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**PEDAGOGÍA DE LOS IDIOMAS NACIONALES Y EXTRANJEROS**

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Necesidades Educativas Especiales y el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje del idioma inglés

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## **TUTOR CERTIFICATION**

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### **CERTIFICATION**

The present degree work called: “Necesidades Educativas Especiales y el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje del idioma inglés” has been exhaustively reviewed in several work sessions. It has been concluded and it is ready for its defense.

The opinions and concepts expressed in this degree work are the results of the perseverance and originality of her author: Tatiana Katherine Cevallos Espinoza, being her sole responsibility.

Chone, January 2025



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## **Dedication**

This work is dedicated to the person who despite all circumstances has never left me alone and has never stopped supporting me and loving me, my dear aunt Mirna Jeanine Mendoza Segarra, who although being far away has always been like a mother to me and even now continues to support me in silence.

My little sister Karen Lisbeth Cevallos Espinoza who has given me enough strength and has lifted me up from my falls. She has always been supportive of me, and because of her I have moved forward.

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## **Special Educational Needs and the Teaching-Learning Process of the English**

### **Language**

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### **Abstract**

The present research aims to analyze the attention directed to the Special Educational Needs in the teaching-learning process of English, in particular to the student with hearing disability. Therefore, a qualitative approach was used, involving in the selection of the purposive sample, an English teacher and a 20-year-old student with 32% hearing disability from Eloy Alfaro University, located in Chone, Manabí. Data were collected through a semi-structured interview with an English teacher and classroom observations focused on the hearing disability student. The results show that the teacher employs adapted pedagogical strategies, such as visual aids, slow speech, sign language, and a focus on reading and writing skills, to support the student's teaching-learning process. In addition, curricular adaptations, such as the use of written materials and ensuring clear communication, were found to be necessary to foster inclusion in the classroom. The research also emphasizes the importance of adapting teaching methods and resources to meet the needs of students with hearing disabilities to ensure their full participation and academic development in English language learning.

**Keywords:** Special Educational Needs; teaching-learning process; English language; hearing disability.



## Resumen

La presente investigación tiene como objetivo analizar la atención dirigida a las Necesidades Educativas Especiales en el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje del inglés, en particular al estudiante con discapacidad auditiva. Por ende, se utilizó un enfoque cualitativo, involucrando en la selección de la muestra intencional, a una maestra de inglés y una estudiante de 20 años con 32% de discapacidad auditiva de la Universidad Eloy Alfaro, ubicada en Chone, Manabí. Los datos se recopilaron a través de una entrevista semiestructurada con una maestra de inglés y observaciones en el aula enfocadas en la estudiante con discapacidad auditiva. Los resultados muestran que la maestra emplea estrategias pedagógicas adaptadas, como ayudas visuales, habla lenta, lenguaje de señas y un enfoque en las habilidades de lectura y escritura, para apoyar el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje del estudiante. Además, se encontró que las adaptaciones curriculares, como el uso de materiales escritos y asegurar una comunicación clara, son necesarias para fomentar la inclusión en el aula. La investigación también enfatiza la importancia de adaptar los métodos y recursos de enseñanza para satisfacer las necesidades de los estudiantes con discapacidad auditiva para asegurar su plena participación y desarrollo académico en el aprendizaje del idioma inglés.

**Palabras clave:** Necesidades Educativas Especiales; Proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje; idioma inglés; discapacidad auditiva.

## **Introduction**

In the current educational context, Special Educational Needs (SEN) are presented as a set of factors that can limit students' learning. Therefore, the educational space, in which the learning process takes place, as pointed out by López et al. (2021), must be oriented to changes subject to a model and build processes of continuous educational improvement, to achieve necessary adjustments in the practices themselves, ensuring comprehensive quality in the training process of learners through curricular planning based on the different educational realities of the language learners.

However, despite advances in inclusive education, there persists little attention to students who present some type of SEN, especially in the process of learning English language an area that, according to Peña (2019) involves the development of linguistic and communicative competencies.

English language instruction faces significant challenges when it is not adapted to the characteristics and needs of students with Special Educational Needs (SEN). Many educators do not incorporate strategies or make pedagogical adaptations that adequately address these needs (Gee et al., 2023). This lack of adaptation creates significant barriers to learning. These teaching deficiencies have a negative impact on academic performance and hinder the development of linguistic and communicative skills essential to master the English language.

Subsequently, this research aims to analyze the attention given to Special Educational Needs, specifically hearing disabilities, within the English language teaching-learning process. Therefore, the methodology employed is qualitative, using an interview with a teacher and classroom observations focused on a student with a 32% hearing disability at Universidad Eloy Alfaro. It is hoped that the findings of this study will provide a

solid basis for the development of pedagogical proposals that favor a more inclusive approach in the English classroom.

This study is structured in several sections: firstly, a review of the relevant literature on SEN and the English language teaching-learning process is presented; next, the methodology used for data collection and analysis is described; then, the results obtained from the interviews and observations are presented; finally, the implications of these results are discussed, and conclusions are presented.

### **Literature Review**

#### **Special Educational Needs (SEN)**

SEN are conceived as barriers that limit the right to education, focusing on eliminating the obstacles of the educational system, instead of focusing solely on the individual characteristics of students (Rojas et al., 2024). Loo et al. (2023) mention that SEN arises when a student faces difficulties in achieving the objectives established in the educational process, compared to their peers. In these cases, it is necessary for the teacher to intervene, implementing technical and material measures and, sometimes, a considerable human effort, with the purpose of overcoming these difficulties. For this reason, SEN requires specific attention and a comprehensive approach that seeks to eliminate the barriers of the educational system, which helps students overcome their difficulties and access an equitable and quality education.

Salum (2021) states that SEN refers to the set of pedagogical strategies designed to overcome the difficulties that a student faces when approaching the curriculum that corresponds to his or her age. SEN refers to the particular needs that some students experience during their learning process, as a result of factors such as a disability, learning difficulties, chronic illnesses, among others (Loaiza et al., 2023).

According to the Ministry of Education of Ecuador (2013), autism spectrum disorders (ASD), visual disability, motor disability, intellectual disability and hearing disability are some of the main educational especial needs presented by students in Ecuador.

**Autism Spectrum Disorders.** Espina et al. (2023) point out that autism spectrum disorders are a diverse group of neurodevelopmental disorders that manifest themselves from the early stages of life and persist throughout life. Alcalá and Ochoa (2022) describe autism spectrum disorder as a neurological condition that affects development, characterized by difficulties in social interaction, communication problems and the presence of repetitive behaviors and limited interests.

**Visual Disability.** Naipal and Rampersad (2018) claim that visual disability is a condition characterized by reduced vision that cannot be corrected through refractive means (such as glasses or contact lenses), surgery, or medical treatments. Visual disability in students affects their development and generates disadvantages in education, learning, and independence, and many of them also face motor or sensory impairments (Jaramillo et al., 2022).

**Motor Disability.** Bravo et al. (2023) state that motor disabilities are alterations in the muscular system and in the proper functioning of the skeletal system, which may include damage to the spinal cord or even the brain. This condition affects body control and movement, limiting personal and social development by interfering with movement, the ability to manipulate objects, maintaining posture, balance, communication and breathing (Fajardo et al., 2022).

**Intellectual Disability.** Ke and Liu (2017) argue that intellectual disability is a developmental condition that affects intellectual functioning and adaptive skills, hindering communication, learning, independence, and social integration. For their part, Cuesta et al. (2019) emphasize that intellectual disability is a common condition that

has a major impact on individual functioning, affecting approximately 1% to 4% of the world's population, according to the World Health Organization.

### **Hearing Disability**

The Ministry of Education (2013) defines hearing disability as the total or partial loss of the ability to hear. Vila (2023) suggest that students with hearing disability perceive the world differently due to sensory differences compared to those with hearing ability. Hearing disability hinders access to communication and information, which slows the cognitive development of deaf students, so expert support is essential to enhance their learning (Tasinchana & Tigasi, 2023).

In general, hearing disability leads to a decrease in the ability to hear, negatively affects language development, communication and school integration, for this reason, it is important to have specialized support to facilitate the learning of students with this disability.

**The Causes of Hearing Disability.** They can be diverse, such as genetic defects, diseases, accidents or aging, resulting in a decrease or total loss of the ability to hear. This generates barriers to access information and communicate orally in the predominant language (Hidalgo, 2023). As well, this disability can originate from lesions in the ear, a particularly sensitive organ, where exposure to loud noises or inadequate hygiene can cause significant damage, such as partial or total deafness, which generates multiple difficulties for those who suffer from it (Chávez & Mogollón, 2021).

### **English Teaching-Learning Process**

The teaching-learning process is considered as an intentional communication system that involves the application of pedagogical strategies to facilitate learning (Osorio et al., 2023). Guamán and Espinoza (2022) mention that the teaching-learning process consists

of a set of activities that employ strategies adapted to the context and contents, with the objective of acquiring knowledge and skills, in which the student plays a central role as the main collaborator. The teaching-learning process is fundamental in the development of the student's personality and in the identification of a theory applicable to the pedagogical process, which is a key aspect of the approach adopted to guide the activity and communication between teacher and student (Ampuero, 2022).

Consequently, the teaching-learning process is a planned communication system that uses pedagogical strategies adjusted to the context, with the purpose of promoting the development of knowledge and skills in the student, who plays the main role in their learning, favoring an effective interaction between the teacher and the student.

The English teaching-learning process involves a series of pedagogical strategies designed to facilitate language proficiency (Bermuy et al., 2023). It focuses on the development of the learner's language skills, such as listening, speaking, reading and writing, adapted to their level and context. In this sense, given that English is crucial today, especially in scientific and technological fields, Ecuador has adjusted its educational policies to respond to the demands of the globalized world, integrating learning factors, diverse methods and cultural aspects linked to the language (Peña, 2019).

Special educational needs impact the English language teaching-learning process by directly influencing the way students access information, develop skills, and relate to the educational environment (Calderon, 2023). SEN can impact different areas of students' development, such as cognition, communication, behavior, and motor skills (Pavas, 2023). Therefore, the difficulties presented by students with SEN in the learning process require modifications in pedagogical strategies and adaptations in the

curriculum to ensure that students obtain the necessary support to acquire and develop their English language skills.

**Pedagogical Strategies.** In the teaching-learning process of English, pedagogical strategies are important to transform the learning and knowledge of students with Special Educational Needs (SEN), fostering the connection between their interest and motivation to learn (Lliquin, 2023). Pedagogical strategies improve the teaching process by inciting the participation and learning of students with special educational needs, while optimizing the teaching work and fostering respect for the diversity of each student (Martínez et al., 2020). Pedagogical strategies, according to Campoverde (2024), should be adapted to teach English to students with SEN to ensure their inclusion and access to learning. These strategies should be personalized, using tools such as assistive technology, visual and tactile materials that strengthen the understanding and use of the language.

In short, pedagogical strategies are important to support the learning of English for students with SEN, ensuring their inclusion by various tools and resources that promote participation, motivation and respect for diversity.

**Curricular Adaptations.** Palacios (2024) proposes that curricular adaptations are important to ensure access and learning for students with special educational needs, adjusting contents, methods and materials to their specific needs. Curricular adaptations are relevant in the teaching-learning process, especially for those students who have specific educational needs, whether related to a disability, since these needs can hinder their academic progress and participation in the classroom, which requires timely intervention by teachers (Campoverde, 2024).

As stated by Andrade et al. (2022) curricular adaptations in the teaching of English to students with Special Educational Needs (SEN), particularly those with hearing

impairment, are fundamental to ensure their inclusion and participation in learning, however, their effectiveness in student learning can be limited due to the lack of teacher training on the procedures to be followed to implement them in the classroom.

To summarize, curricular adaptations ensure that students with special educational needs, particularly those with hearing impairments, can access and participate in learning English. However, their success depends on adequate teacher training to implement them effectively in the classroom.

### **Methodology**

The present research adopted a qualitative approach, oriented to analyze the attention directed to the Special Educational Needs in the teaching-learning process of the English language, in particular to the student with hearing disability. To this end, detailed and contextual data were collected to reflect the English teacher's perspective and the observed classroom dynamics of the student with hearing disability.

The qualitative research design was selected to examine the pedagogical strategies, resources and adaptations implemented in teaching English to a student with hearing disability, considered a special educational need according to the Ministry of Education of Ecuador (2013).

### **Sample**

The study sample consisted of an English teacher and a 20-year-old student with hearing disability, from the fifth semester of "Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros" at Eloy Alfaro University in 2024 (2), Chone, Ecuador. The participants were chosen using purposive sampling.

**English Teacher.** A teacher with experience in teaching English to students with special educational needs, particularly those with hearing disabilities, was selected. This criterion ensured that the participant would provide valuable information on



pedagogical strategies and curricular adaptations in the English teaching-learning process.

**Student with Hearing Disability.** The student was selected because she is studying English and has a special educational need related to her hearing disability. As well, her participation constitutes the central axis of the study, exploring how pedagogical strategies and adaptations influence her English language learning process.

### **Data Collection Techniques**

A semi-structured interview and classroom observations were used to collect the information.

**Semi-Structured Interview.** An interview was designed and applied to an English teacher to obtain data on the pedagogical strategies and curricular adaptations implemented in the classroom to teach the language to a student with hearing impairment.

**Classroom Observations.** Observations were made for approximately 90 minutes, with the help of an observation sheet to record the interactions in the classroom of the student regarding the attention given to her in her English language learning process.

### **Data Analysis.**

The data analysis focused on identifying and examining the most relevant responses of the teacher interviewed, which were presented in detail. Similarly, in the classroom observations, the most significant results were analyzed in relation to the established indicators. The qualitative approach used in the research to analyze the data from both instruments facilitated the understanding of the pedagogical practices used to support students with special educational needs.

## **Results**

### **Results of the Interview Applied to the English Teacher**

**What strategies facilitate communication in students with special educational needs?**

In the opinion of the teacher, assertive communication must be maintained in the process, according to the special educational needs, different strategies are used, such as motivation, continuous feedback in the activities and trying to continuously maintain individual or group work.

**What pedagogical strategies can be applied to support students with hearing disabilities in the English teaching and learning process?**

According to the teacher, incorporating visual aids such as pictures and videos with subtitles is fundamental for supporting students with hearing disabilities. Furthermore, speaking clearly and at a slow pace, combined with the use of sign language, when possible, ensures that learners can fully grasp the content. Additionally, placing emphasis on reading and writing skills helps students strengthen their literacy and develop a deeper understanding of the English language.

**What kind of curricular adaptations are implemented to strengthen the learning process of students with special educational needs, such as hearing impairment?**

The teacher implements adaptations such as the use of visual resources, strategic placement in the classroom, and clear and slow communication. The educator also adapts the materials he uses in class, provides constant feedback, and promotes partner work so that the student with hearing impairment can actively participate.

**What are the most common challenges you face as an English teacher when serving students with hearing disabilities in inclusive environments?**

As claimed by the teacher, making the student an active part of the class group through continuous participation in all the activities to be carried out is a challenge that one must be willing to overcome every day.

**How do you overcome these challenges to ensure equitable and quality education for all students?**

As the teacher mentions, making students aware of their own strengths and motivating them to trust in their abilities and skills is crucial when it comes to overcoming the challenges of teaching English to students with special educational needs.

**What role does collaboration between educators, students with hearing disabilities, and their families play in the inclusive teaching and learning process?**

As believed by the teacher that, it is essential, because they must feel comfortable with the education, keeping them active in the learning process.

**What are the educational practices that foster effective collaboration and ensure adequate support for students with hearing disabilities from the teaching of the English language?**

As claimed by teacher that carrying out activities such as working in pairs or teams, assigning roles to have equal participation plays a crucial role within an inclusive classroom.

**What resources does the educational institution have to contribute to the teaching and learning process of the English language in students with hearing disabilities?**

The teacher mentions that the educational institution has projectors and screens, plus the infallible resource which is the whiteboard.

### **Results of the Classroom Observations of the Student with Hearing Disability**

The findings obtained from the observation form show that the teaching and learning process of English for the student with hearing impairment is developed in an inclusive

manner, supported by various pedagogical strategies, teaching resources and curricular adaptations.

In the observations, it was noted that the teacher implemented pedagogical strategies, which were supported using technology. Group activities were carried out that encouraged interaction and participation of the student with her classmates. Furthermore, the instructions were presented in a clear manner, accompanied by visual examples, which facilitated the student's understanding of the content.

Finally, it was perceived that the teacher made curricular adaptations, the educator used written materials as a complement to the oral explanations, adapting to the student's needs. Besides, it was observed that the student uses a hearing aid, which has been important for her learning, since it helps her to better understand the indications and participate in class activities.

### **Discussion**

The results derived from the teacher interview and the observation of the hearing disability student provide solid findings on how special educational needs are addressed in the English teaching-learning process.

Concerning the pedagogical strategies used, the teacher emphasized that she uses visual resources, speaks slowly, uses sign language when possible, and focuses on reading and writing skills to strengthen the student's literacy. During the observations, it was possible to confirm that the teacher implements the strategies, in addition to perceiving that both the student and her classmates responded positively, which generated excellent results in the development of the class, since the students were motivated.

Likewise, previous research emphasizes that pedagogical strategies are important for transforming the learning experiences and knowledge of students with Special Educational Needs, fostering connections between their interests and motivation for

learning, while also enabling them to enhance their understanding and skills (Lliquin, 2023). Hence, the implementation of adapted pedagogical strategies improves the participation and learning of students with and without special educational needs and fosters a motivating and inclusive environment that enhances their academic development in the English language teaching process.

On the other hand, in the interview, the teacher indicated that she implements adaptations such as the use of visual resources, strategic placement, adapts class materials, provides constant feedback and promotes pair work, which allows the student to be fully involved in the activities. In the observations, it could be seen that the teacher makes curricular adaptations, using written materials as a complement to oral explanations, which is adjusted to the student's needs. This result is in line with the findings of several researchers who emphasize the importance of pedagogical adaptations in English teaching students with special educational needs.

For instance, Andrade et al. (2022), in their research, concluded that English teachers who make curricular adaptations should adjust content, objectives, methodologies, strategies, resources and assessments to ensure that students with SEN can learn English on an equal footing with their peers. Moreover, curricular adaptation can have a positive impact on the learning of English, as long as the teacher makes the necessary modifications in their planning, which should be focused on enhancing the learning of students with SEN (Romero, 2016). In other words, well-implemented pedagogical adaptations promote inclusion and optimize the learning of students with SEN, providing them with equal opportunities to learn English and improve their academic performance by reducing barriers.

In the interview, the teacher remarked on the difficulties she faces when teaching the language to students with special educational needs, especially those with hearing

disability. She pointed out that it is sometimes difficult to integrate them into the group. Nevertheless, the teacher frequently tries to involve the student in activities, encouraging collaboration with her classmates. Schwab et al. (2019) shares a similar perspective, emphasizing the importance of fostering inclusion through cooperative learning and peer support strategies. Their research highlights that students with hearing disabilities often encounter social and communication barriers that limit their participation in group activities.

From this perspective, collaboration between educators, families and students is considered vital for the success of the educational process. The participation of families and peers ensures that the student with SEN receives the necessary support both inside and outside the classroom, which strengthens their learning. This finding coincides with the results of Santander et al. (2020) who point out that collaboration contributes to the creation of an inclusive and supportive environment, which strengthens both the learning and well-being of students with SEN. For this reason, it is imperative to have the constant support of everyone who interacts with students with SEN, as their support is crucial to the academic progress of these students.

### **Conclusions**

Addressing Special Educational Needs in the English language teaching-learning process, particularly in students with hearing disabilities, requires curricular adaptations and pedagogical strategies tailored to the needs of students with SEN to enrich inclusion and participation and adapt the content to be taught. It is important to note that a hearing disability stands for a significant challenge in the development of language skills since it mainly affects communication, vocabulary acquisition, and listening comprehension. However, the implementation of proper measures, such as the use of adapted materials,

strategies, and curricular adaptation is effective in overcoming the barriers that may arise in the English teaching-learning process.

Consequently, further research focused on the development and implementation of adapted methodologies, strategies and educational resources is suggested, with the aim of integrating students with special educational needs in the teaching of a second language and effectively promoting the development of their language skills.

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