

Enhancing English Language Instruction for Deaf Children in Oman: Insights from Teachers on Pedagogy, Classroom Practices, and Support Strategies

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36348/jaep.2025.v09i03.004>

| Received: 22.01.2025 | Accepted: 27.02.2025 | Published: 08.03.2025

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Abstract

English language instruction for deaf children presents unique challenges, particularly when mainstream curricula are adopted. Under the influence of several theories discussing the importance of effectiveness in pedagogy in general such as the Theories of Effective Teaching (Schmoker, 2006), the Four Pillars of Effective Teaching theory for (Hattie, 2009), as well as the Constructivist Teaching Theory (Piaget, Vygotsky), this study encompasses investigating the effectiveness of such pedagogical approaches conducted in six government schools in the Dhofar region of the Sultanate of Oman. In particular, the research aims to explore the English teachers' perceptions in six government schools implementing the inclusive education program involving key aspects such as teaching methodologies, classroom activities, and the quality of course materials, alongside identifying additional support needed to enhance English language learning for deaf students. Data were collected through interviews with six teachers as well as analysis of their teaching diaries. The qualitative data were thematically analyzed. Findings from the data revealed that while the pedagogy used in teaching English to deaf children is generally acceptable, several areas in the pedagogy require improvement. Specifically, the study highlights the need for increased motivation for deaf students, the development of a specialized curriculum, a review of syllabus topics, targeted teacher training, and the enhancement of teaching devices for deaf learners. The study concludes that addressing these issues is crucial for improving English language instruction for deaf students in Oman.

Keywords: Pedagogy; Curriculum; English; Deaf children; Teachers.

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1. INTRODUCTION

A language acts as a channel or a tool that provides the connection required between the child - as an individual, with the society that he/she belongs. In order for any child to become a fully functioning member of a society, that child must have a means of connecting with other individuals (Ewing and Jones, 2003). This notion of connectivity is in line with the function of language that comes in the form of spoken, written as well as signs and symbols, that have been long used as a means of communication with the outside world (Vygotsky, 1962).

Linguistic competence is often the first of many thresholds that must be crossed if one is to become a full and successful member of society (Ewing and Jones, 2003). However, unlike normal children acquiring a language, the scenario is perhaps slightly different in the

case of deaf children. Unlike children without hearing disabilities, deaf children cannot rely on the auditory channel to communicate or gather general information. Rather, communication among deaf children primarily occurs through visual channels such as signs and symbols where audio sounds and lectures become futile in creating meaningful communication. Consequently, such scenario creates a critical need for these deaf children or students to develop literacy in reading and writing for them to function effectively with their communities. This view is also posited by Healey (1990), emphasizing that the ability to read enhances the deaf student's opportunity to communicate with both hearing individuals and other deaf peers and hence expanding their opportunities in the competitive employment market.

English is one of the important needs for children with impairments, particularly for the deaf. Yet, adopting the mainstream curriculum for teaching English to the deaf children has raised numerous problems and challenges for both teachers and deaf students. Focusing on the Dhofar region of the Sultanate of Oman, six government schools implementing the inclusive education programme for deaf learners, were selected in examining the extent of the effectiveness of the pedagogy used in teaching English to deaf children. Specifically, this study aims to explore Omani English teachers' perceptions regarding teaching approaches, classroom activities, and quality course materials, as well as identifying additional support required to further improve deaf students' English language learning.

Accordingly, the primary research aim guiding this study is to assess the effectiveness of the pedagogy used in teaching English to deaf children in Oman. By assessing the effectiveness of the pedagogy used in teaching English to deaf children in Oman, this study hopes to identify key strengths and areas for improvement, providing insights that could enhance teaching practices and support the development of more effective strategies for deaf learners.

1.1 Inclusive Education

Inclusive education is defined as an approach to education where all students, irrespective of any challenges they may have, are placed in age-appropriate general education classes that are in their own neighbourhood schools to receive high-quality instruction, interventions, and supports that enable them to meet success in the core curriculum (Bui, Quirk, Almazan, & Valenti, 2010). According to this concept, the inclusive school and classroom function on the principle that school children with disabilities are as essentially competent as learners without disabilities. Therefore, all the learners can be full members in their classrooms as well as in the school community. This means that they mix freely with their peers (who have no disabilities) as much as possible, with general education being the first-choice placement for all learners (Alquraini & Gut, 2012).

Mohamed Emam (2016) in his recent study entitled "Management of inclusive education in Oman: A framework for Action", provides a well-articulated and thoughtful piece of work on inclusive education in Oman. He observed that Oman's national policy and efforts towards inclusive education are largely influenced by international forces such as the UNESCO Salamanca statement on inclusive education which says in part "ordinary schools should accommodate all children, regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions" (UNESCO, 1994). The Sultanate of Oman ratified the UN Convention on Children Rights in 1996 (Al-Ani, 2017). Since then, Oman has developed and implemented national policies and programs geared towards

integrating children with disability in mainstream classrooms as explained in (Alfawair & Al Tobi, 2015). These policies and programs include encouraging integration by establishing special classes in regular schools and providing support teaching in regular classes. Other policies include the establishment of the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) responsible for providing the vocational, rehabilitation, care, and accommodations services for the persons with disabilities via schools, among others. The government also provide funding and ancillary services for student with disabilities. Psychological, educational, and medical institutions cooperate to provide integrated and excellent services to persons with disabilities.

1.2 Inclusive Education for Deaf in Oman

Inclusive education programs for deaf children have gained momentum in recent years, as educators and policymakers recognize the importance of providing equitable learning opportunities for all students. These programs aim to integrate deaf children into regular classrooms alongside their hearing peers, promoting social interaction and a sense of belonging. The shift towards inclusive education reflects a broader understanding of the need for tailored teaching strategies and resources, such as sign language support, to meet the unique needs of deaf students. In many regions, there has been an increased focus on professional development for teachers, ensuring they are equipped to support diverse learners effectively. As a result, inclusive education for deaf children is seen as a critical step towards creating more inclusive, accessible, and supportive educational environments for all students. However, whereas it is a fact that many countries such as Saudi Arabia, Malaysia and India (Alasim, 2019; Khairuddin, Miles, & McCracken, 2018; Papen & Tusting, 2019) have made commendable efforts in the area of research on this subject, more works are needed in the context of Oman.

The Sultanate's school education system comprises both public schools and private schools, both regulated by the ministry of education. The public schools particularly run the government curriculum and are attended by at least 85 percent of Omani children, while private schools can offer either the government curriculum or curricula accredited by international education systems / bodies (Al-Ani, 2017). It is also worth noting that the ministry of education has over time made necessary efforts to provide diverse educational services that are required by all social groups. These services have been designed for students with disabilities and those with special needs (Alfawair & Al Tobi, 2015). The Education Council in Oman reports that by 2016, there were three special education schools in the Sultanate. These include Al Fikriyah School for students with intellectual disabilities, Al Amal School for students with hearing disabilities and Omar Bin Al Khattab Institute for the Blind.

Besides the special schools mentioned above, the ministry of education has also integrated a “Children with Disabilities Program” in the basic education schools from the academic year 2000/2001 (Education-Council, 2016). The obvious advantage of expanding this program across the Sultanate is that more opportunities have been created for children with disabilities to acquire education through the mainstream schools across the country.

Alfawair and Al Tobi (2015) provided a comprehensive historical review of special needs education in Oman, which includes education for deaf children. The establishment of Al Amal School in 1980, was the first initiative made towards addressing the special needs of the deaf children in the Sultanate of Oman (International-Business-Publications, 2016). This school caters for children from kindergarten to grade 12, at a campus designed with special equipment in the classrooms and an environment to support them obtain quality education. The pupils are taught subjects which include Arabic, Science, History, Sports, Geography, Art and Music (International-Business-Publications, 2016; Times, 2013).

Despite the great contribution made by Al Amal School for the deaf over the years, the Sultanate made a deliberate policy to integrate the education of children with disabilities into the mainstream schools from the year 2000/2001. This policy was initiated to eliminate the effects of disability, develop the self-confidence of the students through interaction with normal children and to equip them with daily living skills (Alfawair & Al Tobi, 2015). For instance, the integration of children with Learning Difficulties (LD) in school program was implemented in 2000/2001 through integrating children with learning difficulties into mainstream Cycle One classes (grades 1-4) to study alongside mainstream peers in same class. Another type of inclusion is the integration of children with disabilities in basic education schools. The ministry implemented this partial inclusion program starting from the 2005/2006 academic year through the opening of separate special classrooms for deaf students and those with intellectual disabilities in selected mainstream schools. Foreman (2001) and Ashman and Elkins (2002) cited in (AlShahrani, 2014) describe integration as referring to a student’s attendance at a less segregated setting than a special school, such as either a mainstream class or a special education class in a mainstream school. This refers to the broad understanding and interpretation of integration first presented in the Warnock report (1978), as there were three types of integration: a) locational integration, where SEN students are educated at the same schools as all other students but in separate special units or classrooms; b) social integration, where regular social interaction takes place during breaks, extracurricular activities, playtime, family assembly and after-school clubs, but SEN students are educated separately; and c) functional integration, where SEN students participate in mainstream classes and follow the same national

curriculum (Garner, 2009) cited in (AlShahrani, 2014). It is noteworthy to highlight that this specified inclusion program is in the context of this study that aims at identifying the challenges of adopting mainstream curriculum in teaching English as a second language to deaf learners in Oman.

1.3 English Language Education for the Deaf children

There is vast theoretical and empirical literature about language education to deaf or hard of hearing children. Nussbaum, Waddy-Smith, and Doyle (2012) argue that for the population of deaf or hard of hearing children, there is a distinct body of knowledge, experience, and skills which are integral to facilitating auditory, speech and spoken language development. The literature in this comprehensive body of knowledge can be categorized into five groups; a) studies on the use of sign language (Holmer, Heimann, & Rudner, 2016; Nussbaum *et al.*, 2012), b) orthographic learning (Nation, Angell, & Castles, 2007; Share, 1999; Wass *et al.*, 2019), c) bilingual studies and deaf education (Knors & Marschark, 2012; Moll, 1992; Scott & Hoffmeister, 2016; Tang, Lam, & Yiu, 2014), d) the use of technological devices such as cochlear implants by deaf learners (Domínguez, Carrillo, González, & Alegria, 2016; Lersilp & Lersilp, 2019; Vavatzanidis, Mürbe, Friederici, & Hahne, 2018) and e) the learning of a second language by deaf students (Charrow & Fletcher, 1974; Hoffmeister & Caldwell-Harris, 2014; Mayberry, 2007). These studies have largely focused on the materials and teaching devices that deaf children need to enhance their learning. Hardly any of these studies however have discussed curriculum, what more when it is related to the adoption of mainstream curriculum in teaching English as second language to deaf children. These are research gaps of the present study.

Although all the broad categories listed above are important, this section focuses on literature that falls in the fifth category, i.e., the learning of a second language, in accordance with the scope of the present study. In the context of this particular research, the aim centres on investigating the challenges of using mainstream curriculum in teaching English as a second language to deaf children in Oman. Hence related literature is scoped around studies that have investigated the question of learning a second language by the deaf or hard of hearing children.

1.4 Theoretical Framework - Effectiveness of the Pedagogy

This study was influenced by several theories discussing the importance of effectiveness in pedagogy in general. For instance, the Theories of Effective Teaching (Schmoker, 2006) emphasize a simplified approach to effective teaching based on three key practices: focus, clarity, and engagement. Effective teaching involves concentrating on essential learning goals, ensuring content is clear and understandable, and engaging students through activities that promote active

learning. This approach stresses that focusing on core content and making learning both engaging and understandable leads to higher student success. Furthermore, The Four Pillars of Effective Teaching theory for (Hattie, 2009), identifies four key factors that contribute to effective teaching which are: teacher clarity; feedback; instructional strategies and teacher-student relationships. Further theory is the Constructivist Teaching Theory (Piaget, Vygotsky) which highlights the importance of active learning, where students construct their own knowledge based on their experiences. Effective teaching, in this view, supports learning through guided discovery, problem-solving, and social interaction. Vygotsky's concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) suggests that effective teaching involves providing learners with tasks that are just beyond their current abilities, which can be achieved through scaffolding and teacher support.

In ensuring that effective pedagogy is achieved, there are several considerations that would need attention, namely understanding the diverse needs of different learners, and on adapting to the on-the-ground conditions needed during the teaching and learning process in the classroom apart from the teacher being well-versed in his/her subject. In this instance, a good teacher is a teacher who has the capacity to encourage their students to learn and to skilfully able to utilize different rang of pedagogical approaches to enhance the learning process among his/her students.

In the case of deaf education, the foremost obstacle to deaf children in inclusive education classrooms is the complicated communication. Khairuddin *et al.*, (2018) found that deaf and hard of hearing children, despite using hearing aids in the integrated classrooms were faced with the practical difficulty of having proper communication. In their responses, deaf children complained that while in class, the teachers spoke too quickly leading them to miss out much of the information delivered by the teachers. Similarly, Cawthon (2001) reports studies that have concluded that poor academic performance of deaf children was a function of their language delays and poor communication with their teachers. Other studies have reported that due to their own difficulty to communicate, it was almost impossible for the deaf students to make friends in the school (Pivik, McComas, & Laflamme, 2002). The study for Al-Rayes (2012) revealed that the most problematic issue upon applying the mainstream curriculum in deaf classes is that the curriculum has failed to respond or cater to the specific needs, learning styles [including communication] and motivation of the deaf students.

Apart from that, effectiveness of the pedagogy should also include a positive learning environment for the students. Subsequently, deaf children could enhance their interaction with their normal peers in school when they share sports, arts, and social activities together (Al-

Ghafri, 2009). In the case of deaf education in Oman, deaf children study in separate classrooms within regular schools. Yet the issues of inadequate teachers' experiences and skills have led to deficiencies in the delivery of the curriculum (Al-Rayes, 2012b).

2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

A qualitative method was used to gather data in the form of interview protocols/recordings of the teachers and diary entries by the teachers involved. The qualitative method was employed to examine the effectiveness of the pedagogy used in teaching English language to deaf children in Oman.

2.1 Research Context

The study was conducted in six different schools which were located in the metropolitan area of Salalah, the center of Dhofar region. The selection of the schools was based on their direct involvement in the inclusive programs for deaf students. The number of students in each deaf classroom varies from 3 to 8 students. Arabic is the native language for both teachers and students in all the public schools with all subjects taught in Arabic except for English. Deaf children are taught the core subjects in separate classrooms; however, they would join their mainstream peers during sports, arts, and social activities in school (Al-Ghafri, 2009).

All the instructions in the deaf classes, including that of the English language lessons follows the Total Communication (TC) approach. This approach combines gestural presentation with spoken language enabling students with residual hearing to hear the instruction of content while those who cannot hear would be able to see the content (Berger, 2009). TC involves both speaking and signing by teachers and parents without disabilities. Other advantages of the TC approach include its ability to utilize multiple forms of communication for the deaf child, which supports in fostering the child's psychosocial, linguistic, and academic development (Hawkins & Brawner, 1997).

2.2. Sample of the Study

To gain insights into the effectiveness of teaching English to deaf learners using the mainstream curriculum, an investigation was conducted on the practice of teaching English to deaf students. Data collected from interviews and diary entries were analyzed to address the research question, focusing on a population of teachers whom were teaching English to deaf children.

2.3. Population of the Study

The selection of the participants for the interviews and diaries documentations was based on purposive sampling a method that identifies individuals who are considered experts in the field and assumed to provide accurate and unique insights into the subject matter Six teachers of deaf children were approached via email and personal contact with an explanation of the

study's purpose. As noted by Sosoulski and Lawrence (2008) this method allows the researcher to select relevant respondents based on prior knowledge of the population ensuring that specific study objectives are met.

The participants consisted of six teachers teaching English to deaf students in six government schools implementing the inclusive education programme for deaf in learners in the Dhofar region. Of these, three were female teachers and male teachers respectively. The three male teachers were assigned to teach male students in grades (5-10) while the female teachers were involved in teaching the female students in the selected all-girls school in the region. Specifically, one of the three female teacher was also involved in teaching the language course of mixed gender children in grades (1- 4) while the other two were involved in teaching the girls in upper grades (5- 10).

2.4 Instruments (Interviews and Teachers' Diaries)

The study employed semi-structured interviews in addition to teachers' diaries to collect qualitative data. The researcher designed open –ended questions, organized in a logical sequence to cover the required area that are necessary for soliciting information related to achieving the objective of the study which is “to investigate the extent of the effectiveness of the pedagogy used in teaching English language to Deaf children in Oman. Using the Open-ended questions format give more freedom to the participants to express their thoughts and views freely (Stein and Mankowski, 2004). To ensure validity and reliability of the responses, identical questions were posed to all teacher participants. However, depending on the responses received during the interview, the order of the questions may vary which were also at time supplemented with either planned or unplanned probes (Morse and Richard, 2002).

2.4.1 Interview instrument

According to Patton (1987), effective questions in qualitative interviews are open-ended, neutral, sensitive, and clear, enabling the interviewee to provide meaningful responses. The best questions elicit information on behavior, experience, opinion, values, feelings, knowledge, sensory experiences, as well as demographic or background details. With this in mind, the researcher designed interview questions aligned with three key themes identified through data analysis: Teaching Approaches, Classroom Activities, and Quality Course Materials. Additionally, the questions included prompts for participants to suggest improvements to the English language curriculum, ensuring a comprehensive exploration of the study's objectives.

To ensure transparency and coherence in the themes derived from the open-ended and semi-structured interviews (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003), the researcher consulted two experts in qualitative research and child education as inter-raters. They provided

feedback on the themes generated during the coding process, which was then analyzed to assess the credibility, consistency, and coherence of the theme formulation.

2.4.2 Teachers' diary monthly entries

Qualitative data were also collected from teachers' diaries, which captured their experiences teaching English to deaf children. After each unit (approximately once a month), participants were asked to write a reflection on their teaching. To assist with this task, the researcher provided a form divided into three sections: an overview of the unit, challenges faced, and strategies or ideas to overcome those challenges. The data were then analyzed using thematic analysis focusing on the challenges they faced while teaching, different/new techniques or ideas implemented in class, as well as suggestions on ways to reduce or overcome the challenges faced.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data were gathered from the interview sessions conducted with the participant teachers to answer the following research question “To what extent is the pedagogy used in teaching English language to Deaf children in Oman effective?”. The participant teachers were asked to share their views regarding the teaching method, classroom activities, quality course materials, and the support they receive to enhance their pedagogy. These are crucial to ascertain the teachers' perceptions and views pertaining to the most effective or suitable pedagogy that can be beneficial for teaching deaf children. This section is structured into five subsections as follows, based on the documented and coded themes. Data were collected from interviews with participant teachers to address the research question: "To what extent is the pedagogy used in teaching English to deaf children in Oman effective?". The teachers were asked to share their views on teaching methods, classroom activities, course materials, and the support they receive to enhance their pedagogy. These aspects are crucial for understanding teachers' perceptions of the most effective or suitable pedagogical approaches for teaching deaf children.

This following section is organized into thematic categories based on the coded data. The first theme explores teaching approaches, followed by a discussion of classroom activities. The third theme examines the quality of course materials, while the fourth addresses the support available for skill enhancement. The final theme presents suggestions provided by participants to improve the effectiveness of pedagogy.

3.1 Teaching Approaches

The participants were asked about their views regarding the common teaching method they use in their language classroom and how they evaluate its effectiveness. The participants stated the various teaching methods they use in their language classroom.

The following are the salient expressions from the participants:

Excerpt 1 (P1)

Lines	Statements
1	You know that in normal classes we can face the heterogeneous classes or
2	The mixed abilities and individual differences between the students. So, we can
3	Use VAK strategy which depends on visual and audio and kinesthetic skills,
4	But for deaf students of course they can't hear so I use visual and kinesthetic skills
5	To make it easier to convey the points and the information for my students.
6	According to my own current teaching method, I use in my class the integrated
7	Methods, which depend on explanation, watching visual aids like video, like still
8	Pictures and do some tactile activities at the end of the class. These approaches
9	Fix the points in their minds. I feel it's a good way as it helps each student to find
10	His needs and it permits students to catch the information through this useful and
11	Desirable method ... we have to touch the point of creativity in each student and try
12	To enter and give him information for this point of creativity.

Based on Excerpt 1, the participant P1 expressed the view that she uses VAK strategy for heterogeneous classes or mixed abilities and specifically visual and kinesthetic skills for the deaf children. In

addition, she uses integrated methods, which depend on explanation, watching visual aids like video, like still pictures, which she finds useful and desirable (Line 1 to line 4; Line 6 to line 8; Line 10 to line 11).

Excerpt 2 (P2)

Lines	Statements
1	Using sign language and body language as the common teaching method
2	I use in my language classroom
3	I evaluate by asking my students to check their understanding.

Excerpt 3 (P3)

Lines	Statements
1	Many ways of the teaching like using the smart board, flash cards, videos, also
2	I give them some homework suppose like do the projects always they work in
3	Pairs or group worker. Ninety five percent of the methods I use include
4	Smart board, flash cards, internet websites, the new sign language and videos.
5	These are perfect ways or methods because these students like these ways.

Excerpt 4 (P4)

Lines	Statements
1	I use sign language, quietness and patience in order to attract the students to love
2	The curriculum and benefit from.

As shown in Excerpts 2 to 4, the participants P2 to P4 respectively provided their views on the two themes of teaching method and evaluating its effectiveness. P2 highlighted that she used sign language and body language as the common teaching method in her class (Line 1) and she evaluates the effectiveness of her teaching method through direct feedback from the students' response whether they understood her lessons (Line 3). Meanwhile P3 said that 95% of the methods he uses include smart board, flash cards, internet websites, the new sign language and videos (Line 4), and his students' liking for these methods serve as a benchmark for evaluation (Line 5). Finally, P4 highlighted that she uses sign language, quietness and patience as her

teaching methods, and she evaluates her methods by the extent of attractiveness and love of these deaf children to the curriculum (Line 1 to line 2).

3.2 Classroom Activities

The participants were asked about the type of activities they use in conducting their language classroom and how they rate its effectiveness. The six participants provided varied experiences in the way they conducted their language classrooms, and from their responses they implied that the activities they adopted were effective. The following are some of the interesting responses from the participants:

Excerpt 5 (P1)

Lines	Statements
1	According to my own current teaching current method I use in my class is the
2	integrated method which depends on explanation, watching visual aids like video,
3	like still pictures and do some tactile activities at the end of the class which fix
4	the point in their minds. I feel it's a good way as it helps each student to find his
5	needs and it permits students to catch the information through this useful and
6	it permits students to catch the information through this useful and desirable
7	method for each student... and we have to enter the students <i>his creative area</i>
8	we have to touch the point of creativity in each student and try to enter and
9	give him information for this point of creativity.

Excerpt 6 (P2)

Lines	Statements
1	I use some activities in conducting my language classroom as;(match pictures /
2	Missing letters/ write the word/chose correct answers)

Excerpt 7 (P3)

Lines	Statements
1	Many activities, but I concentrate on three types of activities which are matching
2	Words with pictures, finding the missing words and sorting the words.
3	Ninety five percent I use smart board, flash cards and videos. These are perfect
4	Ways of methods because they like these ways.

Excerpt 8 (P6)

Lines	Statements
1	The common activities I conduct in classroom are multiple choice questions,
2	Matching words, drawing, reading and writing, Sign language
3	And most importantly the movement I make inside the classroom

As shown in Excerpts 5 to 8, the participants P1, P2, P3, and P6 respectively provided their views on the two themes of language classroom activities and rating their effectiveness. P1 highlighted that her activities in the class include explanation, watching visual aids like video and still pictures, and some tactile activities at the end of the class (Line 2 to line 3) and she rated the effectiveness of these activities through enhancing the creativity levels of the students (Line 8). Meanwhile P2 opined that her class activities mainly focus on matching pictures, finding missing letters, writing the word, and choosing correct answers (Line 1 to line 2). As for P3, he stated that ninety-five percent of his class activities are based on the use of smart board, flash cards and videos and his students' liking for these methods serve as a benchmark for evaluation (Line 3 to line 4). The other participant P6 highlighted that his class activities largely involve multiple choice questions, matching words,

drawing, reading, and writing, Sign language, and the constant movements inside the classroom (Line 1 to line 3).

3.3 Quality Course Materials

The participants were asked about their opinions regarding the type of support language teachers for deaf students have received to ensure effective learning takes place. They were also asked whether such supports were forthcoming and sufficient. All participants agreed that the smart board provided to their deaf classrooms by the ministry is the most important support they have received. One of the participants confirmed that it is sufficient as it helps the deaf to understand and convey the information to them (P4). The following are some of the expressions from the participants regarding the type of support language teachers for deaf students receive:

Excerpt 9 (P2)

Lines	Statements
1	All support's methods that suitable for Deaf students as (smart board /internet
2	Websites /the new sign language)

Excerpt 10 (P3)

Lines	Statements
1	So far, the supports we have received are some books and two CDs of how to
2	Teach these students with some videos. It is like a guide for us. This is in

3	Addition to smart board that we recently got. In the past we did not have the
4	Experience of how to use the smart board. Now we have some information and
5	We know how to use it with the students, and I think it is very helpful for them
6	And for the teacher to provide the information for the students in easiest way.
7	We feel that the smart board is one of the most important advantages we got.

As shown in Excerpts 9 and 10 above, the participants P2 and P3 respectively provided their views on the two themes related to the support for teachers and the extent to which this support is sufficient. P2 acknowledged that language teachers receive support such as smart board, internet websites and new sign language (Line 1 to line 2). Meanwhile P3 highlighted that the kind of support language teachers receive include some books, two CDs, videos, and smart board (Line 1 to line 3). He acknowledged the usefulness of this

support especially smart board (Line 7) but fell short of stating whether it is sufficient.

3.4 Support for Skills Enhancement

On the other hand, the participants have in principle acknowledged that they need various supports to enhance their classroom teaching. The following are some of the expressions from the participants regarding the type of support needed for the language teachers of deaf students:

Excerpt 11 (P1))

Lines	Statements
1	The answer of course is training, training, training 400 times of training, is very
2	Important for all teachers and particularly special needs teachers or the teachers
3	Who teach deaf students. Even the expert teachers need annual training to be up
4	To date with all of the elements of teaching process. If the teacher gets suitable
5	And sufficient training he will be able to help his students

Some of the extracts from P3 from a relatively long response is produced below.

Excerpt 12 (P3)

Lines	Statements
1	I think as we are teachers teaching these disable students we don't have enough
2	Workshops and special books for sign word and also master trainer in this area
3	Who have much experience of this way of teaching around the region.
4	We need many things like some books of ways of deaf teaching and also we
5	Request our department to give us more workshops to give us a lot of
6	Information about how to teach these students

As shown in Excerpts 11 and 12 above, the participants P1 and P3 respectively provided their views on the theme related to the support for skills enhancement. P1 emphasized the importance of training as the kind of support needed to enhance skills (Line 1 to line 2). She added that if teachers get suitable and sufficient training, they will be able to help their students (Line 4 to line 5). Meanwhile P3 highlighted the urgent need for workshops, special books for sign language and master training as the most important support language teachers for deaf children require to enhance their skills (Line 1 to line 2).

The participants in the interviews acknowledge that the teachers need support to enhance their teaching. However, the support teachers need and are yet to receive include training, workshops, teaching tools and materials that include special books for teaching sign language, books with new teaching techniques for the deaf. Some of the support teachers have received are books, two CDs, smart board computer and pictures. Moreover, it would be interesting to compare the level of support teachers get for teaching deaf children to the level of

support they get when teaching normal children. Similar responses were also documented in the teachers' diaries. However, unlike the interviews, the diary entries provided also the intimate insights on the day-to-day challenges that the teacher encounters during the teaching practice.

The participants explained the various teaching methods and tools teachers use in English classes for the deaf children. The main teaching method used by almost all the teachers is the total communicative approach. To enhance this approach teachers, use teaching devices and materials at varying degree. Most of the teachers use visual facilities such video and instructional games in addition to sign language, smart board, flash cards, transparencies, drawing, still pictures, textbook, class book, skills book and course book. Other teachers use kinesthetic skills, sometimes outdoor classes, technology for self-learning, matching pictures and missing letters, writing the word, multiple choice questions, movements inside the classroom, reading, writing and practical applications through computer and Integration between materials. These methods are deemed effective because

they enabled the deaf children to enhance their understanding, retain information and become creative. The methods are also seen to motivate their interest towards learning English. This is also confirmed by the findings from the quantitative survey, which shows that the deaf children enjoy their English lessons.

3.5 Suggestions for Enhancing the Effectiveness of the Pedagogy

In summary, schools in Oman adopting mainstream curriculum to teach English to deaf children face several challenges related to the curriculum, one of which is teaching method or pedagogy.

The challenge lies in the effectiveness of the method to gain the attention or concentration of the deaf children. To overcome this challenge, the participants have proposed the use of sign language, body language, all visual aids and kinaesthetic skills to enhance the teaching method and hence improve the concentration of the deaf children in their studies. This is important as the standard of few deaf children is found to be poor due to their disabilities, and it is suggested that teachers need to be creative and skilful to improve the standard of these affected students. This, notwithstanding the fact that these deaf children are talented in many other aspects than the spoken language.

Meanwhile the quality of teachers for the deaf children is found to be challenging. They lack in-service training and professional development, and there is also insufficient teaching materials and tools to enhance the quality of their delivery. The proposed remedy includes conducting teacher's workshops and training, exposures, and staff exchange programs.

4. CONCLUSION

The research question of the study states, "Is the present pedagogy effective in teaching English language to Deaf children in Oman?" was responded to using data from the interviews [Appendix VIII, Questions 5, 9 and 10 responses] and the Teacher's Diary Entries [Appendix VI].

From the interview data, two pedagogical challenges were identified, namely the quality of teachers and effectiveness of the teaching method. While based on the data from the Teacher's diary entry, the pedagogical challenge relates to how the teaching method is effective in making the deaf children comprehend the lesson, improve their writing skills, and enhance their reading skills. With regards to the data from the Teacher's diary entry, the pedagogical challenges are three, namely the difficulty of comprehension, lack of writing skills, and difficulty in reading. The deaf children had difficulty comprehending abstract sentences, interactive texts, new symbols, and new vocabularies, among others. Some of the suggestions to remedy the problem include practical and applied sentences and the use of sentences in active form

and use of smart board. In terms of writing skills, the deaf children have problem writing clearly and they can hardly respond to survey and write emails, besides dealing with irregular verbs. It is suggested that these could be addressed by offering more training and the use of sign language. The third pedagogical problem is the difficulty deaf children face in reading by themselves and in reading long sentences. It is suggested that they should be given more exercises and explanation of meanings using sign language, and they should be furnished with a list of verbs and meanings using sign language.

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