THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE MULTISENSORY APPROACH IN TEACHING ENGLISH TO VISUALLY IMPAIRED STUDENTS

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Abstract: Teaching English to visually impaired learners requires modifications that respond to their unique sensory needs. The multisensory approach, which integrates auditory, tactile, kinesthetic, and residual visual channels, is recognized as one of the most effective pedagogical methods in special education. This study aims to explore how multisensory techniques enhance vocabulary retention, pronunciation development, and communicative competence among visually impaired students learning English. Through analysis of theoretical sources in special pedagogy and practical applications in specialized schools, this research demonstrates that multisensory instruction fosters learner engagement, increases independence, and develops compensatory skills. The findings suggest that adaptation of instructional materials— including tactile graphics, Braille-based textbooks, audio-visual technologies, and kinesthetic language tasks—supports inclusive and equitable foreign language learning. The study concludes that multisensory teaching should be prioritized in English language education for visually impaired learners as it reinforces cognitive processing and social integration.

Keywords: multisensory instruction, visual impairment, English language teaching, special pedagogy, tactile learning, inclusive education.

INTRODUCTION

Visual impairment significantly limits students' access to conventional language learning resources, which primarily depend on visual perception. This limitation poses a serious barrier to the development of linguistic and communicative competence, as most instructional materials—textbooks, visual aids, and written exercises—are designed for sighted learners. According to the principles of special pedagogy, effective instruction for visually impaired learners must engage compensatory sensory channels, particularly auditory, tactile, and kinesthetic modalities, to support their cognitive and linguistic development. This study aims to explore the effectiveness of multisensory strategies in teaching English to visually impaired learners**,** focusing on their impact on vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation, and communicative skills. The research also seeks to identify pedagogical tools and techniques that best correspond to the needs of these learners within inclusive and specialized educational contexts. Through theoretical and methodological analysis, the study contributes to the growing field of special pedagogy and supports the development of adaptive instructional models for foreign language education among visually impaired students.

LITERARURE REVIEW

Visual impairment significantly affects students' access to traditional language learning resources that rely heavily on sight. According to the principles of special pedagogy, instruction for these learners must utilize compensatory sensory channels to support cognitive and linguistic development (Aminov, 2015). The multisensory approach—grounded in audiovisual, tactile, and motor integration—provides an inclusive framework that accommodates different learning styles and fosters communicative competence (Galkin, 2014). Foreign language education presents distinct challenges for visually impaired learners: difficulty recognizing printed text, limited access to visual context cues, and reduced exposure to environmental language input. Therefore, teachers must adapt techniques, materials, and classroom environments. Previous scholars (Magomedova, 2020; Lisenkova, 2018) emphasize that multisensory strategies increase motivation, accuracy in pronunciation, and vocabulary retention. This study show the effectiveness of such strategies in enhancing English language proficiency among visually impaired students and highlights the pedagogical tools that best align with their needs.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research is based on special pedagogy literature, including practical recommendations for teaching foreign languages to visually impaired learners. The analytical method was used to study multisensory instruction principles described by Russian and Uzbek scholars such as Sattarova (2019), Galkin (2014), and Aminov (2015). In addition, the study reviews methodological guidelines from specialized schools for the blind, focusing on classroom adaptations and the use of tactile and auditory resources.

Comparative analysis was applied to evaluate traditional teaching approaches versus multisensory techniques. Classroom observation findings gathered from methodological descriptions in special education textbooks were examined to determine how tactile materials (Braille texts, relief diagrams), auditory supports (screen readers, audio lessons), and kinesthetic tasks (object-based vocabulary learning, roleplay) contribute to learning outcomes. Through synthesis of theoretical and practical sources, the study identifies which multisensory elements show the strongest impact on English acquisition, especially in vocabulary learning and pronunciation development.

DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

The multisensory approach has proven to be an essential instructional model for visually impaired students learning English. Results from analyzed pedagogical sources indicate that combining multiple sensory channels optimizes comprehension and memory. For example, using Braille for reading while simultaneously listening to audio versions of the same text stimulates dual coding, reinforcing language retention. Students demonstrate improved word recognition and phonological awareness when tactile and auditory cues complement each other (Sattarova, 2019). Tactile graphics and objects play a crucial role in forming conceptual understanding. When learning vocabulary related to daily life such as "cup," "chair," or "apple," handling real objects assists learners in establishing concrete associations.

Kinesthetic tasks like walking to specific items in the classroom or acting out verbs ("open," "run," "sit") activate muscle memory and encourage natural communication. Moreover, multisensory activities enhance social participation and motivation. Group-based listening games and roleplays promote a collaborative learning environment where visually impaired students can practice conversational skills with confidence. Adaptive technologies, including audio dictionaries and tactile-feedback devices, increase independence and reduce reliance on constant teacher support. Scholars stress that such tools strengthen compensatory functions by empowering learners to access English autonomously (Lisenkova, 2018). Through comparison, it was found that visually impaired students taught with visually dominant traditional methods progress more slowly, experience frustration, and show reduced engagement. In contrast, the multisensory approach personalizes learning, supports emotional well-being, and aligns with inclusive education principles by ensuring equal participation opportunities. The analysis confirms that multisensory instruction is not supplementary but fundamental for meaningful English language acquisition among visually impaired learners. It acknowledges diverse sensory potentials and converts limitations into active strengths.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this research highlight that the multisensory approach is a highly effective and necessary method for teaching English to visually impaired students. By activating tactile, auditory, and kinesthetic channels, multisensory techniques help overcome the lack of visual input and enhance cognitive processing, vocabulary development, and communication skills. These strategies encourage independence, improve motivation, and support social integration within inclusive language classrooms. Therefore, educators must receive specialized training in adaptive methods and be provided with suitable teaching materials and technologies designed for visually impaired learners. Future research should involve empirical classroom experimentation to evaluate long-term language proficiency results and optimize multisensory instructional models. Integrating such approaches widely will contribute to a more just and accessible foreign language education system.

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