

# LINGUA MINDS

International Language Research Symposium

## Fostering Inclusion Through English Language Education: A Diagnostic Case Study on Neurodivergent Learners in a Mexican Bilingual School

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### BIOGRAPHY:

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Vanessa Cárdenas holds a PhD in Education from Universidad Iberoamericana, Mexico City, and Master's degree in Pedagogy from the University of Colima. She is a professor and researcher at the Faculty of Foreign Languages at the University of Colima and a Candidate in the National System of Researchers (SNII). With more than fifteen years of experience in teacher education, her work focuses on research on practice, pedagogical reflection, and educational innovation in language teaching.

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Julieta Quetzalli Marín Arroyo, 25 years old. Bachelor's degree in Foreign Language Teaching and a student in the Master's Program in Professionalization of Foreign Language Teaching. She is passionate about education, communication, and pedagogical innovation.

### ABSTRACT

This study presents the diagnostic phase of an educational intervention in English language teaching (ELT) at a bilingual primary school in Colima, Mexico. Using a qualitative case study design, data were collected through interviews with English teachers, school staff, and neurodivergent students to examine inclusive practices in English classrooms. The findings reveal a strong institutional commitment to inclusion but also highlight limitations in teacher training, adapted materials, and early diagnostic protocols. Despite these challenges, emerging multimodal and communicative practices point to the potential of English language education as a space for inclusive pedagogy. The study is grounded in universal design for learning, the social model of disability, and the neurodiversity paradigm.

### KEYWORDS:

inclusive language pedagogy, neurodiversity, English language teaching, teacher training, bilingual education

## SUMMARY:

This proposal presents the diagnostic phase of an educational intervention developed within the field of English Language Teaching (ELT) at a bilingual primary school in Colima, Mexico. Framed within a master's program focused on the professionalization of foreign language teaching, the study explores how inclusive pedagogical practices are currently understood and enacted in English classrooms serving neurodivergent learners. The main aim is to identify challenges, institutional conditions, and pedagogical opportunities that inform the design of a subsequent inclusive intervention.

The study adopts a qualitative case study approach, enabling an in-depth examination of a specific educational context. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with English teachers, the school psychologist, the language area coordinator, and neurodivergent students. This multi-actor perspective offers a comprehensive view of how inclusion is conceptualized, implemented, and experienced within the English program.

Findings indicate that the institution demonstrates an explicit commitment to diversity and inclusion through mechanisms such as individualized agreements (Hoja de Acuerdos) and ongoing psychological monitoring. However, these measures are not consistently articulated with classroom practices in English language instruction. Teachers report limited formal training in inclusive pedagogy, a lack of adapted instructional materials, and insufficient institutional guidance to address learner variability in ELT contexts. Furthermore, the absence of early diagnostic protocols and the presence of classroom disruptions limit the meaningful participation of neurodivergent students.

Despite these challenges, the diagnostic phase also reveals significant pedagogical potential within the English area. Teachers and the language coordinator describe emerging practices aligned with inclusive principles, including the use of multimodal resources, movement-based activities, visual supports, and communicative tasks designed to sustain engagement and foster social interaction. These practices suggest that English language classrooms can function as strategic spaces for experimenting with inclusive methodologies.

Grounded in the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), the Social Model of Disability, and the Neurodiversity Paradigm, this proposal positions English language education not only as a linguistic objective but also as a means to promote equity, participation, and neurodiversity-affirming learning environments. The diagnostic findings provide a solid foundation for designing a context-responsive intervention aimed at strengthening inclusive practices in ELT.

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