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**The impact of Foreign Language Learning on  
Visually Impaired Students: A Case Study of  
EFL Learners**

*A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English submitted  
as a fulfilment of the requirements for a Master's Degree in Language  
Studies.*

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*This work is dedicated to all the visually impaired students, teachers and people who are trying to prove themselves and study and grow their personalities despite the different difficulties they encounter.*

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*To my dear teachers and friends*

*To all the people who stood with me in every single moment to accomplish and finish this work.*

## Abstract

Learning is a complex process that requires a combination of a set of tools and senses. Since vision is essential in learning, sometimes visually impaired students may find difficulties because of their special conditions and needs that affect their learning process as whole. This research aimed to describe and explain the visual impairment deficit and the different cases teachers may encounter in the classroom. It presented a single case study of visually impaired learners who study English as a foreign language at the University of Tlemcen. This work attempted to define and explain the case of visually impaired students and how they learn and methods teachers may use to help them. It also aimed to reveal the difficulties visually impaired students encounter in their learning and how their academic performance can be enhanced using different material and assistance from different sources. Data were collected using different research instruments which include the questionnaire and interviews that aimed to get reliable and valid information about the studied phenomenon. The analysis of the research findings revealed that visually impaired students face problems mainly in understanding concepts and using them sometimes in their context, it also confirmed that language learning is a helpful process that enables visually handicapped students to improve their characters and overcome the different obstacles they face in learning.

**Keywords:** Visual Impairment, Visually Impaired Students, English Language Learning, Foreign Language Learners, Personality.

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## **List of Acronyms**

**BLS:** Blind Language Students

**CRPD:** Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

**FL:** Foreign Languages

**FS:** Fully Sighted

**ICD:** International Classification of Diseases

**NLP:** No Light Perception

**VI:** visually Impaired

**VIS:** Visually Impaired Students

**VILS:** Visually Impaired Language Students

**UNESCO:** United Nations of Education and Scientific and Cultural Organization

**WHO** : World Health Organization

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# **General introduction**

### **General introduction:**

In his early stages of cognitive and linguistic development the infant starts identifying through his five senses; hearing, touching, tasting, smelling and vision. Vision is regarded as an important sense a child uses when he first starts learning. Through interaction, the child develops knowledge and competency that enable him to communicate and interact with other people. Through time, he gets accustomed to his environment and at 6, he goes to school.

Disabled children may find many difficulties when communicating with the external environment because of their different needs. Disabled people may be either physically and/or mentally impaired. When it comes to the case of visually impaired people; they can't deal with some social conditions and it may take them a long time to accept their conditions and start coping with the situation.

It is noticed that the rate of visually impaired students is increasing in higher educational settings. When it comes to foreign language learning, it is difficult for visually impaired students to cope with non-adequate conditions that do not facilitate the learning process. Visually impaired students do face some difficulties in their learning process, in order to achieve better performance, new solutions and adjustments are needed.

This study aims to describe the difficulties visually impaired students face while learning a foreign language and tackle the different cases or types of visually impaired students that teachers may encounter at university. Also, it attempts to reveal the impact of language learning on the character of visually impaired learners and to propose some suggestions for enhancing the learning process.

This study intended to answer the following questions:

- 1- What are the different obstacles that influence the visually impaired students' language learning process?
- 2-What are the factors that may enhance the performance of visually impaired students?
- 3-What is the impact of English language learning on the character and personality of the visually impaired student?

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The aforementioned questions led to propose the hypotheses and suggestions mentioned below:

1-The difficulties are: the weak bond between the teacher and the student, the non-availability of sufficient material.

2-The assessing material like textbooks recorded or in Braille, creating good relationship with classmates and helpful studying environment.

3-The English language learning can affect the character or skills of visually impaired student that is by helping the learners communicate, improve their language use.

In order to check the validity of the hypotheses a specific methodology was chosen which relied on the use of a descriptive case study. This case study attempted to describe and explain the different factors that affect the academic performance of the visually impaired students. Using the qualitative and quantitative research approaches to collect more accurate and reliable data. Relying on the different research tools that were chosen to gather information from the sample, the researcher used an online questionnaire format that was directed to the students and a structured interview that was devoted to the teachers to collect more valid data, and an unstructured interview that was conducted with a psychologist.

The research paper is divided into two chapters. The first chapter gives a simple overview and explanation of the main concepts related to the visual impairment it represents a theoretical background of the research topic. It also describes language teaching and learning for visually impaired students and the methods used to teach them foreign languages.

The second chapter is devoted to the practical side of the study. It gives a detailed explanation of the single case study and the sample that was selected for this study and which is composed of four university students along with two university teachers who teach English in the English Department. The data were collected using an online format questionnaire which was directed to the students and a structured interview that was devoted to the teachers in addition to an unstructured interview that was conducted with a psychologist. Later on, the data were analysed and discussed. Finally, it gives answer to

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the set issues and verifies to the hypotheses put. Finally, some recommendation are proposed.

# Chapter one: Literary Review

## **1.1. Introduction**

1.2 People with Disabilities

1.3. Visual Impairment

1.4. Types of Visual Impairment

1.4.1. Low Vision

1.4.2. The Blind

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1.6. Foreign Language Learning

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1.7. Foreign Language Teaching Methods

1.7.1. The Audio-Lingual Method

1.7.2 The Holistic Approach

1.7.3. The Cooperative Teaching Method

## **1.8. Conclusion**

### 1.1. Introduction

Half of the facts about the world are received through vision (Winzer, 1999) which is one of the primary senses that a child uses to start learning. But what if the child is born blind or he loses his sight unexpectedly, how can he adjust to his environment and start learning and accommodating using his other senses. Getting used to the general study setting and environment may be difficult at the beginning for some students like visually impaired students, who have a visual deficit that restricts their learning, especially at university.

This chapter is devoted to give a detailed literary review about the visually impairment disability. First, it gives enough description and definition of the term disabled then a simple explanation about the visual impairment, and its different types and case. Also, it gives a simple overview about the inclusion principal along with the establishment of the first school of the blind and visually impaired students. After that, it sheds light on the importance of teaching languages to the visually impaired students and the various teaching and learning methods that were and still used by different schools to teach foreign languages the visually impaired students.

### 1.2. People with Disabilities

Some people require help and assistance according to their specific conditions and circumstances. Generally, these people are referred to as disabled or people with specific needs, these people suffer from a certain deficit or disability that affects their tasks fulfilment and influences their activities. The term disabled is used to refer to any person who has a long term difficulty that affects his daily activities and it can be emotional, physical, or mental (ready.gov). In the educational context disabled student means that he is a student with a certain deficit that restricts and limits his performance. These disabilities or impairment differ according to the case and situation of the person who should be provided with the essential help according to their unique condition that enable them to learn effectively and take part in the learning process.

### 1.3. Visual Impairment

The term visual impairment signifies the different visual problems of each individual as stated by Aikin-Araluce (2002) as cited in Ghafri (2015), visual impairment is a term related to vision impairment or vision loss, and this term is used widely to refer to all sorts of problems related to vision loss Likewise Carney et al. (2003) who defined it as a significant loss of vision. Patton (2004) stated that visual impairment refers to any condition in which sight can not be corrected to what's considered normal. As mentioned before any individual who suffers from a gradual or full loss of vision is considered as visually impaired, he may either be fully blind or half sighted. This loss of vision may affect one's personal and social and educational life easily, since most of the things and schools depend on vision and life experiences and mainly everything is related somehow to the use of vision and this is kind of difficult especially for students who are visually impaired who usually find difficulties expressing themselves or interacting with other people and executing daily tasks .As explained by Corn and Lusk (2010: 4-5):

A person with low vision has measurable vision; however, has trouble

Executing or is not able to achieve visual tasks. Standard glasses or contact lenses do not help these people accomplish those tasks, but they can improve their ability to perform them by using compensatory visual strategies, low vision devices, and environmental modifications.

This difficulty can cause other difficulties and troubles for the individual, it can interfere in one's daily tasks and in his educational and social life as well.

This visual impairment occurs when a part of the optic system is kind of damaged or diseased, or malfunctions. If the visual impairment is generally present at birth it is called natural or congenital. These includes the absence of the eyes or other parts of the eye or imperfect system that are stopped up and heritable conditions eyeballs that are too short or too long this means that the damage is at birth or after birth, or accidental (Bruce, 2004). There are hundreds of eye problems and even combinations of problems located in the optic system itself. Visualimpairment can also develop gradually and it is possible for an individual to lose his sight after years of being able to see, this is called adventitious visual impairment which means that the loss of vision was the result of



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illness or an accident and, hence, happened after and vision loss can occur if the individual is not aware of the problem and if he would not look for a cure.

### 1.4. Types of Visual Impairment

The level of visual acuity, visual ability and field of vision are the characteristics with which a visually impaired person is defined and recognized and these parameters differ from an individual to another .Since it mainly relates to each individual and his eye conditions and level of seeing. This is why each visually impaired person usually belong to one of the categories mild, moderate or severe visual impairment (ICD, 2018). For diagnosing the disease and testing the eyes' ability doctors often use the Snellen's chart which assesses them to know about the visual acuity and efficiency of an individual and to how far a person can see, this chart was introduced by the Dutch doctor Herbart Snellen which gives the distance of vision and to what extent a person can see. So according to WHO (2019) visual impairment is characterized either by the low vision or half sighted and severe vision impairment which is called total blindness.

#### 1.4.1. Low Vision

It is a condition that refers to the ability of people who can partially see or who have a small visual ability .This term is used to refer to the people who have a different levels of vision but which are low and they can use a minimal percentage of their vision. Usually this kind of people face problems executing tasks and managing things on their own, and this vision can not be corrected by the use of lenses or regular glasses (Snellen). It is defined according to one's visual acuity which according to Snellen's chart does not exceed (6/18) up to (3/60) (Snellen ) (10/200) in a helping conditions and using some helping material or correction .Whereas in the Limitation of field of vision it reaches less than 40 degree up to 10.

#### 1.4.2. The Blind

Different scales of blindness have been developed to define the extent of vision loss. The term blindness is frequently used to refer to severe visual impairment with residual vision or to a lack of vision with remaining light perception. In total blindness, there is the complete lack of form and visual light perception, clinically recorded as NLP, so it depends on the persons's loss vision severity because there is the fully blind

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who can not use his vision at all and the legally blind who may still have a useful eyesight that can help him accomplish some tasks. This means the fully blind people can not use their vision at all and they do not benefit from their sight at all whereas there are others who are blind but can use a bit of the remained eye sight they have, “The word ‘blind’ refers to a child with minimal or no vision, and ‘partially sighted’ to a child with useful residual vision” (Harrison & Crow, 1993). The different explanations and definitions reveals the complexity of defining one’s visual acuity or label one’s vision since it depends on each individual and each learner.

### 1.5. Historical Overview

Giving interest to the blind and disabled people as a whole started hundreds of years ago. Long time before only the normal people and children were able to go to schools, but after the new regulations and policies the importance of teaching and helping those who are disabled like the blind and visually impaired specifically was given a place. From the foundation of the first schools that started teaching to having their rights as normal people and fighting for their rights for education in the mid-twentieth century to the amazing works and contributions that many disabled people including the visually impaired have made in the history of education focus had switched to self- sufficiency and providing the appropriate education for the blind and disabled in general.

#### 1.5.1 Teaching Visually Impaired Students

The current technological and scientific development marked a big transition in the history of education and learning, these changes have revealed the crucial role that education plays in the life of people. Learning paves the way for people to discover and improve their life in general. Without education, there would be no contemporary growth or infrastructure and the present development would not have existed. Learning is more than just studying and knowing; it helps the individual improve his/her character, personality, and understanding of the world as a whole even if anyone has a certain difficulty there is no problem in having the will and intention to learn and study like everybody else even if you have visual problems.

Being disabled is usually regarded as a socially constructed disadvantage, and disabled individuals have and continue to suffer and face difficulties and challenges

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from other people and their society, and they are still struggling with this kind of issues in some nations. Their rights as citizens and human beings, which include the ability to live in the community, marry, work, receive an education, have been denied throughout history (Connolly & Ward, 2008). In some countries disabled children do not have the right to study and learn like other children, they are forbidden from studying and this would affect badly on their social and personal life later on. But as mentioned in The United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) 'all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights...endowed with reason and conscience and should act toward one another in a spirit of brotherhood'.

These new reformulations and legislations related to the rights and situations of the disabled people whether they are physically handicapped or visually impaired all the disabled have had their chance like everybody else like all the other normal people and to have a protected rights. The Human Rights Model and its new adjustments were put to defend the rights of the disabled and it sought for ways to protect them and provide them with the help they need and not only that but also for the application of these new laws and policies concerning the disabled just like those visually impaired children who did not have the right to an equal education before, the new changes made a big difference in the lives of the disabled people and it facilitated their social, and educational life.

Getting access to education is of such a great help to the visually impaired specifically and for the other disabled people in general, it will enable them to interact with other people and adjust their personality and mental health. They will at least be able to experience, explore and discover other things related to the world in a different way and to learn to face their fears and other obstacles and hardships that limits them from doing their best and take part in the learning and education process especially in higher education settings when they need to discover more about themselves and their abilities

### **1.5.2. The Inclusion Policy**

The new legislations and rules that were set to aid the disabled people havemarked a turning point in the human history especially in education, in protecting the rights of the disabled people including the visually impaired. Inclusive schools allow all students to learn together, regardless of their difficulties or disabilities. Such schools must recognize

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and respond to their students' varying needs by accommodating various learning styles and rates. Students with disabilities should be included in integrating plans aimed at universal education. Although inclusive education is generally associated with the education of people with disabilities, it is in fact, applicable to all learners as claimed by The American Foundation for the Blind states the following in their Paper on the Inclusion of Students with Visual Impairments (n.d) :

Inclusion, full inclusion, and inclusive education are terms which recently have been narrowly defined by some (primarily educators of students with severe disabilities) to espouse the philosophy that All students with disabilities, regardless of the nature or the severity of their disability, receive their TOTAL education within the regular education environment.

The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in General Comment has easily defined inclusive education as a mortal right of every learner. Inclusive education is grounded on the principle that all children should learn together, regardless of the difference. Inclusive education recognizes the capacity of every person to learn, including people with disabilities, and acknowledges that each person has different strengths, conditions, and learning styles that are flexible and adaptable. By taking into account differences among learners, inclusive education promotes respect for and value of diversity and seeks to combat discriminative stations both in the classroom and society.

The Composition number (24) of the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) lays out the points of an inclusive education system full development of mortal eventuality and sense of quality, strengthening respect for mortal rights, freedoms, and diversity development of the personality, as well as their internal and physical capacities, to their fullest implicit enabled people with disabilities to contribute in their society and have an effective role in their society. Inclusive education takes on particular features in operation to people with disabilities mainly the visually impaired people, it seeks to address the specific walls these people may receive in their learning and to insure their effective access to education and fulfilment of their individual eventuality on equal terms to other scholars within a participatory literacy terrain.

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Inclusive education is described in (UNESCO, 2005:15) guidelines as ‘an approach that looks into how provide access to educational system and other programmes in order to respond the diversity of the learners’.

The new regulations aimed to include everyone, irrespective of disability, status or culture in the same educational setting where learner needs can be met and to have an equal curriculum. The inclusive principal is based on four main ideas or criteria that should be followed and portrayed in every educational background as declared by Salend (2005:8):

-All learners profit from this inclusion idea and all of them have an equal access to a flexible class and the applicable service, regardless of their learning abilities and capacities profitable status, culture, etc. As all are given access to a multi-model class that is harmonious with their capacities and needs.

- Individual strengths, requirements and diversity are valued. This promotes acceptance and equity and develops great cooperative contributors to society.

-Reflective practices and discerned instruction are promoted. Preceptors continuously reflect on their tutoring, assessment and classroom operation practice in order to Acclimate to individual requirements and encourage meaningful access and progress.

- A community grounded on collaboration is established. That gathers the learners in a cooperative way and professionals and community bodies work collaboratively as a platoon, participating and responsibilities.

### **1.5.3 The Educational Definition of Visual Impairment**

According to the different perspectives and definitions the Visually Disabled students are those whose visual loss indicates that they should be educated primarily through the use of Braille tactile and other assessing material. Visually Impaired are those who are so severely challenged that they must learn Braille to read and write, while low vision students can still use their residual vision as a primary sense to deal with day-to-day visual demands with appropriate aiding devices. For the appropriate educational or functional definition, teachers consider any visual problem which interferes in the educational process and its development as a visual handicap. It is also explained by Carney et al. (2003) who defines the visual impaired students into two either blind or half sighted. So the visually impaired students are divided into two categories, either

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half sighted students and the totally blind or legally blind students, visual impairment has various forms, the first one entails partial sightedness which is a loss of vision to a certain extent even with correction (NICHCY, 2004).

With partial sightedness, special education support may be required. It can be considered as low vision as well, in this case the student needs to use the large print materials and light adjustment may be required (Lewis & al.,2000). However, the remaining vision can still be utilised together with other senses. The second form is legal blindness, which is measured as a loss of vision from 20/200 to 20/400 degrees (NICHCY,2004). This form is also referred to as severe low vision, as explained by the WHO a person with low vision, is also called a person with partial sight, and has an impairment of visual function, even after the treatment his visual acuity may be less than 6/18 to light perception, or he would have a very restricted visual field which is less than 10 degrees, despite his weaknesses he may be able to use his vision for planning or execution simple tasks. As explained by Westwood :

In the population of students with impaired vision there are those who are deemed totally blind, those who are ‘legally’ blind, and those with varying degrees of low vision often referred to as partial sight. It is interesting to note that at least 80 percent of persons classified as legally blind do have some remaining sight.

(Westwood , 2009:76 )

### **1.5.4. The Establishment of first Schools for Visually Impaired Students**

The interest of teaching the blind and visually impaired took place hundreds of years ago. Earlier before the intention was to only teach normal students, but it suddenly moved to the disabled including the blind and visually impaired. The interest of people and teachers in the blind and visually impaired and disabled in general because of the new ideas and works that took place in the 18th century the interest of helping the deaf

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, blind and visually impaired people and in the 18th century. Haüy is regarded as the he is considered as "Father of the Blind" who founded the first school that was concerned with teaching the blind with twelve blind children as his first students, the school marked a great achievements that the idea of teaching the visually impaired learners spread to other nations, Haüy's academy was the first charity academy that was founded for the visually impaired and the blind (Pritchard, 1963).

Lownfeld (1973) considered Haüy's ability to establish the first school of the blind not just an ordinary thing but in fact it is more than just a school for the blind. Lownfeld (1973) also stated that Haüy's academy was the result of different changes that took place in the society at that time.

The contributions of Valentin Haüy in education and his interest of teaching the blind and visually impaired paved the way for other works and contributions to be seen. In his published essay which is entitled 'Essai sur l'éducation des aveugles' Essays for education of visually impaired which laid to the establishment of new schools for teaching the blind and partially sighted students in the German and Russian educational institutions (Walthes, 2007) has explained more about the ways and methods that were used to teach the blind students writing, mathematics, geography, music, and handicraft. To help them maintaining their goals, and attempting to make blind education more accessible for the non-sighted children (Lowenfeld, 1973).

Haüy's work was one of the leading reasons that inspired other people and pushed them to look for other methods to help the blind and visually impaired in their learning. Louis Braille is one of the great figures in the history of the blind, Louis Braille, without a doubt, was one of Haüy's famous students. Haüy attempted to create an embossed print for the blind to read (Farrell, 1956), but that system could not help the blind to read and distinguish between symbols.

Louis Braille who was blind himself, invented a technique of raised dots to represent the alphabet letters. These dots had the advantage of being easier to feel, taking up less space, and being simple and quick to write with a stylus (Pritchard, 1963 : 46-50). Despite the fact that Braille's technique was not embraced in France until after his death, and in other nations even later, once Braille literature became available, it was and is still widely used. His work was such a helping hand that provided a new system of writing which facilitated reading and writing for the blind students. This system combines the letters of Alphabets in a way that helps the learner to touch and feel the



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raised dots that present the letters of the alphabet (Pritchard, 1963:46-50). These dots had the advantage of being easier to feel, of taking little space, with the aid of a stylus that would help in writing.

Years later other schools were founded. One of the most famous schools that exists till today is the Perkins Institution for the Blind which was founded by Samuel Howe as stated by Lownfeld (1973) "It can be said that no other man in the field of education has contributed so much and so widely as Samuel Gridley Howe. According to Farrell (1956:32-53) Howe travelled throughout Europe to learn how the blind were educated so he sought for the best convenient ways to teach them and provide the appropriate educational settings for them, Schwartz(1956:48-49) explains that Howe "... demonstrated that a learned blind man need not be considered an extraordinary phenomenon, and that a common-school education was within the grasp of all so handicapped". Later on, Howe returned to the United States with determination and a purpose to provide the best education possible the world had ever seen for blind children.

### 1.6. Foreign Language Learning

Learning languages is an effective process that builds one's creative skills and knowledge about other cultures and societies, since all the people have the equal rights mainly in everything including education, no matter what disability they have they should be provided with the essential needs in order to learn and study all the different sciences and subjects to improve their knowledge about the world and their communication skills including languages as stated by Riley who emphasized on the importance of learning languages.

According to Riley (2000) students who are blind or visually impaired must receive appropriate instruction in a variety of subjects, including language arts, composition, sciences, and mathematics, in order to be effectively educated in these subjects, because they have the capacity to learn a foreign language, since they have mastered their mother tongue language as stated by (Mathieu, 1961:269) 'visually-handicapped children are not handicapped when it comes to learning foreign languages'. Foreign language proficiency is an essential component of education, since it facilitates participation in culture and social life. Furthermore, Krzeszowski (2001:12) mentioned that knowing a foreign language serves as a compensatory function for those who are



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blind or have poor vision on the psychological level, and on communication and creativity.

The new adjustments of the educational policies made it possible for all people to learn languages regardless of their impairment or disability. This was mentioned and stated in the European Union new policy that was introduced in articles which promoted the idea of Education for all and Languages for all these two slogans which are the cornerstone of the new legislations and laws that were regulated ,in order to facilitate and provide equal chances for all the people no matter what level of disability or impairment they have. In this phase of equal education and inclusion, the European educational systems sought to respond to pupils’.

According to Arenas (2012), People with VI rely on their memory and oral skills to learn. She claims that persons who are blind may acquire more than one foreign language since their physical condition improves other abilities their working memory, listening, and attention, this will enable them to learn effectively and to have a considerable linguistic competence. “Those with primary visual impairments must thus gain the greatest, given their improved auditory, focus, and memory skills..” Couper (1996). As mentioned before by Krzeszowski (2001:12) learning a foreign language is such an assessing tool that helps improving the mental health of the visually impaired students and harness their abilities and skills and discovering themselves more and the external world around them, Speaking a language other than one's home tongue allows one to meet new people, experience cultural variety, and improve one's sense of personal fulfilment.

Years later, teachers started focusing mainly on finding ways and providing visually impaired students with the most possible support and material they need to study languages. Like introducing new methods and ways of teaching and learning the foreign language just after the foundation and establishment of schools that were interested in teaching the blind and visually impaired students languages. So they started using new methods to enable the visually impaired students to learn and tackle everything that is related to the language. As stated in the European Commission (2005:142) Report of Special Educational Needs in Europe. The Teaching and Learning of Languages Insights and Innovation ‘Foreign language learning provides a set of life skills and personal development channels that embrace, define, and extend social development for many learners’.

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New programmes and projects were launched to support the visually impaired and to help them improve their language skills and make them more competitive on the European labour market. After the great achievements that were noticed in some schools their interest was shifted to learning the English language mainly because of its importance and which might help disabled or impaired people move around the European Union by opening up more job options in countries with high levels of economic engagement. In today's Polish labour market, there is a highly recommendation of a foreign language knowledge, particularly the English language which is regarded as a necessary assessment.

### **1.6.1 The Contributions of William Patrick Morrissey**

The interest to teach foreign languages to visually impaired and blind individuals was a breakthrough moment in the history of visually impaired students in particular. A blind teacher named William Patrick Mourrissey made a great contribution in the educational history of the visually impaired in general. His work became a source of encouragement and inspiration for other instructors and scholars looking for new approaches to teach blind children foreign languages. He was the first to produce a book on teaching foreign languages to visually impaired students. His book which is entitled 'Teaching Foreign Languages for The Blind' it was the first book that highlighted and focused on the potential of the blind people in the field of foreign language acquisition. In the book Mourrissey (1931:35) mentioned that the blind and visually impaired are considerably more capable of learning and appreciating languages than the vast majority of the population.

He also emphasized on the importance of blind learners in foreign language acquisition, believing that the blind or visually handicapped may study and attain better results in this field. Since according to him Foreign language learning does not necessarily depend on vision and the learners can use their hearing sensitivity and their working memory skills. Even though, vision is necessary in the whole learning process, but learning language can be seen as a replacement and helping point in their social and academic life in general.

### 1.7. Foreign Language Teaching Methods

The evolving perspectives on learning and teaching have had an impact on educational practice and research. Mayer (1998) offered a model for learning as knowledge production in which the learner is no usually viewed a recipient but rather a user the knowledge he has this new evolvement in demands and curricula led teachers to seek and try to introduce new methods for teaching FL for those who have specific needs.

#### 1.7.1 The Audio-Lingual Method

This method is regarded as one of the first and old methods used to teach the visually impaired learners foreign languages. This strategy relies mainly on developing and acquiring a proper linguistic baggage, which requires a good repetition and memorization of the new linguistic input (Komorowska, 2004: 22). This method mainly focuses on Listening and speaking which are given a significant consideration and which according to teachers learning is improved by experience in real situations that is why the emphasis is on speaking and pronunciation which is vital for understanding the language.

Despite the fact that there are no scholarly publications on the efficacy of this approach in schools, the Dostert Report demonstrates the substantial utility of the audio-lingual method in the teaching of foreign languages in language courses. Professor Dostert of the Georgetown Research Centre was in charged of training visually impaired learners and the blind how to study and teach foreign languages in schools.

The aim of the programme was not only to improve the linguistic knowledge, but also to gain knowledge regarding the effective ways and procedures that were used to teach those visually impaired and blind students to acquire a languages. Also Nikolic's paper attracted attention to a notable ability of VI persons to successfully learn FLs. In Nikolic's published paper which gained interest he spoke about the notable ability of VI persons that enabled them to successfully learn FLs. According to the author, this potential was connected to the learners' auditory sensitivity and intensive memory training (Jedynak, 2015). For these reasons, he advocated for FL instruction to VI students within the context of the mainstream school curriculum.

The long-lasting oral-aural approach came to an end in the 1980s, Audio Lingual Method, due to the new changes and demands of learning. Other teachers and

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researchers sought for the importance of teaching the BLs and VILs reading and writing, giving place to a focus about developing writing skill in a FL. In his paper, Nikolic emphasised that BLs must first master reading and writing in the first language Braille so that it would help them learn the foreign language Braille and succeed in reading and writing FL Braille, even if the learners have achieved good results in speaking they need to master reading in Braille.

### 1.7.2 The Holistic Approach

This method was firstly introduced by Wyszyska who has used this method to help the VLS learn improve and use the linguistic competence they have. Since it is recommended to teach FLs using a comprehensive approach to VILs. Wyszyska (2013) has developed a technique using the psycho-linguistic therapy experimental method of FL instruction for VI students. Touching the World is a method in which linguistic skills are developed concurrently with the process of overcoming mental barriers.

The author describes her strategy in her PhD thesis as having two layers: mental and linguistic. The former has an effect on the psychological structure of the learner using the sandtray treatment, regulated breathing practices and helps enhancing the psychological status. The latter, in turn, is based on a two-pathed language learning, namely lexis and grammar, which are examined using the Re-charged Direct Method.

The use of sandtray treatment has an effect on the mental state of the learners this container of sand gives sensory experiences as well as tactile experiences. And which according to Kalf (1980) touching and manipulating sand gives a sense of relief and detaches the mind from stress and anxiety and creates "a relaxation of the tongue" (Wyszyska, 2013). This can help them relax and expressing themselves and overcome the mental and the inner barriers they have created in their minds.

The utility of the re-charged Direct Method is an essential process in the acquisition of the vocabulary and grammar structures, since it is based on the usage of question-answer interaction of the Direct Method it would help them improve their language acquisition. The re-charged version includes two new modules, second acquisition, parallel reading. The presentation of new structures is followed by spoken comprehension which focuses on practising them, finally the production of new linguistic knowledge is achieved by parallel reading and dicto-listening that stays for a

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second repetition (Wyszyska, 2013). The use of this method and this treatment appeared to be appropriate for FL learning. The study discovered that, in addition to improving language skills, the therapy improved the VI students' self-growth and self-actualization. It assisted them in overcoming boundaries and releasing feelings, as well as increasing good qualities of self such as joy, tranquilly, and self-esteem. Furthermore, playing with sand and water allowed the VILs to express themselves.

### 1.7.3. The Cooperative Learning Method

This method is said to be affective in triggering the linguistic ability of the visually impaired students, since it seeks to help the learners improve their social bonds. All people know that the school is the second home where the student build his personality and character. After the home, school, including the FL classroom, is the most essential area where pupils may be taught how to harness their abilities for social growth. VILs are faced with new and varied tasks, must adjust to new positions, and learn how to communicate with VI and FS individuals live with them, and form friendships. Teachers of languages can help VILs develop their social skills. Stern (2001) identified a link between social predispositions and FL accomplishment, claiming that FL acquisition entails not only a new linguistic, but also a new social environment.

According to Stern (2001:381) certain social and emotional predispositions might aid or impede a VILS' ability to cope with this component of language learning. The relationship between social predispositions and FL achievements was noticed by Stern (2001) who asserts that FL learning involves not only a new linguistic and cultural environment but also social environment. To be outgoing and uninhibited is often also recommended as an appropriate strategy to be adopted by learners, and to interact with the teachers as well since it is an important factor in the learning process particularly in the development of communicative skills.

## 1.8 Conclusion

Being a disabled person does not mean that you can not study or work or set goals and accomplish them like other people. When it comes to education and learning it is far more crucial to give the chance to all the people regardless of their ethnicity, religion or capacities either they are able or disable they should have the same rights and to be

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educated equally providing them the help they need concerning their different conditions. The principal of inclusion have made it easy for the disabled people including those who have visual problems and are visually impaired to study in a general governing system like the fully sighted students under one general educational system.

This chapter provided a description of the disabled people and a full explanation about the visually impaired students and the different types of the visual impairment. After that, a historical overview was provided along with the importance of teaching visually impaired students, then a detailed explanation of the inclusive education policy was introduced. The chapter also provided a brief definition of visual impairment from the educational perspective with a simple presentation of the first that were founded to teach the blind and visually impaired students. At the end of the chapter, some foreign languages teaching methods were mentioned.

# **Chapter Two: Data Analysis and Interpretation**

## **2.1. Introduction**

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## **2.8. Discussion and Interpretation**

## **2.9. Suggestions and Recommendations**

## **2.10. Conclusion**

### **2.1. Introduction**

This chapter is devoted to explain and describe the difficulties and factors that affect language learning process and the performance of students and how does learning foreign languages influence visually impaired learners. It first starts with a simple definition of the sample population and a description of the research setting. Then it gives a quick definition and explanation about the research instruments that were used to collect data about the aim of the research. Afterwards, a full representation and analysis of the gathered data and the results that were collected. At the end, the researcher tried to give some suggestions and recommendations concerning the research topic and performance.

### **2.2. Research Methodology**

Any research is usually undertaken with a specific purpose of finding and collecting data about a certain phenomenon using a specific methodology. Case studies investigate current real-life phenomena through a careful contextual investigation of a small number of occurrences or conditions, as well as their linkages. It explores a real life events and phenomena which can be either one case or multiple cases over time.

The research was undertaken using a single descriptive and explanatory case study. In this case it seeks to understand and explain the factors that affect the learning of the VI and it also aims to describe the impact of language learning mainly English language learning on their character.

so this group of people was chosen as the sample of the study and where the investigation was conducted. These students study in the same way under one single curricula as their sighted peers. The same lectures are provided to them, just like their sighted peers, they do not have lectures in Braille or other format except for the normal size format and sometimes large format prints are given to some visually impaired students according to the case of the student and level of vision.

### **2.3 The Setting Description**

The data collection process was held at the university where the interviews were



conducted, and the answers of the students were tackled online. Generally, this case of visually impaired students is rarely seen in the university but there are some cases in different departments and faculties. The study was conducted with this group of students who study the English language at university, they have different levels. But they study in the same manner as the sighted students and their peers in the same classrooms under one common educational programme.

### **2.4. The Sample Population**

Choosing a suitable sample population is a crucial phase in any research. The sample selection is an important aspect in any scientific study, according to Leedy and Ormrod (2005:199) it is "a subset of a population" that should be representative, allowing researchers to draw conclusions about the full population.

In this research, a small group of four students who are visually impaired were selected to represent the sample. The four of them are visually impaired students who study English at university. One of them has a severe visual impairment, this student uses the Braille in reading and writing and the other three use large format prints according to their different levels of visual acuity.

The questionnaire was administered to these students, it was designed to describe and define more about their situation and the obstacles and difficulties they face during their learning. In addition to the help of two teachers who teach these visually impaired students to find out more about the ways and what techniques they are using in their teaching and to help visually impaired students accommodate to the learning environment. In addition to that, an unstructured interview was conducted with a psychologist through the phone.

### **2.5. The Research Methods**

This research sought to use the qualitative and quantitative data collection approaches. It is preferable to use both of them since each approach enables to know more about the topic and reach different standpoints, mixing the methods is a helpful way to obtain more valid and accurate data and get in depth in the situation.

### **2.6.The Research Instruments**

In this research, the data were collected using two types of interviews and a questionnaire. Using more than one data collection tool is more reliable and gives more accurate and valid details and information. The structured interview was devoted to the teachers to tackle everything related to the teaching and the situation of their VI students. Whereas, the unstructured interview was conducted with a psychologist. The questionnaire was devoted to the visually impaired students to find out more about their situation and if they are coping and getting used to university and their classmates and about their academic achievements.

#### **2.6.1. The Interview**

The interview is a helpful research tool that can be used to collect data. Interviews are convenient since they can be either structured, unstructured or semi-structured and they may be conducted in person, over the phone, or over the internet using tools such as e-mail, Skype, and other similar services. As explained the data is collected through conversations that take place between the interviewer and the informants.

The structured interview was held in order to find out more about the opinions of the teachers concerning teaching those visually impaired students and their situation in university and how they are teaching them. In addition to this, an unstructured interview was conducted with a psychologist to know more about the psychological status and personality of the visually impaired student. The teachers answered the questions in the same way due to the order of the questions.

The structured interview's questions are ordered and open-ended questions, because of their ability to make the respondents express and speak freely and to collect more qualitative data and opinions. Choosing the structured interview has as a purpose to explain more about the situation of the visually impaired students and how they are learning, and to give more details about concerning the topic and the situation of teaching the visually impaired students.

##### **2.6.1.1.The Teacher's Interview**

Questions of the interview are presented in (Appendix B).The interview was devoted to two teachers who teach English at the university, one is a teacher of Literature and the other one is a teacher of Civilization, both of them answered the questions the

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same manner and in the same order .

The interview questions are described as follow:

The first question is the opening question that aimed to define how the teachers are dealing with the situation of having exceptional cases and teaching visually impaired students.

The second question was set to know if the teachers are of the inclusion principal and if their perspectives towards the inclusive education idea.

The third question aimed at revealing the different obstacles the teachers face while explaining a certain idea or concepts

The fourth question was designed to see if there is any development concerning the linguistic competence of the visually impaired students.

The fifth question attempted to reveal the role that if the teacher are aware of the role and the affect they have over their visually impaired students.

The final question attempted to describe how studying a foreign language affects the character and personality of visually impaired student

### **2.6.1.2 .The Psychologist's Interview**

This interview was conducted and recorded on the phone with a special psychologist. The questions of the interview are open-ended which sought to explain more about the psychological status of the visually impaired students and their personality and character and how does language learning influences their character and personality.

### **2.6.2. The Questionnaire**

Questionnaire is considered as an effective research tool to collect primary data and which is rapid way to assess the behaviour, attitudes, preferences, views, and intentions of a large number of people.

In this research the questionnaire was used to gather more exact data and discover more about the participants. The questionnaire was devoted only to the visually impaired students and it was composed of twelve questions. The questionnaire included twelve questions which were divided into different types, open-ended, closed-ended and

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two multiple choice questions. The questionnaire was intended to explain and describe more about the learning process of the VI students and to tackle the different facets related to their learning and educational settings.

The first question was an opening question, the second question aimed to reveal the impact of language learning on the personality of the visually impaired students. The third question was intended to reveal the developments the learners have reached in grammar, vocabulary and their level in language as a whole. In the fourth question the researcher aimed to know more about the skills and language development and level of the learners and the fourth one sought.

For the fifth question, intended to find the different difficulties and obstacles the visually impaired students face in their learning. The sixth question was asked to describe how usually the participants use to learn and memorize new concepts. The seventh question had as a purpose to find if printing lectures in large format is helpful tool for the students. And the eighth question had as an aim to define the relationship of the visually impaired students with their teachers and how do they feel when interacting with them in the classroom. The ninth question was set to describe the level of the participants in university and their academic achievements.

Question number ten was designed to express the different factors that affect the grades and development of the learners. The eleventh question aimed to explain the role the teacher plays in the academic and learning process and accomplishments of the informants. The final question was a concluding question which sought to label the factors that may help the learners to achieve better results and improve their level.

### 2.7. Results Analysis

Data analysis is an essential phase in a research, in this part of the chapter the gathered set of information are analyzed.

#### 2.7.1. The Students' Questionnaire Results

The questionnaire was designated to a small group of participants which consists of four visually impaired students who study the English language at university, and who study in different classes.

**Question 1:** The choice of English as a field of study.

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This question sought to know why the visually impaired students have chosen to study the English language among all the other fields of study in university .The results revealed that they all loved the English language and they were fascinated and motivated to study it ,especially because of its importance in today's world .

### **Question 2:** The Impact of Learning Languages

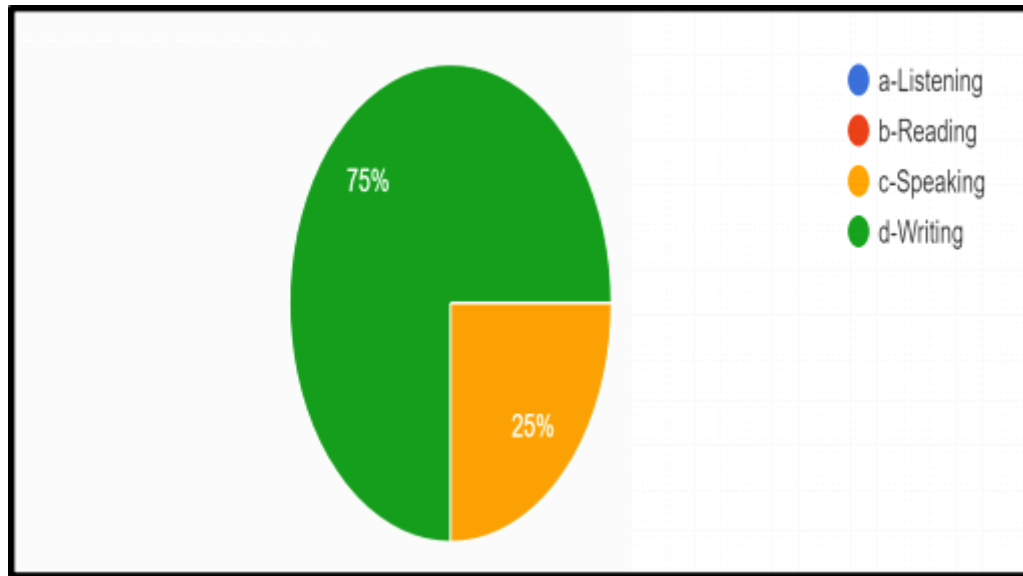
This question was asked to explain the role and impact of learning languages on the character and personality of the visually impaired students and if it does affect and improves their social skills and behaviour. The answers showed that all the learners the 4 participants agreed upon this point and said that learning the English language does have an affect on their personality and it had helped them to improve their communicative skills so far and the ways they communicate with other people and their teachers as well, and it also help them become effective communicators and users of the language.

### **Question 3 :** The improvements in grammar, vocabulary and linguistic competence

The question aimed to explain the developments that occurred during their learning and still developing, so the results showed that there is a considerable improvement in their linguistic competence. Two of the students stated that they have noticed a big difference in their level and language; they said that their language use and grammar rules use have been improved and it is much more better than before .And the other two said that there is a significant progress in their language use, but they still need to improve their language and grammar.

### **Question 4 :** The skill that needs improving

In this question was asked to know more about the students and the skill they lack mastering and need more practice to improve and enhance like the other skills .So the results that were presented in the chart below indicate that two students need to work more on the writing skill ,whereas the other students need to focus mainly more on the speaking skill and on enhancing their language use and speaking in real life situation.



**Figure 2.1: Language skills that need improving**

**Question 5:** The difficulties visually impaired face in learning

This question sought to describe the various difficulties and obstacles the visually impaired students face while studying. According to the results, two of the students mentioned that they do face difficulties in understanding concepts especially if these concepts are new, when the concepts are new they would need an extra explanation from the teacher, one of the students said that whenever he faces difficulties in understanding concepts he would make an extra effort and researchers to understand the concept and to know when and where to use the concept in the future and the othersaid that he usually understands easy words and concepts, and when he does not understand he would ask his friends to help him .

Whereas, the other two said they hardly face difficulties in understanding concepts or expressions and when they rarelydo they would ask the teacher to repeat for them and explain the new concepts or theywould look for further explanations. One of the respondents mentioned that they oftenface difficulties in reading and writing and practising on their reading and spelling mistakes in the classroom since it takes time.

**Question 6:** How the Students Memorize Words?

This question aimed to determine the techniques visually impaired students use to memorize words and expressions and how they tend to remember them in order to use them in their speech and real contexts .According to the results, two of the students said

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that they tend to repeat the words they learn the words within the speech in order to memorize them, they rarely learn words separately.

Another informant said that relating words and expressions to experiences is much more helpful, according to what she said that is a good way to keep the new words and expressions in mind which helped her to know when and where to use the words in future situations. As the student mentioned sometimes relating the word or concept to an external experience and trying to use them in communication and speaking with her classmates is helpful to memorize and retain the new words she learned.

### **Question 7:** The Use of Large Print Format or the Braille?

This question sought to know if the usage of large printing is helpful for the visually impaired students or not. The answers showed that printing lectures in a large format is helpful to the visually impaired students, it helps them to read in a better and in an effective way than the normal size format.

The other student uses the Braille in her studies and she is accustomed to the use of the Braille since she has just a slight degree of vision and it is helpful to other students either the Braille or the large format printing as they have mentioned. And the fourth respondent said that he prefers to make summaries on the lectures on his own, and he does not rely on the large print format a lot.

### **Question 8 :** Communication in the Classroom

The aim of this question was to know more about the interaction and communication process in the classroom between the visually impaired students and their teachers and with their classmates as well and how do they feel while interacting with them. So according to their answers two students said that they sometimes used to feel shy and insecure and uncomfortable in the classroom while interacting with their teachers.

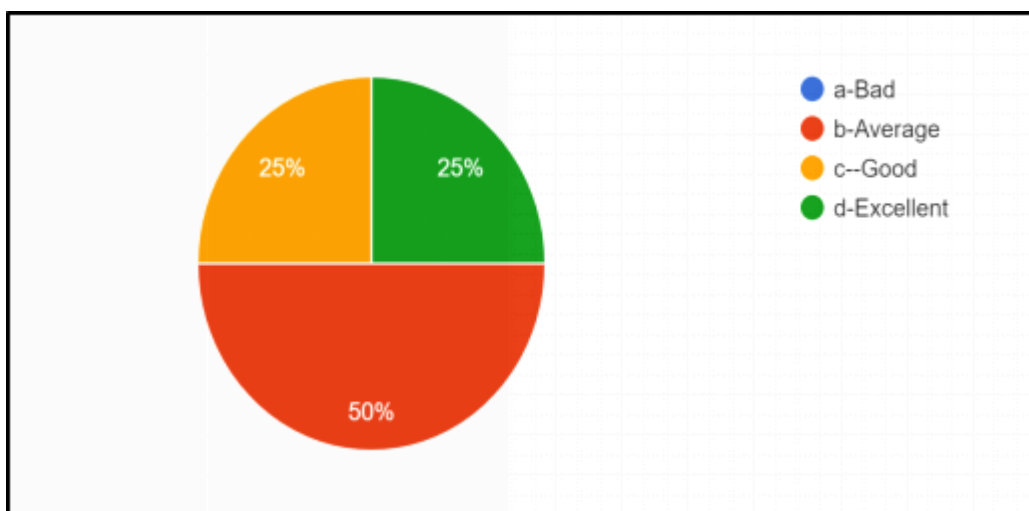
Another subject mentioned that he feels normal while communicating with his classmates, according to what he said he sometimes used to feel uncomfortable and stressed, but he soon got used to his situation and he started communicating normally with his classmates and his teachers, for him it was hard at the beginning but after accepting himself and his situation as it is he soon started communicating with other people and his teachers deliberately from high school and in university he started expressing himself normally. Another student said that sometimes she feels shy and

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uncomfortable especially when she does not find the appropriate and suitable words to express herself clearly and her thoughts clearly to her teachers and her classmates.

### **Question 9:** The Academic performance of Visually Impaired Students

This question sought to describe the level and academic performance of the students. According to analysis of the results that are reported in the chart it was found that two of the students have the average level in university, and another student is good in his grades and academic level for the other participant she said that she achieves excellent grades in university and she has an excellent level in English and in university among her classmates.



**Figure 2.2: The Academic performance of Visually Impaired Students**

### **Question 10:** The Factors That Affect the Academic performance

This question was asked to tackle the different parameters that influence the learning and academic attainments of the visually impaired students in university. According to the answers of the informants, they said that one of the factors that influences the learners' grades is the teacher, the participants stated that the behaviour of the teacher and how does the teacher handle the situation is essentially effective and the techniques their teacher use to teach their visually impaired students especially the new graduate teachers since they are still accommodating and coping that would be kind of hard for them and effective and the classroom, as stated in the results the studying environment and setting including the classmates have an influence the character of the students.



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Another answer explained that the non-availability of lectures and textbooks in word format is one of the serious problems the blind students face whenever they have to print a lecture in Braille but it is not in word format they face problems, as mentioned by the informant the Braille printer accepts only files that are in Word format and no other type of files like PDF or Power Point only word format .So they would either find another way to transform it into word format or get help from their classmates and this impacts them badly because it takes time when their classmates receive the lectures they would still have to wait .

### **Question 11:** The role of the Teacher

This question was asked to reveal the opinions of students and their perspectives towards the role and the part the teacher plays in their learning process and their academic achievements. The answers of the participants showed that the teacher does have an essential role in the learning process of the visually impaired students. According to them the teacher plays a crucial role in assessing the learners in their studies and in supporting them to accomplish better results and in providing them with the help they need.

One of the informants said that the teacher does have a role, but the students should be more responsible since they are university students and it is higher education system, so according to the answer of the student the teacher is just a guide and the one who rectifies and regulates the behaviour of his students or their work and the rest is done by the student who should be more responsible and rely on himself, even if he is visually impaired he should learn to rely more on himself and he should work on his weaknesses and try to improve them to become an effective language user and a good student.

The other informant mentioned that the teacher plays an essential part in assessing his student and it depends on the teacher and his personality, From the point of view of this informant, it was deduced that if the teacher offers the aid the students need that would be more beneficial ,for instance the latter informant said that he does study and asks his teachers and when he needs help he would go to his cousin who is a teacher of English at university and who understands him and help him in his studies and to achieve better results in the exams and tests.

### **Question 12:** Assessing Visually Impaired Students

This question aimed to determine the different factors that can assess and regulate the performance of the visually impaired students at the university and assist them to achieve better results. In this regard, each student gave a different answer according to his case, One of the informants mentioned that the most important and effective parameter is to accept what the student has chosen as a study field and to love his choice are very crucial in providing inspiration and pushing you towards your objective to achieve better results in university, so according to what he said if you are motivated and helped by your classmates and accepted by everyone as you are and love what you do you will work hard and make great accomplishments.

Another subject claimed that providing the appropriate help using social media tools and lectures and textbooks and new programmes that are suitable for the visually impaired students would be a great factor that urges them to do better in their learning. The other first year student said that providing lectures in large print format would be helpful and it would enable him to read better and to understand better rather than the normal print format, he also commented that being surrounded by good classmates would be very helpful they can help him understand and write for him or correct his mistakes when he needs to.

The fourth participant asserted on the importance of making a special collaboration between the teachers and the club that is responsible for printing in Braille format which would be functional and useful for the visually impaired student her case and for others who are used to read in Braille. Also, the need to have volunteers who can write for them in the exams and to raise their awareness and consciousness towards the situation of their students who are visually impaired and their cases and their needs which should be taken into consideration.

### **2.7.2. The Teacher's Interview Results**

A structured interview was conducted in order to collect more opinions and to tackle the different perspectives of the informants. The interview was chosen as the second research instrument because it appears to be a complementing instrument to the questionnaire, it aimed to debate and obtain varied viewpoints from instructors in order

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to collect data. It was formed of six questions that are divided into open-ended questions and closed-ended questions .Its purpose was to inspect deeply and to know more about the situation of the visually impaired students in relation to their teachers and more. As mentioned before the interview was devoted to two female teachers of English, one who teaches Literature and the other teaches Civilization.

**Question 1:** Are you getting used to the way of teaching the visually impaired students?

The answers of this question were as follow the first teacher said that she have taught students with visual impairment but this was the first in which she dealt with such situation ; the student that she taught lost his sight gradually and became visually impaired after years of being able to see this is the adventitious vision loss and this was the first time the teacher dealt with such situation .The second teacher, said that she got used to this situation of teaching a visually impaired student and she started accommodating with the situation.

**Question 2:** what do you think of the inclusion idea which states that all students normal or disabled should study the same way ?

This question revealed more about the opinion of the teachers towards the inclusive principle and the new regulation of giving access to learning to all the students regardless of their disabilities and deficits, the first teacher said that it is a good policy since it seeks to give the same rights to all the students and it is helpful to the visually impaired students to study equally as their peers, but still some specific conditions or exceptions should be taken into account due to their condition and they should have helpful conditions to enable them to study effectively. The second teacher stated that the inclusive principle is a great idea and step that was taken to give the visually impaired students a chance like everybody.

**Question 3:** Do you find some difficulty in explaining a certain concept or idea to them?

This question sought to describe the different obstacles and difficulties the teachers face while introducing new concepts and words to their students. According to the answer of the first teacher, there are some difficulties when trying to explain a certain concept to the student, especially when it is related to the external world and to the real life experiences that needs to be seen and experienced through the eyes, sometimes she

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had to repeat the word many times and to spell it for the student in order to understand and memorize it and the same for the names of the characters she had to spell the names and repeat them. The second teacher reported that she face difficulties in explaining and describing the words and expressions and it is sometimes hard since it takes double efforts to explain and convey the content of the lecture as it is .The other teacher mentioned that she often faces some deficits that are related to explaining a certain concepts and words and she also faces the difficulties in describing diagrams and charts or pictures to them.

**Question4:** Do you notice any progress in their linguistic level in vocabulary, grammar ?

This question aimed to reveal the different development concerning the level of the students. According to the teachers, there is some kind of a progress in the language use and speaking, but her student still need to work on grammar rules and on his writing because he makes a lot of spelling mistakes in his writing as she mentioned .The other teacher stated that there are some remarkable enhancements in vocabulary and the linguistic competence, but in grammar they still need more practice and to focus on improving how to know more about the usage of grammar rules.

**Question 5:** Do you believe that the teacher has an essential role in the learning process especially with this type of students?

This question sought to explain the role the teacher plays in the life and learning journey of their visually impaired students. From the different point of views and answers that were reported, it can be said that both of them agreed that the teacher does have a crucial role the teacher plays in helping and being the source of help and the aid they need. One of them stated that the teacher should be aware of his part towards this student and he should offer the hand of help and he should encourage his visually impaired student to learn and ask questions whenever he does not understand and to interact and communicate freely with his teacher when he needs to. The other teacher agreed upon this point and stated that the teacher certainly has an effective role in assessing his visually impaired students and it is a bit effort taking.

**Question 6:** Do you find that learning languages specifically the English language will be beneficial for them in their personal social academic life afterwards? will it help them to be more confident in themselves and to overcome the different obstacles they face ?

The answers on this question confirmed that learning languages does have an effective role and impact on constructing the character of the visually impaired students, The first teacher stated that learning languages is truly beneficial for the visually impaired students, it would help them improve their communicative skills since they are learning how language and how to use it to communicate effectively ,it also opened the doors for them to be themselves and to accept themselves as they are and to overcome the shyness and fear they have within themselves.

The second answer confirmed that learning languages is truly effective and helpful, it has a remarkable influence on changing the character of the visually impaired students and preparing them for the future and to have a linguistic competence in English, she had confirmed that learning languages does have a positive effect on the personality and character of the visually impaired students especially if they move abroad that would be helpful for them, since they would become good language users so they can communicate effectively with others if they move abroad .

### **2.7.3. The Psychologist's Interview Results**

The answers that were gathered from the psychologist's interview revealed that language learning is an effective way that plays a role in enhancing and altering the character and personality of visually impaired students and it also does help them become better language users and it is helpful since it replaces their lack of visual need since it substitute their vision loss.

According to what she said, speaking would help them know more about the world and even in the classroom asking their classmates and teachers would be beneficial to overcome that inner psychological low self-esteem and opinion about themselves. The psychologist also mentioned that learning English is essential especially in today's modern world and demands it is very effective and helping for the visually impaired people, learning English would help them get access to the modern world and understand other cultures and create strong bonds with other foreign people.

## **2.8. Interpretation and discussion**

The data collection process reported interesting results from different perspectives that are related to the language learning process of visually impaired students. This

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research aimed to give a firm discussion about the main results that were reported and analysed. The interpretation of the results helped to answer the research questions and to either confirm or reject the suggested hypotheses.

Concerning the first hypothesis, which indicated that there are several problems that encounter and affect the grades and language learning of the visually impaired students. One of the major factors is the teacher which is an effective factor that irrups their achievements. From the results that were previously reported in the questionnaire, it was denoted that most of the informants confirmed that there are different factors that influence and control their learning and performance and these parameters which were explained in (question 10) and (question 12) that denoted that proper studying conditions should be offered to the visually impaired students, the behaviour of teachers also affects the character of their visually impaired students, sometimes a harsh word or behaviour can affect the personality of the student especially the visually impaired student who can be easily emotionally affected and because of their personality can quickly lose motivation and become emotionally affected.

Sometimes understanding the concepts and words is somehow difficult for visually impaired students, so they may have to look for them and ask for their classmates to explain to them, also the availability of textbooks and books only in normal size is nothelpful for the situation of the VIS, because they can not read them or get a recorded copy. The lack of time to practice on their speaking and writing and work on improvingtheir writing, spelling and speaking is kind of affecting.

Concerning the second hypothesis which denotes that some adjustments and new ways and material should be taken into account and some strategies can be altered or developed, in order to help the VIS attain better results and accomplish a certain progress in their level at university. This hypothesis was confirmed through the different results that were gathered ,it is possible to say that maintaining a good study setting and having a good relationship with the teacher who can assess his VIS is beneficial, so providing the help the VIS need, the teacher can also emphasize on usingthe cooperative based approach to create strong bonds between the learners and the teachers and learners as well and to help them take part and explore their abilities withinthe classroom would be an effective factor that enables the learners to obtain better results.

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For the third hypothesis, that states that language learning has an influence on the character of the visually impaired students. According to the different answers of the questionnaire and the interview that were analysed, learning foreign languages is truly effective and beneficial, since it helps the visually impaired students become effective users of the language and good communicators and it has a positive impact on their psychological status. It helps them overcome their fears and the various challenges they have face in their lives, learning foreign languages has a specific effect on the character of the learners it helped them alter many things in their personalities and characters.

As mentioned in (question 6) and (question 12) learning the English language have been a helpful tool that enabled the learners to understand more about other people and about the world as a whole. Since language learning demands learners to speak and express themselves and to overcome the different obstacles they would face, even if they go abroad as one teacher said that would enable them to test their level and improve their skills and personality, also their repeated usage of the English language has helped them in enhancing their speaking and grammar rules usage correctly and indifferent contexts and different situations.

As well as their personality traits and social and communicative skills developments as mentioned previously in the interview that was conducted with teachers in (question 6 ) and by the psychologist and to prepare them for the future and how to deal with a certain situation and a certain context. This various results allowed the researcher to confirm the second hypothesis which denotes that the language learning plays an essential role in developing the character and the personality of the visually impaired student.

All in all, the analysed and discussed results have proved and answered the research questions and confirmed the hypotheses that were set by the researcher. The answers have revealed that languages does have an impact on constructing the character and personality of the students, the discussion has also denoted that the lack and need of the specific material and factors that assess the visually impaired students is an obstacle that affects the academic performances of the visually impaired students. Without neglecting the fact that teachers do encounter a certain difficulty while teaching these visually impaired students in university.



### **2.9. Suggestions and Recommendations**

Following the receipt of the results, certain comments and recommendations for the research were included. These recommendations seek to provide and give some adjustments that instructors and students, as well as the administration of the university in the English section should take into account

Teachers should give more importance and interest to these students and they need to be aware and try to know more about the situation and cases of the visually impaired students they teach.

Administration of the faculty should focus on providing the essential material these visually impaired students need like the audio-books and the lectures that can be in large print formats.

The administration can also try to provide the books and of the essential modules in audio forms or recorded forms and they can be put in the library of the faculty, in case the VIS need them.

The need for pointing a certain number of volunteers or members from the administration to help the visually impaired students read and write in their exams when they need to.

The students who are visually impaired should also try to get in touch with the Challenge Club which is special club for students who are visually impaired and blind students, this club consists of group of students who are visually impaired and who try to tackle and talk about the different needs the visually impaired students should have responsible for helping the visually impaired students and offering them special Braille classes if they need any help.

Administration members should try to schedule or programme a special session maybe one in a year to try to know more about the case of the visually impaired and to try to lessen and create good bonds between the learners and the pedagogist or specialist.

### **2.10. Conclusion**

This chapter was devoted to the practical part of the research, it attempted to describe and explain the research methodology and the different research instruments



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that were used to collect data. Qualitative and quantitative data were collected using a structured interview and a questionnaire. These two research instruments enabled to gather interesting data about the research topic and the main points of the research, the collected set of information mainly focused on explaining the factors that affect the learning process of the visually impaired students and their situation in university. Later on, the gathered data were analysed and interpreted and discussed to reach valid results and answers to the research questions and to either confirm or reject the hypotheses that were suggested.

# **General Conclusion**

The inclusive education principle have made it possible for all the people either able or disable to study and learn in the same way and equally, mainly the visually impaired students. The emergence of foreign language learning and its great impact on people and in the European countries particularly the English language which was a turning point in education of the blind and visually impaired students. Foreign language learning became a necessity especially the English language which is considered as a big step and a bridge that gathered different people from different parts of the world, specifically visually impaired students who started learning English and become effective learners and users and it enabled them to make and create strong relations with others.

Although VIS are provided with the same learning material and the same curricula and under one single setting, they are still facing some difficulties which are emerging in language learning field particularly at university and due to the differences of cases and features of every VIS. This investigation attempted to explain and state the different difficulties and obstacles the visually impaired students face during their learning process and how do the different factors and parameters affect their academic performances and achievements at the university. It also sought to find different solutions to the problem and explain how can new assessments and regulations help the visually impaired students in their learning according to the condition of the visually impaired learners, and how can they improve their academic attainments. It also intended to determine the role and impact of language learning on the character of the visually impaired students and how does the language learning process alters their behaviour and their personality.

This work was divided into two chapters that aimed to tackle and talk about the different points that are related to the research. The First chapter, presented a whole literary review of the research topic and phenomenon in general, it aimed to define and determine the visual impairment deficit as a whole with a simple overview about the learning history of the blind and visually impaired students. The second chapter was devoted to the practical side of the study, it dealt with the data gathering process and to explain and know more about the learning situation of visually impaired students at university and their different circumstances.

## General Conclusion

The gathered set of information and results tackled the different difficulties visually impaired learners are facing. The research findings have determined and explained the factors that influence the grades and academic achievements of the visually impaired students. The answers of the questionnaire and the interview have shown that the lack of understanding of the situation by the teacher of the visually impaired students and the weak relationship between the teacher and the student does affect the level of the visually impaired student and his personality and behaviour as well as the appropriate studying setting and classroom does affect the personality hence the learning process especially when there is no communication between the visually impaired and his classmates. The findings also indicated that the lack of the assessing material like the textbooks recorded and the lectures in Braille or large printing format are one of the factors that determine and influence the levels of the students.

The findings that were collected from the questionnaire and interviews have indicated that the language learning process is an effective tool that assesses learners to become better communicators and users of the language, and it also has helped them to boost their self-esteem and to try to get over the different challenges they face and to communicate and express themselves in the best way they can, particularly in English with their classmates and teachers since they are English students and learning English is helpful and essential due to its importance in nowadays world as they have stated. As it was shown the language learning specifically English language learning would be helpful for the visually impaired students especially if they go abroad they would not need help but they would use their linguistic knowledge they have acquired in university.

Language learning is beneficial and has a positive impact on altering and changing the character of the visually impaired students. From the different research findings and the discussion it was found that learning languages is truly helpful in constructing a better and effective character and personality, since languages require only speaking and having a good linguistic competence, language learning would help the visually impaired students to learn more about the world and to express themselves and communicate freely classrooms. It would also enable them to make strong relations with their classmates and their teachers and other people in general, providing the essential help from the teacher and a well fitting studying setting would be effective and beneficial for these students.

## General Conclusion

This work have gone through some ups and downs and some limitations during the data collection process and the completion of the paper as a whole. One of the factors that limited the work is the non availability of textbooks and dissertations that talk a lot about the visuallyimpaired and visual impairments, also the sample size and the number of the informants that was very little because of the different timing of lectures and sessions in university the researcher could not get in touch with other visual impaired students except for these four. In addition to this, the use of only two research tools which gave more qualitative data. Lack of timing to conduct an observation because of the different studying sessions and time of lectures was one of the factors that limited the data collection process and to know more about the case of the students who are visually impaired and who study English at university.

The effect of language learning on the visually impaired students in the university and its positive impact is noticed to be an effective factor that triggers the language skills and communicative skills of the visually impaired students, mainly the English language learning which helps them to become more adapted to the university situations and to get accustomed toother people from different cultures and it has been a helping hand that enables them to enhancetheir behaviour and to treat others like their classmates and teachers in a better way than before.As stated before regular material should be provided and the teachers and administration shouldwork together and give importance to these kind of rare cases into consideration that have noticed an increasing rate in university recently.

Further researches should take into consideration the case of visually impaired learners, likethe importance of the new technological tools in assessing those visually impaired students in their learning or how do teachers use the new technological tools to help the visually impaired students in their learning and offer them better educational setting.

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# **Appendices**

## Appendix A Students' Questionnaire

I am a second year Masters English student I am recently conducting a research about the visually impaired students at the English department about the students who are visually impaired and study English, your cooperation would be very helpful if you answer these questions and give me your opinion about the following questions

1-Why did you chose studying languages particularly the English language among all the other study fields ?

2-Does learning languages has an effect on building your character or your personality ?

3-Do you see any improvements in your linguistic knowledge in grammar, vocabulary ?

4-According to you what is the skill that you need improving :

a-Listening      b-Reading      c-Speaking      d- Writing

5- Do you usually find it hard to interpret a certain concept or you find difficulties understanding a given concept ?

6-Do you tend to memorize the new words that you learn as they are or you repeat them and use them in your speech at university by repeating them or through relating them to experiences or something else?

7-Is the large printing format or the Braille format helpful for you in your studies ?

8-Do you feel insecure or uncomfortable while interacting with your teacher or your classmates ?

9-How are your grades and academic achievements :

a-Bad          b-Average          c-Good          d-Excellent

10-What are the factors that affect your academic achievements ?

11- Does the teacher play an effective role in your academic achievements ?

12- What are the parameters that may help you improve your level and achieve better results ?

**Thank you for your participation**

## **Appendix B Teachers' Interview**

I am a second year Masters student at the university. I am currently making an investigation about the case of the visually impaired students who study English at university if you can answer these questions it would be very helpful for me and in my research topic.

1-Are you getting used to the way of teaching the students who are visually impaired?

2-what do you think of the inclusion idea which states that all students normal and the disabled should study the same way and in the same manner?

3-Do you find some difficulty while explaining a certain concept or idea to them?

4-Do you notice any progress in their linguistic level in vocabulary, grammar and in their linguistic competence ?

5-Do you believe that the teacher has an essential role in the learning process especially with this type of students ?

6-Do you find that learning languages will be beneficial for them in their personal and social life afterwards ? will it help them to be more confident in themselves and to overcome the different obstacles they face ?

**Thank you for your collaboration**

## Appendix C The Psychologist's Interview

- 1- كيف تكون الحالة النفسية للطالب او الشخص المعاق بصريا ؟
- 2- هل لتعلم اللغات الأجنبية او أي لغة اثر على شخصية الطالب ; يعني تعلم اللغات اثر على تكوين شخصية الطالب ,هل تعلم اللغات مساعد للطالب حتى يكتسب مهارات اكثر ويتفاعل اكثر في الجامعة و المجتمع ؟
- 3- في نظرك لماذا يختار معظم الطلبة تخصص اللغات او دراسة اللغات في الجامعة ؟

## **Appendix D The Psychologist' s Interview**

I am an English student at university, I am conducting a research that is related to the visually impaired students who study at university in the English department, I want to know more about their psychological state, your assistance in providing me with data about these type of cases would be very helpful for this research.

1-Can you tell me more about the psychological state of the visually impaired students?

2-Does learning foreign languages have an impact on the character visually impaired students?

3-Why do you think that visually impaired students choose to study foreign languages ? what about those who choose to study English at university ?

يحتاج الطلاب ضعاف البصر إلى الأدوات الأساسية التي تساعدهم على أن يصبحوا متعلمين أفضل ومستخدمين للغة وأن يشاركوا بالكامل في عملية التعلم. حاول البحث وصف نقص ضعف البصر والحالات المختلفة التي قد في المدارس والكشف عن العقبات المختلفة التي تؤثر على الأداء الأكاديمي للطلاب والعوامل يواجهها المعلمون المختلفة التي تؤثر على عملية تعلم اللغة. كشفت النتائج التي تم العثور عليها عن أهمية تعلم اللغة وكيف يؤثر تعلم اللغة على وجه الخصوص اللغة الإنجليزية على شخصية وشخصية الطلاب ضعاف البصر ويساعدهم على أن يصبحوا متصلين فعالين ويتغلبون على الصعوبات المختلفة التي يواجهونها.

## **Le Résumé**

Les étudiants qui ont une déficience visuelle doivent disposer des outils essentiels qui les aideront à devenir de meilleurs apprenants et utilisateurs de langues et à participer pleinement au processus d'apprentissage. Cette recherche a tenté de décrire le déficit visuel et les différents cas que les enseignants peuvent rencontrer dans la classe, et de révéler les différents obstacles qui influent sur le rendement scolaire des étudiants et les différents facteurs qui influent sur leur processus d'apprentissage linguistique. Les résultats obtenus ont mis en évidence l'importance de l'apprentissage des langues, particulièrement la langue Anglaise et la manière différentes difficultés auxquelles ils font face.

## **Abstract**

Visually impaired students need to have the essential tools that help them become better learners and language users and take their fully part in the learning process. This research attempted to describe the visual impairment deficit and the different cases teachers may encounter in their classrooms and reveal the different obstacles that influence the academic performance of the students and the different factors that affect their language learning process. The results that were found revealed the importance of language learning and how does language learning in particular the English language learning affects the character and personality of visually impaired students and it helps them become effective communicators and overcome the different difficulties they face.