

CHAPTER 1

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

The number of Omani persons with disabilities reached 42,304, according to the data of the electronic census 2020, constituting 1.55 percent of the total population of Omanis. The data also show that 34 percent of people with disabilities have a hearing impairment and that 34.5 percent of the total persons with hearing disabilities have qualifications below the general diploma. Regarding the causes of disability, the data show that 86 percent of people with hearing disabilities are congenital (Atheer. Om, 2021).

English is one of the important needs of the impaired children, especially the deaf. Yet, adopting the mainstream curriculum for teaching English to the deaf children has raised numerous problems and challenges for the teachers and the deaf children. Focusing on a region of Oman where there are six government schools implementing the inclusive education programme for deaf learners, the researcher has examined the extent of the effectiveness of the programme. This chapter is organized as follows: Section 1.2. highlights the background of the study. This is then followed by the section 1.3. that gives background regarding the education context in Oman and the special education part in particular. An emphasis is given on the school education system (Section 1.4), the development stages of Education (Section 1.5), the curriculum materials and resources production (Section 1.6) and the English language teaching in Oman (section 1.7). This is followed by the statement of the problem, research

objectives, research questions, scope of the study, significance of the Study and finally the organization of the study (section 1.13).

1.2. Background of the Study

A language acts as a channel or a tool that provides the connection required between the child - as an individual, with the society that he/she belongs. In order for any child to become a fully functioning member of a society, that child must have a means of connecting with other individuals (Ewing & Jones, 2003). This notion of connectivity is in line with the function of language that comes in the form of spoken, written as well as signs and symbols, that have been long used as a means of communication with the outside world (Vygotsky, 1962).

Vygotsky (1962) added that language plays two critical roles in cognitive development of a child. Firstly, it is the main means by which adults transmit information to children, and secondly, language itself becomes a very powerful tool of intellectual adaptation. In view of these roles, Vygotsky (1987) believed that language is the foundation for all higher cognitive processes including controlled attention, deliberate memorization, recall categorization, planning problem solving, abstract reasoning and self-reflection. It also helps children to think about their mental abilities, behaviours and selected courses of action.

Linguistic competence is often the first of many thresholds that must be crossed if one is to become a full and successful member of society (Ewing and Jones, 2003). However, unlike normal children acquiring a language, the scenario is perhaps slightly different in the case of deaf children. They are not able to communicate competently within the society by receiving communication or gather general information through

the use of the auditory channel like their peers without hearing disabilities. Rather, communication among deaf children occurs through the use of visual channels such as signs and symbols where audio sounds and lectures become futile in creating meaningful communication. Consequently, such scenario creates a critical need for these deaf children or students to become literate in reading and writing in order to function effectively with their surrounding community. This view is also posited by Healey (1990), who declared that the ability to read enhances the deaf student's opportunity to communicate with persons without hearing disabilities as well as with deaf peers and hence increases his/her opportunities in the competing world of employment.

Imam & Kazem (2013), citing the statistics of the Department of Special Education at the Ministry of Education in Oman, have shown that the number of pupils with learning difficulties who receive special education services in the inclusive schools has increased significantly in the last decade since 2005. Furthermore, to continue providing more support for this category of nationals, in April 2014 the Oman government and the UNICEF jointly identified a new focus on two strategic areas of development: Early childhood learning, care and development; and Child-centred, inclusive strategies and plans. This cooperation contributed to one result area in the global UNICEF Strategic Plan 2014-2017 related to Education field, which says: Supporting efforts to provide access to quality education for both girls and boys through improved learning outcomes and inclusive education, including in early learning and child-friendly schools (UNICEF Annual Report 2014).

In the context of learning a foreign/second language, many studies have documented the benefits of the acquisition of the foreign/second language in international business (Palitha Konara and Yingqi Wei, 2019) and providing job

opportunities as well (Kari Smith, 2000; Mbumina, 2014). Many of these studies also have extensively documented the challenges and difficulties the language learners without hearing disabilities face in learning a foreign/second language (A. Stables, F. Wikeley, 1999; Marilyn et al., 2008). In comparison, such investigations on the learning of a second/foreign language among students with disability especially the deaf students are lacking. Rather, most of the studies involving deaf students centre on their need to acquire the sign language to some degree to attain optimal language development (Marschark & Spencer, 2016) & (Tang & Sze, 2014).

Subsequently, there is a need to investigate the extent to which the behaviour of deaf children is influenced by mainstream curriculum being adopted in teaching English in Oman. To this end, it is then crucial to examine and analyse the challenges teachers and students face in the adoption the mainstream curriculum, the relevance of the curriculum, and the effectiveness of the pedagogy in teaching English to the deaf children in Oman. Past studies have shown that three core components, which are attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioural control and intention of school children impact their motivations in overcoming challenges towards learning languages. This notion is based on the premise of Theory of Planned Behaviours (TPB) in which these core constructs can shape an individual's behavioural intention, or in this instance the learning of a language (Icek Ajzen 1985, 1991). In this instance, attitude encompasses the positive and negative values that the learners have towards the behavioural intention, while subjective norms entail the perceived expected beliefs of others towards engaging in the behaviour, or in other words language learning. Success in achieving this intention, or the person's readiness in performing an assigned task, is based in the perception of his/her ability to perform the given behaviour, i.e language learning.

Accordingly, behaviour is the consequence of the intention and behavioural control that are in agreement with each other (Alhamami, 2019).

For example, Alhamami, M. (2019 and 2018) adopted the Theory of Planned Behaviours (TPB) to investigate the extent of beliefs and intention of EFL (English as a foreign language) learners about their ability to attend language classes and learn the language in determining the grades that the students would receive at the end of the semester. Findings from this mixed method study on 380 university students undertaking prerequisite EFL courses in Saudi Arabia indicate that the learners' intention to achieve high/low grades in the courses taken was significantly influenced by their attitudes as well as the direct authorities around the learners. Using Confirmatory Factor analysis (CFA), the results showed 73% affected by the attitudes of the students and the important people around the learners (p. 131). In another study, Andrea et. al (2018) used TPB to examine what motivates parents to enrol their children in dual language immersion. Based on sampled participants from 112 parents from Cache Valley, Utah, who had a child enrolled in kindergarten for the 2015–2016 academic year, the study adopted a binary logistic regression to examine the extent to which the theory of planned behaviour model predicted the enrolment of children in dual language immersion. The findings revealed that parental attitudes significantly influenced behavioural intentions to enrol their children in dual language immersion programs.

The study by Davide and Vijay (2016) used the Theory of Planned Behaviour to examine the Chinese ESL students' in-class participation. The study adopted a quantitative survey method. Participants were sampled from 133 Chinese university students enrolled in a Sino-American university located in South-East China. The data were analysed using partial least squares (PLS) path modelling method. The results

showed attitude to be a strong predictor for students' in-class participation, and female students reported statistically stronger intentions to participate in class. Accordingly, framed within the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), the present study attempts to determine how the adoption of mainstream curriculum in teaching English as a second language to deaf children in Oman plays an impact to their overall English language learning.

Meanwhile several studies have recognized how the teachers' skills in teaching are highly co-related to effective learning. A case in point is a study conducted by Alasim (2019), which examined the effective literacy skills of students who are deaf and hard of hearing in an inclusive education classroom. The primary research question relates to whether the inclusive education classroom is considered a rich literacy and language environment to assist deaf students improve their reading skills. The study adopted professional review method on various variables that included teachers' qualifications, access to phonology, access to the general education curriculum, communication and language skills, and support services. The findings revealed that teachers' qualifications, access to phonology, access to the general curriculum, and the availability of supports and services are critical for developing the language and literacy skills of deaf students in inclusive education classrooms.

To this end, the study would attempt to establish the extent of teachers' experience as well as their abilities in overcoming the challenges of the teaching methods and materials in relation to the learning outcome of the deaf children in acquiring the required English language proficiency needed.

1.3. Education in Oman

The Basic Statute of the Sultanate of Oman (November 1996, Article 13) stipulates that education is a cornerstone for the progress of society and must therefore be made accessible to all. Education raises and develops the general cultural standard, promotes scientific thought, kindles the spirit of research, responds to the requirements of economic and social plans, builds a generation that is physically and morally strong and takes pride in its nation and heritage and preserves its achievements. According to UNESCO (2010-11), the Omani philosophy of education is based on six principles and objectives, which include integrating the individual's intellectual, emotional, spiritual and moral development; nurturing the capabilities of individuals and groups; modernizing the Omani; achieving social and economic progress; achieving national unity and; reviving the Arabic Islamic heritage.

The turning point in the effective expansion of education throughout Oman started when His Majesty Sultan Qaboos took power in 1970 and made education one of his priorities (Al-Ghassani, 2010). Accordingly, greater efforts were expended, and money was invested to promote education equitably amongst the various sections of the Omani society and proportionate to populated areas. Since then, enrolment in the education programme has become compulsory, and is free for all Omanis (Ministry of Education, 2008).

Additionally, the inclusive program for deaf students implemented in the Omani mainstream schools started in the year 2005. The programme was as a response to the government's vision towards providing educational opportunities for all Omani nationals regardless of the type of disability they have. Furthermore, such effort is seen as means to eliminate the effects of disability, equip them with daily living skills, and develop students' self-confidence (Alfawair and Al Tobi, 2015). By the academic year

of 2015/2016, the number of schools implementing the program increased to 50 schools enrolling a total of 311 students in the different regions of the Sultanate (Ministry of Education, 2015).

To further strengthen the inclusive program, the Ministry of Education has been stepping up its efforts in providing diverse educational services and programs to cover all social groups. These efforts contrast sharply to the situation prior to 2005 before the inclusive program for deaf students was introduced in Oman. The Ministry's efforts have greatly materialized in the support provided to special education schools and programs. These services are targeted to students with disabilities (motor, visual, hearing, and intellectual), as well as students with special needs (learning difficulties and speech-language impairment).

1.3.1. Education for Special Need Children in Oman

In 2009, Oman ratified both the Optional Protocol and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Moreover, the 2008 Law on the Care and Rehabilitation of the Disabled in Oman further emphasizes in Article 5 that "the disabled are to enjoy the pre-emptive/preventative measures and the medical care offered by the state to allow them mobility, transportation, education and training". Number of principles are incorporated into this law such as: people with disabilities have the right be included in society's general life, to education and higher education commensurate with their abilities, and to employment. They also have a right to access to aids, equipment, and materials that assist them in making life a little bit easier for them. The education of children with special needs has undergone numerous adjustments as a result of this act. In particular, its Article 24 said that " educational opportunities should be offered

equally to pupils with disabilities within an inclusive education system" (UNESCO, 2021).

Special Education and catering for the needs of children with diverse abilities and impairments has become a focus for both the Education Council and the Ministry of Education in Oman (Al-Ani, 2017). A disabled child is defined as: 'a child who suffers from a limited sensory, physical or mental abilities caused by congenital or hereditary factors or as a result of illness or accident, or limit his/her ability to perform his/her role in normal life and particulate fully and effectively in society at an equal level with other'. Articles 25–38 and 51–53 in the Royal Decree 22/2014 stipulate that the social rights of children are protected, irrespective of disability and include the right to education, survival and growth in the context of freedom, human dignity and social security (UNESCO, 2009; Tekin, 2015).

It is important to highlight that teaching which is conducted specifically for students with special needs differs from teaching that is carried out with other students who do not have special educational needs of the same chronological age and grade level. But specially designed teaching is not necessarily teaching carried out in special educational settings isolated from the usual educational settings. In fact, there has been a change in both the target groups of special education and the conditions in which this type of education is implemented. If in the past, special education meant educating students with different disabilities in special educational settings (schools and institutions) outside and isolated from the public educational system, it is no longer so at the present time. A large proportion of these students are receiving education in mainstream schools (Al-Khatib (2007) cited in Al-Askariyah 2012).

1.3.1.1. Students with hearing disabilities

Special education in the Sultanate has witnessed a remarkable development during the last four decades, as the Ministry of Education began providing services to individuals with hearing disabilities by opening an independent school for deaf and hard of hearing students (Al-Amal School) during the academic year 1980/1981. The educational goals of the Al Amal school involves: providing educational service and providing deaf students with academic skills that suit their abilities and level of achievement; integrating deaf students within the social framework of society and dealing with them on the same level as dealing with the normal; qualifying deaf students practically, technically and educationally to work in the fields appropriate to their abilities and capabilities in order to build their future; informing the families of students with hearing disabilities about the causes of disability and introducing them to the best ways to deal with their children, as well as instilling confidence in the deaf student and helping him to accept his disability by improving social relations between him and the members of his community (MoE Educational Portal, 2022).

Admission to Al-Amal School for the Deaf as well as the deaf inclusion programme in the regions of Oman is subject to a number of conditions. First, the school accepts students from the age of five to eight, and the upper limit of the age of admission may be exceeded by an increase of two years in case of availability of free places and with the approval of the competent authorities in the Ministry. Second, the student must be deaf and does not suffer from any other disability. For instance, the student must have a medical report from an accredited body proving the existence of a disability and the degree of hearing loss. The student is categorized as ‘deaf’ if the degree of his hearing loss is (70 decibels or more), and as ‘hard of hearing’ if the hearing loss degree is (35-69 decibels) according to the General Assessment Document for Students’

Learning in Grades 1-12 (Ministry of Education, 2021c). Third, the IQ score shall not be less than (70) IQ factor, and fourthly, the student must be medically examined before joining the school.

The educational ladder at Al-Amal School for the Deaf consists of two stages. First, the Initialization stage which is a two-year period in which students learn to pronounce letters and words using headphones to benefit from the remnants of hearing for the hard of hearing, with the use of educational learning aids such as models and images to link the word and its meaning. Second, the Basic Education stage which involves grades (1-12) in which students are taught basic education curricula after being modified and adapted according to the abilities and capabilities of the deaf student (MoE Educational Portal, 2022).

In addition to these services, the ministry provides a speech and language therapy service through the establishment of the audio lab at Al-Amal School for the Deaf at the beginning of the academic year 1999/2000. It was provided with a collective audio device (Telex 2002), which is a language teaching laboratory that contains a recording machine and a set of (13) small devices for receiving and broadcasting, which are installed on special tables in the laboratory. Students use twelve devices with the headset, while the specialist uses the last device for individual cases of speech modification. The lab provides speech services by a speech pathologist who follows up on the students according to a specific schedule. It also guides the students' parents to the best ways to improve their children's performance in pronunciation and speech. In the 2004/2005 school year, a room for the treatment of speech and speech defects was established in the school in order to receive cases suffering from speech and speech disorders in special education schools and basic education schools. These rooms were

provided with a number of specialized devices for training, diagnosis and audio analysis (Al-Askariyah, 2012).

1.3.1.2. Students with intellectual disabilities

The Ministry of Education also provided education for students with mild and moderate intellectual disabilities through the opening of the Intellectual School in the scholastic year 84/1985. Students receive education in this school from induction classes to the ninth grade. The school provides educational, social, psychological and vocational services for enrolled students with intellectual disabilities. In the school, the focus during the provision of these services is on teaching students with intellectual disabilities some behaviours, daily life skills, sensory skills, language skills, reading and writing skills, and numerical skills, by preparing appropriate individual educational and educational plans for each student with intellectual disability based on determining their academic performance level from the school's special education teachers.

1.3.1.3. Students with visual disabilities

As for the blind and visually impaired students, an educational service was provided to them through the opening of the Omar Ibn Al-Khattab Institute for the Blind in the academic year 1999/2000. This category of students studies the curricula of the Ministry of Education, taking into account that they are printed in Braille for the blind and enlarged in a clear font for the visually impaired students. In addition to establishing the Learning Resources Unit that contains materials such as: ordinary books, Braille books, magnifying text books and images for the visually impaired. All contents of the

digital library are archived in an electronic program, accessible from all existing devices, and through which the student searches for what he needs of scientific material.

Further service which is available is the global information network in which that parents can watch it and learn about the services contained in the institute and guide their children to books, which constitutes an effective communication between the home and the institute. Furthermore, computers equipped with full Braille aids and an automated device for the teacher equipped with a regular printer, which is later replaced by a Braille printer, so that the students and the teacher can extract a copy of any written material are also available.

1.3.2. Inclusive Program

The Sultanate of Oman has decided to keep pace with the development in educating students with special needs, similar to foreign and Arab countries. This is through the implementation of the comprehensive inclusion program for students with learning difficulties in the academic year 2000/2001, where this program provides appropriate educational services for students with learning difficulties in basic education schools, instead of referring them to special education schools mentioned in the section (1.3.1). Students with learning difficulties are enrolled in the second grade of the Basic Education school until the sixth grade. The Learning Disabilities Program aims to reducing the number of students who drop out of schools due to their low level of academic achievement; treating some psychological, social and educational problems among students with learning difficulties; integrating students with learning disabilities with their peers in regular classes and treating some psychological, social and educational problems among students with learning difficulties.

In addition to applying the comprehensive inclusion program for students with learning difficulties, the ministry implements a comprehensive integration program for blind and visually impaired students who wish to settle near their families in various educational governorates. These students are integrated comprehensively with their peers, sighted students, in basic and general education schools in their educational governorates. As well as for visually impaired students, the Ministry provides all they need from books and exams printed in a magnified manner, while they are teaching with their sighted peers in the ordinary class. The comprehensive integration was not limited to students with learning difficulties and students who are blind and visually impaired, it also included students with physical disabilities, since students with physical disabilities receive education service in the same classroom with their peers in basic and general schools.

Furthermore, in the academic year 2005/2006, the Ministry implemented the partial inclusion experience for students with intellectual and hearing disabilities. This program is special classes attached to basic education schools, where all academic services are provided to students with intellectual and hearing disabilities within these classes by specialists in special education. Students with disabilities are integrated with their peers, ordinary students, in classes for activities such as music skills, art education and other activities that are offered to ordinary students of a mainstream school. This inclusion program is implemented for certain justifications and one of them is the lack of special education services for people with special needs in the different educational governorates as all special education schools affiliated to the Ministry are located in the capital area, Governorate of Muscat. Another justification is that the benefits available in inclusion in terms of not isolating students from their general community and

environment and in terms of their participation and the participation of others for them (Al-Askariyah, 2012).

1.3.2.1. Learning environment at inclusive schools

Improvements have been made to the facilities at some schools that are implementing the inclusive education program, and there has been coordination with specialists from the Ministry of Health to conduct regular comprehensive check-ups for children and provide them with proper healthy meals. A full-time nurse is also provided for each school to establish a connection between the school and the health centre, and the Ministry of Health has also established a nutrition program with a system to monitor children's nutrition, health, and treatment histories.

1.3.2.2. Support provided to teachers and students with disability

The training of those working in the field of care for the disabled is highlighted in Article 14(j) of the 2008 Law on the Care and Rehabilitation of the Disabled. Thus, in order to help teachers in cycle 1 (grades 1–4) better integrate inclusive methods for students with disabilities into their teaching methodologies and classroom management, UNICEF Oman produced an Inclusive Education Teacher Training Guide for them. According to in-service teacher training system in Oman, all teachers regardless of their gender are equally trained, and opportunities are given to all. The training guide builds on the wealth of resources on inclusive education produced by UNICEF and UNESCO which aims to enhance learning outcomes in general as teaching methods become more responsive to diverse learning needs. The training is being institutionalized into the

professional training programme for in-service and new teachers within the Ministry of Education's specialized teacher training centre.

Furthermore, in most schools, a social worker is in charge of offering social counselling to pupils and supporting those who have behavioural and academic issues. Additionally, a psychology specialist offers psychological counselling services in some schools with the goal of assisting kids with such issues in reducing psychiatric disorders. In some schools, a resident school health nurse is also available to help students' health and education needs as well as to monitor school health and environmental sanitation services.

Besides, aiming to develop teachers' abilities, the ministry set out to dispatch 10 learning difficulties supervisors and teachers to Sultan Qaboos University on an annual basis to obtain the Learning Difficulties master's degree, with full financing from the Ministry of Education (UNESCO, 2021).

1.4. The School Education System in Oman

The Ministry of Education (MOE) of Oman oversees organizing School Education at all levels (Grades 1-12). The Ministry's responsibilities include the planning and development of education policies, curricula, and schoolbooks; development of student performance evaluation mechanisms; overseeing the work process in schools; and providing technical and administrative support for teaching and administrative personnel in schools. The Ministry comprises three vertical levels: the central level, the local level represented by the regional educational directorates, and the school level. The school is considered an independent administrative unit which comes under direct

local supervision. The Directorates General of Education across all governorates of Oman is in charge of the implementation of the ministry's plan (Education Council, 2016). Within the Ministry, the Directorate General of Curriculum is responsible for developing the national curricula that is taught in all public schools. Private schools have the option of either implementing the curricula developed by the Ministry or adopting curricula affiliated with international programmes. The Ministry of Education also has supervisions and controls at both local and school levels to assure educational policies are carried out according to plans (UNESCO, 2010-11).

The school year in Oman is divided into two semesters and each semester lasts for about five months including exams periods. Children as young as six years old are required to enrol in grade one at school. Overall, children spend twelve years in schools before going for tertiary education. The school education system in Oman consists of three stages: Cycle One, Cycle Two and Post Basic. Cycle One covers the primary classes from Grades 1-4. As stated above, young learners join school at the age of six years. The teachers and other administrative employees in the schools of Cycle One stage are all females and the children are mixed gender. After completing four years in Cycle One, students advance to Cycle Two which covers classes from Grades 5-10. In this Cycle Two, students are separated by gender: the boys are taught by male teachers and the girls are taught by female teachers. After completing grade ten, students are then transferred to the Post Basic stage to continue studying for two more years (Grades 11-12) also in separate gender schools. A General Diploma Certificate of Education is awarded to successful candidates upon the completion of grade 12. The General Diploma Certificate of Education is the main requirement for direct entry into tertiary education in Oman. Table 1.1 shows the three stages in school education system in

Oman:

Table 1.1: Stages of School Education System in Oman

Items	The Three Stages		
	Cycle One	Cycle Two	Cycle Three (Post Basic)
Duration of Study	4 years	6 years	2 years
Grades	1-4	5-10	11-12
Children Age	6 to 10 years old	10 to 16 years old	16 to 18 years old
Separation by Gender [School Children]	Mixed gender in classes	Male and female students in separate schools	Male and female students in separate schools
Separation by Gender [School Teachers]	Teachers are female	The staff are male and female teachers	The staff are male and female teachers

1.5. Development Stages of Education in Oman

The development of education in Oman can be categorized into two main phases: the pre-1970 phase, and the educational renaissance after 1970. The latter phase is further divided into two main periods. The first period ranged from 1970 to 1998 marking the focus of the Omani government on widening access to education. The second period extended from 1998 to 2007 characterized by the improvement of the quality of education and the introduction of the Basic Education Curriculum (BEC). The application of BEC (grades 1 to 10) was later followed by the introduction of the Post Basic Education Curriculum (PBEC, grades 11 and 12), the curriculum designed for secondary level education, grades 11 and 12 (Al-Bulushi, Al Adawi, & Al-Kitani, 1999, Al Maamari, 2009) cited in (Al-Najar, 2010).

1.5.1. Basic Education Curriculum (BEC) [Grades 1-10]

The MOE of Oman has been striving to achieve a significant improvement in the educational system, based on the intended vision of the Omani economy for the year

2020. The BEC is the system adopted by the Government of the Sultanate as a national strategy (Al-Ghassani, 2010). Amongst the most prominent education-related policies in this strategy is the one that is aimed at identifying a suitable aspect of the education system in the Sultanate, which would accommodate the requirements of the next stage after grade 10, so as to ensure that by the time students graduate, they would be ready to engage in both academic life and the labour market (Ministry of Education, 2008). In response to this strategy, the MOE implemented a number of key initiatives for the development of the education system. The BEC Project, implemented in 1998, was one of the most important initiatives taken and was extended to form the secondary education curriculum (PBEC) in 2007 (Ministry of Education, 2009).

BEC is defined as follows:

“... a unified education programme that is provided by the government for all the children (of school age) of the Sultanate. BEC’s duration is ten years and is based primarily on providing the basic needs for information, knowledge and skills, and the development of attitudes and values that would enable the learners to continue in education or training in accordance with their references and their willingness and abilities” (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 23).

The development of all these fundamental elements was taken into consideration by the BEC in order to meet the challenges of the present and future while maintaining the religious and cultural identity and heritage of Oman, within the framework of the overall community development (Ministry of Education, 2007). The main aims of BEC were to reduce the dropout rates of pupils and provide them with basic skills throughout

their BEC studies, which last for a period of 10 years. After the 10 years of schooling at basic education stage, successful pupils may advance to the PBEC stage, which takes two years (grades 11 and 12).

The aim of the Basic Education Curriculum (BEC) in Oman is rooted in number of principles in which they overcome some of the drawbacks of the old version of the educational curriculum (before 1998). For instance, the curriculum was “heavily content-laden, teacher-centred” and did not contain meaning-focused pair work or group work (Atkins and Griffiths 2009, p. 2). Furthermore, there were concerns that students entering universities had inadequate study skills and limited English language proficiency (Flowerdew, 1993) and very limited opportunities to engage in speaking activities in their English classes (Harrison, 1996). The principles of the Basic Education Curriculum (BEC) are as follow:

1. The comprehensive development of the learner’s personality to be integrated within the framework of the principles of the Islamic faith and culture of Oman.
2. Encouraging the national, Arab, Islamic and humanitarian affiliations, and the development of learners’ ability to interact with the surrounding world.
3. The provision of an opportunity for the learner to actively participate in the overall development of the Omani society.
4. Providing equal opportunity in education for all.
5. The provision of a learner-centred education that gives the learner life skills such as communication competencies, self-learning, the ability to use methods of critical scientific thinking and the dealing with science and contemporary technologies.
6. Ensuring the preparation of learners for the requirements of HE and the labour market and life in general.

7. The reduction of the dropout rate among pupils.
8. The eradication of illiteracy and raising the pupils' awareness and knowledge
(Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 16) cited in (Al Najar, 2010).

BEC consists of two cycles as discussed and shown in Table 1 above: Cycle One stretches for four years from grade (1) to grade (4). While Cycle Two takes 6 years, from grade (5) to grade (10). During these two cycles combined, pupils' study for ten years after which they advance to the Post Basic Education (PBE) stage, Cycle Three (Ministry of Education, 2007).

1.5.2. Post Basic Education (PBEC) [Grades 11-12]

The Post Basic Education (PBEC) is designed with the potential to meet national and international standards and expectations. The most desired outcomes, according to the MOE (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 5), are:

1. Establishing curricula and evaluation criteria that are universally recognized and are based on learning outcomes and holding genuine pupil evaluation.
2. Designing learning activities that are pupil centred. These activities are supposed to enhance pupils' critical thinking and problem-solving skills that can be transferred and used effectively in various challenging situations.
3. Acknowledging individual differences and emphasizing the development of personal talents and special abilities.
4. Emphasizing the development of vocational skills and overall capacities in pupils.
5. Emphasizing the development of skills in pupils which will help them adapt to social change.

The MOE (2007a, p. 5) defines PBEC as, "... a two-year post-Basic Education stage that follows BEC (which takes ten years of study) and aims to continue to develop basic skills and work skills and vocational planning for pupils including preparing them to be active members of society and enabling them to take advantage of opportunities for education, training and employment after school studies". PBEC seeks to complement and build upon the subjects and knowledge covered in the first and second BEC cycles. The specific aims of the PBEC are outlined by MOE of Oman (Ministry of education, 2007, p.5) and is discussed in detail in section 2.1 pertaining to the concept and system of deaf education in Oman.

1.5.3. Curriculum Materials and Resources Production

Efforts have been taken to develop the learning materials that adhere to the local syllabus in order to address the curriculum content and objectives. The Directorate General of Curriculum is responsible for developing curricula, producing and evaluating instructional materials, and carrying out other curriculum and training related matters. Implementation of decisions on the school curriculum is carried out at the departmental level, subject by subject, in coordination with the individual subject committee. For the purpose of CQI (Continuous Quality Improvement), the instructional materials are reviewed every two years to ensure that the instructional materials meet the current demand and needs of its stakeholders. The department concerned organizes workshops for teachers who teach the materials and supervisors in order to review and discuss evaluation feedback received from schools on the materials, and to come up with recommendations for submission to the appropriate curriculum subject committee.

The content of the instructional materials takes account of international trends at the beginning of the twenty-first century, the needs of Omani society and the overall educational development objectives, such as establishing the need for understanding and co-existence with others, emphasizing individual rights, maintaining the values and positive traditions of Omani society, and linking education outcomes with labour market demands. Recent curricular reforms have focused on:

(i) introducing new subjects such as information technology, environmental life skills and computer studies; (ii) teaching English language from grade 1 of the new basic education programme; (iii) introducing appropriate instructional methodology in all subjects in general, and in science and mathematics in particular; (iv) modifying curricular content in order to limit theoretical content so that it does not dominate the practical component; (v) ensuring the transfer of skills and knowledge into the students practical world; (vi) laying emphasis on competencies and linking them with the local environment; (vii) Reducing emphasis on rote learning and putting a greater emphasis on experiential learning; (viii) reducing dependence on textbooks as a source for knowledge; (ix) adopting student-centred learning approaches; and (x) applying a system of cooperative education. Furthermore, the concept of a final exam as the only tool to evaluate students has been abolished and was replaced by the concept of continuous assessment that is conducted in schools, by teachers throughout the school year, including both formative (to improve students' learning) and summative (to measure and report on standards of learning) assessments. In essence, continuous assessment provides a fairer, more balanced picture of students' achievements (MoE, 2019).

In the context of inclusive education, considerations have also been given to students with special needs, which includes deaf children when designing curriculum. The content is specified and organized for each individual subject according to the educational aims in general and the objectives of each particular level of education. Topics selected for each subject take into account the need for cross-curricular links. The levels of competencies that students are expected to achieve are specified. These competencies are specified in the light of the subject matter, concepts, attitudes, skills, methodology and assessment. Other considerations such as adherence to Islamic beliefs and to Arabic identity are also given due attention, in addition to developments in information technology, international trends, globalization, intellectual rights and cultural diversity.

Subsequently, students enrolled in the mainstream as well as the inclusive education program at the basic education level are provided with the opportunities to learn through a variety of teaching and learning approaches, including activities involving individual, pair, small group, whole class and out-of-school work. The strategies employed by teachers aim at developing skills and attitudes such as autonomous and cooperative learning, communication, critical thinking, problem solving, research and investigative techniques, creativeness, innovation and the development of an aesthetic sense. The overall aim of the education program for both groups is to provide students with the required tools for lifelong learning.

The Omani Ministry of Education defines the curriculum as a series of processes, skills and attitudes that transcends the prescribed teaching curricula and is disseminated through classroom activities and out of class activities. The new curriculum concept is distinguished by two key characteristics: (a) it is learner-centered with the expectation that students would be active learners who construct knowledge based on prior

knowledge, experiences and attitudes; and (b) it is comprehensive in nature, is not limited to textbook knowledge, and encompasses experiences relevant to the learner. Care was taken to ensure that the basic education curriculum was relevant to the present and future needs of students. Although it will always be important for students to acquire factual knowledge, the body of knowledge in most subject areas is changing rapidly. Consequently, rather than merely recalling information, it is now more important for students to be able to find and use the information. The revision of curricular materials represents a shift away from content overloaded with theory and abstract concepts. (MOE, 2008).

Along with whole class teaching, teachers are expected to use a variety of other teaching and learning methods, such as individual, pair, small group and out-of- school work. The strategies employed by teachers aim at developing skills and attitudes that encourage autonomous and cooperative learning, communication, critical thinking, problem solving, research and investigative techniques, creativeness, innovation and the development of an aesthetic sense. The overall aim is to provide students with the required tools for lifelong learning. (MOE, 2008).

1.5.4. English Language Teaching in Oman

In Oman, the reform of English Language teaching (ELT) occurs continuously since it started its modern renaissance in 1970. One of the biggest educational reform projects called the Basic Education System was implemented in 1998 as discussed previously. This system involved a change in all aspects of ELT, including teaching and learning approaches, course materials and teaching techniques. One of its features is to 'develop teaching and learning and pedagogy that adopt a student-centered approach',

as well as to revise the school course books, reduce abstract concepts and increase practical and real-life contexts, (Atkins & Griffiths, 2009:3).

Although English language is one of the main subjects taught to students in mainstream schools throughout Oman from grade 1 till grade 12, children in reality, get limited exposure to the language. Children learning and practice of English in school ranges between 5-7 periods (12.5-20%) only out of the total time (40 periods) they spend in school per week. This is because the primary language of instruction in public schools is Arabic, therefore, subjects in school, e.g., Religion, Math, Science, Social Studies are all taught in Arabic language. Table 1.2 below shows the number of units, lessons and periods (40 minutes each) of English subject in different grades.

Table 1.2: Number of Units, Lessons and Periods of English Subject per Semester

Grade	No. of units / themes per semester	No. of lessons per unit/ theme	No. of periods (40 minutes each) per week
1 - 2	6	10	7
3 - 4	6	12	7
5 - 10	5	15	5
11 - 12	4	10	6

In the context of the inclusive education program for the deaf, similar school system is implemented. Specifically, the system followed in an inclusive education program is similar to the mainstream education system. Hence, pupils/students enrolled in the inclusive education program are exposed to the same syllabus. Lessons, however, are conducted in special classes that are equipped with the required facilities and learning and teaching aids that cater for this special group.

1.6. Materials and Resources for English Language Teaching

Similar to other course materials used in Omani government schools, the English language course materials are designed by the English Language Curriculum Section in the Ministry of Education in Oman. Hence, they are regarded as non-commercial materials that are 'aimed at a specified, local audience' Dubin and Olshtain (1986:168). Occasionally and in some cases, after teaching the new materials for a semester or a year, teachers may be requested to give feedback on the materials to the Directorate of Curriculum Development through the English supervision sections in the regions. The existing course books for English language subject consist of certain number of units, depending on the grade level. The units are mainly organized around topics (themes) and specific language functions.

1.6.1. Materials and Resources for English Language Teaching for Inclusive Programs – Deaf Classrooms.

No specific curriculum was developed to cater to the needs of deaf children. Rather, the curriculum for these special group of students are similar to the ones being implemented in the mainstream education (Al-Gafri, 2009; Al-Saidi, 2013). Similarly, the English language curriculum for the deaf adopts the same mainstream curriculum being used for normal children, which was designed since 1997. This curriculum has undergone several changes as it has been reviewed from time to time for improvements.

The current Teacher's Book / Guide that teachers follow in inclusive education programme in Oman has been designed for the mainstream students. Teachers of deaf are allowed to adapt the activities in the textbooks to promote additional practice in important or weak areas that the deaf students have accordingly. In this instance, teachers of deaf students are required to make modifications deemed necessary to the

units and the lessons of the course book in a way that suits the nature and abilities of their students (Al Rayes, 2012).

Furthermore, to support the teachers of deaf, the MOE of Oman has taken efforts to provide them with unit planners to show them the steps and activities they need to focus on in their teaching. Based on the researcher's casual interviews with teachers, many of them expressed their concerns over the lack of detail information or guidelines to assist them in their work. For example, the course teachers are expected to cover 4 units with 15 lessons in each semester, from the Grade 9 English course book. However, the information or guidelines given in the unit planner to the teachers regarding the units only encompass a summary of the 12 lessons found in each unit along with the learning outcomes and the language skills to be taught in each of the lessons (e.g., reading, writing, and vocabulary) (see Appendix I). No detailed information is given about the suggested lesson plans, nor are extra teaching materials/sources provided for the teachers to aid them in their teaching activities.

1.6.2. Assessment of the English language skills of students with hearing impairment

Assessment of the English language skills of deaf students in Oman follows as closely as possible the system used in mainstream schools, as described in the Student Assessment Handbook published by the Centre for Educational Assessment and Measurement (CEAM) of the Ministry of Education. However, the system is adapted to take into account the fact that, owing to the students' serious hearing impairment, teaching and assessment should focus exclusively on the written word: i.e., the skills of Reading and Writing, supported by knowledge of Grammar and Vocabulary. For example, in Grades 1 to 4, the learning outcomes for English are grouped into two skills: Reading and Writing, while in Grades 5 to 12, the learning outcomes are grouped into

four elements: Reading, Writing, Grammar and Vocabulary (Appendix XI). (Ministry of Education, 2021a).

Furthermore, according to the Teaching Contents Plans document 2021 /2022 for Special education English language/first semester, special education teachers are requested to review and vary method of teaching according to the students' hearing acuity and their levels, modify listening or speaking tasks to reading or vocabulary tasks particularly in cycle 1 grades (figure 1.1) and delete the units and lessons of listening and speaking in cycle 2 grades (figure 1.2). Ministry of Education (2021b).

Figure 1.1 The Teaching Content Plan for Grade 4A

Grade:4A

The Teaching Content Plan for Grade 4A

Subject: English Language		Grade: 4A		Semester: 1	
Number of lessons per week: 6		Number of lessons per semester: 96		Number of weeks: 16 (Week 1 to 2 are for the implementation of the Learning Loss Plan)	

Unit/ Theme	Lesson/ Topic	Learning outcomes	Suggested implementation time	Remarks
Implementation of Learning Loss Plan	-	As stated in the Learning Loss Plan above	Week 1- Week 2	
Unit 1 Back to School	Lessons 1- 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and name classroom objects Give personal opinion Write and spell Write short paragraph 	Week 3 – Week 4	Teacher can modify listening or speaking task to vocabulary or reading task.
Unit 2 Families	Lessons 1-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and name family members Identify and name facial features Describe people Describe and compare heights 	Week 5 – Week 6	Teacher can modify listening or speaking task to vocabulary or reading task
Unit 3 The Home	Lessons 1- 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and name rooms Identify and name household objects 	Week 7 - Week 8	Teacher can modify listening or speaking task to vocabulary or reading task

(Source: Teaching Content Plans document 2021 /2022 for Special education English language / first semester, p.24)

Figure 1.2 The Teaching Content Plan for Grade 6A

Grade:6A				
The Teaching Content Plan for Grade 6A				
Subject: English language		Grade: 6A		Semester: 1
Number of lessons per week: 5	Number of lessons per semester: 80	Number of weeks: 16 (Week 1 to 2 are for the Implementation of the Learning Loss Plan)		
Unit/ Theme	Lesson/ Topic	Learning outcomes	Suggested implementation time	Remarks
Implementation of Learning Loss Plan	-	As stated in the Learning Loss Plan above	Week 1 – Week 2	
Unit 1 Creative Crafts	Lessons 1- 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Ask for and give personal information about themselves and others (R) . Ask for and give information describing objects, where they are from and what they are made of (R) . Read and understand factual information . Read and understand a variety of texts for specific information and general understanding . Follow a sequence of written instructions . Write short factual information about Omani crafts . Understand and use the verb 'to be' . Recognise and use common conventions for punctuation 	Week 3 – Week 5	Skip listening, speaking and pronunciation tasks.
Unit 2 Communication	Lessons 1- 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Understand and read about different ways of communicating . Ask and answer questions about the meaning of symbols 	Week 6 – Week 8	Skip listening, speaking and pronunciation tasks.

(Source: Teaching Content Plans document 2021 /2022 for Special education English language / first semester, p.35)

1.7. Statement of the Problem

The Omani government has expanded tremendous effort in integrating the needs of children with disability in its education system at all levels. Quite a large number of special need students are enrolled in mainstream education institutions in the Sultanate. Although it is the aspiration of the government of Oman to educate this category of children, the step taken, has also created some problems in the teaching and learning process of the deaf students.

As stated in section 1.6.1 no specific curriculum was constructed by the Ministry of Education to cater for the needs of its deaf school level learners. Rather, the curriculum for these special group of students are identical to those implemented in the mainstream education (Al Gafri, 2009; Al-Saidi, 2013). Similarly, the English language curriculum for the deaf is identical to the mainstream students' curriculum.

Accordingly, this may result in various problems towards the stakeholders involved in the special education curriculum in the country. Moreover, among the main issues highlighted in the literature also include the adoption of mainstream curriculum for teaching English to deaf students are: rigidity of the mainstream curriculum (Adoyo, 2007), mismatch of teachers' qualifications (Alasim, 2019), unfavourable school culture (Donohue & Bornman, 2014) and complicated communications (Cawthon, 2001; Miles et al. 2018). (more details in section 2.1.5.1)

Similar problems are also experienced not only in Oman (Al Rayes 2012), but also in neighbouring countries such as Saudi Arabia (Al Amri 2009; Al Ateebi 2011 cited in Al Rayes, 2012) that also adopts such education system. Most of the findings have highlighted the inappropriateness of the language materials and language curriculum designed for the deaf students. Furthermore, these studies have revealed that the aims and objectives of the mainstream curriculum adopted in deaf children's classes do not suit the linguistic growth of deaf children, nor do they respond or cater to the specific needs, learning styles and motivation of the deaf student.

Additionally, other studies (Dela Fuente, J. A., 2021; Douglas Barrie, 2019; Ibrahim A. El-Zraigat and Yahya Smadi, 2012) have also documented the unavailability of specialized teachers who have undergone specific training related to teaching deaf learners. The teachers involved in such programmes are found to be lacking in the necessary knowledge and skills to communicate with deaf students (Alasim, 2019). The

other issue in teaching English to the deaf is related to unfavourable school culture. Some studies have reported that despite welcoming the idea of inclusive education, many teachers believe that the special needs of disabled learners can better be achieved in separate classrooms (Campbell, Gilmore, & Cuskelly, 2003). This view may not apply to the education of deaf children in Oman where the curriculum is inclusive. With regards to the issue of complicated communications, Miles et al. (2018) found that deaf and hard of hearing children, despite using hearing aids in the integrated classrooms, were faced with the practical difficulty of having proper communication. They miss out much of the information when teachers speak fast (Refer to section 2.1.5.1).

The discussion in the extant literature above on issues of adopting the mainstream curriculum for teaching English to deaf children in Oman raises the following pertinent questions. Firstly, how is the attitude of deaf children in Oman, the support of their parents, their intention, and their abilities influenced by this mainstream curriculum, which is rigid (Adoyo, 2007), whose objectives do not suit the linguistic growth of deaf children (Al Rayes 2012)? This first question raises another important question on the relevance of the mainstream curriculum for teaching English to deaf children in Oman in terms of the language teaching materials (Al Rayes 2012)? The other questions are on the challenges related to the English teachers. How qualified are the existing English teachers for deaf children in Oman (Alasim, 2019)? To what extent do teachers lack the necessary knowledge and skills to communicate with deaf children (Alasim, 2019)? In other words, how good are the teachers in their teaching method or pedagogy?

Unfortunately, and to the best knowledge of the researcher, there is hardly any studies that have examined these pertinent research questions in the context of deaf children and English language in Oman. Therefore, the present study has investigated the extent to which the attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioural control and

intention of the deaf children in Oman are influenced by the mainstream curriculum being adopted by schools in teaching English as a second language to them. The study has also investigated the challenges teachers face in teaching English to deaf children in Oman using the mainstream curriculum.

1.8. Objectives of the Study

This research study aims primarily at exploring the extent of schools adopting mainstream curriculum in teaching English as a second language to deaf children in Oman. Specific objectives include investigating the attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioural control and intention of the deaf children as well as the challenges teachers face in teaching English to the deaf children using the mainstream curriculum.

In doing so, this study hopes to establish the extent to which the success factors of the practice of teaching English language to deaf children in Oman can lead to the enhancement of English language learning among deaf children as highlighted in past studies (Al-Rayes 2012; Alhamami, 2019; Al Ghafri, S. 2009; Al Saidi, A. 2013). In essence, the research objectives are ordered from general to specific as follows:

1. To examine the challenges faced in adopting mainstream curriculum in teaching English as a second language (L2) to deaf children in Oman:
 - a. Challenges of teaching deaf children in general
 - b. Challenges of teaching deaf children in classroom environment
2. To examine the extent to which the existing mainstream curriculum structure is relevant to the teaching of English language to Deaf children in Oman.
3. To investigate the extent of the effectiveness of the pedagogy used in teaching English language to Deaf children in Oman.

4. To examine the extent to which attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioural control and intention of deaf children are influenced by mainstream curriculum being adopted by schools in teaching English as a second language to deaf children in Oman.

1.9. Research Questions

The study particularly aims to answer the following questions:

1. What are the challenges faced in adopting mainstream curriculum in teaching English as a second language (L2) to deaf children in Oman in terms of:
 - a) challenges of teaching deaf children in general
 - b) challenges of teaching deaf children in classroom environment
2. To what extent is the existing mainstream curriculum structure relevant to the teaching of English language to deaf children in Oman?
3. To what extent is the pedagogy used in teaching English language to Deaf children in Oman effective?
4. To what extent are the following factors influenced by the mainstream curriculum being adopted by schools in teaching English as a second language to deaf children in Oman?
 - i. Attitude of the school children,
 - ii. Subjective Norm of the school children
 - iii. Perceived Behavioural Control of the school children, and
 - iv. Intention of the school children

1.10. Scope of the Study

The study focused on English language teaching while acknowledging that mainstream schools in Oman also teach the native Arabic language to deaf children. The Sultanate of Oman gives priority to learning English among other foreign languages. Secondly, the participants for this study are deaf school children and teachers who are directly involved in the program. Thirdly, the context of the study is confined to six schools in Dhofar region, which is the total number of schools implementing the inclusive educational program for deaf children in Dhofar, the origin of the researcher. Keeping into consideration the fact that there are other schools in the Sultanate also cater for the needs of the deaf. Fourthly, the study is framed within the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) in the attempt to investigate the extent to which the attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioural control and intention of these deaf children are influenced by the mainstream curriculum being adopted by schools in teaching English as a second language. Thus, the scope of the study does not extend to the adoption of the mainstream curriculum for English as a second language, nor adapt some of the elements of this curriculum into a new curriculum for the deaf. Rather, the researcher largely aims at analysing the challenges, effectiveness of the pedagogy, and the behaviour of the students towards the adoption of this mainstream curriculum in teaching English as a second language to deaf children in Oman. Lastly, the study has used mixed research design [qualitative and quantitative] involving questionnaires, interviews and diaries in order to investigate the views of the relevant stakeholders (teachers and students) on schools adopting mainstream curriculum in teaching English as a second language to deaf children in Oman. In doing so, both the qualitative and quantitative approaches may contribute as ‘complementary means of investigating such

a complex phenomenon at work in the area of second language acquisition' (Mackey, A., & Gass, S. M. (2005), p.164).

1.11. Significance of the Study

A distinctive contribution of this study is that, it will add to the pool of knowledge in the area of the adoption of mainstream curriculum in teaching English as a second language to deaf children, especially in cases related to Oman. Secondly, the study has departed from other works in using Theory of Planned Behavior [TPB] in the adoption of mainstream curriculum in teaching English to deaf children. Few studies have adopted TPB to examine the ability of deaf children, rather their study focused on their ability to learn the language (Alhamami, M. (2019 and 2018), and the motivation of parents to enroll their children in dual language immersion (Andrea et. al, 2018). The present study has departed TPB studies in using it as a theoretical framework, and for examining the extent of schools adopting mainstream curriculum in teaching English to deaf children.

Thirdly, this study has attempted to use controlled classroom environment as teachers teaching these classes documented their experiences in diaries, which together with interviews were used to examine the challenges and solicit suggestions for improving teaching English to deaf children in mainstream curriculum setting. Controlled classroom environment in this context means classrooms controlled by specific syllabuses, teaching materials, specific teachers, and allocated specially for the deaf children. The objective is to examine the experiences and the extent of challenges both the teachers and the deaf students would experience compared to the environment of adopting the mainstream curriculum. This is the first time that such approaches are

used to solicit data. Fourthly, in terms of pedagogy, this study provides insights on the specific teaching approaches that may best be suitable and appropriate for the teaching of deaf children in schools adopting mainstream English language curriculum. Specifically, as the study explores the learning of English in the inclusive education program context, identification of the most effective delivery of the lessons as well as teaching aids, such as the types of textbooks to be used are recommended. Fifthly, findings from this study may provide insights to the need for the adoption of special curriculum needs as alternative approaches to enhance the inclusive curriculum, specifically in strengthening the delivery and teaching aids for language teaching for the deaf. For example, teaching aids such as the present textbooks used to teach deaf children may be largely inappropriate and in-service training and professional development may also be lacking in language teaching for the deaf. It is hope that findings of this study would open a path for further support to be given for teaching materials and tools and an alternative, special English language curriculum for the deaf to be developed in enhancing the deaf students' language learning experience.

1.12. Organisation of the Study

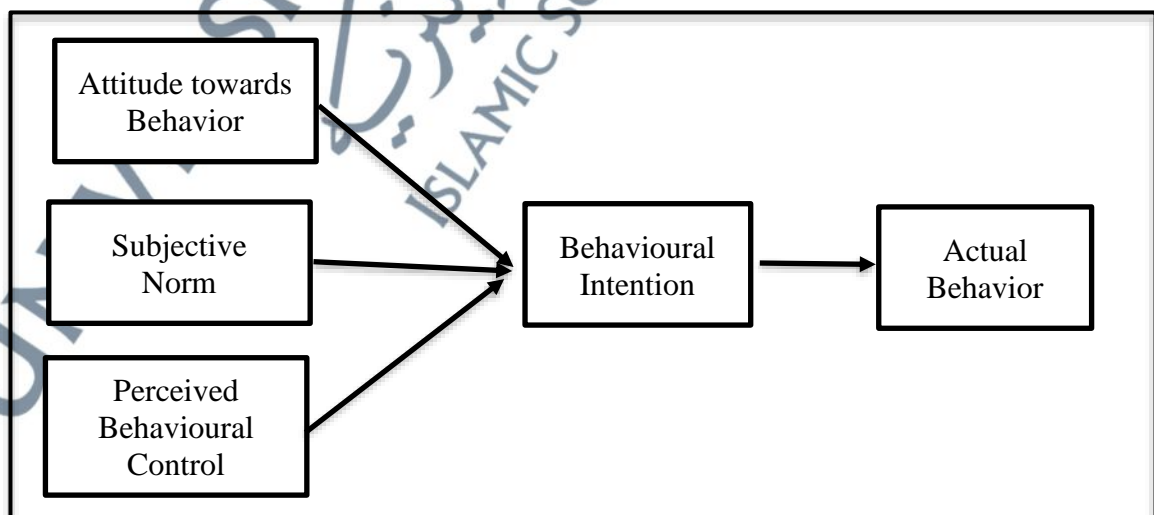
This study is structured into five chapters. The introductory chapter covers the background of the study (section 1.2). Section 1.3 has presented a background regarding the education context in Oman, emphasizing on the school education system (section 1.4), the development stages of education (section 1.5), the curriculum materials and resources production (section 1.6) and the English language teaching in Oman (section 1.7). This was followed by the statement of the problem, research objectives, research

questions, scope of the study, significance of the Study and finally the organization of the study in section 1.13.

The subsequent chapter two reviews the extant literature related to the English language curriculum particularly the inclusive curriculum being used by schools for teaching English as a second language to deaf children in Oman. The main objective of the chapter is to identify research gaps relative to the four research questions of the study, which in essence focus on the challenges of adopting the mainstream curriculum in teaching English to the deaf children, the relevance of the curriculum, efficiency of the pedagogy, and how the behaviour of deaf children is influenced by the adoption of the mainstream curriculum in teaching them English. The Chapter discusses the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) used in the study, and the research framework and hypotheses developed from TPB.

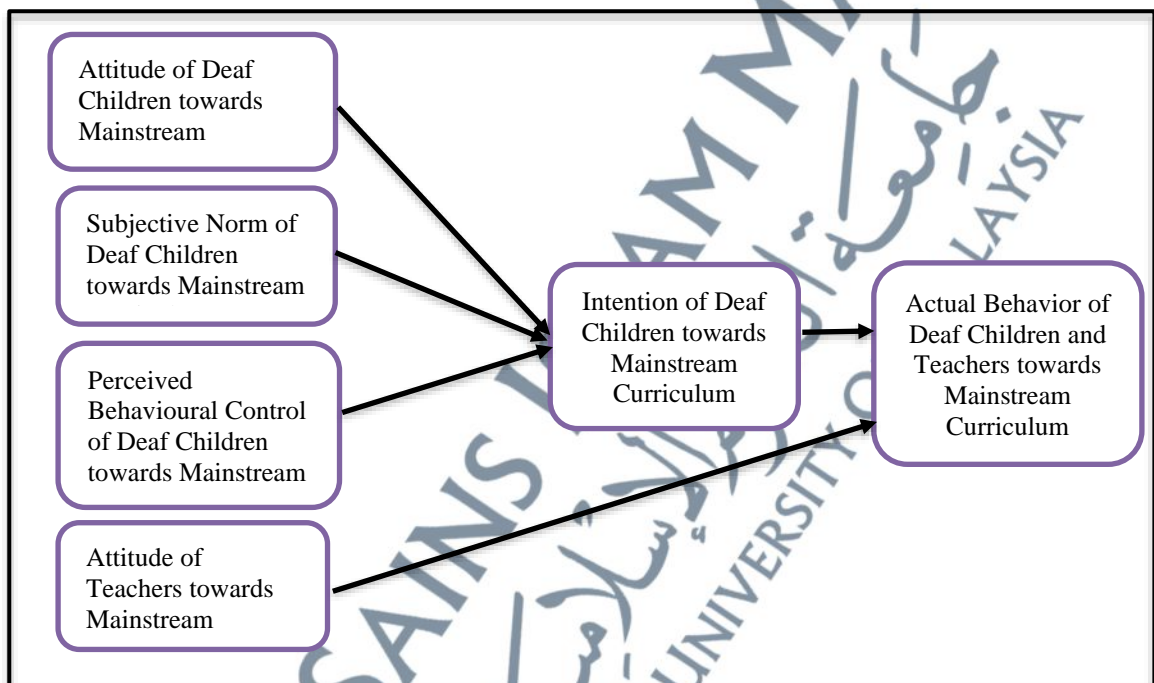
It is worth mentioning that in Chapter Two, the study has adopted for its theoretical and conceptual framework the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) by Ajzen (1991). Both the theoretical and conceptual frameworks are shown below in Figures 1.3 and 1.4 respectively.

Figure 1.3: The Theory of Planned Behaviour Model (TPB) by Ajzen, 1991



The study has used the four TPB constructs or variables [attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control and intention] to examine the extent to which the adoption of mainstream curriculum in teaching English as a second language influence the behaviours of deaf children in Oman.

Figure 1.4: Conceptual Framework of the Study



The study has used the conceptual framework in Figure 1.4 to examine the extent to which attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioural control and intention of deaf children and teachers are influenced by mainstream curriculum being adopted by schools in teaching English as a second language. (see Section 2.3)

Chapter Three covers the methodology used to conduct this study, both the qualitative and quantitative techniques. It details out the research design used for identifying the sample frame, the sampling techniques, development of the research instruments, data collection procedures and data analysis techniques including the

statistical tools and software used. Analysis of the quantitative and qualitative findings are discussed in separate chapters. The findings obtained from the qualitative data are discussed in chapter four. Meanwhile Chapter five reports and analyses the findings obtained from the quantitative data. The final chapter (Chapter six) provides a summary of the major findings, limitations of the study and suggestions for future research.

