
Do we need Special Preparation for Teaching the Special Children?

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ABSTRACT

It carries no doubt that second-language teaching is a complex process that seems to defy strict categorization. However, some dominant models can be used to classify pedagogical approaches, techniques, and methods employed in a particular textbook. This paper is a humble attempt to suggest some changes for special children teaching. In the post-independence era has gradually witnessed a paradigm shift in the same attitude of the people. Presently a vast majority of people, both urban and rural, generally approve of English as a global language. This is the reason that learning of English by special children is also of the same importance as they have to be the part of the mainstream society. This research paper throws some light on the possible changes and problems that are evident in learning of English by special learners. Also, it attempts to analyze existing socio-cultural, economic and linguistic milieu of teaching scenario. It further focuses the psychological attitude of the learners and teachers belonging to such regions and explores the possibility of improving the existing scenario. The teaching of English has been kept in mind while discussing the issues.

Keywords:

English language learning; Schools, Special children; teaching English.

ABSTRAKS

Tidak diragukan lagi bahwa pengajaran bahasa kedua adalah proses kompleks yang tampaknya sulit dikategorikan secara ketat. Namun, beberapa model dominan dapat digunakan untuk mengklasifikasikan pendekatan, teknik, dan metode pedagogis yang digunakan dalam buku teks tertentu. Penelitian ini merupakan upaya sederhana untuk menyarankan beberapa perubahan dalam pengajaran anak-anak berkebutuhan khusus. Era pasca-kemerdekaan secara bertahap telah menyaksikan pergeseran paradigma dalam sikap masyarakat. Saat ini, sebagian besar orang, baik perkotaan maupun pedesaan, umumnya menyetujui bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa global. Inilah alasan mengapa pembelajaran bahasa Inggris oleh anak-anak berkebutuhan khusus juga sama pentingnya karena mereka harus menjadi bagian dari masyarakat arus utama. Makalah penelitian ini menyoroti beberapa kemungkinan perubahan dan masalah yang terlihat dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris oleh siswa berkebutuhan khusus. Selain itu, makalah ini mencoba menganalisis lingkungan sosial-budaya, ekonomi, dan linguistik yang ada dalam skenario pengajaran. Lebih lanjut, makalah ini berfokus pada sikap psikologis siswa dan guru yang berasal dari daerah tersebut dan mengeksplorasi kemungkinan untuk meningkatkan skenario yang ada. Pengajaran bahasa Inggris telah dipertimbangkan saat membahas masalah-masalah tersebut.

Kata Kunci:

Pembelajaran bahasa Inggris; Pengajaran bahasa Inggris; Sekolah Anak berkebutuhan khusus

1. Introduction

Learning without required facilities is a hard nut to crack. Further testing is also a crucial issue. This could be anything from the basic Science to complex English grammar. Unfortunately, the special children face many challenges in learning. Many of these challenges found in the classrooms are often over-looked.

Inclusive education has become one of the central concerns of modern educational systems worldwide. Educational institutions are increasingly expected to accommodate learners with diverse intellectual, emotional, linguistic, and physical needs within mainstream classrooms. In this context, the teaching of English to special children presents substantial pedagogical

challenges because language acquisition requires cognitive engagement, communication skills, social interaction, and consistent instructional support.

Special children often experience difficulties in understanding abstract concepts, developing vocabulary, improving pronunciation, and participating in classroom communication activities. These challenges become more severe in overcrowded classrooms where teachers are unable to provide individualized attention. In many developing educational contexts, teachers continue to rely on traditional grammar-translation methods and teacher-centered instruction, which are not suitable for learners requiring adaptive and interactive learning environments.

The global importance of English as an international language has increased the necessity of providing equitable language education opportunities to all learners, including children with special educational needs. English proficiency is no longer limited to academic achievement but is also associated with employment opportunities, social integration, and access to global information. Consequently, excluding special children from effective English language learning may further marginalize them socially and economically.

Despite policy-level discussions on inclusive education, practical implementation remains inadequate in many schools. The shortage of trained special educators, lack of instructional materials, absence of assistive technologies, and insufficient parental awareness continue to hinder effective teaching-learning processes. Therefore, there is a growing need to investigate how English language teaching can be adapted to meet the needs of special learners.

This study aims to explore the challenges associated with teaching English to special children and identify pedagogical strategies that may contribute to more effective inclusive educational practices. The study also seeks to provide recommendations for teachers, school administrators, and policymakers regarding the improvement of English language instruction for special learners.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Inclusive Education and Special Children

Inclusive education refers to the educational approach that integrates learners with special educational needs into mainstream educational settings while ensuring equal learning opportunities. According to international educational frameworks, inclusive education promotes social justice, educational equality, and learner participation regardless of physical or cognitive limitations.

Special children may include learners with intellectual disabilities, learning disabilities, speech impairments, hearing difficulties, autism spectrum disorders, attention disorders, or emotional and behavioral challenges. These learners require adaptive teaching methods, differentiated instruction, and individualized educational support (Mijwil, Aljanabi, & ChatGPT, 2023) (Das, 2013) (Byrd, 2010).

Researchers have emphasized that inclusive classrooms can enhance social interaction, self-confidence, and academic participation among special learners. However, successful inclusion depends significantly on teacher preparedness, institutional support, and availability of educational resources (Thirumurthy & Thirumurthy, 2007) (Hegarty & Alur, 2002) (Wang & Woolf, 2015).

2.2 English Language Teaching for Special Learners

English language teaching (ELT) for special learners requires specialized pedagogical approaches that accommodate diverse learning abilities. Traditional methods emphasizing memorization, grammar translation, and rote learning are often ineffective for special children because such approaches neglect experiential learning and communication-based interaction.

Modern ELT approaches emphasize learner-centered instruction, visual learning, collaborative activities, storytelling, role-play, task-based learning, and multisensory teaching strategies. These approaches support language acquisition by engaging learners

through meaningful communication and contextualized learning experiences (Bibigul, Marina, Alpysbayeva, & Nietbaeva, 2022) (Lucena-Rodríguez, Invernón-Gómez, Ortiz-Marcos, & Sánchez-Mendías, 2025)(Almalky & Alqahtani, 2021).

Several scholars argue that language learning becomes more effective when teaching materials are adapted according to learners' cognitive levels and emotional needs. Visual aids, digital resources, picture cards, educational games, and assistive technologies can significantly improve learner engagement.

2.3 Teacher Preparedness and Professional Competence

Teacher competence is one of the most influential factors in successful inclusive education. Teachers working with special children must possess not only subject knowledge but also psychological understanding, emotional sensitivity, classroom management skills, and knowledge of special education practices (Hostins & Jordão, 2015) (Brown, Welsh, Hill, & Cipko, 2008) (Kisbu-Sakarya & Doenyas, 2021).

Previous studies indicate that many teachers feel unprepared to teach special learners because they lack professional training in inclusive pedagogy. Inadequate training often results in frustration, negative attitudes, and ineffective instructional practices (Fernandes, Jardim, & Lopes, 2021).

Continuous professional development programs are therefore essential for improving teachers' pedagogical competence and awareness regarding inclusive education.

2.4 Challenges in Inclusive English Classrooms

The literature identifies several recurring barriers affecting English language teaching for special children : Overcrowded classrooms, Lack of trained special educators, Insufficient teaching materials, Limited parental involvement, Inadequate educational infrastructure, Dependence on outdated teaching methodologies, Lack of assistive learning technologies, Psychological barriers among learners (Finny & Mohamed, 2025; Hermansyah & SH, 2025).

These challenges reduce classroom participation and negatively influence learners' motivation, confidence, and academic achievement.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design to investigate the challenges and pedagogical practices associated with teaching English to special children. Qualitative research was considered appropriate because it enables in-depth exploration of educational experiences, teacher perspectives, and learner-related challenges.

3.2 Research Area

The study was conducted in selected schools and households in Udaipur, Rajasthan, India, where inclusive educational practices involving special children were observed.

3.3 Participants

The participants included: English language teachers, Special educators, Parents of special children, Special learners enrolled in English classes.

Purposive sampling was used to select participants who had direct involvement in inclusive English language education.

3.4 Data Collection Methods

The study utilized multiple data collection techniques:

a. Classroom Observation

Classroom teaching practices, learner participation, teacher-student interaction, and use of teaching aids were observed.

b. Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers and parents to understand their perceptions, challenges, and expectations regarding English language teaching.

c. Document Analysis

Relevant educational documents, policy materials, and previous research studies were reviewed to support data interpretation.

3.5 Data Analysis

The collected qualitative data were analyzed thematically. Emerging themes related to teaching challenges, learner difficulties, teacher preparedness, and instructional strategies were categorized and interpreted.

4. Result

4.1 Teacher Preparedness in Inclusive English Classrooms

The findings revealed that the majority of English teachers experienced difficulties in teaching special children due to limited professional preparation in inclusive education. Most teachers admitted that they had never received formal training related to special education pedagogy, adaptive instructional strategies, or classroom management for learners with diverse cognitive abilities. Consequently, teachers tended to apply conventional teaching approaches that were originally designed for general learners rather than for special children.

Classroom observations further indicated that teachers frequently relied on lecture-based instruction and grammar-translation methods. These methods limited learner participation and reduced opportunities for communication-based learning activities. Teachers also expressed concerns regarding their inability to provide individualized attention because of time limitations and large classroom populations.

4.2 Learning Difficulties Experienced by Special Children

Special children encountered multiple barriers in English language learning, particularly in vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation, reading comprehension, and sentence construction. Learners often demonstrated hesitation during speaking activities and displayed low confidence when interacting in English.

The findings also showed that many learners experienced communication anxiety and fear of making mistakes in front of peers. Some students avoided participation during classroom discussions and oral presentations because they feared embarrassment or negative judgment from classmates.

Furthermore, differences in learning speed among students created additional challenges for teachers. Several special learners required repeated explanations and individualized instructional support to understand basic English concepts.

4.3 Lack of Educational Resources and Teaching Aids

The study identified inadequate learning facilities as one of the major obstacles affecting effective English language teaching for special children. Most schools lacked specialized instructional resources such as audio-visual materials, picturecards, interactive language games, digital learning tools, and assistive technologies.

Observational findings demonstrated that classroom teaching was still dominated by textbook-centered instruction and chalk-and-board teaching methods. Teachers rarely incorporated visual or interactive materials capable of improving learner engagement and motivation.

The absence of inclusive educational infrastructure reduced opportunities for experiential learning and multisensory language acquisition among special learners.

4.4 Overcrowded Classrooms and Limited Individual Attention

The research revealed that overcrowded classrooms significantly affected the quality of instruction provided to special children. Teachers found it difficult to monitor learner progress individually because classroom populations were excessively large.

In many observed classrooms, special learners remained passive and received limited opportunities to interact with teachers. As a result, their learning difficulties frequently remained unnoticed during classroom activities.

Teachers also reported emotional exhaustion and instructional pressure due to the complexity of managing heterogeneous classrooms containing learners with different cognitive and linguistic abilities.

4.5 Parental Awareness and Educational Support

Interviews conducted with parents indicated that parental involvement in English language learning remained relatively low. Some parents lacked awareness regarding the importance of continuous educational support for special children, particularly in language learning activities conducted outside school environments.

Several parents prioritized physical safety and protection rather than academic participation because they perceived special children as highly vulnerable. This attitude indirectly limited learners' exposure to English communication and educational interaction at home.

However, the study also found that learners whose parents actively supported educational activities demonstrated better confidence and classroom participation.

5. Discussion

The findings of this study confirm that teaching English to special children requires specialized pedagogical preparation and inclusive educational practices. The lack of professional teacher training emerged as one of the most influential barriers affecting effective instruction. Teachers who lack knowledge regarding special education pedagogy often depend excessively on traditional teaching methods that fail to accommodate diverse learner needs.

The continued use of grammar-translation methods reflects a broader institutional challenge within many educational environments where innovative pedagogical practices are not sufficiently implemented. Communication-based and learner-centered approaches are more suitable for special learners because they encourage active participation, social interaction, and experiential learning. Therefore, the transition from teacher-centered instruction toward inclusive and adaptive teaching models is essential.

The study also demonstrates that learning barriers experienced by special children are not solely cognitive in nature but are strongly connected to psychological and emotional factors. Learners frequently experience anxiety, fear of failure, and low self-esteem while participating in English language activities. Such emotional barriers reduce learner motivation and classroom engagement.

The findings further highlight the importance of educational resources and teaching aids in supporting language acquisition. Visual materials, digital technologies, and interactive instructional tools play significant roles in improving comprehension, motivation, and participation among special learners. Unfortunately, many schools still operate with inadequate educational infrastructure and limited access to inclusive learning technologies.

Another important issue identified in this study is overcrowded classrooms. Large classroom populations reduce opportunities for individualized instruction and prevent teachers from effectively monitoring learner progress. Inclusive education can only function effectively when teachers are able to provide sufficient attention and instructional adaptation according to individual learner needs.

Parental involvement also emerged as an important determinant of educational success. Learners who received emotional encouragement and educational assistance from parents demonstrated greater confidence and stronger classroom participation. This finding emphasizes

the importance of collaborative partnerships between schools and families in supporting inclusive education.

Overall, the study suggests that improving English language learning for special children requires systemic educational reform involving teacher professional development, institutional support, curriculum adaptation, and increased awareness regarding inclusive educational practices.

6. Conclusion

This study concludes that special children face numerous academic, psychological, and institutional barriers in English language learning environments. The major challenges identified include inadequate teacher preparation, overcrowded classrooms, insufficient teaching aids, traditional instructional methods, and limited parental involvement. The findings indicate that conventional teaching approaches are ineffective in addressing the diverse educational needs of special learners. Inclusive English language education requires adaptive pedagogical strategies that emphasize learner participation, multisensory learning, emotional support, and individualized instruction. Teacher competence plays a central role in the success of inclusive classrooms. Therefore, educational institutions must prioritize professional development programs focusing on special education pedagogy and inclusive teaching methodologies. Schools should also provide adequate learning resources and assistive educational technologies to support effective language acquisition. In addition, collaboration among teachers, parents, and policymakers is necessary to create supportive educational environments capable of promoting confidence, participation, and academic achievement among special learners. Ultimately, inclusive English language education is not merely an educational responsibility but also a social commitment toward equality, empowerment, and educational justice for all learners.

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