

UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING (UDL): ADAPTING ENGLISH INSTRUCTION FOR STUDENTS WITH DYSLEXIA IN ISLAMIC PRIVATE SCHOOL

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ABSTRAK

Dalam upaya mencapai masa depan pendidikan yang berkelanjutan, memastikan akses yang setara terhadap literasi bahasa bagi pembelajar neurodivergen adalah suatu keharusan yang kritis. Meskipun ada dorongan global untuk transformasi digital dan inklusif, masih ada kesenjangan signifikan di sekolah swasta Islam, di mana pengajaran bahasa Inggris sering bergantung pada metode standar yang berat teks yang secara tidak sengaja meminggirkan siswa dengan disleksia. Studi ini bertujuan untuk menjembatani kesenjangan ini dengan mengeksplorasi integrasi kerangka Universal Design for Learning (UDL) dalam konteks pendidikan Islam. Menggunakan metode studi literatur, penelitian ini mensintesis teori pedagogis kontemporer, standar inklusi internasional, dan temuan empiris sebelumnya terkait pengajaran bahasa Inggris yang ramah disleksia. Analisis ini berfokus pada bagaimana prinsip-prinsip inti UDL tentang berbagai cara representasi, keterlibatan, dan ekspresi dapat disesuaikan dengan nilai-nilai budaya dan agama sekolah swasta Islam. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa intervensi berbasis UDL, didukung oleh teknologi digital asistif, secara signifikan mengurangi hambatan linguistik bagi siswa disleksia sambil mendorong kelas yang lebih inklusif untuk semua. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa kurikulum yang berpusat pada UDL sangat penting untuk keberlanjutan jangka panjang pendidikan bahasa yang inklusif di lembaga berbasis agama, yang menyelaraskan inovasi pedagogis modern dengan prinsip-prinsip keadilan sosial Islam.

Kata kunci : Desain Universal untuk Pembelajaran, Disleksia, Pengajaran Bahasa Inggris, Sekolah Swasta Islam, Studi Literatur

ABSTRACT

In the pursuit of a sustainable educational future, ensuring equitable access to language literacy for neurodivergent learners is a critical imperative. Despite the global push for digital and inclusive transformation, a significant gap remains in Islamic private schools, where English language instruction often relies on standardized, text-heavy methods that inadvertently marginalize students with dyslexia. This study aims to bridge this gap by exploring the integration of the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework within Islamic educational contexts. Employing a literature study method, this research synthesizes contemporary pedagogical theories, international

inclusion standards, and previous empirical findings related to dyslexic-friendly English instruction. The analysis focuses on how UDL's core principles of multiple means of representation, engagement, and expression can be adapted to suit the cultural and religious values of Islamic private schools. The findings indicate that UDL-based interventions, supported by assistive digital technologies, significantly reduce linguistic barriers for dyslexic students while fostering a more inclusive classroom for all. This study concludes that a UDL-centered curriculum is essential for the long-term sustainability of inclusive language education in faith-based institutions, aligning modern pedagogical innovation with the Islamic principles of social equity.

Keywords: *Universal Design for Learning, Dyslexia, English Instruction, Islamic Private Schools, Literature Study*

INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education has become an essential aspect of modern teaching, particularly in ensuring that all learners can participate meaningfully in the learning process. An inclusive learning environment is defined as a setting in which all students feel welcome, valued, and supported, while equity in learning ensures that students not only have access to resources but also achieve fair learning outcomes. This means that teaching practices must go beyond equal access and focus on meaningful engagement and success for every learner. As stated by Li and Singh (2022), inclusive learning environments can significantly improve student learning and motivational beliefs, highlighting the importance of designing instruction that accommodates diverse needs.

One group of learners who require special attention in inclusive classrooms is students with dyslexia. Dyslexia is a complex learning difficulty with various definitions, generally related to challenges in reading, spelling, and writing. The term itself originates from Greek, where *dys* means difficulty and *lexis* refers to words, indicating difficulty with word processing (Schneider & Crombie, 2003). Although this definition provides a general understanding, dyslexia manifests differently in each individual, making it necessary for educators to adopt flexible and responsive teaching strategies. Therefore, understanding dyslexia from general to more specific perspectives is important in designing appropriate instructional support.

To address diverse learning needs, Universal Design for Learning (UDL) has been widely recognized as an effective framework. UDL aims to shift teaching from a teacher-centered approach to a learner-centered one by providing multiple means of content representation, student expression, and engagement (Al-Azawei et al., 2016). This approach allows teachers to design flexible instruction that can accommodate different learning styles and abilities. By applying UDL, educators can reduce learning barriers and create more accessible English learning experiences, especially for students with learning difficulties such as dyslexia.

The concept of UDL originates from the broader idea of Universal Design (UD), which was first introduced by Ron Mace in architecture to create environments accessible to all individuals, including those with special needs. Over time, this concept was adapted into education and became known as UDL, focusing on inclusive and flexible learning environments (Pratama et al., 2024). In this context, UDL is not only about using technology but also about designing pedagogy that supports diverse learners. Its principles emphasize that students can understand and express knowledge in different ways, and therefore, teaching methods and assessments should be varied and adaptable.

UDL is based on three main principles: providing multiple means of engagement, representation, and expression. These principles guide teachers to involve students in different ways, present information through various formats, and allow students to demonstrate their understanding using different methods (Capp, 2017; Meyer in Rosada et al., 2018). Additionally, assessment plays a crucial role in UDL, as it should be flexible and aligned with diverse learning approaches. According to Pratama et al. (2024), UDL-based assessment allows teachers to adjust evaluation methods according to students' needs, which is also in line with the concept of differentiated learning that emphasizes continuous evaluation.

In the context of Islamic education, inclusive teaching is also highly relevant. Inclusive Islamic Religious Education aims to ensure that all students, including those with special needs, can access and understand religious teachings according to their abilities and conditions (Magfud et al., 2023). This perspective reinforces the idea that inclusion is not only a pedagogical issue but also a value-

based approach that supports fairness and respect for individual differences. However, the application of inclusive practices, particularly in English language teaching within Islamic private schools, still requires further exploration.

Based on the discussion above, this study seeks to answer the following research questions: (1) how can UDL be implemented in English instruction for students with dyslexia, (2) what challenges may arise in its implementation, and (3) how does UDL support inclusive learning in this context. These questions are important to understand how theory can be applied in real educational settings and to identify gaps in current practices.

This study uses a literature review approach to explore the implementation of UDL in English instruction for students with dyslexia. The data are collected from relevant academic sources such as journal articles, books, and scholarly publications related to inclusive education, dyslexia, and UDL. These sources are selected based on their relevance and credibility. The data are then analyzed using thematic analysis to identify key patterns, concepts, and findings. Through this method, the study aims to provide a clear and comprehensive understanding of how UDL can be effectively applied to support students with dyslexia in English learning.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative literature study design to investigate the integration of the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework within the specific context of English instruction in Islamic private schools. By utilizing a systematic-interpretive approach, the research focuses on synthesizing secondary data to bridge the gap between standardized pedagogical theories and the inclusive needs of dyslexic learners. The data sources comprise reputable academic publications from databases such as Scopus, ERIC, and Google Scholar, Emerald, Science Direct, alongside international inclusion standards and empirical studies centered on English Language Teaching (ELT) and assistive technologies.

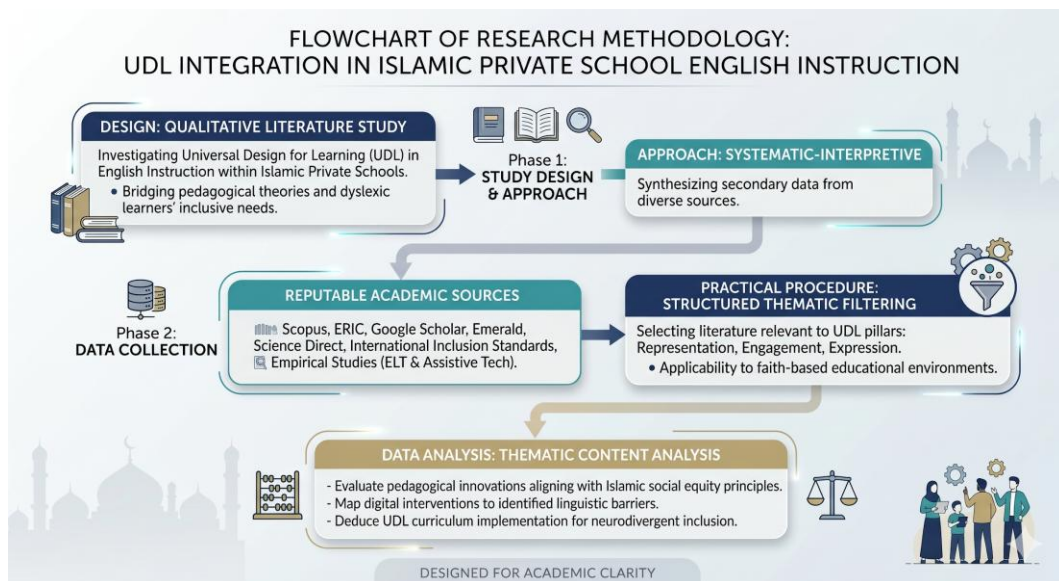


Figure 1. Flowchart of Research Methodology

The practical procedure for data collection involved a structured thematic filtering process, where literature was selected based on its relevance to UDL pillars representation, engagement, and expression and its applicability to faith based educational environments. For the data analysis, a thematic content analysis was performed to evaluate how contemporary pedagogical innovations align with Islamic principles of social equity. This process involved mapping specific digital interventions against identified linguistic barriers and deducing how a UDL centered curriculum can be sustainably implemented to foster an inclusive environment for neurodivergent students. There is a significant gap in how UDL frameworks are integrated specifically for English language instruction within Islamic private schools.

DISCUSSION

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is an educational framework and approach that aims to provide all students with equal opportunities to learn by designing curriculum and instruction that are flexible and accessible to a wide range of learners, including those with diverse abilities, backgrounds, and learning styles (Priyadharsini et al., 2024). This method gives every student the same opportunity to pursue education and also their dreams. The students come to school, improve

knowledge, and also participate in activities like other students at school. This design uses three principles and several approaches. The principles used in this study are portrayal, expressing themselves, and inspiration (Praveen et al., 2024). Therefore several approaches such as understanding the students, providing multiple means of representation, offer multiple means of engagement, allow for multiple means of expression, differentiate instruction, foster a collaborative classroom environment, make materials accessible, professional development and support, continuous feedback and assessment, and use UDL guidelines and resources (Priyadharsini et al., 2024).

Schools and teachers play an essential role in identifying students with reading difficulties, including dyslexia, and are responsible for teaching them to read (Lindstrom, 2018). This strategy and approach is considered a strategic way to provide equality in the learning process at islamic private school. Universal Design for Learning (UDL) itself is a system or program specifically designed to help students who have special needs, especially in the field of education. For example perhaps these children also had difficulty in reading the Quran earlier but had undergone intensive intervention, in other words they had been taught to read the Quran diligently by the parents or “ustaz/ustazah”(Ramli et al., 2016). Another reason or example is dyslexia is a neurological learning disorder that impacts the brain's ability to process language and identify strephosymbolia, resulting in reading, writing, and spelling difficulties (Hayati et al., 2024). Researchers also use Universal Design for Learning as an effective way to provide facilities to those who have special needs.

This program uses three principles that are mentioned before, there is portrayal, expressing themselves, and inspiration. The first principle is portrayal. Portrays are when the teacher delivers the content to students to more understand. The second is the manner or how the teacher expresses themselves and practices it in the classroom. And the last is inspiration, inspiration is that teachers have to give inspiration to students to always have hope and do the best in the classroom. These three main principles are the way to support students that have special needs in their life. Especially dyslexic students in islamic private schools. After the teacher

has three main principles, the teacher also has to implement several approaches to students when they are in the classroom.

The large number of students with disabilities not receiving the same access necessitates changes in the learning system. That's why the researcher believes with some approaches below such as :

- 1.) Understanding the students means that teachers have to know everything that students need or students have to do;
- 2.) Providing multiple means of representation means that the teacher has to use other tools to make the student understand. Like using subtitles, audio, and adjusting the condition of the students;
- 3.) Offer multiple means of engagement means that provide options for students to explore and interact with the content;
- 4.) Allowing for multiple means of expression means that teachers have to encourage students to demonstrate their understanding in ways that suit their abilities;
- 5.) Differentiate instruction is to identify students who may need additional material, or something else;
- 6.) Fostering a collaborative classroom environment means that teachers have to encourage peer interactions and collaborative learning experiences;
- 7.) Making materials accessible means that the teacher has to use the material very accessible, and easy to understand;
- 8.) Professional development and support means that students have to always get support from the teacher, friends, or maybe the parents;
- 9.) Continuous feedback and assessment meaning that teachers have to give feedback and assessment to see the progress of the students;
- 10.) And the last is to use UDL guidelines and resources is the rule that makes this system very clear, transparent and standard. The design learning matches the concept of islamic (Mukhlis., 2025). This approach or this strategy is the way the teachers can implement every part of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in the class, and make it every moment more beautiful.

Studies indicate that flexible learning materials, adaptive assessments, and multimodal teaching strategies significantly enhance student engagement and academic performance. (Wahyuni et al., 2025). This explains that with flexible learning materials, adaptive assessments, and multimodal teaching strategies, the quality of education can be improved. By applying a reflective learning-based prophetic teaching using telling story method, and discussion method, question and answer or dialogue can improve the students' motivation and mutual respect

characters, perseverance and cooperation. Second, the difficulties in learning reading (dyslexia) experienced by the four students about the difficulties in arranging letters into words, and spelling syllables into words can be reduced (Afendi et al., 2015). Students can be more interested in the learning materials presented by the teacher. And of course, students' performance in the classroom also improves. Students can be more active and also can adjust themselves in the classroom according to the existing Universal Design for Learning.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is an educational framework and approach that aims to provide all students with equal opportunities to learn by designing curriculum and instruction that are flexible and accessible to a wide range of learners, including those with diverse abilities, backgrounds, and learning styles (Priyadharsini et al., 2024). With the existence of UDL, equal learning will be achieved. Inclusive education itself is a means to enhance accessibility and personalize learning experiences for students with disabilities (Melo-López et al., 2025). Dyslexia is a neurological problem that leads to obstacles and difficulties in the learning process, especially in reading (Alqahtani et al., 2023). Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is an educational framework and approach that aims to provide all students with equal opportunities to learn by designing curriculum and instruction that are flexible and accessible to a wide range of learners, including those with diverse abilities, backgrounds, and learning styles (Priyadharsini et al., 2024). Of course Universal Design for Learning (UDL), inclusive learning, dyslexia are some related things. Dyslexia itself is included in inclusivity, while UDL is a way to create equal education and also maximize the opportunities for every student to pursue education. Universal design for learning (UDL) is instructional. International schools are considered a type of private school that students and provide more focused English instruction (Alwaqassi., 2024).

This study also invites muslims to adapt this method to support dyslexia (Alkamali., 2020). And the result of this system is easy to implement in private schools and international schools.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that the implementation of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in English instruction can effectively support students with dyslexia by providing flexible and accessible learning environments. UDL can be applied through its three main principles: multiple means of representation, engagement, and expression. These principles allow teachers to present materials in various formats, encourage active participation, and enable students to demonstrate their understanding in ways that suit their abilities. As a result, UDL helps reduce learning barriers and promotes meaningful participation for dyslexic learners in inclusive classrooms, particularly within the context of Islamic private schools.

However, the implementation of UDL is not without challenges. Teachers may face difficulties such as limited knowledge of inclusive practices, lack of training, insufficient resources, and constraints in adapting curriculum and assessment methods. In addition, applying UDL in faith-based educational settings requires careful alignment between pedagogical strategies and institutional values. Despite these challenges, the study shows that UDL has strong potential to enhance inclusive learning by fostering equity, improving student engagement, and supporting diverse learning needs.

Overall, UDL contributes significantly to the development of inclusive education by bridging the gap between theory and practice, especially for students with dyslexia in English language learning. This study, however, is limited by its reliance on secondary data, which may not fully capture real classroom dynamics. Therefore, future research is recommended to conduct empirical studies or field-based investigations to examine the practical implementation of UDL more deeply. Such studies could also explore the effectiveness of specific teaching strategies and technologies in supporting dyslexic learners in different educational contexts. Acknowledgement our paper presentations are used to fulfill academic speaking course assignments. Acknowledgment our paper is used to fulfill an assignment for an academic speaking course. In writing this paper, perfection cannot be separated, therefore we are very open to accepting constructive criticism and suggestions to make the paper we write even better.

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