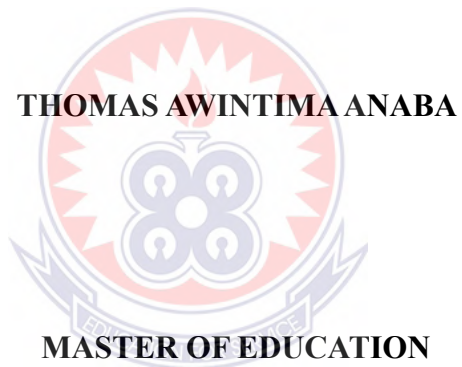


**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

**CHALLENGES OF LEARNERS IN THE ESL CLASSROOM: THE CASE OF  
HEARING-IMPAIRED STUDENTS IN ST. JOHN'S INTEGRATED SH/TS**



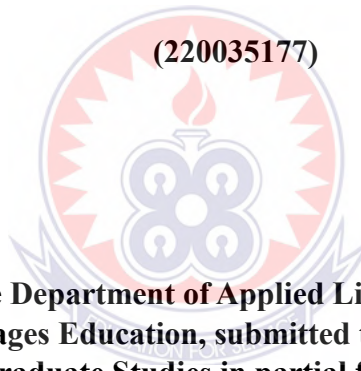
**2023**

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**CHALLENGES OF LEARNERS IN THE ESL CLASSROOM: THE CASE OF  
HEARING-IMPAIRED STUDENTS IN ST. JOHN'S INTEGRATED SH/TS**

**THOMAS AWINTIMA ANABA**

**(220035177)**



**A Dissertation in the Department of Applied Linguistics, Faculty of Foreign  
Languages Education, submitted to the School of  
Graduate Studies in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the award of the degree of  
Master of Education  
(Teaching English as a Second Language)  
in the University of Education, Winneba**

**NOVEMBER, 2023**

## DECLARATION

### Student's Declaration

I hereby declare that this project work is entirely my own original work, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works and international journals which have all been identified and acknowledged, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

Name: THOMAS AWINTIMA ANABA

Signature: .....

Date: .....

### Supervisor's Declaration



I hereby certify that the preparation and presentation of this dissertation was supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of project work laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

NAME: DR. SEFA OWUSU

Signature: .....

Date: .....

## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to My wonderful and lovely daughters, Karen and Immaculate.



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dissertation would not have been possible without the support and patience of my supervisor, Dr. Sefa Owusu. His relentless efforts, supervision and encouragement from the preliminary to the concluding level enabled me to develop an understanding of the topic.



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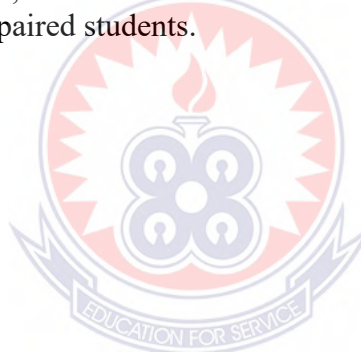
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## ABSTRACT

The challenges faced by hearing-impaired learners in an integrated ESL classroom far outweighs that of their hearing peers. The focus of this study was to investigate the specific factors which contribute to the myriad of challenges faced by the hearing-impaired learners in St. John's Integrated Senior High/Technical School. Focus group discussion was used to obtain data from six hearing-impaired learners of English and a qualitative analysis of transcribed data from the respondents were employed to arrive at the study's main findings and conclusions. It emerged from the analysis of the data that: hearing-impaired students are confronted with diverse linguistic challenges in English language classes, ranging from struggles in spoken and written expression to difficulties in grammar, reading comprehension, essays, literature, and figurative language; The hearing-impaired learners lack specialized tools to aid their language learning; Interpreters play a vital role in bridging a communication gap between hearing-impaired learners and their teachers, yet challenges persist in their skill levels and availability; Teacher contributions vary, with concerns about communication breakdowns and deviations from subject timetables; The classroom environment elicits mixed perspectives, emphasizing difficulties in reading, comprehension, and grammar. Overall, these experiences underscore the need for tailored support, inclusive practices, and alternative communication methods in English language classrooms for hearing-impaired students.



## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter of the study serves as an introduction to the entire work. It covers the following headings: background of the study, the problem statement, the purpose of the study, the research objectives, the research questions, the significance of the study, limitations, delimitation, and the organization of the entire work.

#### 1.1 Background

Keller (2003) once said, *“I am just as deaf as I am blind. The problems of deafness are deeper and more complex, if not more important than those of blindness. Deafness is a much worse misfortune. For it means the loss of the most vital stimulus- the sound of the voice that brings language, sets thoughts astir, and keeps us in the intellectual company of man.”* Keller (2003) describes deafness as “... a much worse misfortune”. Nonetheless she was able to traverse all the challenges that come with this “misfortune” to become a graduate with dual disability at the age of twenty-four, and subsequently became a political activist, an author and a lecturer. It has since dawned on educationists and policy makers that, a hearing loss or any form of disability for that matter, should not barricade any individual from achieving their full potentials. The resultant effect has therefore triggered stakeholders to establish special schools for children born with disabilities. The paradigm then shifted to integration, where children with various disabilities are exposed to the same environment, learning experiences and the same curriculum with their ‘normal’ peers.

Through collaboration and consultation with various stakeholders, including civil society; political organizations; traditional leaders; parents; Ministry of Education (MoE);

Ghana Education Service (GES); Ministry of Health; National Council on Disability; Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, the Government of Ghana enacted the Inclusive Education Act in 2015. The principle of this law is to ensure that: no child is excluded from education or discriminated against on the basis of race, colour, sex, language, age, tribe, religion, poverty, disability, birth or other circumstances; the learning process adapts to the student rather than requiring the student to adapt to the system; curriculum, instruction, assessment, school culture, and the environment provide opportunities to encourage participation (Government of Ghana; Ministry of Education, 2013).

Inclusive education also known as integration, with this policy backing, has come to stay. The inclusive classroom, which is made up of students from different backgrounds and abilities should be tailored to suit the learning abilities of all the students. Hearing-impaired students in inclusive settings need special attention and support in order for their language and communication to develop to make them successful. Hearing-impaired students face special challenges in English classes, mainly because they are limited to their native language (L1). Molapisi and Modiba (2023) opine that deafness can inhibit one's language learning, creating a significant barrier to effective communication. This lends credence to the perception that the hearing-impaired learners are naturally handicapped when it comes to the English language classroom setting.

When students with hearing loss cannot use and learn their language, they may have difficulty mastering the content of the target language, including vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and syntax. According to Aljedaani et al. (2023), the average hearing child has a 3,000-to-5,000-word vocabulary and basic mastery of the English syntax, on the other

hand, children who become deaf before kindergarten enter school with a 25-to-30-word vocabulary, with almost no grasp of English syntax. Not having a solid foundation in their spoken native language will hinder the ability of hearing-impaired students to understand and write English well. This can make it a difficult task to understand and master the intricacies and complexities of using English. Also, students with hearing loss may have difficulty developing their listening and speaking skills. If one cannot hear English properly, one will not be able to understand lectures, lessons or discussions. This can make it difficult to participate in class or group discussions and interact with peers and teachers. Therefore, these students will feel isolated and anxious, which will negatively affect their overall language learning.

Also, hearing-impaired students may encounter social and emotional problems as well as speaking and communication problems in English class. Juhaeni and Wardan (2023) noted that the stigma associated with hearing loss can lead to feelings of shame and self-doubt. These negative thoughts can affect language accessibility and overall learning. In order to solve these problems effectively, teachers need to understand the special education problems of deaf students in English classes. Identifying these problems allows teachers to develop strategies and interventions that will support students' language and communication development. Providing appropriate aids, such as visual aids, sign interpreters, and assistive devices, can improve the quality of learning for deaf students Opoku-Agyemang (2016). In general, assessing the learning difficulties of hearing-impaired students in the English classroom is important to create an integrated and supportive learning environment. By recognizing and addressing these challenges, teachers can help students with hearing loss overcome writing and communication problems and

succeed in learning the English language through the use of appropriate teaching techniques, strategies, and interventions.

## **1.2 Statement of Problem**

Cudjoe (2020) believes that technical education is very important in the education of deaf individuals. This is because it helps prepare children to compete with their hearing peers. He opines that special education cannot be separated from regular education. He believes that hearing impaired children should be well equipped with skills that will enable them to be competitive in the job market. Since inclusive or integrated schools expose all students to the same curriculum as well as examination, the hearing impaired should be able to compete with their non-disabled peers for admission into higher institutions of learning. Students with hearing loss are exposed to the same curriculum as the hearing students in St. John's Integrated Senior High/Technical School. They sit in the same classrooms, share the same school facilities, including extra-curricular activities, and as a requirement, they are expected to score at least a credit in the English language in order to progress to higher levels of education after WASSCE exams. The relevance of English language in the Ghanaian curriculum cannot be over emphasized. It is a worrying phenomenon to observe that only three hearing-impaired students, over the past three years have managed to obtain credits in English in St. John's Integrated Senior High School.

Despite the efforts to create an inclusive learning environment, the hearing-impaired students in St. John's Integrated Senior High School continue to face significant challenges in acquiring English language skills in the classroom. These students encounter barriers such as limited access to spoken language, difficulty in understanding and producing speech sounds, and inadequate support in developing reading and writing

abilities. As a result, their overall language proficiency and academic performance are adversely affected, hindering their educational and social development.

The classroom setting in St. John's is made up of the teacher, the sign language interpreter, and the learner. The teacher presents the learning experience, the sign language interpreter translates the learning experience and the hearing-impaired (HI) learner is at the receiving end. The HI learners observe the translated content with focused attention. Since deafness has an effect on eye fatigue, deaf students are unable to attend to several visual tasks simultaneously, (Brons et al., 2019). The teaching pace is slowed by the teacher to make room for the interpreter to listen and sign the exact content. The interpreter serves as the intermediary between the deaf and the hearing communicator (Nyambwere, 2019). The learner has to pay full attention to the signs and the lispings made by the interpreter, this situation makes it highly impossible for the learner to take notes during the lesson delivery. The learning difficulties faced by these ESL learners may be traced to any of these facets (Teacher, Interpreter or the learning experience).

Does the teacher use appropriate teaching and learning strategies that cater for the needs of the learner? Does the interpreter translate the exact content as delivered by the teacher? Does sign language have the needed grammar and vocabulary (in signs) to convey complete meaning to the HI learner? What factors account for the learning challenges of the HI students in the English Language classroom? These are teething concerns that are worth investigating into to ensure a smooth implementation of the English language curriculum in an inclusive classroom setting. Available literature suggests that, when deaf students are provided with the appropriate support, their achievement will reflect their ability rather than their degree of hearing loss, speech reading skills or speech intelligibility,

(Bamu et al., 2017). Similarly, if the likes of Gunawan et al. (2020), Khalik and Said (2021), Khasawneh (2021), Krishnan et al. (2020) and Langga et al. (2021) and a host of others were able to live beyond their impairments to attain greater heights in academia, theatre, science and politics, then English language should not be a barrier to the success of the hearing-impaired students of St. John's Integrated Senior High School.

If indeed English is perceived as the bedrock of every existing knowledge and communication, and learning written English can make one excel in every other field with little effort, then one should not be left out of the boat due to a disability or other environmental factors. There is therefore a pressing need to address the specific learning difficulties faced by hearing impaired students in order to provide them with equal opportunities for successful language acquisition and integration in the English language classroom.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to investigate and appreciate the learning problems faced by hearing impaired students in an integrated English language classroom.

### **1.4 Research Objectives**

The goal of this study is to identify and understand the specific learning difficulties faced by hearing impaired students in an English Language classroom. The study seeks to;

1. Identify the linguistic challenges faced by hearing-impaired learners in an English language classroom.
2. Find out the factors that contribute to the challenges faced by hearing impaired learners of the English language.

## **1.5 Research Questions**

The following research questions were used to guide the study in order to achieve the set objectives:

1. What are the specific linguistic challenges faced by hearing impaired students in an English Language classroom?
2. What factors account for the learning challenges faced by hearing impaired students in English language?

## **1.6 Delimitation and Limitations of the Study**

The limitations and delimitations of this study refer to the constraints and boundaries within which the research is conducted. These factors help define the scope and provide clarity on what can and cannot be achieved in this study. The first limitation of this study is the small sample size of the data. This challenge may limit the generalizability of the findings to a larger population. Time constraints is another limitation since the study is conducted within a limited time frame. It is not possible to collect data from all potential participants or to observe long-term effects. Also, access to participants and the unwillingness of participants to respond to interview questions during the focus group discussion, wholeheartedly, without prejudices and biases due to stigma and cultural reasons, is a limitation that the researcher has no control over. Finally, resource constraints vis-a-vis limited financial resources, recording devices, and personnel to interpret the signs to the researcher also pose a challenge to the conduct of the study. The study is confined to one setting, meanwhile, there are several other special schools with hearing impaired learners of English language. As such, the findings may not apply to other schools.



### **1.7 Significance of the Study**

This study is significant in diverse ways. The findings will be of enormous benefit to the students, the instructors, the sign interpreters, the school management, examiners, policy makers and various stakeholders and NGOs at large.

First, to the hearing-impaired learner of the English language and the teachers, the findings will suggest various teaching strategies, and interventions that will be appropriate to accommodate and improve teaching and learning which will eventually ensure the overall progress and success of language learning. Also, this study will inform management and sign interpreters as to the acceptable ways of interpreting and distinguishing between Ghanaian Sign Language (GhSL) and the ‘broken’ sign language for writing and for communication outside the classroom respectively. In addition, the study will add as well as fill a lacuna in literature, since there has not been such a study to ascertain the causes of poor performance of students in the English language as a subject in the Upper East Region talk less the school. Finally, to the policy makers and NGOs that are into the promotion of inclusive education, this study will bring to bear the various needs of hearing-impaired learners which may lead to a change in modes of assessing, grading or scoring for the hearing-impaired learners of English.

### **1.8 Organization of the Study**

The remaining part of the study is organized as follows: Chapter two presents the review of related literature, Chapter three discusses the methodology which comprises, the research approach, the research design, population, sample and sampling technique, research instrument, data collection procedure and data analysis. Chapter four deals with the presentation of results of the study. The final chapter, Chapter five, presents a summary

of the study, key findings of the research, conclusions based on the findings and suggestions for future studies.

### **Conclusion**

In summary, the chapter presents the background, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, research objectives and questions, limitations and delimitation of the study, the significance and the organization of the study. These headings will serve as bases of the entire work.



## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the framework and reviewed literature related to the study. Relevant articles, journals, books and magazines, mainly obtained from internet sources were reviewed by the researcher and organized under the following subtitles:

- Methods of Deaf Education in Ghana
- Mode of Communication for the Deaf
- Sign Language Interpretation
- Forms of Signed Languages in Ghana
- Sign Language Paradigms
- The Inclusive ESL Classroom
- Strategies for Inclusion
- Deafness and First Language Acquisition/Learning
- Deafness and Second Language Learning
- Development of Vocabulary and Literacy Skills in Deaf Students
- Research Framework
- Theoretical Framework
- The Social Exchange Theory
- Empirical Literature
- Summary

## 2.1 Methods of Deaf Education in Ghana

Worldwide, there has been a gradual transition from a clinical to a social perspective in special needs education. That is to say, the perspective has shifted from viewing special needs as a lack of capabilities, towards one in which those with special learning needs are seen as people with different skills, who can enrich educational settings (Wezzie Khomera et al., 2020). In Ghana children who are assessed before the age of five and found to be deaf or hard of hearing (D/HH) receive one year of pre-school education before entering a public school for the deaf for the purpose of language acquisition and socialization. As part of the preschool program, the child and his parent or guardian visit the child's school at least three times to familiarize himself with the school environment, activities, and types of education. Throughout the year, children and their parents or guardians will gain skills in GhSL (Egiyi, 2023). Before enrolling their child in a private school, parents should learn how to use the sign language and how to help their child socialize. Children under the age of six who do not attend pre-school education are usually sent to special schools for the deaf and hard of hearing for one or two years of pre-school education and then enter the lower levels of primary school according to their language abilities and talent. The curriculum and education of all public deaf schools up to high school are the same as regular public schools. In other words, children under the age of five receive one to two years of early childhood education and two years of kindergarten education, three years of elementary school, and three years of middle school. (Chaurasia & Pal, 2019). Children attend kindergarten for two years at age four and primary school at age six.

Dr. Andrew Foster founded a total of nine schools for the Deaf in Ghana, according to Fobi & Oppong (2019). Presently, there are approximately 20 educational institutions in

Ghana that provide education exclusively for deaf students or follow inclusive practices. This count includes seventeen (17) public and private deaf schools as well as two private inclusive schools. Ghanaian Sign Language (GhSL) is the primary language of instruction in all these establishments. Despite the existence of at least one public basic school for deaf individuals in the sixteen regions of Ghana, the goal of comprehensive deaf education has not been fully realized. Many D/HH children in rural areas lack educational opportunities or access to specialized institutions. There is a shortage of schools in both cities and villages across Ghana, leading to limited educational opportunities. Even those who are fortunate enough to receive education face challenges when competing with their hearing peers in national examinations. Considering the estimated 110,625 deaf people in Ghana, the number of institutions catering to their educational needs is insufficient, as indicated by the Ghana National Association for the Deaf (GNAD, 2019).

## **2.2 Mode of Communication for the Deaf**

Communication serves as the primary means for people to interact with one another. Every day, we encounter individuals who face challenges such as deafness, muteness, or other difficulties that hinder their ability to communicate effectively. Factors like birth defects, injuries, and oral disorders have led to a significant rise in the number of deaf individuals in recent years. Since the hearing-impaired struggle to communicate with those who use spoken language, they rely on visual communication methods. Previous techniques were sensor-based but lacked universality and cost-effectiveness (Esam et al., 2017).

John and Sampson (2016) noted that when interacting with deaf people, deaf communicators most often rely on exchanging written notes and using nonverbal gestures.

Deaf communicators experience great frustration when hearing people have to exchange notes. The writing is slow and not very "interactive" in any real sense. Deaf culture has developed a set of attitudes and habits that appear to be universal within the deaf community. For people who are hearing impaired, 'listening' in face-to-face conversations involves observing mouth movements without being able to process the sounds. Deaf people can observe conversation, laughter, sighing, and crying, but cannot detect pitch, frequency, or nasal sounds. Deaf people also cannot hear accents, dialects, humorous mispronunciations, or other vocal stressors that lead to humor and sarcasm, orders and requests. Deaf people face many challenges when trying to communicate in the hearing world.

Yaman et al. (2016) discussed the use of sign language, a nonverbal method of communication using hand gestures, as a more organized form of communication for the deaf. Banda (2022) proposes a system that combines voice and visual sign language using natural voice processing and digital image processing algorithms to enhance communication for the hearing and speech impaired. Kigotho (2017) explores the total communication method, which combines various forms of communication such as movements, amplified voice, finger spelling, sign language, reading, and writing, to develop communication skills in deaf individuals.

### **2.3 Sign Language Interpretation**

In various communities in Ghana, interpreting is perceived diversely. Among the local indigenous population, there's a belief that having a deaf child or being a Person with Deafness (PWD) should automatically provide the skills to interpret, leading to the misconception that interpreters don't require training. Moreover, cultural beliefs and

superstitions lead to the stigmatization of interpreters; some view deafness as contagious and discourage interactions with the deaf community. Religious contexts emphasize learning sign language to convey religious teachings to the deaf, and religious institutions encourage deaf integration. Trained interpreters are highly respected and often regarded as intelligent individuals. In educational settings, interpreting is carried out across various levels of education, predominantly in inclusive environments. In some cases, hearing students with deaf peers are expected to interpret without compensation, leading to a shortage of interpreters. Some tertiary institutions employ permanent or part-time interpreters, considering interpreting as an art requiring high intelligence. However, another segment within education dismisses the need for interpreters, viewing Deaf individuals as capable of independent learning. While awareness has influenced changing perceptions, a persistent group adheres to outdated notions, reinforcing the dependency stereotype associated with deaf individuals (Kodiango & Syomwene, 2016).

#### **2.4 Forms of Signed Languages in Ghana**

Ghana's deaf community communicates through three distinct signed languages: Ghanaian Sign Language (GhSL), Adamorobe Sign Language (AdSL), and Nanabin Sign Language (NaSL). GhSL, formed by integrating American Sign Language (ASL) with local signs, is the primary language for the deaf and is used in deaf schools as the medium of instruction (Fobi & Oppong, 2018). Despite lacking official recognition, GhSL remains the prevalent language among Ghanaian deaf individuals. Variations in signs occur across regions, often due to hearing individuals like teachers introducing unique concepts. Nevertheless, these differences do not hinder communication between deaf individuals from different parts of the country. AdSL is specific to Adamorobe, a community in the

Eastern Region, where hereditary hearing loss led to the development of this distinct signed language (Yaman et al., 2016). In the Central Region's Nanabin village, NaSL is used by a multi-generational deaf family, demonstrating unique features that distinguish it from AdSL, although some similarities exist (Balfaah, 2017). These languages reflect the rich linguistic diversity within Ghana's deaf communities and their adaptation to unique regional contexts.

## **2.5 Sign Language Paradigms**

Interpreters for Deaf and Hard of Hearing (D/HH) individuals in Ghana operate within distinct paradigms that influence their approach and roles. These paradigms are shaped by various factors including their initial recruitment and the specific settings they work in. One prevalent paradigm in Ghana involves interpreters who are often family members, church members, and classmates of D/HH individuals. This group, referred to as People from Deaf Families (PDFs) or Children of Deaf Adults (CODA), operate as "aid givers" and "helpers," assisting D/HH individuals in various situations such as churches, banks, hospitals, and schools. Despite lacking formal training, these interpreters believe D/HH individuals cannot be independent without their support, leading them to accompany D/HH individuals to different places (Aiyaleso, 2019; Tedla, 2019; Wezzie Khomera et al., 2020).

Another paradigm involves interpreters who view interpreting as a profession. In this paradigm, interpreters adopt the "machine" or "conduit" model, where they aim to remain invisible in the interpreting process, acting as mere amplifiers of communication. This paradigm emerged with the establishment of the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) in the United States in 1964. Interpreters following this model detach themselves



emotionally and personally from the interpreting situation, focusing solely on translating messages between languages. However, this paradigm has led interpreters to alienate themselves from both the deaf and hearing communities (Abosi et al., 2022).

In contrast, interpreters working within the communication facilitator paradigm assert the need for formal education and training. They advocate for interpreters to be assertive in their roles, ensuring that they actively engage with both the hearing and D/HH individuals. In this paradigm, interpreters have pre-assignment meetings with consumers, discussing roles, responsibilities, and expectations, thus facilitating effective communication (Cudjoe, 2020).

Additionally, interpreters in Ghana also operate within the bilingual bicultural (Bi-Bi) paradigm, where they mediate between languages and cultures, recognizing the inseparable link between language and culture. Interpreters adhering to this paradigm facilitate communication by bridging the gap between the sender and the receiver within specific cultural contexts (Ristiani, 2018). In educational settings, interpreters adopt the Ally paradigm, where they function as allies rather than advocates, empowering D/HH individuals to speak for themselves. This paradigm emphasizes the responsibility of all parties involved, including the interpreter, to ensure accurate communication. Interpreters under this paradigm see D/HH clients as experts in deaf culture and signed language, allowing them to advocate for themselves when necessary (Aljedaani et al., 2023). Lastly, interpreters in Ghana progress through different paradigms as they gain experience, evolving from the helper paradigm to the machine paradigm, and eventually to the communication facilitator, Bi-Bi, and Ally paradigms based on situational needs and ethical considerations.

In summary, Ghanaian interpreters for D/HH individuals work within diverse paradigms, influenced by their background, training, and situational context. These paradigms shape their roles and approaches, ranging from being aid givers and helpers to adopting professional, invisible roles or functioning as communication facilitators, cultural mediators, and allies. The choice of paradigm often depends on the interpreter's understanding of their role, the specific needs of the consumers, and the context in which they operate.

## **2.6 The Inclusive ESL Classroom**

The classroom environment plays a significant role in an ESL teaching and learning process. In the context of inclusive education, Dolmage's (2008) insight challenging the notion of a 'perfect' or 'normal' body or mind emphasizes the necessity for educational systems to fully embrace diversity. An inclusive classroom, as advocated by UNESCO, extends beyond merely integrating students with disabilities into regular classrooms. It emphasizes the removal of barriers, ensuring participation, and prioritizing learners who might face marginalization (Krasavina et al., 2022). Research consistently affirms the advantages of inclusive education, indicating that students with disabilities, especially those with mild or high-incidence disabilities, excel academically and socially in regular classrooms (Langga et al., 2021).

Halili and Arrozy (2021) opines that the English language classroom environment plays an important role in modern English teaching. Bing-we analysed the situation of college English classroom environment and explored ways of creating harmonious atmosphere, optimizing teaching methods, improving teacher-student relationship and intensifying human consciousness. The studies main findings indicated: College English

classroom environment is important for modern English teaching; Ways to create a harmonious language atmosphere, optimize teaching methods, improve teacher-student relationships, and intensify human consciousness should be explored; Teacher-student relationships should be improved to create a positive learning environment. Similarly, Vulchanova and Lervåg (2021) examined classroom discourse in the English language class and discovered that: Classroom discourse in English language classes consists of conversations between teachers and students; Language teaching is linked to the interaction that exists in language learning and communicative aspects; Different elements play a role in cultivating the discourse in the classroom.

Also, Khalik and Said (2021) undertook a study on language acquisition and English classroom environment and discovered that: First language acquisition theory of children and language learning laws can be used to analyze the current situation of English teaching in our country; New ways for English classroom teaching can be explored to create a good English classroom environment; English teaching should be tailored to the individual needs of students. Finally, Gunawan et al. (2020) believe that when deaf students are provided with appropriate support in college, their achievement will reflect their ability and not their degree of hearing loss, speech reading skills, or speech intelligibility. The researchers underscored the need for quality support services in the classroom and stated that it behooves on the individual instructor to ensure that deaf students participate meaningfully in class activities and discussions.

## **2.7 Strategies for Inclusion**

Guided note-taking, as proposed by Hara (2020), serves as a beneficial strategy for both disabled and non-disabled learners by involving focused listening or reading with

specific questions, facilitating a deeper grasp of fundamental concepts. It is suggested that informing students of the daily schedule contributes to a sense of accomplishment and structure, particularly advantageous for those with intellectual disabilities (Dewi et al., 2019). Addressing student fatigue is recommended through diverse task types, breaks, and movement-incorporating activities, catering to students with varying learning paces and sustaining their engagement, as highlighted by Getnet (2019). Systematic and explicit instruction, involving clearly defined lesson objectives, overviews, and explicit guidance, is proposed to enhance understanding, especially for students struggling with abstract concepts, according to Banda (2019). The integration of activity-based learning methods, such as discussions and presentations, is suggested to heighten engagement and understanding, enabling students to actively apply new concepts.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles, as outlined by Somba et al. (2019), emphasize multiple means of engagement, representation, action, and expression. By offering diverse engagement techniques, like group and individual work, educators can cater to varied learner preferences. Disseminating information through different mediums ensures accessibility for all students, accommodating diverse learning styles (Razalli et al., 2018). Additionally, providing various means of action and expression, such as offering assignment choices, allows students to effectively demonstrate their learning (Joseph & Lizzie, 2018). Scaffolding, a technique that guides learners step-by-step through tasks, is suggested for competence development, particularly effective for English language learners with learning disabilities (Erishaelly, 2017). Peer-Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS), where higher-performing students assist their peers, have demonstrated substantial enhancements in reading abilities for students with disabilities (Kigotho, 2017).

In conclusion, understanding diverse learning needs and implementing inclusive strategies are fundamental for educators. These approaches pave the way for classrooms where every student, regardless of their abilities or disabilities, can excel both academically and socially. Although the strategies outlined are not exhaustive, they provide a robust foundation for accommodating learning disabilities in diverse classrooms, fostering inclusive educational environments conducive to the success of every student.

## **2.8 Deafness and First Language Acquisition/Learning**

First language acquisition takes place most naturally and successfully in the first few years of life; if a child is not exposed to accessible or learnable language on a regular and frequent basis before the age of around five years old, that child is unlikely to ever use any language with native-like fluency across the grammar. However, deaf learners often struggle to acquire spoken languages naturally, unlike their effortless acquisition of signed languages. Due to limited auditory access to spoken language sounds and intonations, their acquisition process is laborious and slower than that of hearing learners (Kodiango & Syomwene, 2016). While some deaf learners manage to compensate and acquire native-like language proficiency, many struggle with partial acquisition, leading to difficulties in reading comprehension and written expression. Recognizing the pivotal role of English proficiency, the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID) in the United States, under Vice President Robert Davila and Dean Alan Hurwitz, emphasized integrating English teaching principles not just in language courses but across the college curriculum to enhance students' academic success (Mumba et al., 2022).

English proficiency is increasingly vital for students, both deaf and hearing, in non-English-speaking countries due to the need to access English-language information on the

internet and other educational platforms. In understanding deaf students' knowledge of English grammar, research highlights specific sentence structures causing persistent challenges. English follows a strict Subject-Verb-Object (SVO) word order in simple sentences. Deaf learners often generalize this SVO order to more complex structures, creating difficulties in reading comprehension and writing. Complex English structures, such as passive formations, questions, sentences with relative clauses, infinitives, participles, and gerunds, deviate from the basic SVO order. When this basic order is disturbed, comprehension challenges arise (Navei et al., 2022).

In summary, the challenges faced by deaf learners in acquiring English highlight the need for targeted educational strategies. Recognizing the importance of English proficiency for academic success, institutions like NTID emphasize integrating English teaching principles throughout the curriculum. Moreover, understanding specific grammatical challenges faced by deaf learners, such as deviations from basic SVO patterns, can inform tailored teaching approaches to enhance their language acquisition and comprehension skills.

## **2.9 Deafness and Second Language Learning**

Identifying learning disabilities is a difficult task, but it becomes even more difficult in English classes. Students' English language problems may be mistaken for learning disabilities when they are actually the result of other causes (Abosi et al., 2022). Some English language learners have been misdiagnosed with learning disabilities while studying. Underachievement is caused by a lack of appropriate opportunities to develop language and literacy skills (Fobi & Oppong, 2019). Many factors outside of a learning disability, such as hunger, illness, and inadequate educational support at home, can interfere

with a student's ability to learn (Tedla, 2019). Determining whether a student has a learning disability or a language-learning difficulty can be difficult because both challenges often present with similar characteristics (Brons et al., 2019). Some common shared behaviors in learning disabilities and second-language (L2) acquisition are: difficulty following directions, poor auditory memory, difficulty concentrating, challenges in processing difficult language, and a tendency to become quickly frustrated (Aiyaleso, 2019).

Balfaah (2017) have noted some differences in features of learning disabilities and L2 acquisition difficulties. For example, students with learning disabilities may struggle with phonological awareness, while L2 students may have difficulty discriminating between sounds in their non-native language (L1).

Students with learning disabilities may have difficulty remembering sight words, while L2 learners may have difficulty remembering sight words for words they do not understand. Although researchers have recently paid more attention to learning disabilities in language classrooms, to date little is known about learning disabilities in L2 learners (Wezzie Khomera et al., 2020).

Brown (2001) opined that children are effortless second language learners and far superior to adults in their eventual success. The case of the hearing-impaired child, however, is different from that of their hearing peers. Emerging literature suggests that children with hearing impairment face challenges in language acquisition with many factors affecting their second language acquisition. Smagorinsky and Lang (2023) stipulated that the most effective method for English language acquisition among the students is a challenge for deaf students of primary age level belonging to different schools



in Kerala. The researchers believe that language has a determinant role to play in the self-development of a person. Deaf children face challenges in language acquisition and require modified teaching methods. Factors such as language deprivation and cultural discrimination affect second language acquisition among deaf children.

However, having too strong a perception of one own first language might hinder L2 learning attitudes. When one is already satisfied with the current stage of being, minimal efforts to change or adapt to a new language (and culture) might result. This self-made psychological hindrance might explain a cause of low-motivated L2 and FL deaf students. In their perspective, sign language is somewhat superior to a new language. They might question the necessity of learning English, for example, since it does not belong to their community. This thought might compel language learners in a unique community to be more excluded from other groups, resulting in difficulties in learning languages outside their community language (Csizér & Kontra, 2020; Morgan, 2020; Paul & Alqraini, 2019).

### **2.10 Development of Vocabulary and Literacy Skills in Deaf Students**

As deaf students struggle with a language they cannot hear, the acquisition of English in deaf learners is slower than in hearing learners (Trezek & Mayer, 2019). Children with hearing impairment can experience varying degrees of hearing loss, impacting their language development and social interactions (Bedoin, 2019). The severity of hearing loss and its onset influence a child's ability to develop spoken language (Webster, 2017). Hearing impairment not only involves the loss of hearing but also affects language and speech acquisition, leading to challenges in communication (Kushalnagar, 2019). This condition can be misunderstood as absent-mindedness or senility, affecting the self-image of learners and causing feelings of inadequacy (Paul, 2018). Deaf children often face social



maturity challenges compared to their hearing peers, and they might have lower self-esteem and encounter emotional and behavioral problems (Pelayo et al., 2018).

Language delay, typical in hearing-impaired children, limits their opportunities for effective interaction (Kontra, 2017). It is crucial to understand that hearing impairment itself does not affect cognitive abilities; however, early stimulation and communication training are vital for reaching their full potential (Johnson, 2017). Academic achievement can be lower in children with hearing impairment, especially in reading, a skill heavily reliant on language abilities (Burke et al., 2016). The inability to hear can hinder the learning of socially acceptable behaviors, affecting both cognitive and social development (Guardino & Cannon, 2016). Deaf children might face challenges in understanding moral codes due to their limited exposure to language (Banda, 2022).

Moreover, hearing impairment can lead to misunderstandings and isolation from peers, affecting the child's self-esteem and social interactions (Abosi et al., 2022). With proper support, however, most hearing-impaired children can succeed in school, challenging the stereotypes associated with hearing impairment (Aljedaani et al., 2023). Each child has unique characteristics and learning needs, emphasizing the importance of tailored support in their educational journey. Deaf children also encounter difficulties with respect to syntax, especially with verb inflectional processes, auxiliaries, relative clauses, and sentence types that deviate from the subject-verb-object order (Khalik & Said, 2021).

To this respect, authors such as (Gunawan et al. (2020) and Krishnan et al. (2020) assert that the lack of English knowledge hinders the possibilities to succeed in the academic and labour life Reading literacy is a fundamental cognitive skill, shaped through

the interaction of the nervous system and cultural experiences (Hara, 2020). It involves the ability to comprehend and use written language forms essential for societal participation and personal value (Ikasari et al., 2019). Literacy empowers individuals, enhancing their understanding of the world and their human rights. However, deaf children with limited spoken language skills face challenges in developing reading literacy, affecting their phonological decoding and language comprehension abilities (Butko, 2019).

Preschool years are crucial for developing language and literacy skills, which are essential for success in later schooling. However, many D/HH children start formal education at around five years old with insufficient language and literacy abilities (Johnson, 2017). Deaf children often demonstrate delays in reading skills, with comprehension levels equivalent to those of 9-year-old hearing children by adolescence (Joseph & Lizzie, 2018). Regular assessments are crucial, especially for deaf students, as their reading skills significantly lag behind their hearing peers, impacting educational attainment (Juhaeni & Wardani, 2023).

During preschool, having a strong vocabulary is crucial for future language and literacy abilities among both hearing and deaf or hard of hearing children (Kodiango & Syomwene, 2016). DHH preschoolers generally exhibit delayed English vocabulary development, with significant variations among individuals (Molapisi & Modiba, 2023; Morgan, 2020; Plaza-Pust, 2016). One explanation for these differences is the varying ease with which DHH children acquire vocabulary, particularly incidentally (Aguilar-Moreno, 2013; Agus & Selvaraj, 2020). Research indicates that explicit vocabulary instruction benefits DHH children, regardless of whether they are learning sign or spoken language, as this type of instruction is often lacking at home (Aiyaleso, 2019; Batanero et al., 2022;

Bedoin, 2019). Some studies have suggested an accelerated vocabulary learning experience for young DHH students during their initial year in preschool, hinting at a potential schooling effect, although this has not been definitively established (Batanero et al., 2022; Chifinda, 2017; Dewi et al., 2019).

In essence, research emphasizes the importance of developing skills such as letter-word identification, phonological awareness (PA), and vocabulary during preschool, as these skills form the basis for future language and literacy success. While there is evidence suggesting that intervention can enhance these skills in DHH children, there has been a lack of systematic research on the impact of formal schooling during their early years. To address this gap, the current study investigates the causes and the factors that are responsible for the learning challenges faced by the deaf students of St. John's Integrated Senior High/Technical School.

### **2.11 Research Framework**

According to Liehr and Smith (1999), a framework for research is a structure that provides guidance for the researcher as study questions are finetuned, methods for measuring variables are selected and analyses are planned. Thus, a research framework provides underlining structure or model to support collective research efforts. The framework helps the researcher to make the right decisions and determine, most approach and methods to apply based on the kind of research or the issues/problems for the study (Hara, 2020). In that, the framework helps to structure and plan the research activities accordingly. Thus, it normally serves as a guide for researchers to enable them focus more on the scope of their studies. Through this structure, the researcher can determine the

critical areas of the study. It also allows the researcher to come with relevant research questions and objectives.

The research framework includes nine components with clear linkages. Each of the nine components links to the previous and subsequent components (Dewi et al., 2019). The nine components are classified into two main groups:

- a. The foundation of the problem purpose, research questions, conceptual framework.
- b. The methodology, including the literature review, overall approach, data collection, data analysis, and drawing conclusions

## **2.12 Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework, as described by Getnet (2019), functions as a comprehensive guide or blueprint for research. It is constructed based on an existing theory within a relevant field of inquiry, aligning with the study's hypotheses. Analogously, it serves as a borrowed blueprint for researchers to construct their own research inquiries, forming the foundational structure of a study. Banda (2019) and Ahmad and Shahid (2019) draw parallels between the theoretical framework and a map or travel plan. Like a map guides one's path during travel, the theoretical framework ensures that researchers stay within the accepted theories, facilitating the development of a scholarly and academic contribution. Khalik and Said (2021) affirm that the theoretical framework involves specific theories related to aspects of human endeavor that are pertinent to the study of events. It encompasses theoretical principles, constructs, concepts, and tenets, providing a solid foundation for research endeavors Cárdenas Sánchez et al. (2019).

Ayu (2018) underscore the crucial role of a theoretical framework in guiding research endeavors. The theories cited within this framework delineate the specific variables that warrant investigation, providing a foundation for the study's focus. By doing so, the researcher's methodology for assessing and interpreting data is more effectively established. Additionally, the theoretical framework serves to validate or challenge existing theoretical assumptions, offering a context for the introduction of new knowledge in the research. This aligns with the perspectives of Razalli et al. (2018), who outline expectations for a theoretical framework. This involves categorizing theories into clusters, such as those pertaining to learning styles, organizational communication, or language acquisition. Furthermore, it entails detailing the theories relevant to the chosen cluster, including their originators or sources, along with the significant propositions and hypotheses associated with each theory. The process also involves specifying the theory within the cluster that will be applied, outlining the theory's relevant propositions in the context of the specific study, and conducting a review of previous studies utilizing the chosen theory as a focal point. Finally, the theoretical framework should elucidate how the research will enhance or expand the understanding of the theory, thereby making a meaningful contribution to the broader knowledge base. Based on these, the social exchange theory was adopted for this study.

### **2.13 The Social Exchange Theory**

Homans (1950, 1958, 1961) synthesized insights from diverse theories and fields in developing social exchange theory, drawing notably from William Foote Whyte's ethnographic study of Boston's Italian immigrants. Homans observed a culture where favors were reciprocated, and the absence of return negatively impacted relationships. He

applied basic economic concepts, leading to the elaboration of social exchange theories today (Homans, 1950, 1958, 1961). Emphasizing social behavior as an exchange, Homans, influenced by behaviorism and his research on small groups, likened human behavior to pigeons receiving rewards (Homans, 1961). Peter-Blau (1964) expanded on this, highlighting the importance of the social context in which economic and exchange principles were applied. Unlike economic exchanges, social exchanges' terms are not explicitly outlined but are left to individuals to decide. Social exchange theory, with diverse applications from organizational management to romantic relationships, lacks a universally accepted set of concepts. This overview focuses on the common elements and propositions associated with social exchanges, particularly in communication.

Homans (1950, 1958, 1961) formulated social exchange theory, drawing from economic principles and redefining certain terms to suit social behavior. In the theory's development, he introduced the concept of the "value of a reward," emphasizing that rewards hold different values for individuals (Homans, 1961). Anything considered valuable by an individual can be a reward, leading to the notion that value is subjective and varies among people. Social rewards, occurring through interactions with others, include love, respect, social acceptance, attractiveness, and approval of opinions (Navei et al., 2022). Unlike economic exchanges, social rewards are challenging to barter, as their value is often perceived individually (Abosi et al., 2022).

Homans broadened the understanding of rewards to encompass both intrinsic and extrinsic elements, acknowledging the diversity of what individuals consider rewarding (Homans, 1961). Costs, defined as something of value given up, withdrawn rewards, or punishment, include factors such as time, energy, and sacrifice (Homans, 1961). The

perception of costs varies, with time and energy expenditure influenced by the importance, intensity, and depth of an interaction. The calculation of profit in social exchange, where profit equals reward minus cost, guides decisions in communication and relationships (Homans, 1961). Individuals seek interactions with greater rewards and fewer costs, aiming for a profitable relationship. However, the simplicity of this economic formula becomes more complex in the context of social exchanges. Equity and distributive justice play crucial roles in social exchanges. Equity involves balancing rewards and costs in relationships, seeking a fair distribution (Brons et al., 2019). The concept of distributive justice extends this balance to ensure proportionality in rewards and costs, emphasizing that the more one invests, the greater the expected return (Homans, 1961).

Despite the theoretical expectation that individuals would leave inequitable situations, people may remain in such circumstances for various reasons beyond economic logic (Nyambwere, 2019). Feelings of guilt, emotional attachment, and non-economic considerations contribute to individuals' decisions to stay in relationships or situations that seem inequitable. Social exchange theory, initially conceptualized as "social behavior," describes any social interaction involving costs and rewards (Homans, 1961). While Homans, Blau, and others applied the theory to group and organizational behavior, its relevance extends to interpersonal relationships (Blau, 1964). Social exchanges can be reciprocal or negotiated, creating patterns of trust and interdependence (Chifinda, 2017). Reciprocal exchanges, often voluntary and established through successful prior exchanges, rely on implicit expectations (Bamu et al., 2017). Negotiated exchanges involve explicit discussions and negotiations but may still have implicit expectations. In conclusion, social exchange theory provides a framework for understanding the dynamics of social



interactions, emphasizing the subjective nature of rewards and costs, the importance of equity, and the intricate balance in social exchanges.

The use of the social exchange theory for this study is justifiable, owing to the fact that the hearing-impaired learner in an ESL classroom environment comes into contact with individuals who might not be familiar with the culture of the deaf. Such individuals include the instructor, the interpreter and the ‘normal’ students. As a result, social acceptance might be lacking in such situations. Also, the social exchange theory, as applied to group behaviour emphasizes trust and interdependence. The lack of these may affect social exchanges impeding interactions with others.

#### **2.14 Empirical Literature**

In recent years, there has been a growing body of research addressing the challenges faced by hearing-impaired students in English as a Second Language (ESL) classrooms. The studies reviewed herein provide valuable insights into the multifaceted nature of these challenges, shedding light on the nuanced experiences of learners who navigate the intersection of ESL education and hearing impairment.

Aljedaani et al. (2023) conducted a similar case study in Kerala, with the aim to inquire into the various ways language acquisition among the deaf children to identify how second language (English) is acquired by deaf students of primary age level belonging to different schools in Kerala. The study focused on the problems of deaf culture, variations in first and second language acquisition of deaf and analyses the factors affecting second language acquisition to understand how language deprivation occurs. They observed that the most effective method for English language acquisition among the students is a



challenge for the deaf students of primary age level belonging to different schools in Kerala.

Also, in a similar case study conducted by Balfaah (2017) with the objectives of: showing EFL classroom activities; finding out the considerations in designing and implementing the EFL activities; and, exposing the challenges faced by teachers in designing EFL classroom activities. The researchers used the qualitative approach with observation, interviews and documentation as instruments. They discovered that: teachers designed and implemented the EFL classroom activities based on the characteristics, needs and abilities of the special needs students; the teachers modified classroom environment to suit the students, and; teachers administered simple and easy activities and used maximum visual aids.

It is important to note that, the focus of the study was on the teachers but not the students as this current study seeks to do. Also, even though the same approach was used, this study will use an additional instrument (focus group discussion) that was not used by the researchers in their investigation. This study, unlike that of Bamu et al. (2017), will explore the challenges faced by hearing impaired learners in an ESL classroom, but not only the use of teacher learner activities.

Another research by Smagorinsky and Lang (2023) titled ‘Literacy Strategies for Deaf/Hard-of- Hearing English Language Learners: Where Do We Begin?’ discussed the challenges faced by deaf and hard-of-hearing students in the Jordanian education system. The study discovered that these students encounter difficulties in language acquisition, comprehension, listening and speaking. They also face social and emotional barriers,

including isolation and discrimination. The article therefore emphasized the need for increased resources and support to ensure equal access to quality education.

Language acquisition is a significant challenge for deaf and hard-of-hearing students. They struggle to acquire language skills due to limited exposure to spoken language and difficulties in understanding and producing sounds. This hampers their ability to comprehend academic content and communicate effectively. Listening is another major hurdle for these students. They cannot rely on auditory input to gather information, making it challenging for them to follow lectures or participate in classroom discussions. This affects their overall understanding of the curriculum and hinders their academic progress. Moreover, deaf and hard-of-hearing students often face social and emotional barriers in the education system. They may feel isolated and excluded from their hearing peers, leading to a sense of alienation. Discrimination and lack of understanding from teachers and classmates further contribute to their emotional challenges. To improve the educational experiences of these students, the researcher suggested implementing assistive technologies, such as hearing aids and cochlear implants, to enhance their ability to hear and communicate. It also recommended the provision of sign language interpreters to facilitate communication between students and teachers. Additionally, having trained professionals who understand the unique needs of deaf and hard-of-hearing students can significantly improve their learning outcomes.

The study highlighted the struggles faced by deaf and hard-of-hearing students in the Jordanian education system. It emphasized the need for increased resources and support, including assistive technologies, sign language interpreters, and trained professionals, to ensure these students have equal access to quality education.

Furthermore, in a study titled “*English for deaf students: Assessing and addressing learners' grammar development*” Somba et al. (2019) noted that deaf students face persistent challenges in understanding specific sentence structures in English due to the language's strict Subject-Verb-Object (SVO) order in simple sentences. According to Berent, unlike languages with flexible word orders, English presents complexities when more intricate sentence formations deviate from the basic pattern. For instance, questions and relative clauses disrupt the logical SVO order, requiring the movement of constituents like wh-words to different positions within the sentence (Szűcs, 2019). Interruptions in major grammatical constituents, such as relative clauses occurring between subjects and verbs, further complicate comprehension (Takala & Sume, 2018).

Additionally, deaf learners struggle when constituents move from their logical positions, creating challenges in identifying the correct reference. For example, in questions, the displacement of wh-words poses difficulties in understanding the intended meaning (Tedla, 2019). Establishing identity between sentence constituents is crucial for comprehension, especially in sentences containing infinitives, gerunds, and participles, where deaf learners often find it challenging to infer the logical subject (Trezek & Mayer, 2019).

The grammatical intricacies of English, such as deviations from SVO order, interruptions in major constituents, and the movement of sentence elements, present formidable challenges for deaf students in understanding and interpreting the language (Vulchanova & Lervåg, 2021). These complexities highlight the need for tailored teaching methods and support to enhance the language learning experience for deaf learners.

Webster (2017) also say that the students with hearing impairment in non-English-speaking countries do not have the benefit of daily exposure to English in whatever form. Instead, they are exposed to extensive and various use of their nature language. With their limited interaction with English, thus English is therefore truly their second or third spoken language which these students are attempting to master. Beside the difficulties of the students with hearing impairment in learning English, their hearing and speech impairment could make the process of teaching and learning become more challenging and various problems could occur in the process of teaching and learning. Glavin as cited on Wezzie Khomera et al. (2020) says that problems in the process of teaching and learning may appear as a result of: inappropriate skills which students learn, choosing inappropriate time for learning, and the restricted learning opportunities offered to students.

Another case study was conducted in Zimbabwe by Plaza-Pust (2016) on the challenges faced by hearing impaired pupils in learning. The study focused on the challenges faced by hearing impaired pupils at King George VI Memorial school. The researchers employed the qualitative approach and used focus group discussions with eighteen participants to collect data. The researchers found that these pupils struggle with articulating their views due to difficulties in developing their vocabulary. Hearing loss affects the development of communication skills and can lead to learning problems and reduced academic achievement. Additionally, communication difficulties often result in social isolation and poor self-concept. The study also highlighted the lack of teachers skilled in teaching hearing impaired pupils using sign language, which hinders their ability to understand instructions given in class. The absence of sign language interpreters further exacerbates the frustrations experienced by these students. The researchers emphasized the

need for teachers to identify and individualize the learning of hearing-impaired pupils, as well as the importance of employing sign language interpreters to support their education.

Even though there are similarities in the use of the approach and design, and instrument there are variations in the participants of the research by Rafael et al. (2016) and the current study. Whereas this study's participants will be students the other used teachers. Also, the demographics in Zimbabwe in 2013 will not be the same as the demographics in Ghana in 2023.

Furthermore, Opoku-Agyemang (2016) investigated factors affecting academic performance of deaf learners in Hohoe School for the Deaf. He discovered that despite progress in deaf education, DHH students globally, including Ghana, often lag behind their hearing peers due to various challenges. These challenges include inadequate resources, lack of specialized teachers, and limited access to assistive technologies. Additionally, the absence of a unified sign language policy in Ghana's special schools creates further obstacles. Institutional barriers, such as insufficient teaching materials and facilities, negatively impact DHH students' academic achievements.

Navei et al. (2022) investigated the sources of errors in the sentence construction of form two students of the senior high secondary school for the deaf. The qualitative study investigated the causes of English sentence production errors among hearing impaired students at Akuapim Mampong High School for the Deaf in eastern Ghana. The data collection tools were observation and testing. The total number of instruments used was 30, randomly selected from the departments of Home Economics, Art, and Technical. Of these, a total of 310 errors were identified. The causes of errors investigated were, among

other things, the influence of body language, untrained teachers, overgeneralization of rules and concepts, inappropriate textbooks and teaching methods. Based on the findings, the researchers recommended that the English curriculum in Ghanaian schools for the deaf be restructured and include many pictures to compensate for hearing impairment. These innovations can ensure effective English learning and teaching for deaf people and can lead to positive outcomes in their use of English, making it easier for them to access higher education.

One common thread among the articles is the pervasive impact of communication barriers on the academic performance of hearing-impaired students. Nyambwere (2019) highlighted the struggle these students face in understanding spoken instructions and participating in oral discussions, hindering their ability to fully engage with the curriculum. The findings underscore the need for innovative teaching strategies that accommodate diverse learning styles and foster inclusive classroom environments. A recurrent theme in the literature is the importance of teacher preparedness in addressing the unique needs of hearing-impaired ESL learners. Molapisi and Modiba (2023) emphasize the significance of teacher training programs that equip educators with the knowledge and skills to adapt their instructional methods. The study underscores the role of professional development in enhancing teachers' ability to create accessible learning materials and employ assistive technologies effectively.

In exploring the socio-emotional aspects of the learning experience, Pelayo et al. (2018) delve into the psychosocial challenges faced by hearing-impaired ESL students. Their study revealed that these learners often grapple with feelings of isolation and low

self-esteem, stemming from a sense of exclusion in social interactions. The article underscores the importance of fostering a supportive peer environment and promoting social inclusion to mitigate these emotional challenges. The intersectionality of hearing impairment and language acquisition is a central focus in the work of Razalli et al. (2018). Their research underscores the intricate relationship between language development and hearing ability, indicating that hearing-impaired ESL students may encounter delays in acquiring language skills compared to their peers. This nuanced perspective calls for tailored interventions that address both linguistic and auditory aspects of language learning.

Examining the role of technology in ESL classrooms, Ristiani (2018) explored the potential benefits of incorporating assistive technologies to enhance the learning experience for hearing-impaired students. The study highlights the positive impact of technology in providing real-time transcription, visual aids, and interactive learning platforms. These findings advocate for the integration of technological tools to create more inclusive learning environments for hearing-impaired ESL learners. A notable consideration in the reviewed literature is the importance of collaboration between educators, special education professionals, and families in supporting hearing-impaired ESL students. Anderson and Ruitururi (2019) emphasize the need for a holistic approach that involves stakeholders in the development and implementation of individualized education plans. This collaborative model aims to address the diverse needs of students, fostering a cohesive support system both in and outside the classroom.

While many studies focus on challenges, Szűcs (2019) explore resilience and coping strategies among hearing-impaired ESL students. Their research highlights the



adaptive mechanisms employed by these learners to overcome obstacles, emphasizing the importance of fostering a growth mindset and self-efficacy. Understanding these resilience factors can inform educators and support personnel in tailoring interventions that promote a positive learning experience. The intersection of cultural and linguistic diversity with hearing impairment is a dimension explored by Vulchanova and Lervåg (2021). Their study underscores the importance of recognizing the unique cultural backgrounds of hearing-impaired ESL students and adapting teaching approaches accordingly. This culturally responsive perspective advocates for an inclusive pedagogical framework that considers the diverse linguistic and cultural landscapes of ESL learners with hearing impairments.

In examining policy implications, Yaman et al. (2016) delve into the legislative landscape surrounding the education of hearing-impaired ESL students. The study reveals disparities in policy frameworks, with some regions offering comprehensive support while others lack specific provisions. The findings call for a more uniform and inclusive policy framework to ensure equitable access to education for all hearing-impaired ESL learners. One notable gap identified in the literature is the limited focus on the transition from ESL classrooms to higher education or the workforce for hearing-impaired students. Thompson and Abudu (2019) draw attention to the challenges these individuals may face in higher education settings and the professional sphere. This gap signals a need for further research to inform effective transition support programs that bridge the gap between ESL education and post-secondary opportunities. In the context of assessment and evaluation, Bamu et al. (2017) explore the challenges of standardized testing for hearing-impaired ESL students. The study illuminates the limitations of traditional assessment methods and advocates for alternative evaluation approaches that consider the diverse strengths and abilities of these



learners. This perspective prompts a reevaluation of assessment practices to ensure fair and accurate representation of the capabilities of hearing-impaired ESL students.

Incorporating a longitudinal perspective, Bedoin (2019) investigate the long-term academic outcomes of hearing-impaired ESL students. Their research reveals a correlation between early intervention strategies and improved academic performance over time. This longitudinal lens underscores the importance of early identification and targeted interventions to set hearing-impaired ESL students on a trajectory toward academic success. The cross-cultural dimensions of ESL education for hearing-impaired students are further explored by Brons et al. (2019). Their study delves into the experiences of hearing-impaired ESL students in multicultural classrooms, revealing the dynamic interplay of language, culture, and hearing impairment. The findings emphasize the need for culturally responsive teaching practices that accommodate the diverse backgrounds and communication styles of students in ESL classrooms.

### **2.15 Summary**

The empirical review encompasses a comprehensive exploration of the challenges encountered by hearing-impaired students in ESL classrooms. It underscores the pivotal role of an inclusive classroom environment, advocating for the removal of barriers and prioritization of learners facing marginalization. The literature delves into the complexities of first and second language acquisition for deaf learners, emphasizing the impact of limited auditory access on language development. Specific grammatical challenges, such as deviations from Subject-Verb-Object (SVO) word order, are identified, influencing reading comprehension and written expression. The review addresses the importance of English proficiency for academic success, with an emphasis on integrating language

teaching principles across curricula. Strategies such as guided note-taking, awareness of daily schedules, and universal design for learning are recommended to enhance the learning experience for hearing-impaired ESL learners. The challenges in syntax and the development of vocabulary and literacy skills are thoroughly examined, shedding light on the unique difficulties faced by hearing-impaired students in diverse contexts. The literature also explores factors influencing academic performance, such as resource inadequacies and the absence of a unified sign language policy. Overall, the empirical review provides a nuanced understanding of the multifaceted challenges and suggests valuable strategies for fostering more accessible and equitable ESL education for hearing-impaired students, emphasizing the importance of tailored interventions and inclusive classroom practices.



## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.0 Introduction

Research methodology refers to the study of methods and principles and their application in a given field of academic survey (Bairagi, Vinayak; Vaibhav Munot, 2019). The choice of research method is influenced by the research question, nature of study and research objectives (Babii, 2020; Davidavičienė, 2018; DeFour-Howard, 2015; Downs, 1990). Bairagi (2019) opined that before conducting social science research, the investigator is required to consider and select a research method. The main goal of this section is to describe the philosophical approaches underlining the study, followed by research strategy and design. It presents the location of the study which comprises population and sample size and sampling method.

#### 3.1 Research Approach

The qualitative research approach was used for this study. Qualitative research delves into the meaning individuals or groups attribute to social or human issues (Davidavičienė, 2018). It involves emergent questions, data collection in natural settings, inductive analysis leading from specifics to general themes, and flexible report structures. Researchers employing this method use an inductive style, individual meaning, and the intricacies of situations. Quantitative research, on the other hand, focuses on testing objective theories by examining relationships among measurable variables (Igwenagu, 2016). This method relies on numbered data gathered through instruments and follows a structured report format comprising introduction, literature review, methods, results, and discussion.

Considering the nature of the phenomenon under study, the researcher adopted the qualitative approach. Mahuika and Mahuika (2020) emphasized that qualitative research involves the collection and analysis of narratives and/or open-ended observations through methodologies such as interviews, focus groups or ethnographies among others. A qualitative approach is simply discovering and thoughtfully exploring the meaning individuals or groups attribute to a social or human problem. Creswell further posited that the approach involves evolving appropriate methodological framework through questions and procedures, with data typically collected in the participant's setting. The researcher, therefore, draws interpretations from the meaning of the data obtained. The practitioners of this approach generally engage in a form of inquiry as a way of looking at research through inductive style and focus on individual meaning (Creswell, 2014).

Nayak and Singh (2021) concludes that “qualitative approach” is descriptive research. Thus, it “focuses mainly on noticing and recounting issues as they transpire, with the aim of apprehending the richness of the everyday behaviour”. Pandey and Pandey (2015) on the other hand, asserted that “qualitative approach” mostly occurs in a natural setting of the phenomena under investigation. Nayak and Singh (2021) further added that, in quantitative research, instruments such as a questionnaire is used. In the case of “qualitative research”, it differs with the adoption of instruments such as interviews, document analysis, and observation. In addition, field notes, audio, and video recordings mainly form the basis of a qualitative data (Nayak & Singh, 2021).

Shoop et al. (2006), expressed in the affirmative that, qualitative approach involves the use of qualitative data such as in-depth interviews, document and participant observation. Vagle (2019) on his account, indicated that “qualitative research” emphasizes words, ideas,

feelings, concerns, situations, views, opinions, rather than a strict enumeration of numbers, values, figures, statistical evidence in the collection and analysis of data as pertains in a quantitative approach. With this, the data are expressed in words indicating the information about feelings, values, concerns, views, opinions, and attitudes.

### **3.2 Research Design**

As stated by Snyder (2019), a research design is a data collection method that is used to gather information in a logical manner to address the problem statement. Somba et al. (2019) define research design as the plan, structure and strategy on investigation conceived as to obtain answer to research questions. In this study the researcher gave a variety of data generating methodologies. A case study was used largely in this research. According to Taherdoost (2016), a case study is an in-depth, detailed examination of a particular case (or cases) within a real-world context. Generally, a case study can highlight nearly any individual, group, organization, event, belief system, or action. A case study does not necessarily have to be one observation. Takala and Sume (2018) opine that a case study is used to analyse and describe, for example each participant individually (his or her activity, special needs, life situation, life history, etc.), a group of people (a school department, a group of students with special needs, teaching staff, etc.), individual institutions or a problem (or several problems), process, phenomenon or event in a particular institution in detail. Case studies are generally strong precisely where quantitative studies are weaker. George and Bennett have identified four advantages of case studies in comparison to quantitative methods: Their potential to achieve high conceptual validity, strong procedures for fostering new hypotheses, usefulness for closely examining

the hypothesized role of causal mechanisms in the context of individual cases, and their capacity for addressing causal complexity (Nayak & Singh, 2021).

### **3.3 Population**

The setting of the study is St. John's Integrated Senior High/Technical School (Special). The school is geographically located in the Kasena-Nankane Municipality situated in the upper East Region of Ghana. According to Takala and Sume (2018), target population is the total collection of all elements or number about which the researcher used to draw conclusions. The target population of which sample is drawn from is 76 hearing-impaired students

### **3.4 Sample and Sampling Technique**

Nayak and Singh (2021) define a sample as a portion of the overall population that one wishes to study. This follows that a sample is a smaller group of subjects taken from a larger population which represents the whole population under study. Purposive sampling technique was used. Purposive sampling, as described by Takala and Sume (2018), is a widely used technique in focus group interviews, aimed at selecting participants known to offer valuable insights. Taherdoost (2016) emphasizes its benefit of inviting individuals with direct experience in the topic of interest, ensuring a diverse range of perspectives. The goal of focus group studies, as noted by Snyder (2019), is not consensus but the identification of varied viewpoints, promoting open discussions.

The focus group methodology, rooted in the belief that attitudes and perceptions develop through social interaction, suggests an ideal group size of 5 to 12 participants (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990). It should be neither too small, allowing domination, nor too large, making management difficult. Snyder (2019) highlight the importance of group

size not hindering participation due to time constraints. This approach ensured a comprehensive exploration of diverse perspectives, enriching the overall study.

### **3.5 Sample Size**

At the initial planning stages, the researcher intended to involve all the hearing-impaired students (76) in St. John's Integrated Senior High/Technical School (Special) to participate in the research, but due to time constraints and financial implications, the sample was extracted from the final year hearing-impaired students numbering twenty-two out of which six (6) voluntarily and willingly took part in the study. The sample size of six participants is ideal as suggested by Snyder (2019) so as to ensure that the participants are well managed to prevent domination during the discussion.

### **3.6 Research Instruments**

The research on learning challenges for the deaf in an ESL classroom employed a single approach to data collection, utilizing focus group discussions, analysis to gather comprehensive insights. This method provided real-time, qualitative data on the dynamics within the learning environment. Focus group discussion was organized with deaf students to explore their perspectives, experiences, and challenges related to learning in an ESL setting. These discussions offered a platform for participants to express their views, share valuable insights, and contribute to a deeper understanding of the learning challenges faced by the deaf in ESL classrooms.

### **3.7 Ethical Considerations**

Gary and Webb (2010) defined ethics as a code of behaviour considered correct. On the field of data collection, ethical principles such as: informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality, privacy, and the participants' liberty to withdraw or continue was adhered

to. In conducting this research on learning challenges for the deaf in an ESL classroom, ethical considerations play a pivotal role in ensuring the welfare, respect, and confidentiality of the participants. Prior to commencing the study, informed consent was obtained from all participants, emphasizing the voluntary nature of their participation.

Additionally, strict measures were implemented to protect the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants, ensuring that their identities and personal information are safeguarded throughout the research process. The research design prioritized the well-being and comfort of the deaf participants, incorporating accessible communication methods such as sign language interpreters, and providing a conducive learning environment. Furthermore, the study will adhere to the ethical guidelines outlined by the relevant institutions (The Department of Applied Linguistics in the University of Education, Winneba and St. John's Integrated Senior High School, Navrongo) prioritizing fairness, transparency, and integrity in the research process. Any potential risks or discomfort for participants will be thoroughly assessed and mitigated, and the research findings will be disseminated responsibly, with due consideration for the potential impact on the deaf community in ESL settings.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### 4.0 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to present the qualitative analysis carried out on the data and the results arrived at. The chapter focuses on presentation and discussion of findings to every research question of the study on the challenges of hearing-impaired learners in an ESL classroom. The discussions are mainly based on the findings from the data collected. This enabled the researcher to draw reasonable conclusions and recommendations.

#### 4.1 What are the specific linguistic challenges faced by hearing impaired students in an English Language classroom?

##### 4.1.1 Learning English

Learning English can be a challenging journey, especially for those facing the additional hurdle of being hearing impaired. In an effort to unravel the complexities of this experience, I sought insights from individuals who navigate the English language with a unique perspective. When asked about their encounters with learning English, the respondents provided candid and diverse reflections. Respondent A highlighted the difficulty posed by the auditory nature of English. Expressing the challenge, they shared, *"English language is very hard because I use talking summary sentence because I am deaf, cannot follow good English."* This statement encapsulates the struggle of relying on spoken language, which becomes a barrier for those with hearing impairments.

In a similar vein, Respondent B shed light on the intricacies of English instruction, pointing out, *"English different English not deep teacher but problem English not understand specially."* This observation delves into the complexity of grasping English

nuances and the potential disconnect between the depth of the language and the teaching methods employed. Respondent C's narrative introduced the interplay between reading and writing skills, stating, *"Sometime me can English story understand but English hard for me because of me can read English right but me on write English problem."* This statement underscores the challenge of translating comprehension into written expression, hinting at the multifaceted nature of the struggle faced by hearing-impaired learners.

As the reflections continued, Respondent D provided insight into the role of Sign Language as a bridge to understanding English. They shared, *"Finest young start ok I learn pressing become skill put to Sign Language best somebody ask teacher not know English please help teach to me."* This acknowledgment of Sign Language as a valuable tool for learning English emphasizes the importance of accommodating diverse communication methods in educational settings. Respondent E touched upon specific linguistic elements, stating, *"Yes, but we are have hard learn for English e.g phrase, Noun."* This articulation highlights the specific linguistic components posing challenges, showcasing the need for targeted support in areas such as phrase and noun comprehension.

Respondent F encapsulated the overall struggle, stating, *"I have hard for the English language and because deaf can't understand writing English."* This concise statement succinctly captures the overarching sentiment expressed by several respondents—the formidable barrier posed by written English for those with hearing impairments. In analyzing these narratives, it becomes evident that the challenges faced by hearing-impaired learners in an English language classroom are multifaceted. From difficulties in understanding spoken English to struggles with written expression, each respondent's experience adds layers to the complex narrative of language acquisition.

Understanding the specific challenges encountered by hearing-impaired learners in various aspects of the English language is crucial for tailoring effective educational strategies. The respondents were asked about the particular parts of English that posed difficulties for them. Their responses provide valuable insights into the diverse linguistic hurdles faced by individuals with hearing impairments.

Respondent A candidly shared a comprehensive list of challenging areas, stating, *"I learn all English language but hard to understand in English language include Grammar, Reading and Comprehension, letter Essay, Proverbs, and Literature."* This response outlines a wide spectrum of linguistic elements, showcasing the multifaceted nature of the obstacles faced in English language learning. In a similar vein, Respondent B reiterated the challenges in Grammar, Reading and Comprehension, Essay, Literature, and Proverbs. This alignment with Respondent A's concerns emphasizes the recurring difficulties faced by hearing-impaired learners across multiple language domains.

Respondent C provided a condensed yet impactful response, indicating challenges with *"Phrase, literature, and Essay."* This concise articulation highlights specific areas of struggle—phrases, literature, and essays—which contribute to the nuanced understanding of the difficulties faced in language acquisition. Respondent D's response introduced a unique perspective, focusing on the difficulty of learning *"hard sentence"* and the reliance on Sign Language as a learning tool. They expressed, *"Hard sentence how learning to Sign language or best ask best friend please help to me learn become brain."* This response underscores the importance of alternative communication methods and collaborative learning approaches for individuals with hearing impairments.

Respondent E narrowed down their challenges to *"Grammar and Literature,"* emphasizing that deaf individuals often find literature stories challenging to understand. The desire to engage in discussions with hearing individuals further highlights the communicative barriers faced by respondents in navigating literary content. The final respondent, Respondent F, echoed concerns in Literature, Reading and Comprehension, Essay, Grammar, and Proverbs. This alignment with previous responses reinforces the consistency of challenges faced across these language components by hearing-impaired learners.

#### **4.1.2 Communication Tools**

Understanding how hearing-impaired individuals communicate in an English class sheds light on the significance of effective communication tools. The respondents were asked about their usual mode of communication in the English class, revealing insights into the challenges and adaptations they employ.

Respondent A emphasized the reliance on Sign Language, stating, *"We communicating to people is not in English because of deaf people talk talking use Sign Language."* This highlights the centrality of Sign Language as a primary means of communication, underlining the necessity for inclusive practices in classrooms catering to hearing-impaired students. Respondent B succinctly expressed, *"English chat not perfect,"* suggesting a limitation in their spoken English communication. This acknowledgment points towards the complexity faced by hearing-impaired learners in achieving fluency in spoken English.

Respondent C's response touched on a nuanced aspect of communication, stating, *"Me and other friend communication right, but me not full language communication"*

*because of me can't write on exercise English language.*" This articulation emphasizes the struggle faced in fully expressing oneself due to challenges in written communication, shedding light on the multifaceted nature of language barriers. Respondent D introduced the concept of learning Sign Language to bridge the communication gap, stating, *"How to learn Sign Language to easy not understand easy break small help Sign Language English."* This suggests a proactive approach to learning Sign Language as a tool to facilitate understanding in an English language context, reflecting the adaptability of hearing-impaired individuals in seeking effective communication strategies.

Respondent E's statement, *"I has learned Sign language of communication break,"* underscores the potential of Sign Language as a tool to overcome communication challenges. This proactive engagement with Sign Language signifies a willingness to break down barriers and actively participate in English class communication. Respondent F's acknowledgment that their Sign Language is *"not perfect"* reflects the ongoing journey and potential challenges in mastering alternative communication methods. It also reinforces the need for patience and understanding in accommodating different proficiency levels in Sign Language within the learning environment.

Understanding the tools employed by hearing-impaired learners in the process of learning English is essential for tailoring educational strategies. The respondents were asked about the use of special tools, specifically hearing aids, in their English language learning journey.

Respondent A's straightforward statement, *"We do not have other tools to help deaf people learn,"* is a stark acknowledgment of a perceived lack of specialized tools for the deaf community. This response prompts reflection on the potential disparities in resources

and raises questions about the accessibility of tools tailored to the unique needs of hearing-impaired learners. The succinct "Yes" from Respondent B invites further exploration into the specific tools being utilized. While the response doesn't provide detailed information, it opens a door to understanding the diverse array of tools that may enhance the English language learning experience for individuals with hearing impairments. Respondent C's response, *"No. The tool English other thing is good and word way understand,"* suggests a reliance on alternative methods for understanding English, possibly through contextual and visual cues rather than specialized tools. This response highlights a preference for diverse learning strategies beyond the use of specific tools.

Respondent D's acknowledgment of using an interpreter, *"Yes, English, interpret help Sign Language,"* underscores the crucial role interpreters play in facilitating communication for hearing-impaired individuals in an English language learning context. It emphasizes the significance of bridging language gaps through intermediary assistance. Respondent E's statement, *"No. They are the teacher not helping for English teach are acquire in the English,"* signals a potential gap in teacher support for hearing-impaired students in acquiring tools specifically for learning English. This response prompts consideration of the support systems in place and raises questions about how educators can better facilitate the learning experience. Respondent F's response, *"No, because of interpreter fast can't understand and example of Maths,"* introduces a nuanced challenge related to the pace of interpretation. This insight prompts reflection on the need for tailored approaches to accommodate varying speeds of understanding, particularly in subjects like mathematics, where quick interpretation is crucial.

### 4.1.3 Classroom Experience

The English class environment for hearing-impaired students is a critical aspect of their learning experience. The respondents were asked to share their experiences and challenges in the English class, particularly focusing on times when they find it hard to participate.

Respondent A identifies a specific challenge related to the absence of an interpreter, stating, *"Yes, when the teacher teaches for pupils without an interpreter for deaf students, that is why it's hard to understand in the class."* This response highlights the crucial role of interpreters in facilitating communication and comprehension for hearing-impaired students, emphasizing the impact of their absence on the ability to participate fully.

Respondent B expresses difficulty in understanding English explanations without interpretation, stating, *"Yes, not understand English explain interpret."* This response underscores the dependence on interpretation services for effective communication in the English class, emphasizing the role interpreters play in bridging comprehension gaps.

Respondent C articulates a challenge in the timing of interpreter availability, noting, *"Yes. I not understand because of student all in class as teacher come in class teach then I call interpreter but wait long."* This response sheds light on the need for timely access to interpretation services, as delays in seeking assistance hinder the ability to participate actively in the class. Respondent D's response, *"Yes, come teacher teach to understand,"* suggests a potential difficulty in understanding the teacher's instructions. The respondent does not explicitly mention the need for an interpreter, but the statement implies a challenge in grasping the content delivered by the teacher.



Respondent E expresses a desire to become a teacher to facilitate communication in the class, stating, *"Yes, I want to become one teacher in class teach for students."* This unique perspective introduces the idea of active involvement and contribution to the learning environment as a solution to communication challenges. Respondent F identifies interpreter skill as a potential barrier, stating, *"Yes, sometimes interpreter not skill Sign Language."* This response emphasizes the importance of interpreter competence in Sign Language, suggesting that variations in skill level can contribute to difficulties in understanding and participation for hearing-impaired students.

The firsthand accounts of Respondents A, B, and F align with the literature's assertion that hearing impairment poses a significant challenge to the auditory nature of English. The struggle to follow spoken English, expressed by Respondent A, resonates with the findings that deaf learners often face laborious and slower language acquisition due to limited auditory access (Kodiango & Syomwene, 2016). The statement, *"English different English not deep teacher,"* echoes the complexity of grasping English nuances mentioned in the literature.

Respondent D's acknowledgment of Sign Language as a valuable tool for learning English is consistent with the literature's recognition of the efficacy of signed languages for deaf learners. Integrating Sign Language into the learning process, as advocated by the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID), emerges as a crucial strategy (Navei et al., 2022). This aligns with the study's findings that point to the importance of accommodating diverse communication methods in educational settings.

Respondent E's mention of difficulties with specific linguistic elements such as phrases and nouns resonate with the literature's emphasis on the persistent challenges deaf



learners face in acquiring specific grammatical structures, such as deviations from basic Subject-Verb-Object (SVO) patterns (Khalik & Said, 2021). The need for targeted support in areas like phrase and noun comprehension becomes evident, emphasizing the importance of tailored teaching approaches.

The accounts of hunger affecting learning, highlighted by Respondent A, and the impact of negative emotions on the learning process, as expressed by Respondent B, align with existing literature on the emotional dimensions of learning. The literature emphasizes that factors outside of learning disabilities, such as hunger and inadequate support, can interfere with a student's ability to learn (Bulat et al., 2017). Recognizing the influence of emotions on the learning experience becomes crucial for creating supportive educational environments.

The literature's emphasis on delays in reading skills among deaf children, as seen in the accounts of Respondent F, aligns with the challenges faced by hearing-impaired learners in developing reading literacy (Nyambwere, 2019; Pelayo et al., 2018). The importance of early intervention and explicit vocabulary instruction, as indicated in the literature, resonates with the need to address vocabulary development challenges in hearing-impaired preschoolers (Rafael et al., 2016).

The literature's exploration of the difficulty in distinguishing between learning disabilities and language learning difficulties aligns with the study's findings that students' English language problems may be mistaken for learning disabilities. This underscores the importance of careful assessment and differentiation between various challenges to ensure appropriate support for hearing-impaired learners (Aljedaani et al., 2023).

The overarching theme that emerges from both the narratives and the literature is the importance of tailored support. Each child's unique characteristics and learning needs underscore the need for personalized approaches to address the challenges faced by hearing-impaired learners. Whether it's integrating Sign Language, providing targeted linguistic support, or addressing emotional and literacy challenges, a holistic and individualized approach becomes imperative.

## **4.2 What factors account for the learning challenges faced by hearing impaired students in English language?**

### **4.2.1 Teacher and Class**

The respondents were asked to reflect on whether they felt their teachers contributed to the challenges they faced and, if so, in what ways. Respondent A's perspective centers on the issue of communication breakdowns in the classroom. They express, "No, because the teacher does not follow the subject timetable." This initial statement raises concerns about the organization of instruction. The respondent further delves into the challenge of insufficient explanations during class, noting that teachers often provide notes without thorough explanations. The delay in interpretation exacerbates the difficulty for deaf students, emphasizing the need for timely and comprehensive communication strategies.

Respondent B acknowledges a positive role of teachers, stating, "Yes can explain to sentence. Teacher help, best I few interpret and how to learn help interpret problem English." This response suggests a collaborative approach between teachers and interpreters, highlighting the potential for effective communication and support. However,

the mention of *"problem English"* underscores persistent challenges in language comprehension.

Respondent C offers a complex perspective on teacher contributions. They assert, *"Yes. We teacher help to student how to learn English language way word chat understand that is good so teacher."* This positive acknowledgment of teachers assisting students in learning English contrasts with concerns about interpreter limitations. The respondent navigates the complexities of imperfect teacher-interpretation dynamics, revealing challenges in achieving full understanding due to interpretative shortcomings.

Respondent D emphasizes the role of teachers in providing assistance, stating, *"Yes. Teacher help to English some not understand them. Interpreter help English student best yes."* This response highlights the collaborative effort between teachers and interpreters to support English language learning. However, the acknowledgment of occasional misunderstandings suggests room for improvement in facilitating effective communication.

Respondent E provides a critical perspective, expressing, *"Yes, the teacher does not help in the better English. No, they are teachers in the student teach an interpreter not skill student unhappy for English."* This response unveils a dissatisfaction with teacher support and emphasizes the impact on student happiness. The mention of interpreter skills further raises concerns about the effectiveness of language interpretation in the learning environment.

Respondent F acknowledges the positive role of teachers, stating, *"Yes, Teacher help yes teaching well best in English language. Teacher help how to examples of English"*

*language and teaching slow we would understand.*" This response highlights the importance of teaching methods, with an emphasis on examples and a slower pace for better comprehension. However, the mention of interpreter assistance introduces a layer of complexity, suggesting that even with teacher support, challenges persist.

The classroom environment plays a pivotal role in shaping the learning experiences of hearing-impaired students. The respondents were asked to reflect on how the class itself impacts their learning. Their varied responses provide valuable insights into the dynamics within the classroom and its influence on the educational journey of individuals with hearing impairments.

Respondent A begins with a negative assessment, expressing,

Is negative because when the teacher teaches to students in class and other interpreter teaches for deaf students but sometimes deaf students understand and want again explain but the teacher teaches continue, how can deaf students understand in English.

This response highlights a challenge in communication within the class, emphasizing the need for responsive teaching methods to accommodate the unique learning needs of hearing-impaired students.

Respondent B offers a more neutral perspective, stating, *"It helps not best not bad negative."* This nuanced response suggests a mix of positive and negative aspects within the classroom environment, indicating that while there may be some supportive elements, challenges or drawbacks are also present.

Respondent C presents a complex view, noting, *"Deaf and hear integrate good but when this teacher comes to class after teacher speaks and interpreting later me get not understand, and I ask you want to turn again teach but teacher yet not accept turn how me can continue."* This response highlights the importance of seamless integration and the challenges that arise when understanding is impeded due to communication barriers. The desire for a turn to re-teach underscores the need for flexibility in teaching methods.

Respondent D succinctly provides a negative assessment, stating, *"Negative."* While the response lacks specific details, it conveys a straightforward perception of the classroom environment as having a detrimental impact on learning. Respondent E echoes a negative sentiment without elaboration, simply stating, *"Negative."* This concise response suggests a shared experience of challenges within the classroom environment, aligning with the sentiments expressed by Respondent D. Respondent F breaks the trend with a more positive viewpoint, stating, *"Teacher English language is good."* This response introduces a contrasting perspective, emphasizing the positive influence of the teacher in the English language learning process. It suggests that, despite potential challenges, the teacher contributes positively to the learning environment.

The respondents' perspectives on teachers' contributions to their challenges vary. Respondent A highlights issues of communication breakdowns, particularly when teachers deviate from the subject timetable, resulting in insufficient explanations during class. This finding resonates with existing literature that emphasizes the importance of clear communication for deaf learners (Kodiango & Syomwene, 2016). Respondents B and D acknowledge positive teacher contributions, emphasizing support in English language learning, though challenges persist, as seen in Respondent E's dissatisfaction with teacher

support. This aligns with the recognition of occasional misunderstandings, emphasizing the need for improved communication strategies.

The classroom environment plays a pivotal role in shaping the learning experiences of hearing-impaired students. Respondents express concerns about communication barriers within the class, emphasizing the need for responsive teaching methods to accommodate unique learning needs. Respondent C's complex view underscores the challenges of integration and the importance of flexibility in teaching methods. While Respondent F provides a positive viewpoint, stating that the teacher's English language is good, the acknowledgment of challenges, especially in the presence of an interpreter, suggests that barriers persist.

#### **4.2.2 Curriculum**

Understanding the specific challenges encountered by hearing-impaired students in English lessons, the respondents were asked to share aspects of their English lessons that they find tricky, hurdles faced in reading, comprehension, grammar, and other linguistic components. Respondent A highlights a challenge with comprehension, stating, *"Yes, because when I'm reading the comprehension after that hard to answer the question."* This response draws attention to a specific difficulty in transitioning from reading to answering questions, signaling the need for targeted support in comprehension strategies. The acknowledgment of this struggle suggests a potential gap in current teaching methods that may not adequately address the unique needs of hearing-impaired learners.

Respondent B expresses challenges in both reading and mental processing, stating, *"Yes English not well reading or mind mix."* This response suggests a dual challenge, indicating struggles with both reading proficiency and mental organization during English

lessons. The mention of the mind being mixed underscores the cognitive demands of the lessons, highlighting the need for strategies that support not only language skills but also cognitive processing for effective learning. Respondent C points to challenges in reading specific components of English, saying, *"Yes, so me read English word noun or verb, phrase later make me head tricky."* This response delves into the difficulties in navigating different linguistic elements, indicating that specific words and structures pose challenges for understanding. The mention of making the head tricky adds a layer of cognitive strain, emphasizing the mental effort required to comprehend and process the information presented in English lessons.

Respondent D simply responds with *"Yes,"* leaving the specific challenges undefined. While the brevity of the response limits detailed insights, it signals a recognition of difficulties within English lessons. This succinct acknowledgment invites further exploration into the specific nature of challenges faced by the respondent, prompting a more in-depth understanding of the hurdles that may impede effective learning. Respondent E expands on the challenges faced by many hearing-impaired students, stating, *"Yes, that is true because they are most deaf has a problem in studying Grammar phrase, Noun subject."* This response generalizes the difficulty, indicating that a broader group of hearing-impaired individuals struggles with elements such as grammar, phrases, and noun subjects. This insight suggests a common trend among hearing-impaired learners, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions and support in these specific linguistic areas.

Respondent F identifies specific examples of tricky content introduced by the teacher, stating, *"Yes, Teacher teaching makes thinking tricky, for example, Grammar,*



*Proverbs, etc.*" This response provides a concrete illustration of the challenges introduced during lessons, highlighting grammar and proverbs as particularly tricky areas. The mention of teaching making thinking tricky underscores the cognitive demand imposed by certain components of the English curriculum. This insight prompts consideration of instructional methods and the need for pedagogical approaches that scaffold learning in complex linguistic domains.

The challenges in reading and comprehension identified by respondents highlight specific difficulties in transitioning from reading to answering questions. Respondents B, C, D, E, and F collectively identify struggles with reading proficiency, mental organization, understanding specific linguistic elements, and complexities in grammar and proverbs. This aligns with existing literature on challenges faced by deaf learners, particularly in navigating complex linguistic structures (Navei et al., 2022).

Exploring the resources used by hearing-impaired individuals to learn English, the respondents were asked about books or materials they use for learning, bringing to light on their experiences, preferences, and areas that may require improvement. Respondent A introduces the positive impact of storybooks, stating, *"We learn storybook, I feel comfort, interest, and understand, but I cannot write as English language what I learn from the storybook."* This response highlights the positive emotional and cognitive engagement with storybooks, indicating comfort, interest, and comprehension. However, the challenge of translating the learned content into written English suggests a potential area for improvement in writing skills.

Respondent B provides a concise response, stating, *"Me not all few reading books."* The brevity of the response suggests limited engagement with reading books, and the



phrase *"me not all"* may indicate a partial or selective approach to utilizing books for learning. This insight prompts exploration into the factors influencing the respondent's reading habits and potential barriers to broader book engagement. Respondent C expresses reliance on teacher assistance for improvement, stating, *"Me not read anything on the book then teacher able to help me how letter improve become English best understand word."* This response highlights the need for personalized guidance and support from teachers to enhance reading skills and comprehension. The mention of becoming "English best understand word" indicates a desire for proficiency and understanding in the language.

Respondent D emphasizes the efficacy of purchased English materials, stating, *"Buy English help to learn can do."* This response suggests a proactive approach to acquiring learning materials, indicating a positive perception of purchased resources as effective tools for learning English. The phrase *"can do"* conveys a sense of empowerment and capability through the utilization of these materials.

Respondent E expresses a desire to read books but notes a limitation in English proficiency, stating, *"I want to read book not better in English."* This response indicates an aspirational attitude toward reading books and a recognition of the current proficiency level. The acknowledgment of the language barrier prompts consideration of strategies to bridge the gap and make reading more accessible. Respondent F highlights a modest level of understanding through reading books, stating, *"Reading books understand small."* This response provides a realistic assessment of the understanding derived from reading books, suggesting that while there is some comprehension, there may be room for improvement. The use of *"small"* to describe understanding opens the door for further exploration into factors influencing comprehension levels and potential areas for growth.

The literature review provides a foundation for understanding the challenges faced by deaf learners in language acquisition. The critical period hypothesis underscores the importance of early exposure to language, and hearing-impaired individuals may face challenges in acquiring spoken languages naturally (Kodiango & Syomwene, 2016). The challenges in syntax, difficulties in acquiring spoken languages, and the impact on academic success align with existing research (Khalik & Said, 2021).

Identification of learning disabilities in ESL learning presents challenges, with overlapping characteristics between learning disabilities and language learning difficulties. The differences, such as struggles with phonological awareness for learning disabilities and difficulty discriminating sounds in non-native languages for language learners, highlight the need for careful diagnosis (Aljedaani et al., 2023). The psychological hindrance faced by deaf learners in adapting to a new language, particularly when sign language is perceived as superior, provides valuable insights into motivational factors influencing language learning (Kodiango & Syomwene, 2016).

The literature emphasizes the impact of language deprivation and cultural discrimination on second language acquisition among deaf children (Nyambwere, 2019). The unique challenges faced by hearing-impaired children, including delays in reading skills, comprehension levels equivalent to younger hearing children, and variations in vocabulary development, align with existing research (Trezek & Mayer, 2019).

The findings underscore the importance of the preschool years for developing language and literacy skills, with challenges in vocabulary development among deaf preschoolers. Explicit vocabulary instruction is identified as beneficial, emphasizing the need for tailored support and acknowledging variations in vocabulary acquisition with ease

(Rafael et al., 2016; Razalli et al., 2018; Ristiani, 2018). The mention of schooling effects and accelerated vocabulary learning experiences suggests potential interventions to enhance early literacy skills (Ruitururi, 2019; Shoop et al., 2006).

The exploration of learning tools extends beyond books to encompass the social and emotional aspects of the learning experience. Understanding the role of friends and feelings in the learning process contributes to a holistic understanding of the challenges and supports encountered by hearing-impaired individuals.

In exploring the influence of friends on the learning experience of hearing-impaired students in an ESL class, the respondents were asked about the impact of their friends on their English language learning, and their responses are as follows: Respondent A expresses a positive view of friends but notes a lack of collaborative learning, stating, *"My friends are very good people, but she does not improve me in learning English language or learn together."* This response highlights the positive interpersonal relationships with friends but signals a missed opportunity for collaborative learning. The desire for mutual improvement suggests potential benefits in fostering more collaborative learning environments.

Respondent B provides a more optimistic perspective, stating, *"It helps to learn all not ready, and so me any learn all ready."* This response suggests a positive influence of friends on the learning process, indicating support and readiness to learn together. The use of *"helps"* underscores the collaborative aspect of the learning experience, suggesting that friends contribute to a supportive environment. Respondent C presents a nuanced view, stating, *"No but sometimes help or not help friend."* This response acknowledges the variability in the impact of friends on learning, indicating that while friends can offer

assistance, it is not a consistent factor. The use of *"sometimes"* suggests that the influence of friends on the learning experience may be context-dependent.

Respondent D emphasizes the importance of self-motivation and the potential positive impact of supportive friends, stating, *"Self so very not good or best friend help together good yes."* This response introduces the idea that personal motivation plays a significant role in learning, and friends can contribute positively when they offer support. The acknowledgment of the self as a factor in the learning process underscores the multifaceted nature of learning dynamics. Respondent E highlights the role of hearing classmates in providing support, stating, *"Yes, the student is hearing help to write words I don't understand depending on the interpreter."* This response underscores the potential role of hearing classmates in facilitating communication and understanding. The mention of dependence on an interpreter suggests that hearing classmates may play a supportive role in bridging communication gaps for hearing-impaired students. Respondent F acknowledges the supportive role of hearing classmates, stating, *"Yes, real sometime hear help deaf how to know teaching more well in the subject."* This response emphasizes the collaborative aspect of learning, indicating that hearing classmates can contribute to a deeper understanding of the subject matter. The use of *"real sometime"* suggests that the impact may vary but is recognized as beneficial in certain situations.

The role of friends in the learning process is recognized positively, with instances of mutual support and readiness to learn together. The literature on collaborative learning environments and peer support aligns with these findings, emphasizing the potential benefits of positive interpersonal relationships on the learning experiences of hearing-impaired individuals (Yaman et al., 2016).

Exploring the intersection of emotions and the learning experience for hearing-impaired students, respondent A introduces a practical aspect, stating, *"Yes. I feel hungry, the teacher teaches is not more in the lesson, that is why I cannot feel learn very hard in the classroom."* This response highlights the tangible impact of physical discomfort, such as hunger, on the ability to engage in the learning process. The mention of the teacher's teaching duration suggests a potential connection between the duration of lessons and the ease of learning. Respondent B emphasizes the influence of negative emotions, stating, *"Feeling sad not comfortable and disturb non-learn."* This response underscores the emotional aspect of the learning experience, indicating that negative feelings, particularly sadness, can create discomfort and disrupt the learning process. The term *"non-learn"* suggests a complete or significant hindrance to learning under such emotional states.

Respondent C provides a multifaceted perspective, mentioning morning preparations, hunger, and family health, stating, *"When this early morning bath prepares finish after go classroom wait later become me hungry make can't write or father have sick."* This response introduces a combination of factors, including hunger, writing difficulties, and family health issues, suggesting that a confluence of emotions and external circumstances can create challenges for effective learning. Respondent D introduces a positive emotional state, stating, *"Not bad or feeling happy to learn more sweet, feeling sentence is Right."* This response contrasts with previous responses by highlighting the positive impact of feeling happy on the learning experience. The use of *"more sweet"* suggests an enhanced and enjoyable learning experience when accompanied by positive emotions.

Respondent E links hunger and unhappiness, stating, *"I am very hungry unhappy with learn as they come in class No interpret."* This response connects the emotional state of hunger with unhappiness, further exacerbated by the absence of interpretation services. The mention of interpreting services highlights the importance of support mechanisms in mitigating the impact of negative emotions on the learning process. Respondent F introduces a reflective perspective, stating, *"Read just sometime this morning and in class sit down learning think about not happy that is teacher teaching not full make feeling born."* This response delves into the internal thought processes influenced by unhappiness, suggesting that negative emotions can impact the perception of the teaching quality and contribute to a sense of dissatisfaction with the learning experience.

The findings emphasize the tangible impact of physical discomfort, such as hunger, on the ability to engage in the learning process. Negative emotions, including sadness and unhappiness, are identified as disruptive forces that can create discomfort and impact the ability to learn effectively. The literature on deafness and emotional factors in learning corroborates these findings, emphasizing the interconnectedness of emotional well-being and educational outcomes (Takala & Sume, 2018; Wezzie Khomera et al., 2020).

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the main findings, the conclusions drawn and recommendations for the improvement of effective learning of students with hearing-impairment. The chapter ends with suggestions for further studies.

#### 5.1 Summary of Findings

The study was set to investigate and appreciate the learning problems faced by hearing impaired students in an English language classroom. With the objectives of identifying the linguistic challenges faced by hearing-impaired learners and the contributory factors to such challenges.

Hearing-impaired students face a myriad of linguistic challenges in English Language classrooms. The struggles range from difficulties in understanding spoken English to challenges in written expression. Respondents highlighted issues with grammar, reading comprehension, essays, literature, and proverbs, emphasizing the multifaceted nature of obstacles in language acquisition. The reliance on Sign Language emerged as a crucial tool for bridging communication gaps, with respondents acknowledging its significance. Specific linguistic elements such as phrases and nouns were identified as particularly challenging. The respondents also shed light on their communication tools, with Sign Language playing a central role. The absence of specialized tools for hearing-impaired learners was acknowledged, raising questions about resource accessibility. Interpreters were recognized as vital in facilitating communication, but challenges related to their skill levels and availability were noted. The experiences shared by the respondents



align with existing literature on the auditory nature of English, emphasizing the importance of tailored support, inclusive practices, and alternative communication methods for fostering effective learning experiences for hearing-impaired students in English Language classrooms.

The learning challenges faced by hearing-impaired students in English language classes are influenced by various factors, including teacher contributions and the classroom environment. Respondents expressed mixed perspectives on teacher impact, with concerns about communication breakdowns, inadequate explanations, and deviations from subject timetables. Collaborative approaches between teachers and interpreters are acknowledged, but challenges persist in language comprehension. The classroom environment is deemed negative by some due to communication barriers, while others see it as a mix of positive and negative elements. Challenges in reading, comprehension, and grammar are identified, highlighting specific difficulties in transitioning from reading to answering questions and struggles with mental organization. The respondents emphasize the importance of effective teaching methods and express varying preferences for learning materials, from storybooks to purchased resources. The literature review contextualizes these challenges within existing research on language acquisition, learning disabilities, and the impact of language deprivation on deaf learners. Friendships and emotions also play a crucial role, with positive interpersonal relationships and emotions enhancing the learning experience, while negative emotions and external factors like hunger can hinder effective learning.



Hearing-impaired students encounter a diverse array of linguistic challenges within English Language classrooms, spanning difficulties in both spoken and written language. The identified challenges encompass aspects such as grammar, reading comprehension, essays, literature, and proverbs, illustrating the multifaceted nature of obstacles in language acquisition. Sign Language emerges as a pivotal communication tool, recognized by respondents for its role in bridging communication gaps. However, the challenges associated with specific linguistic elements, the reliance on Sign Language, and the absence of specialized tools underscore the need for enhanced resource accessibility and alternative communication methods tailored to the unique needs of hearing-impaired learners. The acknowledgment of interpreters as vital, coupled with concerns about their skill levels and availability, emphasizes the importance of continuous support and improvement in facilitating effective communication in English language classrooms.

The learning challenges faced by hearing-impaired students in English language classes are influenced by a multitude of factors, notably teacher contributions and the classroom environment. The mixed perspectives on teacher impact, ranging from concerns about communication breakdowns to acknowledgments of collaborative approaches with interpreters, highlight the complexity of addressing language comprehension challenges. The identified negative aspects of the classroom environment, such as communication barriers, contrast with positive elements, underscoring the need for a nuanced understanding of its role in the learning process. Challenges in reading, comprehension, and grammar point to specific areas requiring targeted interventions, emphasizing the importance of effective teaching methods. The expressed preferences for various learning materials indicate the need for diverse resources to accommodate individual learning

styles. Friendships and emotions further contribute to the learning landscape, emphasizing the role of positive relationships and emotions in enhancing the educational experience, while negative emotions and external factors pose potential hindrances.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

The following recommendations are provided based on the findings and conclusions drawn from the study:

Develop and implement specialized training programs for English language teachers to raise awareness of the unique challenges faced by hearing-impaired students. Emphasize effective communication strategies, inclusive teaching practices, and the importance of timely and thorough explanations. Provide resources that enable teachers to adapt their methods to better accommodate the diverse learning needs within their classrooms, fostering an environment conducive to language acquisition for all students.

Address the identified gaps in resource accessibility for hearing-impaired learners. Invest in the development and availability of specialized tools and materials designed to support language acquisition in English classrooms. Ensure that these resources cater for diverse linguistic elements, such as phrases and nouns, and provide a range of materials, from storybooks to interactive digital resources. Additionally, consider the integration of technology, such as real-time transcription services, to enhance communication and comprehension.

Recognize the vital role interpreters play in facilitating communication for hearing-impaired students and implement measures to enhance their skills and availability. Establish ongoing professional development opportunities for interpreters, addressing

language-specific challenges and promoting effective collaboration with teachers. Explore innovative technologies that can supplement interpreter services, ensuring a seamless learning experience for hearing-impaired students, and consider strategies to increase interpreter availability within the classroom.

Foster a more inclusive classroom environment by implementing practices that address communication barriers and enhance collaboration among students. Encourage collaborative learning experiences that leverage the strengths of both hearing-impaired and hearing students, creating a supportive community. Implement flexible teaching methods that accommodate various learning styles, providing targeted support for challenges in reading, comprehension, and grammar. Additionally, consider the emotional well-being of students by promoting positive relationships, addressing negative emotions, and creating a conducive atmosphere for effective learning. Regularly assess and adapt inclusive practices based on feedback from students and educators.

#### **5.4 Suggestions for Further Studies**

Based on the findings of this study the following recommendations are provided for further study:

- ✓ Future studies should delve deeper into the effectiveness of specific teaching strategies and materials tailored to the linguistic challenges faced by hearing-impaired students in English language classrooms.
- ✓ Investigating the impact of inclusive practices, collaborative learning environments, and emotional well-being on the language acquisition process could provide valuable insights for educators and policymakers.

- ✓ Additionally, exploring the use of emerging technologies, such as AI-driven language learning tools or adaptive resources, may offer innovative solutions to enhance the educational experiences of hearing-impaired individuals in English language education.



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## APPENDIX I

### FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

#### Identifying Linguistic Challenges

##### Learning English

- Tell me about learning English. How's that been for you?
- What parts of English are hard for you?

##### Communication Tools:

- How do you usually talk in your English class?
- Do you use any special tools to help you learn English?

##### Classroom Experience

- What's it like in your English class? Are there times you find it hard to join in?

#### Factors Contributing to Challenges

##### Teacher and Class

- Do you feel like your teachers help you with English?
- How does the class itself make a difference in your learning?

##### Curriculum and Stuff

- Are there things in your English lessons that you find tricky?
- Tell me about books or things you use to learn. What's good or not so good?

##### Friends and Feelings

- Do your friends in class affect how you learn English?
- Are there times when your feelings make learning harder?