can discuss the clash of a personality with anxiety, grief, or belonging, and it will enable students to reflect on their experiences. It is not as intimidating as direct questioning and equally important to their emotional development.

Theme 4: Collaborative Learning Structures

This theme includes the use of collaborative learning by teachers to ensure language development and emotional health. The respondents have cited peer interaction as a powerful context to language development, social interaction and academic interaction.

One British curriculum schoolteacher remarked: My students learn to learn off each other in ways they will never learn of me. When they are collaborating, they are dealing with language in a real sense, they are negotiating meaning, telling each other things. My English learners value the interaction. And through cooperating with other students, we build relationships and feel that we are part of a group in our heterogeneous Dubai classroom.

The teachers indicated various collaborative models including cooperative learning group, peer tutoring, literature circle, writing workshop, and project based learning teams. One of the teachers of American curriculum commented: I do groupings intentionally, I mix students according to language level, to abilities, and backgrounds, according to nationalities. And I educate them on how to work together. Teamwork is not an accidental event; it must be learned and supported.

Teamwork emotional benefits were also emphasized. One IB teacher wrote: When a student feels isolated or out of place, be it because of language, disability or cultural difference, it can be a life changing moment when he or she is invited to join a group of collaborators. They develop relationships, feel valued by their contribution and feel belonging. Their safety at the time is emotional and thus enables them to take risks in their academics.

Theme 5: Individual Relationship Building

This theme is characterized by intentional efforts of the teachers in establishing a good relationship with the individual students. The participants described relationship-building as the foundation of the

inclusive practice, which contributes to the trust and connection that results in not only the linguistic development but also the emotional wellbeing. This fact can be linked to the research indicating the essential contribution of teachers to the creation of inclusive learning environments (Alasuutari, Savolainen, & Engelbrecht, 2024).

One of the teachers who had undergone the IB training stated: I cannot teach that which I am not aware of. I cannot resolve their academic problems without knowing who they are, what interests them, what they have difficulties with, what they can do well, and what their out-of-school life is like. That is being familiar with their home countries, their languages, their acculturation to the UAE life in Dubai. That is to greet them at the door, visit them individually, be interested in their lives.

Teachers described several relationship-building techniques: learning names and correct pronunciation of students in a few minutes; having a brief one-on-one conversation; attending as much as possible extra-curricular activities of students; remembering and following up on things students have said to them; making themselves available and approachable.

One of the instructors in a British curriculum commented: in a diverse school, relationships are all. Students will never trust you in your academic work before they know that you care about them as human beings. I also make sure that I communicate with all students in a day- even by just visiting them at the start of the lesson. Those trifles add up.

Teachers noticed that relationship-building is particularly important to students who may have been marginalized or traumatized. An American curriculum teacher explained: not all my students have good reasons to trust adults, they have studied in schools where they were not properly taken care of, or they are just going through the hardships of being in a new country. Establishing relationship with them is a process of time and frequency. I must show up every day, be reliable, loving, and earn such confidence over a period.

Theme 6: Classroom Community Cultivation

It is a theme that personifies the efforts of teachers to create a classroom environment where all students feel appreciated, respected and related to one another. Even though the relationships between individuals were important, the participants were also concerned with the group component of inclusive classrooms.

My classroom should be a community - a place where the students are familiar with each other, where they support each other and where they take responsibility towards each other. That sense of community is especially applicable to a city like Dubai where such many families are mobile. It does not simply come naturally. I need to develop methods of ensuring students interact intentionally, to get to know each other, to come up with shared norms and expectations.

Teachers described community cultivation strategies: the formation of classroom norms in collaboration; facilitating community-building; restorative conflict resolution strategies; collective performance and inclusive language and behavior modeling. This plan suggests the worth of the inclusive language as a motivational tool (Ackah-Jnr, Appiah, &Kwao, 2020).

One of the IB teachers said: We spend the first part of the year discussing what kind of a classroom we would like to create. Students establish rules of respect, involvement, and support. They will be invested in maintaining the community when they are invested in it. We are not afraid of talking about our diversity as our strength, but not as a challenge.

Some of the participants emphasized the connectedness between the community and emotional wellbeing. One schoolteacher of Indian curriculum noted: When the students feel that they are part of something, they are much more willing to take risks, they are more resilient when they are not doing well, they are more willing to seek help when they require it. This sense of belonging is protective of the emotional well-being, especially to students who are equally struggling to establish themselves in a new country.

Theme 7: Adaptive Assessment Strategies

In this theme, there are assessment techniques employed by teachers that would satisfy the needs of different students without undermining the academic rigor. The participants cited the way they had transcended the traditional testing to the new forms of testing which allowed students to demonstrate learning in different ways.

One of my teachers that teaches American curriculum in the middle of her career told me about it: A single test on a single day cannot tell me what all my students know and can do. I have several assessment methods that I use, among them observations, conversations, products, performances etc., to get a more comprehensive picture. And I give choices in how the students demonstrate their learning. This is required to be flexible to my English learners and students with other learning needs.

Some of the adaptive practices explained by teachers include providing students with more time or less work; oral tests in place of written tests; portfolios to demonstrate progress over time; use of their native language where it is appropriate to do so; and accommodations identified in individualized education plans.

A long-serving British curriculum teacher has commented: Assessment should be a tool of learning and encouragement, not a disqualification. Why not when a student can prove to me that he or she has understood the work with the help of a presentation,

but not an essay? The learning is what is important and not the format.

The conflicting nature between their accommodative strategies and curriculum specifications was reported by teachers. One IB teacher remarked: "I think that I believe in different forms of assessment, but we have external examination and curriculum requirements as well. I should train students to respect them in their different ways of conveying knowledge. It's a constant balancing act."

Theme 8: Professional Development Engagement

This theme explains the experiences of teachers in terms of professional development in relation to inclusive practice, formal and informal learning opportunities and informal colleague. The access and involvement of professional learning was much different, which is consistent with the findings of the research on disparity in the perceived competence of teachers in inclusive education (Loyd et al., 2024).

A teacher with the British curriculum shared her experience of professional development that was useful:" The best professional development I have ever had was a series of workshops on supporting students with different learning needs in general classrooms. It was helpful, equipped me with the strategies that I could use immediately, and offered me the follow-up coaching. That changed how I teach."

Teachers emphasized professional learning. According to one American curriculum teacher, I have some of my most successful learning experiences with informal collaboration with colleagues. We also hold weekly meetings where we discuss the needs of students, brainstorm on solutions and solve problem problems. Such a sustained conversation is superior to a workshop. We learn all through each other, bearing in mind that there is a great diversity of students in Dubai. (Alasuutari, Savolainen, and Engelbrecht, 2024).

Theme 9: Systemic Barrier Navigation

This is the final theme that narrates the experiences of teachers who are forced to work around the barriers to inclusive practice at school and classroom levels. The respondents indicated the challenges in terms of resources, policies, and institutional arrangements that restrict their ability to build inclusive classrooms.

One of the teachers with British curriculum explained it in the following way: The biggest obstacle is the size of the classes. My classes have 30-35 students, and the diversity is overwhelming: there are multiple languages, multiple nationalities, and students with different learning needs. I would like to differentiate, I would like to build relations, I would like to support each student individually. But it has its own limit to the days of the day.

Shortage of resources was a widespread factor. The comment of one of the American curriculum teachers was: There is lack of sufficient reading materials of various levels. We are not technologically advanced enough. We lack adequate support staff. I am doing my best, however, I do not have what I should do to meet the needs of my students completely.

Despite these challenges, many teachers described new methods of going around the challenges. One of the experienced teachers remarked: I have learned how to work in the system and against it. I advocate my students, I discuss with other teachers to share resources, I find ways of doing what must be done even when things are less than optimal. It is tiresome sometimes; it is the job requirement. This advantage reflects the need of teachers to ensure that every student learns (Alasuutari, Savolainen, & Engelbrecht, 2024).

4.3 Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

The quantitative and qualitative findings were combined through a side-by-side comparison and development of a joint display table (see Table 5), which will enable determining the convergence, divergence, and complementarity of datasets (Fetters, Curry, and Creswell, 2013). With the help of such an analysis, it is possible to understand how qualitative knowledge can be applicable to explain quantitative tendencies and how quantitative findings can be applicable to contextualize qualitative topics.

Table 5: Joint Display Integrating Quantitative Findings and Qualitative Themes

Quantitative Finding	Key Statistic	Convergent Qualitative Theme(s)	Illustrative Qualitative Insight	Meta-Inference
Emotional Wellbeing Facilitation highest mean score (M = 4.14)	Highest-rated subscale	Theme 5: Individual Relationship Building; Theme 6: Classroom Community Cultivation	"Students need to know you care about them as people before they'll trust you academically."	Teachers prioritize relational work as foundational to all learning, recognizing emotional safety as prerequisite for academic engagement in

				Dubai's transient context.
Linguistic Support Practices lowest mean, greatest variability (M = 3.89, SD = 0.61)	Lowest mean; widest variability	Theme 8: Professional Development Engagement; Theme 9: Systemic Barrier Navigation	"We don't have enough materials at different reading levels... I'm doing my best, but I don't have what I need."	Inconsistent linguistic support reflects systemic constraints (resources, training) rather than teacher resistance; variability signals inequitable distribution of supports across schools.
Significant association: certification type and implementation (p < .01, V = .12)	$\chi^2 = 24.36$, df = 8, $p < .01$	Theme1: Differentiated Instruction Practices; Theme8: Professional Development Engagement	"The most impactful training I've had was on supporting diverse learners... practical strategies I could use immediately."	Specialized preparation (ESL/bilingual certification) provides teachers with concrete strategies and confidence for addressing linguistic diversity.
Significant association: PD hours and implementation (p < .001, V = .14)	$\chi^2 = 31.82$, df = 6, $p < .001$	Theme8: Professional Development Engagement	"Some of my best learning happens in informal collaboration... That ongoing conversation is more valuable than any one-time workshop."	Sustained, collaborative professional learning (not one-off workshops) builds capacity for inclusive practice; dosage matters.
No significant association: experience and implementation (p = .21)	$\chi^2 = 8.42$, df = 6, $p = .21$	Theme 8: Professional Development Engagement; Theme 9: Systemic Barrier Navigation	"I've learned to work within the system while also pushing against it."	Experience alone does not guarantee inclusive practice; targeted learning and systemic support are more influential than years in classroom.
Significant association: curriculum type and implementation (p < .01, V = .08)	$\chi^2 = 16.84$, df = 6, $p < .01$	Theme 2: Culturally Responsive Teaching; Theme 9: Systemic Barrier Navigation	IB teachers described curriculum frameworks that explicitly value international-mindedness; other curricula teachers noted less systematic attention.	Curriculum frameworks shape possibilities for inclusive practice by signaling priorities and structuring professional expectations.

5. Discussion

5.1 Interpretation of Findings

The mixed-methods research study focused on the ways Dubai English teachers build inclusive classrooms which enable students to learn languages while developing their emotional health. The results show that teachers give priority to emotional wellbeing through their efforts to build relationships and create a classroom environment that fosters community. Students need emotional safety because it serves as the essential requirement for their learning process when they encounter a new cultural and linguistic environment.

The current linguistic support practices show inconsistent implementation because there exists a deficit of training programs and available resources and institutional limitations. Systematic improvement requires teacher preparation programs to undergo fundamental changes while professional development initiatives need to gain better resources.

The study shows that specialized training programs together with ongoing professional development activities serve as essential factors which boost inclusive teaching practices while teaching experience proves less effective. The implementation of different curricula develops distinct educational practices between IB programs which show more effective inclusive teaching methods.

The researchers discovered nine essential themes through qualitative analysis which included differentiated instruction and culturally responsive teaching and social-emotional learning and adaptive assessment to create a full system that explains inclusive teaching methods in English classrooms throughout Dubai. The results create an extension of existing inclusive education theories which applies specifically to the particular context of this study.

5.1.1 Teacher Agency Within Structural Constraints

The main finding shows how teacher decision-making interacts with the restrictions established by educational systems. Teachers develop new teaching methods because they need to overcome obstacles which include their insufficient resources and the unchanging nature of their operational guidelines. The system shows moderate to high inclusion levels yet its implementation depends on institutional backing which needs to address problems with linguistic support that occur during individual attempts to solve these issues. Teachers who participate in ongoing professional development programs show better implementation results because their work requires both professional development and educational system support to succeed with their teaching methods.

5.2 Theoretical Implications

The research contributes to inclusive education theory development through four major theoretical advancements. First, the research establishes a complete inclusion framework which combines cognitive linguistic and emotional affective elements with positive psychological approaches. Second, it highlights teacher agency within constrained systems, showing how educators navigate institutional and resource limitations to sustain inclusive practices. Third, the research shows that inclusion practices need to be studied within educational contexts and cultural environments which exist in the United Arab Emirates.

5.3 Practical Implications

The research results demonstrate that teachers who work in ESL/bilingual and special education classrooms require specific training programs to handle the diverse needs of students in Dubai classrooms. The implementation process needs professional development that takes place through ongoing practice instead of using short-term workshop sessions. Schools need to improve their resources and planning time and access to specialists to eliminate structural barriers. The educational system needs more investment in teacher support systems together with inclusive frameworks while accountability systems should undergo reforms that focus on developing students comprehensively. The themes which were found by teachers work as a guide to help them evaluate themselves and develop their professional skills for inclusive teaching.

5.4 Limitations

The research reveals multiple constraints which restrict its findings. The data collection method relies on participant self-reporting which creates potential biases in the results. The study's design prevents researchers from establishing cause-and-effect relationships. The sample does not accurately represent all teachers in Dubai because participants chose their involvement and their selection process resulted in curriculum biases. The study lacks student input which prevents researchers from understanding real classroom practices. The research framework uses a broad definition of inclusion which fails to address the unique requirements of various student populations. The study adopts a general view of inclusion which fails to address the specific needs of different student groups.

6. Conclusion

The mixed-methods study investigated how English teachers in Dubai create inclusive classrooms which enable students to learn both languages and develop their emotional health. The study results which used survey data from 1,700 teachers and conducted interviews with 45 educators showed that teachers played a crucial role in promoting inclusion through

their ability to build relationships and provide emotional assistance to students which shows the increasing importance of positive psychology in language learning. The implementation of linguistic support practices showed multiple inconsistencies because training programs failed to provide adequate materials needed to execute their duties while institutional limits restricted their operations. The study found that effective inclusive practices required both teacher preparation and professional development activities as essential components. The qualitative assessment of the study found nine main themes which included differentiated instruction and culturally responsive teaching and social-emotional learning and collaborative structures and adaptive assessment.

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