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Empowering Language: Parents Insights on Enhancing English Learning for Children with Mild Intellectual Disabilities in Remote Enclaves^(*)

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تمكين اللغة: رؤى الآباء حول تعزيز تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية للأطفال ذوي الإعاقة الفكرية الخفيفة في المناطق النائية

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الملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحديد التحديات التي يواجهها الآباء السعوديون الذين يعيشون في مناطق نائية عندما يتعلق الأمر برعاية وتعليم أطفالهم ذوي الإعاقة الفكرية البسيطة. تم اختيار تسعة آباء من المنظمات والمدارس التعليمية الخاصة للمشاركة في مقابلات بالبريد الإلكتروني. استخدم تحليل الموضوعات لفحص البيانات المجمعة. أظهرت الدراسة ثلاثة مخاوف رئيسية: صعوبات في الحصول على تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية، أهمية التعليم المتخصص، والتدريب والمساعدة المقدمة للمعلمين. يواجه الأطفال في المناطق النائية تحديات في تطوير مهارات اللغة الإنجليزية، مما يبرز ضرورة تقديم تعليم مصمم خصيصاً لهم. تستكشف هذه الدراسة العقبات الخاصة التي يواجهها آباء الأطفال ذوي الإعاقة الفكرية البسيطة في المناطق النائية في المملكة العربية السعودية في سعيهم للحصول على تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية. لمواجهة هذه الصعوبات بشكل فعال، من الضروري توفير تدريب مناسب وتعليم متخصص للمعلمين، وإزالة العقبات الحالية، وتوسيع فرص التعليم. يمكن أن يؤدي تيسير التعاون بين المشرعين والمعلمين إلى إنشاء مبادرات تعليم مخصصة للغة، مما يعزز النمو الإدراكي والاجتماعي للأطفال ذوي الإعاقة الفكرية البسيطة. **الكلمات المفتاحية:** وجهات نظر الآباء، تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، الأطفال، الإعاقة الفكرية البسيطة، المناطق النائية.



Empowering Language: Parents Insights on Enhancing English Learning for Children with Mild Intellectual Disabilities in Remote Enclaves

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Abstract

This study aims to pinpoint the challenges faced by Saudi Arabian parents living in isolated regions when it comes to caring for and educating their children with modest intellectual disabilities. Nine parents were chosen from organisations and special education schools to take part in email interviews. Thematic analysis was used to examine the gathered data. The survey pinpointed three main concerns: difficulties in obtaining English language education, the importance of specialised instruction, and the training and assistance provided to teachers. Children in rural places encounter challenges in developing English language proficiency, highlighting the necessity of tailored instruction. This study explores the particular obstacles encountered by parents of children with mild intellectual disabilities in isolated areas of Saudi Arabia as they seek English language education. To effectively tackle these difficulties, it is essential to offer teachers suitable training and specialised education, eliminate current obstacles, and broaden educational opportunities. Facilitating cooperation between lawmakers and teachers can lead to the creation of customised language education initiatives, which in turn can enhance the cognitive and social growth of children with minor intellectual impairments.

Keywords: Parental perspectives, EFL, Children, Mild Intellectual Disabilities, Remote Areas.



Introduction

This research delves into the challenges experienced by parents in remote areas of Saudi Arabia as they strive to provide care and education for their children with mild intellectual disabilities. In certain regions, the availability of specialised English language education and support services is often limited. This study is important because it focuses on the challenges faced by parents in remote areas of Saudi Arabia when trying to provide English language instruction for their children with minor intellectual disabilities. The research aims to shed light on these challenges and contribute to the development of tailored language education programmes and support systems. Ultimately, it seeks to promote the intellectual and social development of children with mild intellectual disabilities in remote regions.

All children need to have an education in the English language in today's globalized society. Acquiring proficiency in a second language is crucial for academic achievement, effective communication, and understanding diverse cultures. However, it could be difficult for children with mild intellectual disabilities to have a good education and language training if they live in a remote place. Lack of funds, specialized teachers, and social support are a few possible obstacles (Alkhateeb, et al; 2016, Brereton, et al;2006; Mohamed & Shaaban, 2021).

For children with mild intellectual disabilities living in remote locations, it is essential to ensure equal access to school, including English language instruction. This requires understanding the viewpoints of their parents, who play an extremely important role in their children's education. Children with special needs often have their parents as their first and most important teachers. Consequently, it is important to learn what their thoughts are about English language instruction for children with intellectual disabilities who live in remote places (Almalki, et.al., 2021; Coyne, et.al., 2012).

The purpose of this study is to learn what parents think about English language training for children with mild intellectual disabilities who live in remote areas. Besides analyzing the problems these children and their families face, it also considers potential solutions.

This research aims to understand the challenges faced by parents of children with mild intellectual disabilities in remote areas regarding English



language education. By exploring their perspectives and experiences, the study seeks to enhance the quality and effectiveness of language education for these children. The findings will inform educational practices and promote inclusivity and equity in English language education for children with mild intellectual disabilities in remote areas.

The study Questions

- 1- What are the challenges that parents of children with mild intellectual disabilities face when it comes to English language education in remote areas?
- 2- What are the parents' perspectives on the quality of English language education their child receives in remote areas?
- 3- How can English language education for children with mild intellectual disabilities in remote areas be improved according to parents' perspectives?

Literature review

Since learning English is necessary for success in many facets of life, including communication and academics, all pupils ought to acquire an education in the language. However, children with minor intellectual disabilities face unique challenges when learning a second language, particularly English, in comparison to typically developing children. Significant limits in intellectual functioning, adaptive behavior, and social skills that accompany an intellectual impairment have an impact on a child's language learning and use. Intellectually disabled yet learning-capable students may have trouble with memory, information processing, comprehension, and effective communication. They might also require extra help with math, reading, writing, social skills, and communication (Alenezi et al., 2023; Assouline, et al., 2010; Bishop, 2014).

When it comes to learning, students with mild intellectual disabilities may have distinct learning methods and preferences. They might benefit more from experience, and hands-on learning than from traditional lecture models. More practice and reinforcement may be necessary to help them understand and retain new knowledge and abilities. Despite these obstacles, these children can succeed in their academic endeavors and get past learning hurdles with the correct support, adjustments, and teaching strategies (Almalki, et al., 2021; Harris, 2006).



Language development might be challenging for English language learners with modest intellectual limitations. Learning new terminology, deciphering metaphorical language, and handling intricate linguistic systems are a few of the difficulties. A person may have trouble speaking aloud, which can cause social isolation and communication problems. But it's becoming more and more clear how important it is to provide equal access to English language teaching for children with intellectual disabilities. To meet this need, special education programs are including English language instruction into their curricula. Children with intellectual disabilities can become more fluent in English with continued support and early intervention (Brereton, et al.,2006; Martins, et al.,2011, Trent, et al., 1998).

Children with mild intellectual disabilities may benefit from using visual aids, individualized instruction and support, and technology integration in English language education. For example, educators can facilitate language production by encouraging students to use assistive technology, like communication devices, and they can teach language comprehension by using visuals or videos. Additionally, it is essential to deliver instruction that is precisely tailored to each child's needs and skill level. Children with minor intellectual disabilities should definitely learn English, but there are several strategies and resources that need to be used to make sure they succeed. To ensure that these children have equal opportunities to acquire and use the English language, so they may speak it fluently and participate fully in society, families, educators, and other pertinent parties can collaborate (Brereton, et al.,2006; Harris, 2006).

Since parents are their children's primary caregivers and advocates, they play a crucial role in their education, especially for children with minor intellectual disabilities. But when it comes to dealing with the educational system, speaking out for their child's needs, and getting help and resources, families face particular difficulties. Research shows that parents' cultural background, values, and beliefs shape their expectations for their child's education. These variables also impact parents' perceptions of their child's education in cases where the youngster has a mild intellectual disability. While some parents place a higher priority on their child's social and emotional growth than their intellectual achievement, others hold the opposite



view. Since parents are their children's primary caregivers and advocates, they play a crucial role in their education (Parmenter, 2011; Sanders).

If a parent believes that their child's illness is a significant barrier and they have had negative experiences with the educational system, they may be less in favor of inclusive education. They could assist with specialized or distant learning settings. Interactions with educators and other professionals may impact parents' perceptions. Positive connections with supportive experts promote advocacy and involvement, while negative interactions lead to discontent and disengagement. Understanding the perspectives of parents is crucial to developing responsive educational policies that satisfy the diverse needs of families and communities (Harris, 2006; Wilder & Lillvist, 2017).

For children with mild intellectual disabilities, getting access to high-quality education can be quite challenging; these challenges are exacerbated in remote places where resources are scarce and there is a teacher shortage. Lack of appropriate resources and support services is one of the largest obstacles to providing education for these children in distant places. This weakness includes a lack of special education teachers with certification, inadequate curricula and instructional materials, and limited accessibility to assistive technologies. This may prevent children with intellectual disabilities from having access to the educational opportunities that are essential for them to reach their full potential (Ferri, et.al; 2020; Mohamed & Shaaban, 2021; Singh, et al., 2020).

The limited chances for networking and peer integration present another difficulty. Children with intellectual disabilities may be less likely to participate in extracurricular activities in remote locations or form friendships with peers who experience similar difficulties. Isolation and less opportunities for emotional and social development could result from this. Moreover, families with children who have modest intellectual disabilities usually face unique challenges while trying to provide their children with an education in remote places. These can include having little means of transportation, needing to travel a long distance to receive specialized services or education, or fighting to make ends meet so they can give their children the resources they require (Al-Ahmadi, 2009; Paulauskaite et al., 2021).



Despite these obstacles, there are ways to enhance schooling for children with minor intellectual disabilities who live in remote areas. Restrictions on resource access and service availability can be removed with the use of technology. Telehealth and online learning platforms can help decrease the success gap by providing these children, regardless of where they live, with skilled teachers and support services. Working together, families, neighborhood associations, and educational institutions can help children living in remote areas who have modest intellectual disabilities. In collaboration, these stakeholders may devise strategies to eliminate barriers and guarantee equitable access to superior education for all children (Chomba et al., 2014; Ferri et al., 2020; Kim et al., 2021; Mohamed et al., 2023)

Kover's study (2018) delved into language learning in children with intellectual disabilities, specifically examining Williams syndrome, autism spectrum disorder, Down syndrome, and fragile X syndrome. The study emphasised the significance of distributional cues, such as statistical learning and patterns, in language acquisition.

The study conducted by Bawa and Osei (2018) shed light on the teaching practices at Yumba Special School. Their findings highlighted a predominant use of teacher-centered methods and a disregard for the diverse learning styles and materials of the students. The recommendations involve the provision of Teaching Learning Materials (TLMs) and the implementation of in-service training for teachers.

Reed (2013) conducted a study that focused on explicit phonics and sight word instruction in English language learners with intellectual disabilities. The study found that this type of instruction led to improved letter-sound identification and word reading skills.

The studies highlight the importance of enhancing instructional methods, interventions, and language input in English language education for children with intellectual disabilities.

For children with mild intellectual disabilities in distant areas, a comprehensive and multifaceted approach must be taken to provide them with an education. To ensure that every kid has an equal chance of achieving his or her full potential, we need to be able to identify the challenges they face and find a way to overcome them as well as seize the opportunities that arise.



Methodology

Participants

This study involved nine parents of intellectually disabled children from three isolated Saudi Arabian districts. Local organizations and special education institutions made it easy to find the participants. An email survey about their kids' English language instruction was sent to parents. After obtaining informed consent, the interview questions were delivered to the participants via email. In an interview, parents talked about the difficulties they had encountered and the ideas they had for enhancing their kids' English language education.

Instrument

This study mostly utilised email interviews as its research approach. This method was selected to account for the wide distribution of the participants and possible scheduling limitations. By employing email interviews, participants could answer the questions at their preferred speed and convenience. An email was meticulously composed with nine questions and delivered to each participant to gather their viewpoints and experiences on their child's English language education. The questions were created to obtain thorough understanding of the particular barriers and difficulties experienced by people living in remote regions. After analysing the interview replies, three main issues were identified: challenges in accessing English language instruction, the need of personalised education, and the critical necessity for teacher training and support.

Data Collection

The data collection for this study consisted of sending participants a series of questions via email. The questions were designed to collect information about the challenges their child faced when learning English as a second language. Participants were requested to consider any disparities they observed in the obstacles encountered by their child in comparison to children without intellectual disabilities. In addition, participants were requested to share their perspectives on how their child's learning of English may have been influenced by their remote environment. The questions also delved into parental perspectives on the quality of English language education in remote areas for children with intellectual disabilities.



In order to gain a deeper understanding of the participants' experiences, we included some additional questions. The participants were inquired about whether they sought any external support or resources to aid their child in learning English. They were also requested to explain any adjustments they made to their teaching method to cater to their child's individual requirements. In addition, participants were requested to identify the key factors they believed could impact their child's English language learning in a remote area.

Participants were asked to share their thoughts on the English language education provided to their child with intellectual disabilities in terms of overall satisfaction. They were specifically asked if they believed the education adequately addressed their child's individual requirements. In addition, participants were invited to share any positive experiences they had with English language education for their child in a remote area.

Data Analysis

The collected data was subjected to a comprehensive thematic analysis. The analysis involved a thorough examination of recurring themes to gain a comprehensive understanding of the participants' perspectives. The analysis process required careful refinement and thorough examination of the themes to accurately capture the intricacies of the data. The reliability and validity of the research were ensured through effective collaboration among researchers. The study sought to offer valuable insights into the difficulties, adjustments, levels of satisfaction, and positive experiences associated with English language education for children with intellectual disabilities in remote areas.

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical guidelines, ensuring the protection of participant confidentiality. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study. All collected data were securely stored and permanently deleted once the study was concluded.

Results

1- English language challenges for children with mild intellectual disabilities in remote areas

What difficulties did your child experience while learning English as a second language?



The participants were questioned about their children's challenges learning English as a second language. As Parent 1 clarified, "Grammar and vocabulary are areas where my child struggles. She has trouble remembering words' meanings and using them in sentences." Parent 2 recounted an incident similar to this, noting, "Long, complex sentences are hard for my child to understand. She also has problems saying words correctly." Parent 3 continued, stating that their child "finds it troublesome to comprehend the language because she finds it difficult to understand the concept of idioms and metaphors."

In addition, parents were asked about their child's English proficiency. According to parent 6, "English is a universal language and I want my child to be able to communicate clearly with it." The possibility exists, however, that she may need more time to accomplish this goal than her peers without intellectual disabilities." Parent 7 said, "All I can hope for is the best." I just want my child to be able to speak and comprehend herself as much as possible."

In response to a question concerning difficulties, they had as parents of children with intellectual disabilities, parent 8 said, "Finding specialized resources and programs for our children can be difficult." The general public does not seem to have a good understanding and awareness of intellectual disability, which can lead to prejudice and stigma. "It's not always easy to get there, as we have to travel long distances." Parent 9 explained.

Children with intellectual disabilities residing in remote and remote areas have several difficulties learning English as a second language. Parents expressed concerns about the lack of resources and help available, as well as the difficulty in finding specialized services. Furthermore, they discussed the realistic expectations they had set for their child.

Did you notice any differences in the challenges faced by your child compared to other children without intellectual disabilities?

Parent 1 stated, "Yes, it seemed like my child had more difficulties than the other pupils in their class who did not have intellectual disabilities. It disturbed me to see that my child was falling behind in linguistic skills." In contrast, Parent 2 shot back, "Actually, it didn't seem like my kid had any more problems than the other children. My child looked to like learning English and was able to stay up late with their classmates."



Parent 3 said, "I think the problems my child was having were different, not harder. For example, my baby had trouble understanding abstract concepts and slang." Parent 4 said, "My child's development in learning English was hampered by their difficulty understanding grammar and vocabulary."

Parent 5 reported that their child found it difficult to communicate verbally and had to rely on non-verbal clues such as gestures and pictures to participate in English language activities. Nonetheless, Parent 6 observed that their child was picking up knowledge at the same rate as their classmates and that there were no discernible differences in their learning abilities.

Parent 7 stated that their child struggled to engage in class because they couldn't keep up with the course speed and required more time and help to comprehend the subject. Parent 8 reported that their child found it challenging to stay focused during English lessons, which hindered their ability to follow instructions and participate in class activities. Parent 9 said in closing that their child struggles to read and write in both Arabic and English. These difficulties in speaking both languages well made it difficult for their child to acquire English as a second language.

How do you think your child's environment in a remote area has affected their ability to learn English?

When asked how their child's surroundings in a remote place have influenced their ability to learn the language, Parent 1 responded, "There are limited resources available for special education in our area, which makes it difficult for our child to obtain the help they need to learn English." In a similar spirit, Parent 2 stated, "Because we live far away, our child has fewer opportunities to practice speaking and listening to English outside of school." Parent 3 on the other hand stated, "Our child can focus better during English sessions and is less distracted in a remote region." "Our child's school has adopted virtual English sessions, which has been really valuable considering the remote location," said Parent 4, who also reported having a pleasant experience. Parent 5 expressed concern about the dearth of suitable English teachers in their community, saying, "Finding teachers who are qualified to work with pupils who have intellectual disabilities is a struggle, let alone teaching English to them." "There's a lack of awareness and comprehension



of the problems our child confronts when studying English in a remote place," Parent 6 said in reference to the issue of inadequate support. The comments state that learning English as a second language can be both difficult and advantageous for children with intellectual disabilities who reside in remote locations.

2- Parental perspectives on the quality of English language education in remote areas for children with intellectual disabilities.

Have you sought any external support or resources to help your child learn English?

English language development strategies and experiences were discussed by the participants. As Parent 1 explained, "We have already sought outside assistance, including a private tutor who teaches English to children with intellectual disabilities." In response, parent 2 commented, "We have not sought outside support yet, as we are unaware of any available resources in our area, but we are searching online for programs and resources that can help our child learn English." According to parent 3, "We haven't looked for outside assistance yet because we don't think our town has many resources. A language program online would provide even more assistance to our child."

Parents 4 and 5 said they have been working closely with the school on providing support to their children and have not yet looked for outside assistance. Additional tools and accommodations have been provided by the school to help parents improve their child's English language proficiency. However, parent 5 mentioned that they received outside assistance from a nearby organization that helps children with intellectual impairments learn languages, and that organization gave them more resources and tools to help their kid learn English. According to parent 6, their child's school provides sufficient support and they have not sought outside assistance. Nevertheless, parents are willing to explore alternative methods or outside sources to help their children learn English.

Parent 7 said, "Our preferred outside helper has been a private teacher who specializes in teaching English to children with disabilities. The extra materials and help that the instructor has provided for our child has been really beneficial." Parent 8 stated "We haven't yet searched for outside help because we have been working closely with our child's school to provide additional



support. However, in order to provide further support, we are considering enrolling our child in an online language school."

At last, Parent 9 answered "A language therapist that we contracted with on the outside has been providing our child with additional support and materials to help them learn English. The therapist has been very helpful in developing a personalized program for our youngster."

How have you adapted your approach to teaching English to your child's specific needs?

When it came to tailoring their teaching strategies to the individual requirements of their child, the parents took distinct tacks. To improve their child's comprehension, Parent 1 said they needed to utilize simpler language and visual aids. To keep the child's interest in studying alive, Parent 2 suggested teaching subjects about their interests, such as animals. Parent 3 gave an example of how they helped their child learn by using repetition and positive reinforcement. Parent 4 reported using dance and music as part of a multimodal approach to help their child learn English.

Parent 5 said they tried to incorporate games and puzzles into their English language education. Parent 6 stated that they had to change the pace of the lesson and break the material up into smaller, more digestible portions to help their child grasp. Parent 7 stated that they had to be patient and understanding to meet their child's requirements. Parent 8 stated that they worked together with their child's teacher to develop a customized plan that would satisfy their requirements. Parent 9 stated that they had to use real-world experiences and analogies to help their child learn English. The parents' approaches to teaching their children English showed a very high level of adaptability and creativity.

What do you think are the most important factors for helping your child learn English in a remote area?

Parents talked about what they thought was the most important factor in supporting their child's English language acquisition. Parent 1 emphasized the need of creating a welcoming classroom atmosphere and ensuring that students have access to top-notch materials, like educational websites and applications designed specifically for children with disabilities. Parent 2



believed that an instructor's education and experience were crucial to their child's growth as an English language learner. They conveyed appreciation for having a committed special education teacher who uses a variety of instructional techniques and offers their child customized instruction. Parent 3 emphasized the need to surround oneself with a solid network of experts, friends, and family. They also mentioned that a team of specialists and therapists work together to address the individual requirements of every kid and involve the family in their education.

These parents' divergent views on the most crucial English language skills for their child serve as a stark reminder of how intricate and varied schooling is. The unique needs and talents of each kid must be considered, in addition to the importance of having access to top-notch educational resources, skilled instruction, and a nurturing atmosphere. For children with impairments learning English, a collaborative approach involving educators, family, and specialists can ultimately be most useful. Fourth Parent: "Supporting children with impairments to have a good learning mentality is crucial, in my opinion. Making learning English enjoyable through games, singing, and watching films is our aim. We also encourage our child to keep trying even when things get difficult, and we praise her accomplishments."

Parent 5 lives in a remote place with little resources, therefore they feel that digital access is crucial to their child's English language learning. They connect with professionals and scholars who could be able to help them using the internet, video conferencing, and educational apps. Parent 6 emphasizes how important it is to set up a regular, controlled schedule for their child's education. They support and encourage their child's English study efforts by designating specific periods of the day for it.

Parent 7 believes that their children's attempts to incorporate their hobbies and interests into their English language instruction have been successful. They include activities and resources that are relevant to their child's interests, such as products with animal themes, to make learning more engaging and relevant. Parent 8 highlights how important it is to have realistic expectations and goals for their child's learning of a second language, especially if they have special needs. They concentrate on setting realistic objectives and savor each little victory. Finally, Parent 9 encourages their kid to practice speaking



English with native speakers whenever possible and exposes her to English-speaking cultures through media such as TV shows, movies, and books because they think that cultural immersion is essential to language development.

3- Enhancing English language education for children with mild intellectual disabilities in remote areas: Parental suggestions.

How satisfied are you with the English language education provided to your child with intellectual disabilities?

There were a variety of answers given by the parents in response to this question. Parent 1 expressed satisfaction with their child's education: "I am satisfied with my child's education. While the teachers are supportive and use learning strategies that benefit my child, Parent 2 expressed disapproval of the education provided, stating, "I believe it could be improved." I believe that there are insufficient tools or resources available, and the teachers lack the necessary training to engage with students that struggle intellectually." Despite some areas that may be improved, parent 3 expressed satisfaction, especially with recognizing the unique needs of children with intellectual disabilities. Although some parents are satisfied with the education their children receive, others believe that more could be done.

In relation to their children's English language training, different parents have different opinions. Despite the school and instructors doing a good job, Parent 4 believes there is still room for improvement despite the school and instructors doing a good job. In order to meet the needs of children with intellectual disabilities, special attention should be paid to modifying the curriculum in a way that meets their needs. As a result of their remote location and lack of access to the resources and assistance needed for their child to obtain a quality education, parent 5 believes that their child has not received a sufficient education. Parent 6's moderate satisfaction with their child's current English language education illustrates the need for an inclusive and supportive environment for children with intellectual disabilities.

Parent 7 is really satisfied with their child's English language instruction, stating that the school has done a great job of tailoring the curriculum and providing focused support to help with learning. Parent 8 is conflicted about her education. Although she appreciates the school's and the teachers' efforts,



she thinks more has to be done to improve children's education. Parent 9 is also quite dissatisfied with the English language instruction their child has been receiving. They highlight the obvious dearth of support and resources available to children, which has a detrimental effect on their capacity to learn.

Do you feel that the English language education provided to your child meets their specific needs?

Parent 1 expressed their discontent with the English language education their child was receiving, saying, "It doesn't appear that their English language training is customized to meet their specific needs. Too few resources are available to children with intellectual disabilities, and their chosen teaching methods are not incorporated into the curriculum." Parent 2 thinks there is still space for development even though the curriculum is sufficient. "Even though I believe my child is receiving adequate English language teaching, there is always room for improvement. It would be advantageous if educators had more training on how to instruct pupils with intellectual challenges." Parent 3 expresses satisfaction with the English language instruction their child is receiving, pointing out that "I'm satisfied with my child's English language education. The incredibly patient instructors have modified the program to suit my child's needs." Parent 4 also shares the same worries as Parent 1: "My child's English language instruction doesn't seem to be tailored specifically for them. It's not always feasible to provide my child with the one-on-one care and attention they require in a classroom."

Parent 5 said: "While my child receives adequate English language training, it may yet be improved. Children living in remote locations who have intellectual challenges require more resources and assistance." Parent 6 expressed gratitude for the English language instruction their child received and talked highly of the teachers' understanding, tolerance, and readiness to make accommodations for their child's needs. Though they believe their child's English language instruction is adequate, Parent 7 believes that children with intellectual disabilities ought to have greater access to specialist resources. Parent 8 believes that their kid's English language education is meeting their special requirements since the teachers have been supportive and have worked hard to ensure the child learns everything they can. Parent 9 believes that additional resources and help are needed to ensure that children



with intellectual disabilities obtain an equal education. They believe that their child is not getting adequate teaching in the English language.

Have you had any positive experiences with English language education for your child in a remote area?

Parents 1 and 2 vouch for the advantages of their child obtaining distant English language education. Apart from the plethora of resources the school has provided to aid children with intellectual disabilities, Child 1's teacher has demonstrated a strong dedication to fulfilling their requirements. The teacher of Parent 2's child, on the other hand, has recognized and supported their child's preferred learning style, and the school has spoken with parents often to provide progress reports. Both parents are satisfied with the English language training their child is receiving while living far away.

Parent 3 gave varying accounts of their child's distance learning English. It turns out that while some teachers were sympathetic and helpful, others weren't as good. It was emphasized that the type of education that children with intellectual disabilities receive depends on the teaching methods and styles that different teachers use. Despite living far away, Parent 4 was happy with the English language training their child received. They spoke of the school's strong commitment to diversity and its tireless efforts to guarantee that all students, including those with disabilities, have access to a top-notch education.

Parent 5 stated, "Our child has not had positive experiences with English language training because they live far away. Since it seems that the school lacks the resources or expertise necessary to support pupils with intellectual problems, our child has suffered." On the other hand, Parent 6 expressed satisfaction with the English language education their child had in a remote area, saying, "My child received English language teaching in a remote area that I am delighted with. The instructor has been really helpful to our child and has paid attention to their requirements. However, I think more should be done to improve the quality of schooling for children with disabilities living in remote areas." "Our child in a distant place has had positive experiences with English language teaching," said Parent 7, offering a nice experience in the interim. The teacher has provided our child with particular attention and a great deal of help. We also appreciate the school's efforts to provide additional resources and support to children with impairments."



Parent 8 expressed dissatisfaction with the teaching provided, however, saying, "I am not thrilled with my child's English language education, which is being provided in a remote location. Due to the teacher's evident lack of experience working with children who have intellectual problems, our child has not made any progress." Lastly, Parent 9 brought up "It's been an unremarkable English language education for my child in a remote location. Although certain educators have not been as beneficial as others, some have been tremendously encouraging and have provided our children with a great deal of one-on-one time. It depends on the specific teacher and their level of experience."

What changes would you like to see in the English language education provided to children with intellectual disabilities in remote areas?

Parent 1 conveyed her wish for a more individualized education that meets her child's specific needs "I can see with confidence that these children' English language training needs a lot of work,". Parent 2 agrees and would want to see more resources and help made accessible to teachers who work with children who have intellectual disabilities. We both believe that more emphasis should be placed on the use of interactive exercises and visual aids to improve language acquisition. Parent 3 believes that the curriculum has to be more aware of cultural diversity because English language instruction typically stresses Western culture and practices. Parent 4 suggests that the use of technology could greatly enhance the learning experience, especially for children in remote areas.

Parent 5 would also want to see more workshops or training sessions that let parents get involved in their children' language development. Parent 6 emphasizes the need for more qualified specialists in the field of special education to ensure that children with intellectual disabilities receive the best education possible. Parent 7 stated that additional funding should be allocated to improve the English language education of children with intellectual disabilities who reside in distant areas. Parent 8 believes that life skills should be taught in addition to language skills to adequately prepare children for independent existence. Parent 9 concludes by stressing the need of creating a warm, inclusive atmosphere where children with intellectual disabilities feel valued and motivated to learn.



Discussion

The results of these interviews shed light on the difficulties faced by young Saudi Arabians with modest intellectual disabilities who live in isolated communities and want to study English as a second language. These difficulties include problems with grammar, pronunciation, idioms, metaphors, syntax, vocabulary, and intricate sentence structures. Parents also expressed concerns about the lack of certified teachers, specialized programs, and easily accessible resources.

Compared to their peers without disabilities, parents of children with intellectual disabilities noticed particular difficulties when teaching their offspring to talk. Others, though, did not notice any differences. The severity of the children's problems, as well as their cognitive capacities and learning preferences, could account for the divergent viewpoints (Mohamed & Shaaban, 2023).

Moreover, children with intellectual disabilities experienced different learning challenges than their peers, despite not being intrinsically more difficult. According to the study, these children struggled with oral expression, grammar, vocabulary, comprehension, and staying focused. It has also been reported that similar challenges have been encountered in previous studies.

This study found that children with intellectual disabilities have particular difficulties learning English as a second language. It may be necessary to provide them with specialized instruction and assistance in order to meet their language learning objectives. As a result, specialized learning tools should be provided to these children.

Children with intellectual disabilities face particular difficulties when learning English as a second language, according to this study. Language learning may require specialized assistance and instructional techniques to overcome these challenges. Therefore, these children need specialized learning tools that will maximize their learning potential in light of these variations.

Children living in remote areas find it harder to learn English, according to their parents. Despite limited resources and opportunities, some parents believe a remote setting is better for their child as they are less distracted and



have more concentration. It was also believed that virtual English language instruction could benefit children living in remote areas. Moreover, there were concerns raised about the lack of qualified teachers and ignorance of the challenges that children with intellectual disabilities face in remote areas (Alam, 2022; Shaaban & Mohamed, 2023).

Considering the challenges that children with intellectual disabilities face learning English in remote areas, these results highlight the need for more resources and assistance. Providing specialized support to these children is necessary to reach their linguistic competency goals (Bereiter, et al., 2018).

In response to the study's second question, the majority of parents stated that in order to assist their child in learning English, they have either already sought outside assistance or want to do so in the future. This includes individual tutors, language therapists, internet resources, and neighborhood organizations that assist children with disabilities with their language needs. Furthermore, several parents indicated that they have been working closely with their child's school to ensure that they receive adequate support (Greenway, et al., 2020; Mohamed, 2021).

In addition, the parents' approaches to teaching their children English showed a great deal of adaptability and creativity. Some of the tactics included were using visual aids, teaching terminology that was relevant to the child's interests, using repetition and positive reinforcement, taking a multisensory approach, making learning fun, changing the pace of the classes, and using real-life examples and scenarios (Alam, 2022).

The parents concluded that their children's success in learning the English language depended on a variety of factors, including high-quality resources, well-organized routines, integrating interests, realistic goals, competent teachers, strong support networks, and optimistic attitudes. For children with disabilities learning English at a distance, adaptability, outside assistance, and a range of approaches are crucial. It is essential to create a joyful and supportive environment (Levinthal, et al., 2022).

Regarding the third research question, the findings show that parents have differing opinions; some think there is already enough work to be done, while others are happy with the education their children are getting (Greenway, et al., 2020; Malik-Soni, et al., 2022). One major source of frustration for some



parents is the lack of resources and support available for children with intellectual disabilities, particularly in remote areas. These parents emphasize how important it is to create a more welcoming, supportive learning environment that caters to the unique requirements of each child. They also emphasize the need for more specialized care and attention, as well as a curriculum created especially for children with intellectual disabilities who live in remote areas.

Nonetheless, some parents believe that their children' special requirements are met by the English language training they get. They have positive things to say about their experiences, particularly in remote locations where dedicated teachers give each student individualized attention and adapt their course plans to suit their needs. It is also mentioned that constant communication between parents and educators is one of the primary factors contributing to these fulfilling experiences. However, it's crucial to keep in mind that some parents have seen mixed outcomes. They stress that depending on the approach taken by particular educators, children with intellectual disabilities may receive varying levels of support and accommodations (Petretto, et, al.2021).

Regarding English language instruction for children with intellectual disabilities, parents have diverse opinions. While some are satisfied, others stress the need for more resources and assistance. These findings show that in order to give these children a top-notch education, additional financing and support are required. It is imperative to establish a warm and inclusive learning atmosphere and to offer a curriculum that is especially tailored for each child with an intellectual handicap.

Limitations and recommendations

There were only nine parents from three remote Saudi Arabian towns who participated in the study. This means that extrapolation is impossible. In addition, email interviews have the drawback of not covering some topics in depth. Only parents participated in the study; neither teachers nor children with disabilities were included.

Future studies may include educators and students with intellectual disabilities. For an in-depth understanding of issues surrounding English language training for children with intellectual impairments, qualitative and



quantitative methodologies may be combined. A teacher training program or assistive technology may also help these children improve their English language learning.

Pedagogical implications

According to the study's conclusions, students with intellectual disabilities living in remote areas can benefit from a number of instructional suggestions. Training educators, adapting curricula and materials, using visual aids and hands-on activities, and implementing peer support programs are some of the things we can do. Promoting collaboration among schools, community organizations, and special education organizations, as well as providing support to parents through online forums and support groups. Teachers can use these measures to support children with intellectual disabilities living in distant areas in learning languages and achieving their full potential.

Conclusion

This study offers valuable insights into the challenges faced by parents of Saudi Arabian children with intellectual disabilities in providing them with high-quality English language education. The findings highlight the difficulties posed by limited funding, a shortage of qualified teachers, and the isolated location as significant obstacles to their children's language learning. The significance of children learning English was greatly emphasised by parents, who offered various suggestions including allocating additional resources, providing support for educators, and integrating technology for remote learning. These valuable insights highlight the importance of addressing the specific needs of children with intellectual disabilities in remote regions and involving parents in policy and programme development.

Further research is necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of these strategies and gain a more thorough understanding. This study highlights the challenges faced by parents of Saudi Arabian children with intellectual disabilities in providing them with a quality English language education. The challenges that need to be addressed include limited financial resources, a shortage of qualified teachers, and the isolated location of the children. The significance of their children learning English was strongly emphasised by parents, who also proposed various potential solutions. These solutions included the allocation of more resources, providing support for educators, and utilising technology for remote learning. This study emphasises the



importance of acknowledging and addressing the unique needs of children with intellectual disabilities in remote areas. It highlights the importance of parental involvement in the development of effective policies and programmes. Further research is needed to evaluate the efficacy of these strategies and gain a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by these children and their families.

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