



*Lectoescritura en Inglés para Estudiantes con Discapacidad Auditiva*

*English Literacy for Students with Hearing Impairments*

*Literacia em inglês para alunos com deficiência auditiva*

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## Resumen

La lectoescritura en inglés se presenta como un recuso pedagógico valioso para mejorar las habilidades lingüísticas de los estudiantes, especialmente en aquellos con discapacidad auditiva. El objetivo del presente estudio consistió en analizar el desarrollo de la lectoescritura en inglés en estudiantes con discapacidad auditiva en la Unidad Educativa “Oasis”. Por lo cual, se utilizó el enfoque cualitativo para estructurar el diseño y llevar a cabo el análisis de los hallazgos de la investigación. Como instrumento para la recolección de información, se diseñaron y aplicaron dos entrevistas, una a docente de inglés y la otra a la representante legal de una estudiante con discapacidad auditiva de segundo grado paralelo “A” perteneciente al nivel básico elemental. El contexto que se ejecutó el estudio fue la Unidad Educativa “Oasis”, una institución privada de la ciudad de Chone, y para la selección de la muestra se utilizó el muestreo por conveniencia. Los principales resultados muestran que el uso de estrategias centradas en la lectura y escritura, como aplicaciones, lengua de señas, y actividades interactivas, son indispensables en el aprendizaje del inglés para estudiantes con discapacidad auditiva, ya que favorece la adaptación a sus necesidades educativas sin depender de la recepción de sonidos. Además, se concluye que la familia desempeña un rol esencial en el proceso de aprendizaje del inglés a estudiantes con sordera, al proporcionar apoyo emocional que los motive a seguir esforzándose.

**Palabras clave:** lectoescritura en inglés; estrategias pedagógicas; estudiantes; discapacidad auditiva.

## Abstract

English literacy is presented as a valuable pedagogical resource to improve the language skills of students, especially those with hearing impairments. The objective of this study was to analyze the development of English literacy in students with hearing impairments at the “Oasis” Educational Unit. Therefore, the qualitative approach was used to structure the design and carry out the analysis of the research findings. As an instrument for collecting information, two interviews were designed and applied, one to an English teacher and the other to the legal representative of a hearing impaired student in second parallel grade “A” belonging to the elementary basic level. The context in which the study was carried out was the “Oasis” Educational Unit, a private institution in the city of Chone, and convenience sampling was used to select the sample. The main results show that the

use of reading and writing-focused strategies, such as applications, sign language, and interactive activities, are essential in learning English for students with hearing impairments, since it favors adaptation to their educational needs without depending on the reception of sounds. In addition, it is concluded that the family plays an essential role in the process of learning English for students with deafness, by providing emotional support that motivates them to continue making efforts.

**Keywords:** English literacy; pedagogical strategies; students; hearing impairment.

## Resumo

A literacia em inglês é apresentada como um recurso pedagógico valioso para melhorar as competências linguísticas dos alunos, especialmente dos que têm deficiência auditiva. O objetivo deste estudo foi analisar o desenvolvimento da literacia em inglês em alunos com deficiência auditiva da Unidade Educativa “Oasis”. Assim sendo, foi utilizada a abordagem qualitativa para estruturar o desenho e realizar a análise dos achados da investigação. Como instrumento de recolha de informação foram elaboradas e aplicadas duas entrevistas, uma com uma professora de Inglês e outra com a representante legal de um aluno com deficiência auditiva do segundo ano paralelo “A” pertencente ao nível básico elementar. O contexto em que o estudo foi realizado foi a Unidade Educativa “Oasis”, uma instituição privada da cidade de Chone, e foi utilizada a amostragem por conveniência para seleccionar a amostra. Os principais resultados mostram que a utilização de estratégias orientadas para a leitura e a escrita, como as aplicações, a língua gestual e as atividades interativas, são essenciais na aprendizagem do inglês para os alunos com deficiência auditiva, pois favorece a adaptação às suas necessidades educativas sem depender da receção de sons. Além disso, conclui-se que a família desempenha um papel essencial no processo de aprendizagem de inglês para os alunos surdos, fornecendo um suporte emocional que os motiva a continuar a esforçar-se.

**Palavras-chave:** Literacia em inglês; estratégias pedagógicas; estudantes; deficiência auditiva.

## Introduction

The teaching of English as a foreign language has become a global necessity, and Ecuador is no stranger to this phenomenon. In the Ecuadorian educational context, the inclusion of students with various disabilities, especially those with hearing disabilities, has gained relevance in recent decades. The integration of scholars with hearing disabilities poses challenges in terms of the

design and implementation of pedagogical strategies and activities that favor the learning of deaf students, especially in areas such as literacy in English.

Literacy is defined as a set of communicative skills focused on meaning making, which are fundamental for students to adapt and perform successfully in learning (Arteaga & Carrión, 2022), while hearing disabilities refers to the sensory limitation of the sense of hearing, which can affect one or both ears, resulting in sensory loss due to damage to the auditory organs (Andrade et al., 2022). Adequate attention to these students is essential for their academic and social development, which has motivated several research focused on identifying effective strategies for their teaching (Muñoz, 2015).

The importance of this research is based mainly on the need to improve educational practices for learners with hearing disabilities, a group that frequently faces additional barriers in their learning process. It is relevant to note that learning to read and write in English offers deaf students advantages, such as the possibility of exploring new cultures and accessing information available on the Internet related to their interests and activities (Molina, 2020). Therefore, addressing literacy in English language instruction for students with hearing disabilities contributes to the strengthening of inclusive education in the country and to the construction of an educational model that recognizes and values the diversity of needs of all students.

Consequently, the objective of this research is to analyze the development of literacy in English in students with hearing disabilities at the “Oasis” Educational Unit. To this end, the following specific objectives are proposed: to investigate the relationship between literacy in English and the learning of scholars with hearing disabilities, through a review of the academic literature; to identify the pedagogical strategies used to promote literacy in English; and to determine the importance of family support in strengthening these skills. Finally, the results of this research provide new perspectives on how to improve the teaching of English to students with deafness, which will contribute to the field of inclusive pedagogy and English language teaching.

## **Literature review**

### **Literacy in English**

According to Arteaga and Carrión (2022), literacy is understood as a set of communicative skills oriented to the construction of meanings that help students develop effectively in their social

environment. In the educational environment, literacy is a vital component in the learning process of beginners from the first years of schooling, since the ability to read and write correctly is fundamental for any activity or task (Pisco & Bailón, 2023). In this sense, the development of literacy in academic activities notably favors the progress of students' skills by increasing their confidence and strengthening greater participation in school activities.

The development of literacy encompasses several steps within the cognitive process, ranging from ignorance to the understanding of the relationship between writing and spoken language, as well as the association of writing with oral language (Reyes, 2019). Furthermore, it is necessary to advance from the conscious process of operations, such as the identification of phonemes and their representation in letters, the combination of letters to form words, and the organization of words, towards the automation of these operations, finally reaching the mastery of written text and written language (Pisco & Bailón, 2023).

Literacy in English in the words of Sanz (2014), is related to the four basic language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing), grouped into receptive and productive skills since some individuals can understand what they hear, but not what they read, or communicate orally but not in writing, which leads to each skill being developed differently. Hence, it is necessary to work on language skills in an integrated manner to achieve a balance between receptive and productive skills in order to ensure English language learning.

Similarly, Fernández and Casas (2016) argue that literacy in English fulfill a communicative function that depends both on the mastery of the syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic aspects of the language, as well as the influence of the environment and the social experience of individuals. Cabrera (2022) notes that reading and writing together are an innovative form of education that promotes the psychomotor, biological, social, and cultural development of students to communicate more realistically and creatively in the English language in written form.

Consequently, the combination of literacy in English consists in the development of reading and writing skills in this language. It includes the comprehension of texts, the ability to write appropriately, and the mastery of the linguistic structures necessary to produce and understand the language, without the need to use oral expression, presenting itself as a great advantage to those students who present a sensory disability such as hearing disabilities.

## Hearing Disability

When hearing disabilities is mentioned, it refers to the sensory limitation related to the sense of hearing, which can affect one or both ears, becoming a sensory loss, because the organs and structures responsible for the perception of sound stimuli are damaged (Andrade et al., 2022). The Ministry of Education of Ecuador (2013) defines hearing disabilities as the absence or reduction of the ability to perceive sounds. According to Álvarez (2021), hearing disabilities is considered a permanent special educational need (SEN) and is clinically diagnosed when the hearing loss exceeds forty decibels; a factor that limits the reception and processing of auditory information, which directly affects the student's development and learning.

In Ecuador, hearing disabilities is an invisible condition for many, because it does not always present obvious physical characteristics, unless hearing aids are used (Villareal et al., 2024). Students with hearing disabilities frequently face greater behavioral and oral language difficulties due to less social interaction time (Cruz et al., 2021). Schoolchildren with this disability have difficulty understanding instructions and writing coherently, affecting learning, and creating barriers in the educational process (Tasinchana & Tigasi, 2023). Thus, it is essential that teachers employ pedagogical methodologies or strategies aimed at developing the skills of students with hearing disabilities so that they can break down the barriers that limit their learning.

Nevertheless, Yáñez et al. (2023) emphasize that hearing disabilities in learning English hinders the acquisition of oral language, greatly limiting access to information; therefore, it is essential to use signed communication and accompany language with gestures or signs that simplify understanding and learning of the English language in students with hearing disabilities. Equally, Muñoz (2015) argue that English as a foreign language is increasingly important, and in Ecuador, the integration of students with hearing loss to the common educational system presents new challenges, demanding special attention in its teaching and inclusion.

For this reason, literacy in English is presented as an innovative methodology in the teaching-learning process for learners with hearing disabilities. For authors such as Molina (2020), literacy in English for hearing disabilities students requires the modification of pedagogical plans that promote comprehension and written production, overcoming auditory limitations through visual and gestural strategies that support language learning. According to Díaz and Ñato (2020), including students with hearing disabilities in the teaching of English represents a challenge for many educators because meeting their special educational needs requires the implementation of



strategies that strengthen reading and writing skills that permit them to achieve the educational objectives proposed by the Ministry of Education of Ecuador.

## **Methodology**

This research used a qualitative approach, focused on the experiences, opinions, and behaviors of individuals, to understand and explain the social phenomena in which they develop, as Piña (2023) points out. The qualitative approach was used to analyze the development of literacy in English of hearing disabilities learners in the “Oasis” Educational Unit.

As a data collection technique, interviews were conducted with the teacher in charge of the English subject at the educational institution and the student’s legal representative. Each interview consisted of eight questions, so as not to overwhelm the participants, which addressed both the independent and dependent variables. In addition, we coordinated with the teacher and the student’s legal representative to schedule the interviews at convenient dates and times. It was also ensured that the place was private and comfortable so that the interviewees felt in an environment of trust. Participants’ responses were recorded, then accurately transcribed for later analysis. Careful transcription simplified the identification of trends, experiences, and important aspects in the responses. Thus, a rigorous and structured interpretation of the qualitative data was achieved, ensuring its alignment with the objectives of the study, which provided validity to the results obtained.

Regarding the selection of the sample, the method of convenience was used, given that the selection of the sample is made according to the convenience of the researcher, who arbitrarily determines the number of participants included in the study (Hernández, 2020). Accordingly, a teacher who teaches English to a six-year-old hearing disabilities scholar in second grade of elementary school was selected, as well as the student’s representative, belonging to the “Oasis” Educational Unit, during the 2024-2025 school year, the private institution located in the city of Chone, Ecuador.

## **Results**

After applying, collecting, and analyzing the results of the interviews, the main findings are presented in two sections. The first section presents the results of the interview with the English teacher, while the second section describes the results of the interview with the representative of the hearing disabilities scholar. The findings are as follows:

*Table 1: Results of the interview with the English teacher*

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Principal Finding(s)</b>
Familiarity with literacy in English.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The teacher is familiar with literacy in English and states that it is important to develop students' language skills.</li> <li>• The educator recognizes that literacy is interrelated, which helps students understand and produce the language more effectively.</li> </ul>
Academic training in teaching students with hearing disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The teacher has received academic training in teaching students with hearing disabilities during her training as an educator in English language pedagogy.</li> <li>• She frequently attends workshops and seminars on the educational needs of these students, since during her time as a teacher she has taught English to some students who have different physical, mental, and sensory disabilities.</li> </ul>
Impact of literacy on academic performance in students with hearing impairment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The teacher mentioned that literacy directly impacts the academic performance of learners with hearing disabilities and their other classmates, because it strengthens their written comprehension and expression skills.</li> <li>• By working on the development, reading, and writing in students with or without hearing disabilities, noteworthy results can be obtained.</li> </ul>
Strategies to improve literacy in English.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The teacher uses strategies such as: technological applications, incorporation of sign language, interactive activities, work in pairs, individualized feedback, and guided writing. She emphasized that throughout her career as an English teacher these strategies have been extremely useful to her and daily, she looks for new activities and methodologies that adapt to the needs of her students.</li> </ul>
Curricular adaptations in planning to integrate literacy in English in students with hearing disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The teacher adjusts the complexity of the texts and tasks. She focuses particularly on vocabulary according to the student's level and pace of learning.</li> <li>• The teacher also mentioned that she provides additional time in activities and assignments, to ensure that the student can complete the activities without pressure and does not get stressed.</li> <li>• Finally, the teacher stressed that she maintains a planning open to continuous modifications, and incorporates strategies based on observations of the student's progress.</li> </ul>
Resources to enhance literacy in English in students with hearing disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Among the resources that the teacher uses are visual materials, books, personalized worksheets, digital platforms provided by the book, communication boards, vocabulary cards, and interactive games.</li> </ul>



Limitations faced by students with hearing disabilities in learning English.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The student does not regularly attend classes.</li> <li>• The student becomes demotivated in the development of some activities.</li> <li>• Sometimes she isolates herself and shows resistance to participating in the class.</li> </ul>
Advantages of literacy in English on the academic performance of students with hearing disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The teacher said that literacy in English helps students with hearing disabilities to understand information and improve their performance in tasks related to the language.</li> <li>• She has observed that working on literacy reinforces the student's participation in academic activities, motivating her to interact with the same materials as her peers.</li> </ul>

Table 1 presents the results of the interview with the English teacher, who has knowledge and mastery of literacy in English and pedagogy for students with special educational needs, the teacher recognizes the importance of making curricular adaptations, especially for scholars with hearing impairment. Hence, she has been in constant training to effectively integrate activities and strategies to teach in English. Besides, by integrating literacy in the classroom, the teacher has supported the English language acquisition of students with and without disabilities by providing them with the necessary resources for their academic success.

*Table 2: Results of the interview with the representative of the hearing disabilities student.*

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Principal Finding(s)</b>
Familiarity with literacy and the English language.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The student's representative is widely familiar with the subject of this research since she is also an English teacher and has a solid background in language pedagogy.</li> </ul>
Support for the hearing disabilities student at home.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The interviewee stated that her support for her daughter both in affection and in education has no limits, so she always tries to find the best for her, never skimming on resources or time.</li> </ul>
Impact of literacy in English on academic performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The interviewee has evidenced that her daughter has made noteworthy progress in literacy in English. Her daughter is always enthusiastic and excited whenever she must do some kind of activity related to the subject.</li> </ul>
Supportive strategies at home to improve literacy in English.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The interviewee combines flashcards with pictures, with basic vocabulary, such as animals, colors, shapes and numbers in English and sign language so that her daughter can associate the concepts and strengthen her literacy comprehension.</li> </ul>

At-home accommodations to support literacy in English.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The interviewee mentioned having a basic command of sign language, which contributes to the student feeling confident at home and every time she needs to perform a task or activity, she turns to her for guidance and support.</li> </ul>
Resources available at home to contribute to the development of literacy in English.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At home, the student has a laptop and visual materials such as images.</li> </ul>
Limitations faced by families in supporting English literacy for students with hearing disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The interviewee indicated that she still needs to learn a lot to fulfill everything her daughter needs, even though she always gives the best of herself, her task as a mother never ends, because her work demands a lot from her, therefore she cannot be present all the time in her daughter's education.</li> </ul>
Benefits evidenced at home in the behavior of the student with hearing disabilities in literacy in English.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The interviewee has observed that her daughter has made progress in learning the English language, since she shows that she recognizes some colors and figures in English.</li> </ul>

Table 2 shows the main findings of the interview with the representative of the hearing disabilities student. It emphasizes the relevance of family support and the use of available resources at home for the development of literacy in English, although it also stresses the need for more training and dedicated time to optimize the reinforcement of language learning from home.

## Discussion

The results of the interviews with the English teacher and the representative of the hearing disabilities student show a complementary and committed approach to reading and writing skills in English. The English teacher, who has a background in teaching scholars with special educational needs, accentuates the importance of the interrelationship between literacy for language development; thus, her participation in workshops on special educational needs reinforces her ability to adapt her teaching to scholars with hearing disabilities. For her part, the representative, also an English teacher, provides unconditional support at home, as she frequently tries to find the best resources and time to help her daughter's learning.

According to Moreno's research (2020), most teachers in Ecuador agree that receiving academic training on inclusion and accessibility issues is valuable to improve the academic performance of

students with disabilities. Subsequently, it is relevant to know and apply strategies adapted to the needs of all students.

The interview with the English teacher revealed several pedagogical strategies designed to meet the needs of learners with hearing disabilities in the development of literacy in English. For example, the following are the most significant ones according to the author of this research:

**Sign Language.** Ureta and Donos (2022) argue that sign language is a form of human communication that develops spontaneously among people with hearing disabilities, which arises as an inherent response to their need to interact and express themselves, becoming a decisive element that defines identity and strengthens the sense of unity within the deaf community.

Relatedly, Peña et al. (2022) state that sign language, as a visuospatial-gestural system specific to deaf people, is considered a significant symbol of identity and part of their cultural heritage. Undoubtedly, sign language is a fundamental strategy for students with hearing disabilities to fully interact and develop their reading and writing skills.

**Interactive activities.** Guiracocha (2022) states that interactive activities awaken joy and motivate the desire to have fun, be entertained, and develop skills such as reading and writing, which contribute to the English language learning process, as long as they are planned in a way that is attractive to students.

On the other hand, Vaca and Gallegos (2021) claim that the use of interactive activities promotes dynamic and active learning, intricately linked to the development of skills such as reading and writing. Consequently, interactive activities promote a participatory approach in which all students can participate, including those with hearing disabilities. Moreover, it is important that the teacher includes clear rules that favor the strengthening of values such as respect, empathy, inside and outside the classroom.

**Technological applications.** Salcedo and Tinizaray (2022) emphasize in their results that technological applications have a highly positive impact on the increase of English vocabulary, considering that the use of visual didactic material, through platforms such as “Educaplay”, contributes significantly to language learning for students with hearing impairment.

In this sense, authors such as Mera et al. (2024) and Screpnik (2024) add that the use of technological applications is aimed at promoting equal opportunities and ensuring access to quality education for all students, regardless of their hearing abilities. Consequently, combining interactive and visual approaches through technology applications in English language teaching can improve

the reading and writing skills of hearing disabilities students and have a positive impact on their self-esteem.

Conversely, the teacher implements curricular adaptations such as the simplification of texts and tasks. In a complementary manner, the student's representative also applies pedagogical strategies at home, such as the use of cards with pictures and words in English, combined with sign language, fortify the learning process of the hearing disabilities student.

These types of adaptations are aligned with the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), which according to the Ministry of Education (2022), is based on essential principles that seek to ensure that all students can achieve learning under conditions of equality and equity, regardless of whether they have a disability.

In both contexts, school, and family, reflect a multimodal approach relevant to the learning of students with hearing disabilities, in terms of literacy development, since the need for continuity and coherence between the pedagogical strategies applied in both environments is highlighted.

The role of family support is a principal factor in the learning of hearing disabilities students. Martínez et al. (2020), Mendoza and Cárdenas (2022) and González and Sánchez (2022) suggest that the family is the first foundation in the formation of people, so it is considered the main institution and the basis of human societies. The main objective of the family nucleus is to guide its members so that they can face the environment in which they will develop (Martínez et al., 2020). In this instance, the student's motivation and her progress in English language pattern recognition are indicators of the impact of the family environment.

## **Conclusions**

The relationship between literacy in English and the learning of scholars with hearing disabilities, according to the review of various academic sources, indicates that success in effective language learning in students with deafness depends on the proper use of strategies focused on strengthening literacy, since these are skills that do not require the reception of sound patterns or oral production. Consequently, integrating literacy in lesson plans undoubtedly helps English language instruction to be more effectively adapted to the educational needs of hearing disabilities students so that they can be integrated into the English language learning process without limitations.

The pedagogical strategies identified for the development of literacy in English in students with hearing disabilities include the use of applications, sign language to associate concepts and

strengthen reading and writing comprehension. Interactive activities that integrate pair work, guided writing and individualized feedback are also implemented, which adjust to the English learning process and the educational needs of each student and have proven to be effective.

The importance of family support in strengthening literacy in English for hearing impaired students. The role of the family is indispensable, not only as a source of resources, but also as an emotional pillar that motivates the student. However, the time and training limitations of the representative highlight the need for collaboration between school and home to optimize student learning.

Besides, it was determined that family support is of utmost importance in strengthening literacy in English for students with deafness. The family provides resources tailored to the student's needs and acts as an emotional pillar that motivates the student in the learning process. However, time constraints and lack of training of family members highlight the need for close collaboration between the educational institution and the home.

Finally, teachers and researchers in the educational area are encouraged to continue developing research on strategies, methodologies and activities that contribute to the linguistic development of those students who present some type of disability because they deserve to learn the English language without limitations.

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