

**UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
FOREIGN LANGUAGES DEPARTMENT**



UNDEGRADUATE RESEARCH:

Limitations of students with disabilities that hinder the learning process of English as a foreign language in semester I in the Foreign Language Department, School of Arts and Sciences at University of El Salvador.

IN ORDER TO OBTAIN THE DEGREE OF:

Licenciatura en Lenguas Modernas Especialidad en Francés e Inglés

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INTRODUCTION

The following research paragraphs that follow present some serious limitations that complicate the learning process of English as a foreign language of students with disabilities. Two specific cases of students with disabilities were selected to execute a study case on each one. Both of them were active students during first semester of 2013 at University of El Salvador.

The limitations that become more difficult as the process of learning English as a foreign language for a student with a disability at the University of El Salvador are related to disabilities in *History*. By demonstrating that they have been excluded from public service access including health, education and jobs opportunities that all citizens must have, people with disabilities have been perceived by authorities and other social groups under a prejudgement that reduces and limits their abilities; this explains partially why they still face serious educational limitations.

The most common limitations that handicap students relate to are *external and internal limitations*. External limitations refer to the lack of physical access and bibliographical resources, "especially" in Braille, infrastructure which does not offer any type of accessibility for the disabled and curriculum adaptations. The internal limitations include a pedagogical practice that ignores any methodological effort to integrate and adapt to the circumstances of students with disabilities as well as the perception from the teacher and other students represent serious limitations in the learning process of English a foreign language.

As a result of this complex social phenomenon that represents disability in education, the term Inclusive Education emerges as a solution to reduce all serious limitations that affect the learning process for students with disabilities. Fortunately, the University of El Salvador is working since last year in a proposal for Inclusive

Education which day by day becomes a reality.

1. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

1.1 Theme

Limitations of students with disabilities that hinder the learning process of English as a foreign language in semester one of year 2013 in the Foreign Language Department, School of Arts and Sciences at Universidad de El Salvador.

1.2 Delimitation of the problem

Traditionally people with disabilities and their particular characteristics are considered differently by the rest of society according to Ana Doménech Vidal, Lidón Moliner Miravet and Elina Vilar Beltrán from Universitat Jaume I, this is what causes distancing, differentiation or separation and even social exclusion (Beltrán, Miravet and Vidal, p.2). The learning process of English as a foreign language is notably affected, since it especially requires social activities, word interchange and curriculum adaptation by all parts involved in education. According to Vidal, Miravet and Beltrán, how students with disabilities are treated by other entities involved in the learning process may or may not ease their limitations in social life activities (Beltrán, Miravet and Vidal, p.2).

Individual differences must be considered in pedagogical practice to develop a role that includes all students looking forward to more and better results in the learning process, so difficulties or limitations may be reduced as much as possible. In her research of "Discapacidad y dificultades de aprendizaje: Una distinción necesaria", Mariella Caballos states: "Disabilities are linked exclusively with a physical deficiency or a functional deficiency in a body organ, so an education meant with the objective to consider the individual conditions are distinct when learning a foreign language".

Therefore, this investigation will focus on describing the different limitations in the process of learning English as a foreign language for students with disabilities at the University of El Salvador in semester one of 2013.

The research study was conducted with two correspondents; the first one is the case of Armando Madrid, fifth-year student majoring in journalism who suffers of total blindness from birth. The second one refers to Álvaro Maravilla, fourth-year student of Licenciatura en Inglés Opción Enseñanza who suffers of hydrocephalus and myelomeningocele which hinders his physical displacement.

Both students were studying subjects belonging to the English area during semester I of year 2013 at Universidad de El Salvador.

1.3 OBJETIVES

1.3.1 General objective

To describe the limitations in the process of learning English as a foreign language for students with disabilities in semester I of 2013.

1.3.2 Specific objectives

1. To refer the context that frames the subject of study that establishes the basis of such factors.
2. To describe the relation that exists between teaching and learning process for students with disabilities.
3. To determine based on the information provided by the students the causes that limit their performance.

1.4 Justification of the problem

This vital significance of this research is that it will be applied on a group of disabled people: The students of the University of El Salvador with disabilities.

As every human being people with disabilities have feelings, they suffer, they want to experience happiness. They express love and also have the need of being loved and included as well. They definitely have an active participation in Salvadoran society. Consequently it is the responsibility and the commitment of everyone involved in education to know what they think, how they live, what kind of activities they perform. How they are integrated to the society as well as their families, with the aim of presenting proposals for solving their problems and improving their social life through higher education.

Many people with disabilities do not have equal access to health care, education, and job opportunities. They do not receive the disability-related services that are required, and experience exclusion from the everyday life activities. According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), disability is increasingly understood as a human rights issue. Disability is also an important development issue with an increasing body of evidence showing that people with disabilities experience worse socioeconomic outcomes and poverty than persons without disabilities.

Because of that, this investigation has a great social relevance since people with disabilities and their families have a place within society. And it is necessary to understand them, provide them all of the tools for solving their daily problems. And also that society and educational institutions do not feel just pity for them, but give them a real opportunity to develop, to explore their creativity. Therefore, they become productive to society, respected and considered as human beings since they are included in education.

On the other hand, with the evaluation's results of the limitation of both infrastructure and

pedagogical program development that people with disabilities face within the University campus. The empiric knowledge will be obtained and with this, the research group will be able to suggest certain recommendations to teacher staff. Improving their daily lives as active students with the sole purpose that they can live with dignity, respect, consideration and acceptance regardless of their limitations and with this assure their success when they finish their majors and they can be hired in our country's labor market.

Besides, this investigation has practical and real implications, whose knowledge will allow knowing in a better way the experience of disabled people. The interrelationship that they have with the physical environment, classmates and teachers in general, also how they are considered as an essential part of their solutions within the human element.

At the end of this research, our society, university authorities, and local education authorities based on evaluation results of limitations that face disabled people who are students of the University of El Salvador will be able to take measures and to present alternatives for improving what are considered limitations by students with disabilities. They are subjected to these restrictions, because they do not have the inclusive measures which ensure the success of this sector of the society.

In reference to the methodological usefulness, this investigation will allow the creation of an instrument to measure the limitations hopefully applied on students with disabilities from Universidad de El Salvador. Also, as well as a reference for future investigations, especially in this context that Universidad de El Salvador begins admitting that Inclusive Education is a necessary step.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Disability in History

Since the times of ancient Greece the "ideal" of humans remains until modern day, in our civilization. The way different generations from Ancient Greece until Classical Greece created citizenship out of Aristocracy: gymnastics, music, dance and foods in common. Knowledge in science was added afterwards. If there is a need to summarize the complex heritage coming from the Hellenistic period, the fundamental part consists in a search of the *excellence of the body* and psyche, all in harmony. People with disabilities have been considered differently by society since they are not able to achieve the full *capabilities of the body*. According to history, it is from year 1917 that in Europe schooling became mandatory for students with disabilities; as a result special classes were created for a large number of students with learning problems.

Since people with disabilities were underestimated, which caused a difficult task for the first school that provided education to people with disabilities could emerge. It wasn't until 1928 that the first school was created in France and it is during this period of time that sign language was created.

It is important to point out that disability is not just a health problem. It is also a complex social phenomenon which reflects an interaction between impairments, activity limitations and participation restrictions from a *person's body* and the features of society institutions, especially the educative ones. Overcoming the difficulties faced by people with disabilities requires interventions to remove environmental, social and educational barriers.

Throughout history, humans have been witness of the struggle and stigma that

physically disabled people have faced in their everyday life according to Puig de la Bellacasa (1992) in *Revista Educación y Desarrollo Social*. De la Bellacasa mentions that “Physically disabled people were considered a punishment for their families and condemned to live without any type of development or integration (Puig de la Bellacasa, 1992 y Cañedo, 2003)”. Besides that, the terms that have been awarded to persons that are “*different*”, lack neutrality. Moreover, marks and labels with a high significant and always with negative connotations are linked to refer to persons with disabilities according to Mariela Cabello (Cabello, 2007).

Dr. Rodrigo Jiménez Sandoval (*Las personas con discapacidad en la educación superior*, 2007) establishes that it is also recognized in history that there are two paradigms of disability. Initially, there is the *traditional model* in which people with disabilities were used as objects of charity which left the family alone in the process of coping with this situation.

In the second paradigm or model the skills of people with disabilities were underestimated as a result of the same stigmas that the society awarded; therefore, it imposed barriers that affected their ability to develop properly.

According to the World Health Organization, “*a disability is an umbrella term, covering impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions. Impairment is a problem in body function or structure. An activity limitation is a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or action while a participation restriction is a problem experienced by an individual in involvement in life situations*” (2011).

Therefore, in the educational system a person with disabilities must be accepted as *she or he is*, meets their needs, with the same rights as others and offering services so that they can develop to their full potential.

In that period, where special schools were created, there were certain limitations that

remain nowadays, among these: the resistance caused among teachers towards the change of organizational methods, curriculum and staff training demands.

However, people with disabilities have the same health and educational needs as non-disabled people. They also may experience narrower margins of health and education as well, both because of poverty and social exclusion. They also may be vulnerable to secondary conditions. Evidence suggests that people with disabilities face barriers in accessing health and different types of public services. The World Report on Disability states in its introduction that many people with disabilities do not have equal access to health care, *education* and employment opportunities. They do not receive disability-related services required, and they experience exclusion from everyday life activities” (2011).

Moreover, in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, there were eight guiding principles that underlie the Convention. This was established to improve Inclusive Education by hiring qualified teachers in sign language or Braille and by training personnel that work in all educative levels to accomplish the right of education of people with disabilities. Therefore, the personnel training must include a commitment to work with people with disabilities, the usage of forms, ways, increasing and alternative communicative formats. Also, it must include techniques and educative material to support people with disabilities. On the other hand, it must guarantee the access to higher education, professional education as well, adult education and the possibility to study and learn throughout their life without discrimination and the opportunity to have equal rights.

The main objective in Inclusive Education is to give access to education in all levels to people with disabilities in an equitable form since historically they have been discriminated from the educational systems. The Inclusive Educational term has forced many students to be labeled as *those* people with disabilities that bring negative consequences in their learning process and given that many teachers do not

adjust their pedagogical practices and have very low expectations of them. An Inclusive Education is an answer to the phenomenon of exclusions that people with disabilities face in the education service.

Historically at the University of El Salvador students with disabilities have been facing many limitations in their learning process of English as a foreign language. However, the conditions needed to ease their learning process in higher education are found in the agenda of the university authorities with the creation of a proposal for an Inclusive Education. Students with disabilities are perceived by others as learners with higher difficulties. Inclusive education is an answer to this social problematic phenomenon found in the people that are trying to learn English as a foreign language. This type of education (Inclusive Education) is meant to provide circumstances and offer opportunities to persons with disabilities so they can continue growing in their education.

Developing inclusive education must be seen as a reform process. For it to work, many new attitudes need to be formed and developed practices, not only among educational professionals but across communities and societies as a whole. While these changes are taking place, many countries maintain a range of provisions to offer choice to parents and to give flexibility to local circumstances. It seems to be one of the proposals found in *Inclusive Education at Work* from the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation. The attitudes that must be formed depend basically on the plans coming from the university authorities. In fact, Ana María Glower, Academic Vice-Rector of Universidad de El Salvador, explained to journal CoLatino, November 29th 2012, that curriculum adoptions were being taking place to offer possibilities to people with disabilities (Bernal, CoLatino).

Traditionally only an elite group studied foreign language, according to Ana Doménech Vidal *et al*; however, nowadays English is the most spoken language and in Salvadoran society it is really needed to quickly get a job opportunity. People with

disabilities then could find a great opportunity learning English as a foreign language. Therefore, the importance of the way people without disabilities perceive peers with disabilities since it may affect the quality and level of social interaction needed to develop communicative skills. Changing all elements, as well as negative perception and attitude in education toward people with disabilities is a challenging task requiring continued study and effort.

2.2 The ideal classroom for students with disabilities

From the social groups that have been traditionally excluded, people with disabilities, there is a consent and approval of educational situations of exclusion and segregation (special classes and/or special schools). Barton (1998) interprets this phenomenon as the answer that modern societies give to the concept of disability. This certainly becomes a major cause of differentiation and involves isolation and social restriction. In the only public higher education of El Salvador, although there is an existing proposal to face this social reaction that induces educational situations of exclusion, the applicability is not yet controlled or supervised allowing the continuity of this situation that Barton explains in *Discapacidad y Sociedad*.

In *Inclusive Classrooms* there are some characteristics that should be considered (Giné, 1998; Parrilla, 2001; Steinback, 1992):

Classrooms philosophy: The essential principle states that every student is able to learn in any conventional classroom. Diversity is a shared valued, it strengthens the classrooms and provides more learning opportunities to everyone in the classroom.

Curriculum: It is designed to let students recognize positive attributes and respect other personal characteristics and circumstances. It incorporates shared objectives agreed in evaluation indicators.

Optimization and changes in services and resources: Every type of resource is focused in Inclusive Education. Professors' roles are reconsidered. For example a physiotherapist pedagogical professor may be considered a group member who contributes with his experience and background but not getting the main tutor professor in the classroom. The pedagogical practice is optimized by working with different groups, parents, other support members and students.

Students' participation: They are the center of the classroom and curriculum. Students are supplied with necessary educational tools so they value diversity, work and feel included.

Ordinary classroom as a framework for students: Strategies and methods are encouraged to optimize all students' attention through different networks in which they help each other, as for instance, peer to peer tutoring, cooperative learning and group works. Cooperation and collaboration is necessary along with activities in which they are not competing but they feel all equals. This strategy may contain limitations at Universidad de El Salvador, according to Madrid if the peer to peer tutoring strategy is performed during class.

2.3 Ideal Classroom

The inclusive classroom has been built over time on the basis of equity, social justice and human rights. This is a situation of belief and trust where families of disabled students are involved. Teachers and the classrooms in general, firmly believe in the contributions that each one can give in to the teaching-learning process. This process of inclusion embraces the whole community. This inclusive educational model even nowadays allows to correct inequalities, find the balance between equality, diversity and to achieve an educational institution for all.

At the University of El Salvador there are just a few *educational facilities* that establish good circumstances for an inclusive education. As referred to by the students with disabilities Armando Madrid and Álvaro Maravilla were interviewed during this research. They both have not experienced an *Ideal Classroom*, a term which represents an educational facility for students with disabilities. Recently at Universidad de El Salvador a proposal of policies for inclusive education has just come out coordinated with *Secretaria de Inclusión Social*, a governamental institution in El Salvador.

So far the investigation in teaching languages for disabled people is limited and the inclusive practices occur in concrete situations. Among the experts in this field, McColl (2000) assures that learning a foreign language does not interfere with the development of mother language. Moreover, it implies improvements in the curriculum in a cross-cutting manner.

Consequently, classrooms in inclusive institutions are reorganized taking in consideration methodological, strategy and organization changes so learning and students attention is more effective. *Classrooms* in Inclusive Education are organized by having a diversity education as a goal, this represents a solution from *inclusive education* that consider the needs of students with disabilities as a basis. And develops didactic proposals to stimulate, promote everyone's participation (Arnaiz, 2004). Classrooms are social and didactic spaces where culture, values and goals from inclusive education institutions are reflected. At Universidad de El Salvador, according to Armando Madrid, the culture, values and goals from inclusive education institutions are not still reflected. Therefore, classrooms from Universidad de El Salvador require a new way of organizing them to become inclusive adapting to the needs of students with disabilities achieving better results during participation and evaluation.

Furthermore, in 2005, McColl reflects on monolingualism comparing it with a "straitjacket". Returning to a previously mentioned problematic classroom atmosphere, it is possible that the English learning process would be a reality for everybody if the classrooms were provided with appropriate aids and support.

Authors as Ainscow, Booth and Dyson (2006) understand inclusive education under the following basis:

1-Presence: It refers to the place where students are educated. Ainscow, Booth and

Dyson consider these places very important since it is too difficult to recognize and learn human diversity far away from classrooms or any other institution for students with no disabilities.

2-Learning: The educative institution where the students with disabilities learn adopts necessary measures.

3-Participation: It is highly necessary to recognize and value each student's identity and also to take care for their personal and social well-being. No mistreating.

Inclusive Classrooms gather all students with disabilities and organize the class in a creative way dealing with the needs of students with disabilities. They organize classroom activities letting students work and cooperate with non-handicap students. According to Madrid and Maravilla, an effort by the pedagogical practice is not perceived whenever they are learning English at Universidad de El Salvador classrooms. In *Inclusive Education*, the pedagogical practice requires adaptation to the various activities, resources and different ideas guided to have students with disabilities included. Currently, at Universidad de El Salvador, Madrid states that it works differently: it is the student with a disability that has to adapt to the pedagogical practice requirements. The professors' role in Inclusive Education must create a suitable atmosphere to let every type of student socialize in order to raise awareness that in *Inclusive Education* everyone must cooperate.

Because of that cooperation, Inclusive education is focused in *practice* with different facets (Echeita, 2008) since it is referred as an aspiration and an important value for all students. All students with disabilities need to feel included (in the educational system), recognized, taken into consideration (by the pedagogical practice and its educative institution) and valued in their social groups such as family, friends, school and work.

Years ago in different European countries, there were people with disabilities that were unable to study a foreign language because of their condition. When learning English this represented a serious problem in getting a job. Nowadays, people with disabilities are able to study English, but *what matters* is how they are able to learn English, specifically in a third-world country. Even at Universidad de El Salvador has recently produced a proposal of policies for an inclusive education, but the professors are not yet qualified and trained to teach under the proper conditions. The facilities within the school are not appropriately adequate to create a learning atmosphere for disable students.

Teachers are forced to physically take all the didactic material and available technology from one class to the next. In general there isn't a suitable method which is the best to teach languages but it is preferred that a multimodal method would be used for stimulating all the concepts within the classroom. Even though this occurs in an optimal way, the physical space is fundamental. Inclusive theories and those of universal designing claim that one must adapt to different environments as well as the ever changing present needs. For this, the microelements (materials and resources) as well as macroelements (classrooms and spaces) must be accessible. The subject of foreign language has been a pioneer in the use of technology, from analogical to the multimedia material.

History lets us know that discriminations and exclusions have their basis in the way disability is perceived. Domenech and Moliner (2011) state that there are three models or ways of understanding and conceiving disability: *Model excluder, medical model and social model*. Depending on what model is applied, it will facilitate or hinder integration, social participation, rights' development and opportunities. Moving to higher educational environments, a whole process must be included to teach staff on Inclusive Education and, of course, by using different models students with disabilities can become productive and dynamic so they can also contribute to Salvadoran society and economic development. Especially when learning how to

speaking English properly it can lead to different job opportunities that are much more favorable to students with disabilities.

The educational response that authorities usually offer on the issue of curricular tasks for the disabled student population is directly related to the approach. As a result, different educational responses will emerge depending on the inclusive models of disability presented. The model that fits the reality of the University of El Salvador has been a non-answer to improve curricular tasks for students with disabilities. However, by introducing a proposal for Inclusive Education, circumstances must improve. The proposal for Inclusive Education from Universidad de El Salvador emphasizes in its presentation that socially and historically, students with disabilities have been marked by discrimination and exclusion. This proposal aims for the University of El Salvador to distinguishably become the nation's leading institution to provide inclusive education taking into account the democratic principles of equality, justice and non-discrimination (2013).

One of the models that have prevailed for years at the University of El Salvador is the excluder one, which considers the students with disabilities incapable of contributing to society. Educative authorities tend to feel pity and or sorrow for them and from this point of view, the University of El Salvador has not been able to create full development, integration and potential of students with disabilities. In this model, it is considered that the best option for a student with disability is going to specialized center where professionals can assist them in inclusive educational services. Nevertheless, in El Salvador there is only one higher education institution for people with disabilities, this may explain why students with disabilities from Universidad de El Salvador are not usually referred. The educational response that will counteract this conception that has preponderated is the segregationist and assimilationist model.

On the other hand, if Inclusive Education is considered from a perspective projected in a medical vision or medical model, the educational response seek to promote the

integrative educational model. It allows the student to spend part of their time in regular classrooms, but in certain academic areas they are left out to be attended by different types of professionals (not only teachers), thinking that it may be beneficial for him or the rest of the group. During the interview Armando Madrid stated "the model has not been fully applied", referring to the medical model.

Finally the social conception of disability or social model involves the application of an educational model of inclusion where students with disabilities are included into social diversity and all aspects of institutions. In order to become a leading national institution of higher education Universidad de El Salvador intends to apply this Inclusive model. No one involved in inclusive process should feel sorrow or pity, and should not plan to help them separate from their classmates since students with disabilities are considered members of the regular classrooms. And their development is promoted in a full potential with a trained pedagogical practice and different resources. In Inclusive Education, diversity is beneficial to all members of a school or university community.

Armando Madrid, a student with disability that was interviewed during this research, is considered as a member of the educational classroom. But, he argues that the public higher education institution does not have necessary resources yet so that the proposal for Inclusive Education may be possible and reflected in developing his full potential. In the section on ethical-political demands from the proposal for inclusive education, the following lines were taken from the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: "States Parties will enable persons with disabilities to learn life skills and social development, in order to promote their full and equal participation in education and as members of the community."

Added to this purpose which States Parties will take appropriate measures, including:

a) To make easier the learning of Braille, alternative writing, alternative modes, means

and formats of augmentative and alternative communication and skills of orientation and mobility, as well as tutoring and peer support;

b) Facilitating the learning of sign language and the promotion of the linguistic identity of the deaf community;

c) Ensuring that the education of the people, especially the children who are blind, deaf or deaf blind, is delivered in the languages and modes and means of communication more appropriate for the individual, and in environments that allow them to reach their maximum academic and social development (Universidad de El Salvador, 2013).

Furthermore, we can take into consideration the cases of the Countries with an inclusive tradition as the case of England, where there is an equivalent figure to the figure of PT (Principal Tutor) best known as SENCO (Special Education Needs Coordinator). There are SENCOs in every school and its participation is very active, from general practices as seminars organization for teacher staff to more concrete situations as the support to the foreign language teacher. This last one, besides, usually relies on other members of educational environment, assistants, and assistants of language or specific supporting human resource for disabled students in the foreign language classroom (LSA- Language Support Assistant). Therefore, it is necessary a greater participation of experts or volunteers in the foreign language classrooms. Moreover, the training on inclusive strategies for teaching foreign languages is considered fundamental.

2.4 A Didactic Proposal: Peer Tutoring and Shared Teaching

To carry out this proposal, the team used the support and collaborative peer work;

meaning students who share similar status. Therefore, tutoring will be set up with the students and the teachers achieving the Shared Teaching exercise. It is necessary to identify each part of this proposal.

The Peer Tutoring refers to the fact that people from similar social groups, who are not teachers, help others to learn as they do themselves while teaching. They help fellow students with disabilities in their learning process in an interactive, intentional and systematic way (Topping 1996, 2000). For Boud (1988) this is the way to go from independence to the interdependence through mutual learning.

The students learn by sharing their ideas to others and through the participation in activities from which they can learn from their peers. The emphasis is in the learning process which creates emotional support. It is an educational practice in which all of the students interact with one another to reach educational goals or set up curriculum objectives. So **the peer tutoring** constitutes an alternative of teaching and learning where students commit themselves to exercising thought, reasoning, and the exchange of knowledge (Luca and Clarkson, 2002). Durán, Torro and Vila (2003) conceive the idea that the cooperative learning method based on the creation of couples with an asymmetric relationship. The tasks of respective roles are included in the didactic proposal as students have a common and shared objective which is the learning process or improvement of any curricular competence that is acquired through an interaction planned by the teacher.

According to the following method, it is important to remark how the group of reference or commonly called ordinary group is the second social system (after the families) where students coexist daily. This method consists mainly in reducing feelings of exclusion from a cooperative peer to peer work in class. The fact that students with more limitations or barriers in learning and participation do not have to go out of the classroom to receive additional support but participate in the daily life of the classroom with all the support they need. This provokes integration in the peer

group and acceptance of differences (Huguet, 2006).

Since other professional elements can be integrated in class, this form of coordination and teacher organization is as simple as the presence of two teachers in the same classroom. In this case both of them work together simultaneously in a collaborative way. Both professionals: The Principal Teacher of English Language, The Specialist of Therapeutic Pedagogy.

To Huguet (2006) there are a number of basic requirements for this coordinated work:

The Mutual Confidence: It is necessary to build a confidence environment and a good relationship between them that makes them feel well and they can collaborate in the educational labor.

To feel one more in the group: It means that the main tutor or teacher permits that the professional in therapeutic pedagogy goes to class and both of them share a space and a group with equal conditions as well as the students with disabilities.

Communication between teachers: The spaces of collaboration and communication between the teachers permit the critical reviewing of pedagogical practice performed in class and the contrast between alternatives and proposals.

Another aspect to consider, and as Huguet suggests, if Inclusive Education is to profit the fact that there are two teachers in the classroom and they attend the whole diversity of students (disable or not), a number of activities must be executed to combine some specific requirements. In this sense, it should be encouraged interaction, teamwork and the classroom organization which promotes the flexibility to group students. Moreover, these activities encouraged the success of learning and the autonomy through teamwork by achieving mutual confidence.

3. METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Methodology

In order to obtain the most accurate information, the research team took into account the following aspects. So the team used a mix of research strategies to collect and analyze data.

3.2 Technique

The technique used by the team to gather information was the interview where two disabled students volunteered to provide information about their experiences as English language learners. The research group told the students interviewed to provide as much information as possible considering the objective and relevance of the information provided.

For this reason the interviews took place close to their homes where they can be comfortable; so that they could provide important information about the categories of analysis: curriculum, inclusive education and emotional state. Moreover, limits to both inside and outside the classroom were taken into account. This information was recorded for a later analysis.

3.3 Instrument

The team used the interview as a tool for collecting information whose questions were subjected to review by the research team and the memory director.

3.4 Procedure for collecting data:

With the aim of collecting information the team has made use of the following

elements:

1. First of all, two students of the foreign language department were selected because they both have a disability. And the team made some observations to investigate the form of displacement. Their development outside the classroom. The observations were taken into account.
2. Second, the research team told the students with disabilities what was the purpose of the interview. The team asked their permission to give the interview because it is easier for both students especially for Armando, being as he is blind. The group made use of a camera to record interviews and avoid significant loss of information or misinterpretations during the transcription process.
3. Finally, the data collected has allowed the research team to investigate former classroom disadvantages that influence learning.

3.5 Analysis and results

The analysis was made based on the information provided from the students. And, the information gathered by the group with the purpose of seeking an agreement between the information collected and the interpretation of the information. Therefore, the analysis is based on the opinions of the research team members.

Then, from the analysis the group identified the constraints that both students have faced in the subject of English during the period of time in which the research was conducted.

Finally, the team establishes the conclusions of this study and also provides some

recommendations.

3.6 ANALYSIS OF THE TWO INTERVIEWS

3.6.1 Interview results of Álvaro Maravilla

The main limitations that hinder English learning for Álvaro Maravilla, student of Licenciatura en Inglés Opción Enseñanza at Universidad de El Salvador, are grouped as follow.

1. Infrastructure, due to the difficulties accessing the facilities. And in the classrooms there are not enough seats forcing the student to wait until one is available. (Maravilla focuses exclusively on the displacement taking into account that his disability involves difficulty and careful maneuvering). And also the library and other places at the university turn out to be difficult to enter.
2. The teaching method and pedagogical practice since Alvaro Maravilla reveals that no teacher has adapted his pedagogical practice to the presence of physical disabilities students. In fact, he thinks that some teachers ignore the presence of people with disabilities (whether they are mild or severe) in the class. So, it should be noted that neither the inclusive activities have taken place because according to Maravilla some of them inside and outside the classroom become a bigger difficulty due to his condition. Moreover, Maravilla states that inclusive education is not a reality in classrooms because he perceives that professors not only ignore a teaching method that makes the English language learning easier for students with disabilities but also he considers that they marginalized.

3.6.2 Interview results of Armando Madrid

Two interviews were carried out during the research. One of them, Armando

Madrid has a physical disability. Madrid was born, therefore, all answers provided were analyzed taking into consideration his condition.

During the interview Armando Madrid pointed that there are different limitations in the process of learning English in the Major that he studies (Journalism only), these are listed below: 1. The lack of language skills tutors, as well as time and space to work with disable students (note that to avoid the negative impact on the learning process these people should not be other students of the course, and in terms of time he argues that the learning process of a disable person use to be slower). 2. The lack of literature in Braille for English language learning (Madrid mentions the University of El Salvador without leaving behind other higher education institution). 3. The lack of a didactic method of teaching-learning for people with disabilities. 4. The demotivation to learn English when it is mandatory (refers to the inexperience of a disable person learning the language especially with their limitations and difficulties).

The previous four limitations as Madrid suggest that the teaching-learning process of English language is more difficult for a person with a physical disability (in this case is blindness). Similarly, both the internal and external conditions of classroom teaching practice and the lack of other elements makes it difficult for him to learn at a faster pace. Therefore, a student with a disability needs more facilities to be afforded by the (educative) institution and the teaching practice.

In one of the questions, Madrid is asked about the English teaching method at Universidad de El Salvador. For him it is *acceptable* since at the University of El Salvador *everyone* must triumph. But, an attempt must be done to improve the English method so it can adjust to the slow learning process of students with disabilities in acquiring and mastering English. Madrid thinks mastering English may offer job possibilities to blind students working as interpreters or other types of laboring positions.

Finally, he emphasizes that institutions must have certain knowledge to adapt the didactic methods for students with disabilities; since they are a challenge to inclusive

education in El Salvador. It is practice, according to Madrid, taking in consideration necessary adaptations that should take place in didactic methods when learning. He thinks that superior inclusive education must adapt to the educative system. This refers to the didactic method. Since inclusion (in the term superior inclusive education) is not only registering students with disabilities at Universidad de El Salvador in with their preferred major but also turning the learning process easier and effective to students with disabilities.

Madrid thinks that English Professors teach without adapting the class activities to the nature of his major (*Journalism*) and neither applying the didactic method in the classroom to students with disabilities. If these changes were done Madrid, it may have provided the opportunity for students in journalism to write news in English and continue practice it. He says there are many English subjects with similar contents.

Madrid not only criticizes that there are many English subjects and content similarity, but also criticizes the didactic method because it is not adjusted to superior inclusive education. He thinks that students in Journalism prefer to postpone studying English in their final years.

Madrid thinks students get delayed the fact there are many English subjects. He considers there are few opportunities for those students willing to retake English subjects after failing. Madrid was studying third level of English last semester for a third time (at Universidad de El Salvador, you can fail a subject three times and a fourth one means destitution from that major). Even Madrid passed, the fact he had to study English means he did not receive other opportunities to learn English. Madrid was considered a conventional student. He said that “any effort to learn English comes from me adapting to the class. Moreover, the current Superior inclusive education relies on the effort coming exclusively from the student with disability. In fact, the disable student depends basically of other classmates that regularly help us only if they want to or if they are asked to do so”.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

After getting the results throughout this investigation, the research group provided some suggestions and advice with the sole purpose of improving the educative service. Becoming a pioneer in the educative center with better conditions for

students with disabilities who want to develop their full potential; these recommendations are addressed to:

4.1 Teacher's staff:

1. To take advantage of the technological devices from the Foreign Language Department at Universidad de El Salvador with the aim of reducing as many limitations as possible in the learning process of students with disabilities. It is also necessary to adapt the pedagogical practice addressed to also *teach* students with disabilities. This means modifying activities and homework considering that students with disabilities face more limitations.
2. To promote the collaboration among the students with the research groups who carry out Seminar investigations. The purpose of these groups is to suggest possible solutions for future academic problems.
3. To work in social service projects designed to create assistants for English Teaching Majors that can give support to people with disabilities and develop a commitment toward this community of students.

4.2 Universidad de El Salvador Authorities:

1. To facilitate training programs to qualify teacher staff in sign language and Braille so that they will be updated about teaching methods for

students with disabilities. As a result, inclusive education classes would develop their full potential.

2. To evaluate the possibility of investing more budget for improving the facilities according to the needs of disabled student population. And give them appropriate opportunity to reach their maximum potential.
3. To promote curriculum adaptations that includes strategies to offer better possibilities for disabled students to progress. As a result, providing more opportunities for developing their competences and changing the attitude toward people with disabilities.

4.3 Student population

1. To change the negative perception an attitude toward classmates with disabilities by promoting an inclusive environment in which they can feel confidence, comfortable, as well as belonging to the group and developing their potential.
2. To work in social service projects which enhance the competences of disabled students and encourage students' participation adopting strategies and methods as peer tutoring. Fostering with the goal of attempting to make them feel like equals.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The phenomenon of disability in human condition represents a social problem that covers education access and career field. Students with disabilities face a foreign language learning process with more limitations and difficulties than any other population in higher education. Therefore, pedagogical practice and educative institutions must *adapt* their teaching, learning process, evaluation system, methods

(methodological lines, resources, activities, homework), classes, among other elements to reduce restrictions that do not ease learning English as a foreign language.

Modifications are necessary in methodological, strategy practices and institution organization to let conditions adapt to the needs of students with disabilities. The ideal classroom is an objective in Inclusive Education since it adapts to students with disabilities needs' achieving better results when evaluating them and there is more participation. Inclusive Classrooms gather all students with disabilities and organize the class in a creative way dealing with the needs of students with disabilities. The role of the professor in Inclusive Education must create a suitable atmosphere. This would allow all type of student socialize in order to raise awareness that in *Inclusive Education* every element involved in higher education must cooperate.

To process an immediate change considering students with disabilities a priority in higher education does not only require a proposal of policies for inclusive education but a change in classroom philosophy where diversity is a shared value. This strengthens the classrooms and provides more learning opportunities to everyone in the classroom. The curriculum is designed to incorporate shared objectives, indicators that raise awareness in disabilities, services and resources are optimized and changes in institutions are done.

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7. ANNEXES

7.1 Interview with Armando Madrid, a disable student from University of El Salvador.

Armando Madrid: "I would like to thank you for me giving this opportunity to disclose a research on people with disabilities to be known. To begin it is necessary to say I will

describe the problem mentioning part by part. Methodology: The professors teach a conventional public but most of them do not attempt to get to know the disabled student special on a personal level. However, there are some that do provide personal life help to their disabled student.

1- What are the main difficulties you face during learning English at the University of El Salvador *specifically in the classroom?*

In the case of English, there is no approach; therefore methodology is practiced in a general way. In regards to Braille there are very few books accessible for the blind. In English, we use different books coming from different institutions that sell them to the university students but you cannot have them in Braille method with the printer since you might be incurring in piracy (stealing intellectual property), so the (blind) student must jot down the whole class, grammatical points, exercises and what else the book has. It is not a big deal. There is another problem: There are no people that can cooperate in this subject (English) at the moment to dictate (to the blind student to write in Braille method). Even there are people willing to cooperate; they do not know how to pronounce a word or to do an exercise. Methodology, lack of information in Braille, and also the didactic part of the class, dynamics (are the main the difficulties). There is no way to involve blind people in class. I participate when they ask me to but if I do not understand, I will not be able to do it. Since I do not have the textbook as the rest of the students and the teacher is always speaking in English is hard for me to understand the class

2- In the classroom, what are the advantages applied by the pedagogical practice of your professor that ease learning English?

There are no advantages since you are the one that creates that mechanism to adapt to the class and the pedagogical practice. I have been with three different professors that have distinctive ways to work. Some of them are accessible. It is you the one that needs to adapt to each class, it is yourself who jots down an exercise. There is no methodology that involves people with disabilities. It is you who brings to the

professor any type of proposal to the class so you can become part of it.

3- In the classroom, how do you consider the Importance of socialization when learning English?

It happens and it is really good but as I was saying, it is the student with disabilities the one that needs to adapt and some peers help as they can cooperate. Sometimes it is too complicated since I participate if I understand the topic, the grammar part of the class or anything is being taught, but if I do not understand, socializing in class results not useful or being part in class dynamics carried out by professors or students. I believe working in groups helps since I can work with others, we work together, and other types of working in class are complicated.

4- What are some of the activities that help you a lot learning English in the classroom?

What has helped, as I was saying, is working in groups or homework (where you do something with no rigid instructions) since I can get help from others. Homework of that type without rigid instructions is easier than doing a glossary of words, do an activity to do a presentation being timed and having memorized a certain amount of paragraphs or dialogue. This type of homework is open to everyone; I do agree with others who cooperate in this subject (English).

5- What are some of the techniques applied by professors that help you learn English?

There are not many techniques. What's very common is having a peer that helps you in class. This person reads and works with the book and dictates an exercise or any grammar topic. This certainly helps me but it makes it difficult for the other person that helps me since the professor continues teaching the class and explaining an exercise. So I have to pay attention to both the professor teaching and what my peer is explaining. My peer does lose concentration in the class sometimes. To make learning English easier, professors allow the students to go in to their office after the

class especially with important questions so that you can talk to him or her but sometimes I do not have time to go or professors have other consultants. At first I did not take advantage to this; previously I used the CD that the book had to help me in class. However, this year the book of English did not have a CD, so I only had the help of a person in class.

6- What are the main limitations you find outside the classroom in your process of learning English at the University of El Salvador?

Armando Madrid: I can mention some. One of them is that people have the desire to help but they do not master this language. It is also necessary to know the writing and pronunciation skills. Then people interested in helping provide (aside) time but they do not master the language so you cannot learn it in a very good way. Another difficulty is that some information that you want cannot be found in Braille. I can find some texts that are vocabularies and dialogues that help to know a little bit, for example if you are looking for something specific, grammar, the usage of any verb, the usage of some phrases. But these can be found in written form which is called *ink form* or from internet, but this cannot be found in Braille. Another limitation is that institutions give opportunities to the public that want to learn English but they are not prepared to work with the persons with disabilities since it depends on the disability, on the topics to be discussed and also it depends on the material being used. Blind students need the Braille method, any disability in learning requires much more time. It must be said that the students with disabilities do not learn as quickly as any other conventional person (without any disability). Depending on the type of disability the process of learning the terminology is slower. This type of education should be personalized specially when there are few places people with disabilities can learn English.

Other limitations to learn English are the teachers, instructors and program designers. They create the project and thematic classes and they do not know how long the person is going to take to learn it, they establish a period of time and in that period the person must learn it. It is not the same to work with a conventional group compare to

a group with disable people. We all do not have the same ability to learn things, not just the language, in this case English, there are some who learn faster because they like it, they consider it interesting and they want to learn it. There are others that wish they can learn it. However, it is more complicated. Another example is that of a child that is being taught and even when he sees it as a game it is difficult for him to learn it. It is more difficult in the case of an adult with disabilities. These are some limitations that I found.

7- How do you consider learning English at the University of El Salvador?

I think it is great because here it is applied the term that a person with disabilities must be comprehensive to excel, achieve goals and objectives. Then one (the disable student) must submit to the rigidity that the conventional people exceed. But, how is that accomplished? I think to have more opportunities; it's great changing to a slower learning pace. For a blind man that cannot do anything, practicing to speak English throughout the day helps me to learn how to handle the language. Especially when an opportunity arises such as meeting a tourist or foreigners whom needs interpretation for direct or just a general question, I would feel confident to do so.

The system must be adapted to the facilities of the person with disabilities and the institutions should open opportunities to receive these disable students. It is useless if there are institutions that do not provide opportunities. Adaptations and modifications must be done to both the blind and the disable persons since there are other disabilities for example the case of the deaf, so that they too can learn English. How can it be done? It requires a process. Therefore, it is necessary to create this mechanism: To identify each disabled individuals and then adapting inclusive English methods so that students can assimilate, increasing their ability to learn and perform in the classroom.

8- To you, what is inclusive education at the University of El Salvador?

The term is very interesting for me since it has been promoted and it is a good model to assimilate, to include higher education for people with disabilities. These are very good methods. But you should not let behind the various types of adaptations possible in the classroom; because if you talk about the inclusion of people with disabilities, we will fall into the same problematic situation in every interview if these methods are not properly applied. The people with disabilities are already included in our higher education system. They only need to adapt to the educational system to make that inclusion more equitable so that people with disabilities can develop the abilities in an easier way and graduate from this university with less complications. The case of English is complicated not only for conventional people but for people with disabilities. We are included; it just requires adapting the system (educational) to people with disabilities.

9- What are the limitations that discourage you the most?

It discourages me to know that in my career, journalism, there are several levels of English (subjects) and they are taught in a generalized way. It takes time and dedication which represents more work. It is a generalized form because it should be related with an approach to journalism. This means developing your English while giving an interview, it requires you to write the proper news in all areas. However, English is studied but generally, the names of the subjects are different (English subjects) but the same is studied. English 1, 2 and 3 are a review of English 4. In other majors there are only one or two levels of English. I think many levels of English delay a lot the students. There are three opportunities to pass a subject. Many students wait to study English in their last years to dedicate more time to the subject. But, too much time spent on one subject discourages because you cannot get a job then. Thus, the students fall behind in the career.

7.2 Interview with Álvaro Maravilla, a disable student from University of El Salvador.

1-What are the main difficulties you face during learning English at the University of El Salvador specifically in the classroom?

AM: Space, infrastructure, sometimes it is hard to reach classroom locations. Sometimes the classrooms are too crowded so I have to wait to get a desk.

2-In the classroom, what are the advantages applied by the pedagogical practice of your professors that ease learning English?

AM: No advantage has been taken into account (by professors). For example, English professors assign homework to do outside the classroom, so it turns out to be too hard due to my disability to move to certain places. I feel like English professors obviate or ignore the disability of a student.

3-In the classroom, how do you consider the Importance of socialization when learning English?

AM: Well, it is important because it may provide more information about our physical problems so high education could be truly inclusive. In my experience that term has never been used since there is no special didactic method to better learn and that includes different activities.

4-What are some of the activities that help you a lot learning English in the classroom?

AM: None inside the classroom. When doing role-plays (activities that simulate a conversation between two or more people) or dynamic, students make a circle so they can all stand but I'm sitting. English Professors do not provide any facility or special way for our participation. I go to the whiteboard with some degree of difficulty. Since inclusive education is not properly applied it cannot help the rest of students with disabilities.

5-What are some of the techniques applied by professors that help you learn English?

AM: Debates, research, review, participation, expositions or presentations, information research outside the classroom about the class.

6-What are the main limitations you find outside the classroom in your process of learning English at the University of El Salvador?

AM: The condition of sidewalks, infrastructure, I mean that there is not enough ramps that help me with the displacement. There are long distances between some buildings and the locations of buildings or cafeterias (there is only one ramp that has been located). To find information in the library is difficult. The new constructions and remodeling in the University make difficult or complicate to access them.

7-How do you consider learning English at the University of El Salvador?

AM: Honestly I think that some English professors have pronunciation problems, others are absent in many class sessions and this affects learning. Other teachers assign homework that is complicated especially for people with disabilities; for example presentations, summaries, homework assignments outside the classroom that make it difficult to study for exams.

8-To you, what is inclusive education at the University of El Salvador?

AM: All institutions of the university should reach an agreement to find an easier way to provide students with disabilities the opportunity to graduate. More people with disabilities could enter to the University of El Salvador if we limiting physical, academic barriers.

9-What are the limitations that discourage you the most?

AM: The location of classrooms, infrastructure, inefficiency of some teachers and the lack of application of didactic methods for students with disabilities. I do not understand when the teachers ignore this. Then, even some of them are more interested in finishing their class but they are not paying attention to the students that have mild or severe disabilities.

7.3 Interview used

**UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
FOREIGN LANGUAGES DEPARTMENT**



Interview objective:

To know what are the main difficulties students with disabilities at the University of El Salvador face during learning English inside and outside the classroom.

1-What are the main difficulties you face during learning English at the University of El Salvador *specifically in the classroom*?

2-In the classroom, what are the advantages applied by the pedagogical practice of your professors that ease learning English?

3-In the classroom, how do you consider the Importance of socialization when learning English?

4-What are some of the activities that help you learning English in the classroom?

5-What are some of the techniques applied by professors that help you learn English?

6-What are the main limitations you find outside the classroom in your process of learning English at the University of El Salvador?

7-How do you consider learning English at the University of El Salvador?

8-What is inclusive education at the University of El Salvador?

9-What are the limitations that discourage you the most?