

## ABSTRACT

The issue of special and inclusive education had become the crucial topic for discussion in Kazakhstan after signing the UN CRPD (Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities) in 2008. The fact that children with disabilities are excluded from the mainstream and quality education in Kazakhstan attracted the attention of national and international experts. Kazakhstan with its trilingual language policy (Kazakh language as the state language, Russian as the language of interethnic communication and English as a way to enter the global community (Ministry of Education and Science [MoES], 2010a)) should be able to provide quality language learning for children with and without disabilities. The attitudes of teachers remain as one of the most crucial factors in implementing inclusive education.

The purpose of this qualitative study is to examine the attitudes, understandings and concerns of secondary school English as the Second language teachers regarding the implementation of inclusive education in Kazakhstan. The central research question of the study is following: What are the attitudes, understandings and concerns of the secondary school English as the Second language teachers about the inclusion of children with disabilities? Three sub-questions are: 1. What are *inclusive school* ESL teachers' attitudes, concerns and understandings about inclusion? 2. What are the concerns and attitudes of *special school* ESL teachers? 3. What are the attitudes and concerns and understandings of *mainstream school* ESL teachers? The qualitative interviews were gathered using semi-structured face-to-face interviews.

This research spanned the three cities of Kazakhstan: one inclusive, one mainstream school with correctional classes and one special school. Atlas.ti™ computer based program had been utilized for analyzing data of 5 different interviewees.

The results of the study revealed that teachers of these three schools do believe in the successful implementation of inclusive education in Kazakhstan and they have positive attitudes, but the severe types of disabilities should not be mainstreamed. For the current situation of inclusion in the country English language teachers expressed their concerns that the facilities and methodological support is not yet provided in schools that could lead to negative attitudes towards teaching English in inclusive classrooms. The understandings of teachers about inclusive education and the given definitions are diverse due to their teaching experiences in teaching in different schools and cities. This research is the new voice of teachers who teach under the new and challenging policies, whose voices cannot reach the policymakers. The results of this in-depth small scale study will contribute in the development of balanced inclusive education policy adapted to the context of Kazakhstan.