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**Teaching English as a Foreign Language to Autistic Students: Challenges and  
Current Perspectives of Parents, Teachers, and Policy Makers**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the study

According to the education sector development program ESDP IV (MOE, 2010); Special needs education is the education of students with special needs in a way that addresses the students' individual differences and needs. Ideally, this process involves the individually planned and systematically monitored arrangement of teaching procedures, adapted equipment, and materials through inclusive education.

In Ethiopia, the movement towards inclusive education continues on the assumption that teachers are willing to admit students within the regular classes and be responsible for meeting their needs. However, negative attitudes and misconceptions have begun to be reflected in a researches conducted in some schools.

In 1816 American minister and educator Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet established the first public school for deaf students in the United States. The first school for blind students in the United States was founded in 1829 in Boston by American physician John Dix Fisher. The school is known today as Perkins School for the Blind and is located in Watertown, Massachusetts. Special education classes within regular school programs began at the beginning of the 20th century. Elizabeth Farrell, a teacher in one of these early classes in New York City, founded the Council for Exceptional Children in 1918. This organization remains the primary professional group for teachers and administrators in the field of special education (Margaret, 2006; Winzer, 1986).

Relatively, according to ACPF (2011), Ethiopia launched its SNE strategy in 2005 G.C., in an attempt to facilitate the education of children with disabilities into the ESDP III and achieve universal primary education development goals. The document stresses the need for well-trained SNE teachers, to increase the return rate of disabled children to education. However, results have been less than satisfactory and the main challenges were, according to the education sector development program, ESDP IV (MOE,2010: p76), limited access to formal education by children with special needs education, limited awareness within the education sector and among teaching staff about SNE, the cooperation between M.O.E. other minstrels and different partners is not yet developed. The existing special classes are under staffed and have inadequate instructional materials, insufficient and inappropriate opportunities for teacher training, and an

adequate support system for students with special education needs is not yet in place (e.g. Resource center adaptive technologies).

Many factors continue to affect and regulate the development of inclusive education in Ethiopia, among which as ACPF (2011) has pointed out, limited understanding of the concept disability, negative attitudes towards persons with disabilities and a hardened resistance to change are the major barrier impeding inclusive education. For this reason, there is a growing body of literature which argues that the problem should be approached methodically as Gezahegne & Yinebeb (2010) reported. In relation to this background report on inclusive education in Ethiopia prepared for the Education for All by Global monitoring report 2010 stressed that a lack of sign language skills and special needs training among teachers, and inadequate accessibility of schools and teaching materials, prevented disabled children from accessing education. The report also points to the severe lack of early childhood development programs for preventing the early diagnosis of disabilities.

when previous research outcomes are closely examined, regardless of the fact that confirms the significance of teachers' attitudes for effective inclusion, the available research evidences in the area of teachers' attitudes are not consistent Abate (2001); Abebe, (2001). it was found that the majority of regular education teachers had a negative attitude toward inclusion, attitudes, which are largely negative, place limitation on students with special needs and inhibit the responsibility of their success Tirussew (1999).

When we take a look a studies conducted on EFL teaching, a number of studies, for example (Hung, 1977; Taylor & Harris, 1995), have focused on teaching question asking to children with autism and they suggested that question asking may especially be useful for speech and language specialists or other special educators who have large caseloads because question asking allows the child to evoke learning opportunities outside of the clinical setting. One investigation into teaching question asking was provided by Koegel and colleagues (1998) who designed a self-initiated strategy to increase noun vocabulary in three children with autism within the context of a multiple baseline design. The participants were taught to use the query, "What's that?" by prompting its use with highly desired items hidden in a bag. After the query, the experimenter

removed a desired item from the bag and labeled it the prompt was then gradually faded until children were asking the question spontaneously. At the same time, unfamiliar items were added until the self-initiated query was being used in response to only unknown labels of items. Results of the study indicated that all children learned to use the self-initiated strategy and all children made substantial gains in their vocabularies moreover, participants demonstrated generalization of question asking to their home environments with their mothers. Other areas that have been shown to improve as a result of teaching child-initiations are prepositions, pronouns, and assistance and attention-seeking utterances (e.g., “Help me!” and “Look!”), as for (Koegel & Koegel, 1995; Koegel, et al., 1999).

Students who have difficulties in one or more of the language systems — reading, writing (especially spelling and grammar), listening, speaking — may experience problems learning a foreign language in school. The degree of difficulty a student is likely to experience depends, to a large extent, on the nature and severity of his/her language problems in reading, writing, listening, and speaking for this matter, students who have moderate to severe difficulties in most or all of these language systems in the native language are likely to experience the most problems learning a foreign language, particularly in language classrooms that emphasize an oral communication approach. As well, the communication of children diagnosed as having Autism is marked by a lack of verbal and nonverbal social initiations (Mundy & Stella, 2000; Weiss & Harris, 2001).

Initiations, such as question asking, have been recognized by researchers as important in prompting language acquisition (Hung, 1977; Taylor & Harris, 1995). They occur infrequently or are absent in children with autism (Koegel, Camarata, Valdez-Menchaca, & Koegel, 1998; Koegel, Shoshan, & McNeerney, 1999; Wetherby & Prutting, 1985). Through self-initiation, a child may spontaneously elicit teaching interactions from the surrounding environment. Furthermore, longitudinal outcome data from children with autism suggest that the presence of initiations may be a prognostic indicator of more favorable long-term outcomes and therefore may be “pivotal” in that they appear to result in widespread positive changes in a number of areas Koegel, et al., (1999).

Thus the importance of comprehensive programs that include systematic teaching of child initiations are being implemented in relation to increasing the likelihood for positive long-term outcomes (Koegel, et al., 2001; McClannahan, MacDuff, & Krantz, 2002)

Studies in Ethiopia, like, Tibebu (1995), Abate (2001) and Tilahun (1991) as cited in Tesfaye (2005) which are small-scale studies (survey- like type scale), indicates that the majority of teachers, who were participating in inclusive programs, had strong negative feelings about inclusion. The teachers identified several factors that would affect the success of inclusion, such as class size, inadequate resources, lack of adapted curriculum and lack of adequate training. Research has suggested that teachers' attitudes might be influenced by a number of factors, which are in many ways, interrelated. For example, attitude studies reviewed earlier, appeared to vary according to disabling conditions. In other words, the natures of the disabilities and educational problems presented have been noted to influence teachers' attitudes. Forlin (1995) as cited in Eavramidis and Brahmnorwich, (2002) found that educators were cautiously accepting of including a child with cognitive disability and were more accepting of children with physical disabilities. The degree of acceptance for inclusion was high for children considered to have mild or moderate disabilities.

A great deal of research for example (Aksamit, Morris & Leunberger, 1987; Eichinger, Rizzo & Sirotnik, 1991; Thomas, 1985) regarding teacher characteristics has sought to determine relationship between those characteristics and attitudes towards children with special needs. Though the above researchers have explored a number of specific teacher variables, such as gender, age, years of teaching experience, grade level, and contact with disabled persons and personality factors, which might influence teachers' acceptance of the inclusion principle, with regard to gender. For example, the above research out comes appear inconsistent; some of the researchers noted that female teachers had a greater tolerance level for integration and for special needs persons than did male teachers. On the other hand, a research conducted by Abate (2001) confirmed that there is no statistical significant difference in attitudes between male and female regular teachers. Teaching experience is another factor mentioned in several studies as having an influence on teachers' attitudes.

In the above case, much of the research conducted seems consistent. For example, Eavramidis and Brahmnorwich (2002) mentioned that younger teachers and those with fewer years of

experience have been found to be supportive to integration/inclusion than with those more experience.

Another factor that has attracted considerable attention is the knowledge about children with disabilities gained through pre- and in-service training. This was considered as an important factor in improving teachers' attitudes towards the implementation of an inclusive policy. Without a coherent plan for teacher training in the educational needs of children with special needs, attempts to include these children in the mainstream would be difficult Eavramidis & Brahmnorwich (2002). In support of the above, a research conducted by Abate (2001) in some schools of Addis Ababa reveals a significant statically variation between regular teacher whom had training in inclusive education and whom did not.

Generally, research conducted in some schools of Addis Ababa for example Abate (2001), Tesfaye (2005) show a high correlation of teachers' attitudes with factors like availability of support, adapted curriculum, training, materials, and classroom size. In support of the above, Etenesh (2000), experienced 100 students in one class, which makes the teaching learning process more difficult even for the non-disabled children and as a result, she concluded that teachers were not be in a position to attend the individual problem and interested in them. Further, she explained that lack of accessible and flexible curriculum and lack of training as the ultimate challenge in affecting teachers' attitude negatively. It is the fact that regular schools and regular classroom environment often fail to accommodate the education needs of many students, especially individual with disability. This is the reason that so many pupils with disabilities do not attend regular schools.

## 1.2 Statement of the problem

Among the areas which children with Autism have demonstrated difficulty is usage of verb. Tomasello (1992) asserts that verbs are responsible for much of the grammatical structure of language, and hence the acquisition of verbs marks a major turning point in children's passage to adult-like grammatical competence. It has even been argued that children's initial verb lexicon is a strong predictor of other aspects of early grammatical competence (Bates, Bretherton, & Snyder, 1988).

However, it is well-documented that all children have more difficulty acquiring verbs than other linguistic items such as nouns (Bloom, Lightbown, & Hood, 1991; deVilliers, & deVilliers, 1978; Gentner, 1978; Gleason, 1993; James, 1990; Smith & Sachs, 1990; Tomasello, 1992,

Tomasello & Kruger, 1992). However, in contrast to typical language developers, studies investigating morphologic development in children with autism have suggested that the use of grammatical morphemes in children with autism is delayed and the order of acquisition can be atypical (Menyuk & Quill, 1985; Paul & Alforde, 1993; Swisher & Demetras, 1985). This may be because particular difficulty is recognized in areas such as temporal morphemes, as it is in other children with language disorders (Broen & Santema, 1983; Wiig & Semel, 1980).

A study by Bartolucci and Albers (1974) found that the production of the regular past tense was notably less frequent in children with autism compared with that of control groups. Similarly, a study by Bartolucci, Pierce, and Streiner (1980) discovered that children with autism lacked mastery of verb tense markers and unconstructed copula and auxiliary verbs, and that this atypical acquisition was inconsistent with other measures of syntactic complexity such as Mean Length of Utterance (MLU). Moreover, children with autism often do not make overgeneralization errors on morphemes such as the regular past tense ending –“*ed*”, which is so illustrative of typically developing children (deVilliers & deVilliers, 1978; Kuczaj, 1977).

Methods to facilitate children's acquisition of morphologic and other linguistic structures are prominent in the literature, and intervention procedures have moved increasingly toward naturalistic learning contexts (Baker & Nelson, 1984; Camarata, Nelson, & Camarata, 1994; Conti-Ramsden, 1990; Farrar, 1992; Kaiser & Hester, 1994; Koegel, O—Dell, & Koegel, 1987; Pemberton & Watkins, 1987; Valdez-Menchaca & Whitehurst, 1988).

Naturalistic interventions have been shown to be important because they are more apt to produce generalized changes in children's vernacular (Kaiser & Hester, 1994). Most interventions are based on conversational techniques that adults naturally employ in their everyday interactions with children, such as recasting, expansions, and negative evidence. Although these processes generally have been successful in facilitating correct language use with different populations of children, they are limited in that they rely on the child's production of words that are then repeated by the adult but corrected in some fashion (i.e., grammatically, semantically, or otherwise).

Unfortunately, because of the generally lower levels of conversations and initiations in children with language delays, and especially children with autism, fewer opportunities exist for remediation (Koegel, 1995; Paul & Shiffer, 1991).

Foreign language learning problems can range on a continuum from mild to moderate to severe. Students who have difficulties learning a foreign language are sometimes referred to as "at-risk" because of their struggles in the regular foreign language classroom. Some of these students may have been classified by the school as having language learning disabilities or dyslexia.

Additionally, research findings on students in the U.S. such as conducted by Ganschow & Sparks, (2001), Sparks (1995), Grigorenko (2002) suggest that at-risk students who have difficulty with foreign language learning generally have experienced overt or subtle problems with the oral and/or written aspects of their native language. These problems can occur in any combination and at different levels of severity in three areas of language: (1) the phonological/orthographic area (sounds and sound-symbol relationships, letter combinations), (2) the syntactic area (grammar, how words connect in sentences), and (3) the semantic area (meaning of words and word parts) to illustrate this, students who had difficulties with the phonological/orthographic component of English in elementary school may have had difficulty learning and remembering the sounds of the consonants and distinguishing the different sounds of vowels. Later, as they study a foreign language, they may have difficulty learning to pronounce, read, and spell words. Students who had problems with the syntactic component of the native language may have experienced problems with subject-verb agreement and use of plurals, possessives, and parts of speech in the native language; and in their writing, they did not use complete sentences and sometimes used incorrect verb tenses. Later, in the study of a foreign language, they may struggle to conjugate verbs (that is, selecting the correct ending for a verb related to the subject of the sentence). They may have difficulty matching the correct masculine or feminine pronoun with a noun or placing the adjective in the proper order in a spoken or written sentence. Students who had both weak grammar and semantics (meaning) skills in the native language may have had difficulty comprehending the meaning of what was said to them in the native language when listening to others speak, or problems comprehending what they read. Later, in the study of a foreign language, they may do well in the first semester or year of foreign language learning because sentence structures are relatively simple and vocabulary concentrates on concrete, life-related topics. In advanced level courses, however, the amount and complexity of listening, speaking, reading, and writing tasks increases.

Students' difficulties increase as language complexity increases. Second, research findings also show that the primary difficulty for at-risk foreign language learners most likely originates in the



phonological/orthographic (sound-symbol), and sometimes, syntactic, areas of language rather than the semantic area. Their difficulties often become apparent in the first semester of a foreign language course. Students with low levels of sound-symbol and grammatical skills tend to have problems with most aspects of foreign language learning — listening, speaking, pronunciation, reading, and writing of students. Third, research across languages illustrates that languages differ on a number of dimensions, and the differences between one's native language and the foreign language of study can pose problems for students with language difficulties. For example, one dimension on which languages differ has to do with the regularity of the language's sound-letter correspondences. This regularity can range from languages that are highly regular, where a single sound is represented by a single letter (for example, Italian) to languages that are highly complex, where one letter can represent several sounds and a sound can be represented by several different letters (for example, English).

Another dimension on which languages differ is in their morphological complexity. Some languages allow for numerous additions of words or parts of words, and word endings change depending upon their place in the sentence. For languages with complex morphologies, for example, students may have to break down long words of many syllables into their parts to determine meaning, or they may have to add one or more "affixes" or word parts to the word to produce grammatically and semantically meaningful information. Other dimensions on which languages differ are grammatical rules and special markings on letters. The arrangement of word order in sentences, agreement between subject and verb, and how clauses are linked are examples of grammatical rules. Some languages have a great variety of diacritical markings, which may denote a particular pronunciation, an accent, or even grammatical information necessary for obtaining meaning. In short, there is no "simple" foreign language, as all have "dimensions" that could pose difficulty for students with language processing difficulties. To date, research findings indicate that it is not clear who will and who will not be able to master the study of a foreign language in school. For example, some students classified as having learning disabilities have been found to be successful in their study of a foreign language Sparks, Philips, & Javorsky (2003). Thus, it is important to look at instructional practices that can foster success in foreign language learning for at-risk foreign language learners.

Necessary skills for the regular classroom teachers include an understanding of how a disability affects the ability to learn academic skills or to adapt in social situation. According to Abate (2001), it is unrealistic and unfair to expect that the regular class teacher will be able to include children with disability in regular classroom without first receiving adequate training. It is through training that teachers could bring the necessary adaptation required to meet special needs of their student. A number of researchers such as Tibebe (1995), Abate and Tilahun (1991), have concluded that successful implementation of inclusion depends largely on the goodwill of educators in addition to the skill they required to have. Teachers with positive attitudes towards inclusion more readily change and adapt the ways they work in order to benefit students with a range of learning needs Tilahun (2007). Specifically, Smith and Merry (1995), have shown that when teachers are not trained in techniques for including children with disability and do not share responsibilities with others, they would not have change of attitudes. In other words when planning and training have not taken place, teachers develop negative attitudes towards inclusion which in turn affects their roles. Regular teachers must be provided with the training and resources they need to meet children's specific learning and behavioral needs for the successful implementation of inclusion.

One challenge for students might be finding the appropriate learning environment for their particular needs. Sometimes students need extra time to learn a foreign language concept, a slower pace of instruction, and special attention to specific aspects of the foreign language, such as the sounds and special symbols of the language and grammatical rules. Sometimes students need extra tutoring in the language. They may need a distraction-free learning environment and explicit guidance about language concepts.

These accommodations may not be available. Another challenge might be the need for students to recognize and acknowledge their own unique learning difficulties. This may necessitate putting in considerable extra effort to complete the foreign language requirement successfully, asking for support from various resources (teachers, tutors, peers), and frequently requesting the additional explanations they may need to understand a concept. Traditionally, foreign language teacher education has prepared teachers for the ideal learner who can thrive in whole-language instructional settings without explicit attention to the underlying linguistic patterns of the foreign language. By and large, students are expected to become proficient in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and pronunciation through exposure and practice. Teachers, therefore, may need

training in methods of addressing the special needs of some students in their classrooms. They may require additional time and resources to establish a classroom appropriate for students with diverse needs and abilities. They may need to work together with a student with learning difficulties to determine what accommodations might be most beneficial for that student.

The ACTFL, (Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language), guidelines recommend that foreign language study be available for all our nation's students. By definition, this includes individuals classified as having specific learning disabilities, such as dyslexia. Administrators and foreign language departments may need to demonstrate flexibility in setting criteria for foreign language study in school settings (Schneider, 1999; Schneider & Crombie, 2003), examples include release time for teachers to provide small group tutoring, funding for specialized additional tutors for after school support, curriculum schedules that allow for slowing the pace of foreign language content instruction and planning of ways to re-integrate students back into the regular classes in the second/third year, and developing and implementing an alternative foreign language instructional program for students at-risk foreign language learners.

In some cases, despite considerable time and effort, a student may not experience success in a foreign language classroom. Some high schools and colleges and universities provide an option for students to petition to take course substitutions for the foreign language requirement. To qualify for course substitutions, generally, students must provide documentation of testing and a diagnosis of a learning disability. Sometimes students must demonstrate a history of failure to learn the language despite special assistance. Schools that offer course waivers or substitutions sometimes include a statement in the school's governance document, and the student is required to meet with the school's learning assistance specialist to determine eligibility (Philips, Ganschow, & Anderson, 1991; Shaw, 1999; Simon, 2001).

To date, there is evidence that students with language learning difficulties can succeed in their study of a foreign language, especially if they have appropriate instructional modifications for example, researches conducted by (Downey & Snyder, 2001; Sparks & Miller, 2000) suggest that at-risk students can experience success in classrooms that provide direct, explicit instruction on language structure and extra time to master the subject matter. Some experts therefore encourage students to expose themselves to the study of a language of their choice early in their schooling, talk to their instructor about their language needs, and seek additional help as soon as it is needed and they recommend that students recognize that the study of a foreign language may

take extra effort on their part, but that it will provide them with an experience in linguistic and cultural diversity that is desirable today in our global society. Sometimes struggling students may need to take fewer courses or focus specifically on foreign language study. It is helpful in this situation to provide letters of support from foreign language instructors as well as documentation of effort. Under the right circumstances, then, the study of a foreign language can be a positive and culturally broadening experience.

To sum up, inclusive education teaching as whole and EFL teaching to students with autism in inclusive education in specific, face multidirectional problems as has been noted earlier, among which, attitudes of both parents and teachers of those students, EFL teachers training for inclusive education, policies and curriculums of EFL teaching for to autistic students, adapted curriculum, resources, teachers training programs, adapted curriculum, teachers' attitudes towards autistic students, materials and equipments provision, financial sources, and more specifically, difficulty of EFL students, whom are autistic, in inclusion education on achieving the basic skills of language items such as verbs, grammatical morphemes, nouns, verb tense markers, and others as noted by scholars such as Bates, Bretherton, & Snyder, 1988; Baker & Nelson, 1984; Camarata, Nelson, & Camarata, 1994; Conti-Ramsden, 1990; Farrar, 1992; Kaiser & Hester, 1994; Koegel, O—Dell, & Koegel, 1987; Pemberton & Watkins, 1987; Valdez-Menchaca & Whitehurst, 1988) and others. Generally, as Tirussew (1999) argues, teachers training programs, adapted curriculum, teachers' attitudes, materials and equipment provision, and financial sources are among the frontiers of challenge in the implementation of inclusive education.

Though a lot of researchers tried to conduct studies on visually and hearing impaired students at different SNE centers in Ethiopia, there are no available researches conducted on EFL for autistic students in SNE centers, therefore, the researcher wants to find out what MOE is doing regarding EFL teaching to autistic students, what challenges do teachers and policy makers of EFL teaching in inclusion education face, and other issues and is determined on filling the gaps that autistic students, if are provided with all the necessary support in inclusion education , if MOE adopt and adapt curriculum that includes them, if are being though by devoted and motivated EFL teachers whom uses necessary teaching methodology there will be no reason for them to achieve the determined levels of skills and knowledge as EFL students and be successful

in their other subject learning, furthermore if the government and peoples of Ethiopia in general, and MOE in specific give the due attention to them and their learning, they will become independent and providers to their family, not liabilities to their family; and the possible way to fill this gap, according to the researcher, therefore this study will try to fill the gap/s why Autistic students are not continuing their studying rights above the six grade and how could that be solved by trying to look in to the **“Teaching of English as a Foreign Language to Autistic Students: Challenges and Current Perspectives of Parents, Teachers, and Policy Makers”**

### 1.3 Basic Research Questions

The above statement and other related issues lead the researcher to conduct this study and respond to the following questions.

- How do policy makers of SNE, department of mental retardation, at M.O.E. evaluate English as a Foreign Language teaching and learning process of the Autistic students in inclusive education of the Autistic students?
- How frequently do policy makers evaluate the inclusive education policy of EFL teaching and learning?
- How do English Language teachers in SNE schools implement the M.O.E.’s inclusive education policy of Teaching English as a foreign Language for Autistic students?

#### 1.3.1 Specific Research Questions

- What kind of methodology do English language teachers use in classrooms EFL classrooms?
- How do English language teachers evaluate their Autistic students’ progress in inclusive as compared to their ‘normal’ counter parts?
- What are the attitudes of language teachers in SNE schools towards their students both Autistic and non-Autistic?
- How do parents and teachers of those unprivileged students attitudes look like towards the Autistic students English as a Foreign Language learning and teaching?
- What do normal students perceptions look like towards their Autistic students counterparts EFL learning?

## 1.4 Objectives of the Study

This study, upon its completion, is expected to execute the following general and specific objectives.

### 1.4.1 General Objective

The general objectives of the study will be to find out what the M.O.E.'s policy of SNE looks like in comparison to the philosophy of English language teaching to students who are Clinically Diagnosed with Down Syndrome also known as Mental Retardation in its inclusive education programs; and to investigate the perceptions of parents, teachers, and policy makers on inclusive education.

### 1.4.2 Specific Objectives

Specifically, this study will try to:

- Identify the policy of M.O.E.'s EFL teaching in inclusive education program to Autistic students.
- Find out challenges and drawbacks M.O.E. is facing while implementing its EFL teaching program within inclusive education to Autistic students.
- Describe the perception and attitude of EFL teachers of the autistic students with in inclusive education.

## 1.5 Significance of the Study

Right from the first launch of SNE strategy in Ethiopia, a lot of scholars have conducted researches on English language teaching classrooms. Nevertheless, there is no research conducted on language teaching to autistic students. Though a lot of researchers tried to conduct studies on visually and hearing impaired students, no researcher or policy maker has tried to study the status or outcomes of inclusive education of English language for autistic students in SNE education centers. Therefore, the outcome of this study may extend the English Language Teaching research scope into areas of special needs English as foreign language classrooms in Ethiopia.

## 1.6 Theoretical and conceptual Frame work

There has been a growing awareness over the last three or four decades of the enormous complexity of language teaching, leading to the conviction that if language teaching is to be a truly professional enterprise it must deal with the various aspects involved in a scholarly and scientific manner and establish a sound theoretical framework. From around 1940 to 1960 it looked as if a well-reasoned application of linguistics and psychology could provide the best basis for solving the problems of language teaching, but radical changes in both disciplines which took place between 1960 and 1970 dampened these hopes. The interaction between teaching languages as a practical activity and the theoretical developments in language sciences was recognized as less simple and straightforward than it had appeared in the earlier period stern (1991).

## UNIT THREE

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter will discuss the research design, the sampling techniques, data collection procedure and administration in the study area and data analysis techniques. The detail explanations are stated here under.

#### 3.1 Design of the Study

For the main concern of the study was to look in to the teaching of English as a foreign language to autistic students in inclusive education along with the challenges and current perspectives of the sector, the objects determined that it had to be a case study.

#### 3.2 Population and Sample

Assosa selam ber elementary school was selected for this pilot from the other four schools randomly. And all EFL teachers and parents of the Autistic students were subjects of the study.

Concerning the sample, every language teacher from those SNE schools will be included because number of English language teachers in those schools or SNE centers is manageable and for this mater it is believed by the researcher that it is going to be easy to deal with and covenant with the study's intents. All the SNE experts, department of Mental Retardation, at M.O.E. will be included in the study in order to gather detailed and vast data of policy development, curriculum adaptation, and syllabus design of English language teaching. All parents of those unprivileged students will

also be included in the study, for after all they have every responsibility and obligation to their child's education and lifelong issues in general. And lastly, every principal of those five schools will be included in the study due to the fact that they are they are the key informants for issues related to teachers development, finance (which are directly related to English language teaching), and administration of teachers.

### 3.3 Data Collection Instruments

The study has employed the following instruments in order to accumulate necessary facts from the population.

#### 3.3.1 Observation

An English class room observation check list containing thirty two items in four categories were provided to Assosa selam ber secondary school English language teachers, whom were paid data collectors. The English class room teaching check list was designed by Florida's Centers for Autism and Related Disabilities (CARD) and was adapted by the researcher to relate it to the Ethiopian educational system. The core elements of the English class room observation were; environmental arrangement, scheduling, activities, and intensity, instruction and interaction, and core curriculum area. The quaternaries and English class room teaching observation check list took place between hidar2009 and megabit 2010.

#### 3.3.2 Questionnaire

A standard questionnaire format was adapted from Kate McGinnity (2010) and updated for the purpose of this study by the researcher. And it was dispatched to parents and EFL teachers. The questioners' focus was social participation of autistic students, communication of autistic students in their English classrooms, developmental rates and sequences of autistic students, cognition, sensory processing of autistic students, and challenging behaviors of autistic students. Those questioners were administered both for parents and English language teachers of the autistic students at Assosa Selam ber secondary school.

#### 3.3.3. Focus Group Discussion

Focus group discussions was facilitated by the researcher among teachers, parents, principals of those SNE schools, and SNE experts, those whom are responsible for English language teaching, department of Mental Retardation, for the purpose of creating a smooth relationship among those stakeholders so that they would talk about the real facts about English language teaching of those



unprivileged students' learning status in general. The following are the researchers alibi to conduct focus group discussion.

#### 3.3.4 Document Analysis

M.O.E.'s SNE policy on EFL, curriculum EFL, action plans of schools, EFL teaching program evaluations, supervision manuals, the schools' student enrolment manuals, yearly student enrolment documents, teaching staff status program and teacher development manuals of the five schools, Autistic students' family back ground history was examined and analyzed by the researcher in order to get detailed and explicit data teachers so that the study would grasp problematic aspects of Teaching English as a Foreign Language to those Autistic students. The researcher's decision to employ document analysis is raised from the following superb ample reimbursements projected by renowned authors of research in linguistics. For example: according to Best and Kahn (2003), document analysis is known to be used for the deconstructing a lifelong phenomenon of societal endeavors at fastidious or preferred moment in time or its maturity over an episode of time.

Furthermore, a modern smart mobile phone application called Autism Test, which is designated to identify if a certain person is Autistic or not, was used as cross checking tool for those students.

#### 3.4 Data Analyzing Tools

The quantitative data were analyzed by employing descriptive statistics. Furthermore; Descriptive statistical measures were used to describe the characteristics of the sample or population in totality limiting generalization to the group that was researched. Thus, frequency and percentage were used to analyze various characteristics of the participants in the study i.e. EFL teachers of Selma ber secondary school and Parents of the Autistic students was scored in scalar categories towards a certain relevance, and attitudinal question were analyzed using frequencies, percentage, mode, means, and standard deviations. A computer program known as statistical package for social sciences (SPSS-24.0) was used to compute the data. The compiled data were arranged and organized in tables.

The data collected in accordance with the nature of basic questions and of the purpose of the study through questionnaires, focus group discussion (FGD), and document analysis, the

researcher had provide them qualitatively, analyze them for their meaningful content and endowed them with their meaningful interpretations, rather than tally them or quantify them in statistics. Hence, the qualitative data obtained through Focus Group Discussions was analyzed qualitatively and was used to supplement and/or triangulate the responses given and the results obtain through questionnaires, similarly, the data that were collected using observation checklist were compiled and used to substantiate the responses obtained through various means. Results that were obtained from the focus group discussions were used to confirm the quantitative results.

### Conclusions of the Main Findings

The following are the fundamental conclusions derived from the main findings the pilot study

- MOE do not have any philosophy or approach to teaching EFL to Autistic students,
- School principals do not motivate their EFL teachers for further education so that the teachers could equip their selves to go with their EFL students different learning styles,
- School principals most of the time do not allow their EFL teachers for special needs education or short term trainings which focus on Autistic students language learning and teaching styles due to the fact that the principals fear that the teachers could leave the school after the training,
- Teachers do not try to share experiences on the mechanisms of teaching EFL to Autistic students,
- EFL teachers do not know what Autism is or how to identify Autistic students in their while before, after their EFL teaching sessions,
- Parents consider their Autistic children as dump, idiot, and for most of the children's' lives as curse of their wrong doings or wrath of the almighty GOD, and
- Among the Autistic students EFL learning disabilities are, hasty generalization, hard time on understanding abstract concepts of EFL learning are among the major findings of this research.

Depending on those and other findings, recommendation will follow here under.

### 5.3 Recommendations

Though it might seem expensive and unpractical, Certified Speech-Language Pathologists (SLP) would give an ample and core change on the Autistic students EFL learning progress. Certified Speech-Language Pathologists (SLP) use a variety of techniques to address a range of challenges for children with Autism. SLT is designed to address the mechanics of speech and the meaning of social value of a language. For students whom have problems on a certain area of EFL, SLT ( speech-Language Training)

might work on expanding the conversational repertoire, or Certified Speech-Language Pathologists (SLP) reading social cues and adjusting conversation needs of the listener. An SLT program begins with an evaluation by an SLP and therapy may be conducted one-on-one, in a small group or in classroom/natural settings.

Inclusion does not mean placing a student with Autism in general education just like a typical learner; a variety of supports should be provided to create a successful environment and experience for everyone involved. Careful planning and training are essential to provide the right modifications and accommodations.

The different supports should include special type of training to EFL teachers, SNE sector provisions and follow-ups.

Not all parents will feel that a mainstream environment will meet the needs of their student with Autism, nor will all students be ready for full inclusion, all of the time. Anxiety and sensory issues may mean that the student should start with small and successful increments, and build increasing participation in the general education environment. The less restrictive a student's setting, the greater the opportunity for the Autistic child to interact with the school population outside the special education environment - this means support staff, general education and special area teachers, office staff, custodians and most importantly, peers and EFL teachers whom are not necessarily knowledgeable about Autism. As a result of the specific learning profile and communication impairment associated with Autism, and differences in skill levels, the needs of individuals with Autism should be adequately catered for in arrangements and learning activities for 'lower sets', or pupils with Autism. When planning placement within groupings, it is important to take into consideration that, as visual and kinesthetic learners, pupils with Autism respond well to positive role models and should be placed with students who provide good models of learning and behavior, and who can provide peer support. Students with Autism are disadvantaged when the peer models in the learning setting display inappropriate behavior.

Students with Autism should move up with their chronological age group to maintain peer relationships and friendship groups, and to progress through the national curriculum. In exceptional cases, school staff, especially EFL teachers, along with an educational psychologist may propose that a child with Autism should repeat a year, especially in foundation/reception, such as when an Autistic student has been absent from school for extended periods due to illness and hospitalization.

Effective transition planning is essential in ensuring sustained progress and successful inclusion, and key transitions include when the child starts in early years settings, on transfer to primary school, transfer to secondary and then into further education. Activities to support transition should include sharing information and planning between settings, and teaching to prepare the Autistic student, as well as introducing the new setting to the student. Transition activities should take place over several months before and after the Autistic student joins the new setting, and must involve key staff from both settings working with families/careers, and external support staff.

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