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Department of Foreign Languages

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English Language Sciences of  
the language

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Submitted by: **Asma Atrous**

## **Investigating the EFL Teacher's Role in Dealing with Visually Impaired Learners**

### **The Case of Fourth Year Pupils at Taha Houssin Middle School- Biskra**

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Dissertation submitted to the Department of Foreign Languages as partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master in sciences of Languages.

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## **Dedication**

To my beloved mother and my dear father for their love, prayers, and sacrifices.

To my handsome brothers: Oussama, Haroun, Yassin, and Younes who have  
always filled my life with joy.

To my grandfather “Saad”, my uncles “Abd Elkader, Kamel, Abd Nacer,” and my  
aunts “Amria, Noura, Naziha” who have always supported me.

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## **Abstract**

The present study is an attempt to discover some of the pedagogical difficulties the EFL teachers face when teaching visually impaired learners, as well as to investigate the effective role that s/he plays in order to lessen the impact of the students' disability on their academic performance. Thus, throughout this research we seek to investigate some effective teaching strategies that those teachers implement when teaching the visually impaired learners. In this study, we hypothesize that teachers are not knowledgeable about the needs of the visually impaired learner that makes it difficult for them to deal with him/her, in addition to the lack of materials (the assistive technology). Additionally, they may rely only on the listening skill in teaching. Furthermore, to test the proposed hypothesis we opted for the mixed method approach using three data collection tools, which were implemented at Taha Houssin Middle School; a special middle school for the blind pupils at Biskra. First, the classroom observation took place with the fourth year level at Taha Houssin Middle School. Second, the questionnaires were administered to the students of the same class (fourth year level) whereas the interview was for the only two EFL teachers at the school. After collecting the data using the three aforementioned data collection tools, a qualitative analysis and interpretation was implemented in order to come up with the findings. The latter displayed that EFL teachers face serious difficulties when teaching their visually impaired students, for instance, the lack of materials such as personal assistance devices, recorded audios as well as their reliance on the listening skill.

**Keywords:** EFL teacher, visually impaired learner, teaching techniques, mixed method approach.

## List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

**DfES:** Department of Education and Skills

**EFL:** English as a foreign language

**Et al:** et alia (and others)

**i.e.: id est** (in other words)

**VI:** Visually impaired

**WHO:** World Health Organization

**%:** Percent

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المخلص

# **General Introduction**

## **Introduction**

Education for all act mandates that all children, including those with disabilities, have equal rights to be educated. The law now indicates that disabled students be educated in the same environment as the non-disabled once. In Algeria, learners who suffer from different visual impairments study in ordinary secondary schools and universities after they graduate from special primary and middle schools for the visually impaired people. In fact, the inclusion of the visually impaired students may complicate the teaching-learning process in ordinary classes because of the lack of techniques that cope with special needs of these learners. Furthermore, visually impaired learners present a range of unique needs relating to pedagogical, organizational, management and environmental factors. These arise in relation to communication of information and the learning processes. Thus, the visually impaired learners needs a special care and support from the teacher, who is supposed to use special and effective strategies that can help in reducing the influence of their disability and enhancing their academic performance.

### **1. Statement of the Problem**

When the EFL teacher plans and delivers his/her lessons, there are different types of learners that he/she is expected to take into consideration. Among them are those with visual impairments, who are facing much more challenges in learning compared to their non-disabled colleagues. Consequently, the EFL teacher is supposed to adopt the teaching techniques in order to cope with the special needs of this category of learners. In the EFL classes, teachers usually use variety of pictures, photographs, and color-coded materials. Besides, the use of body language in order to make instructions more comprehensible to students, which requires the visual attention. The problem stated at this level is about those who cannot perceive the visual clues. Thus, this study

aims to investigate the significant role a teacher plays when teaching English as a Foreign language to visually impaired learners, to highlight the pedagogical difficulties he faces, and to explore the most effective methods and techniques the EFL teacher uses to enable visually impaired students make the most of their learning.

## **2. Research Aims**

This research aims at:

- Sensitizing ordinary teachers about the visually impaired learners, and the necessity of having knowledge when teaching them.
- Identifying the difficulties that EFL teachers encounter when teaching visually impaired learners.
- Identifying the teaching techniques employed by EFL teachers in order to address the needs of the visually impaired learner.

## **3. Significance of the Study**

The present study highlights the challenges faced by EFL teachers who teaches students with different visual disabilities in Taha Houssin School. It provides first-hand materials about how do teachers cope with the special needs of this category of learners, and most importantly it shows the importance of the EFL teacher's role in assisting and supporting the visually impaired learners in their educational career.

## **4. Research Questions**

The present study intends to answer the following questions:

- What are the difficulties the EFL teacher encounter while teaching visually impaired learners?
- What are the teaching techniques held by EFL teachers to provide visually impaired learners with accessible instructions?

## **5. Research Hypothesis**

Based on the above-mentioned questions, we hypothesize that:

- Teachers face problems such as the lack of previous knowledge concerning this type of learners, as well as the lack of materials.
- Teachers rely more on the listening skill when giving instructions and assessments rather than other skills.

## **6. Research Methodology**

Due to the descriptive nature of the present research, the appropriate methodology should be adopted is:

### **6.1. The Selection of the Method**

The approach of gathering information we used in the current research study is the qualitative method due to the limited period of time provided for exploring and investigating the phenomenon of the study. In addition, the qualitative method is useful to make the connection between the two variables that are the EFL teacher's role and the visually impaired learners.

## **6.2. The Data Collection Tools**

Questionnaires and interview were chosen as the main instruments of data collection, including semi-structured questionnaires for students and semi-structured interviews for teachers, besides a classroom observation to generate in-depth knowledge about the studied phenomenon.

## **6.3. The Population and Sampling**

The population targeted are the pupils of Taha Houssin Middle School. The sample chosen is the fourth year class throughout a simple random sampling technique. Moreover, two EFL teachers were selected to interview in order to have an insight about how they teach the visually impaired learners and how the process of teaching goes on. The number of teachers is limited because they are the only two teachers of English at Taha Houssin School.

## **7. Structure of the Dissertation**

At the outset, there is a separate prelude for presenting a general introduction to the study; including the statement of the problem, the research questions, hypotheses, and aims. In addition, the significance of the study and the methodology that we used along the research process including the population and data collection tools.

The dissertation is divided into three chapters. As a theoretical part of the study, the research consists of two chapters; each chapter is divided into three sections. As for the first chapter, the first section represents an overview about the visual impairment; i.e. its definition, types, and causes. The second section deals with characteristics of the visually impaired learner, his learning systems, and whether his academic achievements are affected by his/her visual disability while the third section deals with the assistive technology designed to help the visually impaired learner in

his educational career. However, the second chapter is concerned with the role of the teacher. The first section provides a general overview of the teacher's roles based on Harmer's framework, the second section is about teacher of the visually impaired learners and the teaching methods s/he uses to meet their needs, while the third section deals with the roles of the visually impaired learner's teacher. Yet, the third chapter is devoted to the practical part of the research; it demonstrates the process of gathering data, the analysis and discussion of the obtained findings, and the recommendations.

# **Chapter One**

## **The Visually Impaired Learner**

## **Introduction**

Nowadays, learning a foreign language is an essential part of the societies' educational systems; language skills and knowledge are fundamental aspects that should be developed by all students. In fact, teaching a foreign language is already a complex process that requires the teacher to be skillful in different education-related tasks such as instructions and course design. In addition, the teacher definitely should know about his learners' needs in order to provide them with what best suit them. Therefore, this chapter intends to provide a clear image about the visual impairment, its causes and types. In addition, it attempts to reveal the characteristics of the visually impaired learners, the learning systems they use, and the readjustments needed in education to meet the needs of the visually impaired learner. Later, it sheds light on the assistive technologies designed for the visually impaired learner.

### **1.1. Overview of Visual Impairment**

#### **1.1.1. Definition of Terms**

##### **1.1.1.1. Special Needs**

There is a great number of individuals in the world who are considered as being peoples with Special Needs, those individuals who require special care and assistance. According to Wearmouth (2008), "Need" can be defined as "a lack of something in an individual, which gives rise to difficulty" or "the thing the individual requires to satisfy that lack" (p. 3). However, in the educational context, the individuals' Special Needs are defined according to the National Council for Special Education (2004) as:

a restriction in the capacity of the person to participate in and benefit from education on account of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or learning disability, or any other condition which results in a person learning differently from a person without that condition. (as cited in Nehari, 2017, p. 10).

Thus, there are different types of disabilities including physical, sensory, mental, and learning disabilities. The special needs vary according to the nature of the pupil's disability

#### **1.1.1.2. Special Education**

It is necessary for pupils with special needs to receive their education, at least the primary and middle education, in special schools designed to meet their special needs. As an illustration, the Department of Education and Skills (DfES) (2001) emphasized that:

There is a wide spectrum of sensory, multi-sensory and physical difficulties. The sensory range extends from profound and permanent deafness or visual impairment through to lesser levels of loss...that only require appropriate access to educational facilities and equipment... (as cited in Wearmouth, 2008, p. 53)

Furthermore, different scholars used similar definitions of special education. To mention first, Hallahan, Kauffman, and Pullen (2014) defined special education as “a discipline that is sufficiently different from the mainstream of professional education to require special training programs but sufficiently like the mainstream to maintain a primary concern for schools and teaching” (p. 27). In the same vein, Roe and Webster (2002) defined it as “an era when children were categorized according to their disabilities, and educational provision was made accordingly” (p. 135). In brief, special education provides learners with special

needs with appropriate and necessary modifications and readjustments needed to enjoy an accessible education.

#### **1.1.1.3. Handicap, Disability, and Impairment**

The terms handicap, disabled, and impaired are sometimes used interchangeably in different contexts, however there is a slight difference between the meanings of these three terms. According to the World Health Organization (WHO) (1980), an “Impairment” is any kind of “loss in normal functioning”. “Handicap” refers to “those impairing or disabling factors that also lead to disadvantage by limiting or preventing the fulfilment of roles for the individual”. While “Disability” refers to any factor that prevents the individual from doing particular everyday activities (as cited in Roe & Webster, 2002, p. 10).

In the same vein, WHO (1990) presented three definitions of “Disability”. To mention first, “Disability” is the abnormality or the loss of an organ’s function. Second, it is the partial or total reduction of the individual’s ability to do a particular activity in a normal way. Finally, “Disability” is “the total or partial impossibility of fulfilling a very normal role... disability is defined as the discrepancy between the performance or status of a person and the expectations and perspectives of that person or group to which they belong” (as cited in Rachid, 2018, pp. 117-172).

#### **1.1.1.4. Vision/Visual Impairment**

Vision is a primary sense for learning and the main source of the individual’s knowledge about the surrounding environment, however a great number of pupils suffer from different types of visual impairments due to different reasons. Furthermore, a number of scholars introduced the term visual impairment. For instance, Jose (1983) defines this term as “the actual damage to the eye that results in an acuity or field loss. This impairment can be mild (20/40), moderate (20/200),

or severe (20/800)” (as cited in Harley, Lawrence, Sanford & Burnett, 2000, p. 4). In addition, Mangal (2007) presented the term “visual impairment” in the educational setting. He stated that “educational definition of visual-impairment emphasizes relationship between vision and learning and shows difficulties, and deficiencies exhibited in the children, which make them different from children with normal vision to the extent of attention, requiring special education provision” (as cited in Kocyigit & Artar, 2015, p. 690).

### **1.1.2. Causes of Visual Impairment**

Different types of visual impairments are due to different causes and factors. In his book, Farrell (2008) mentioned that genetic factors, brain damages, injuries, and some diseases are considered as the main causes of visual impairments (p. 29). According to Farrell (2008), hereditary or genetic factors are passed to the child by one of his parents or both of them without being aware that they carry the syndrome or the condition that causes the visual impairment (p. 82).

In the same vein, Roe and Webster (2002) emphasized that genetic factors are the cause of around 50 per cent of Childhood severe visual impairments in Europe and America (p. 29). In addition, errors of Refraction such as Myopia (nearsightedness), hyperopia (farsightedness), and astigmatism (blurred vision) can cause serious vision impairments. Besides several diseases. For instance, Glaucoma that is “a group of eye diseases that causes damage to the optic nerve”, Cataracts that “are caused by a clouding of the lens of the eye, which results in blurred vision”, and Diabetes (Hallahan et al., 2014, p. 340).

Moreover, according to Zimmerman (2011), the most common causes of vision impairments in children are Cortical Visual Impairment that results from a serious brain damage, Retinopathy of prematurity which “results in abnormal growth of blood vessels in the eye”, and Optic nerve

hypoplasia that “involves underdevelopment of the optic nerve” (as cited in Hallahan et al., 2014, p. 392).

Therefore, health care should be giving much more attention in order to avoid such diseases and decrease the possibility of visual impairments. As Baird and Moore (1993) emphasized; in areas such as Africa, Asia, and South America “primary health care measures such as vaccination, use of antibiotics, and better nutrition would have a major impact on reducing the incidence of blinding diseases”. However, “in many countries the incidence of visual impairments in children is an indicator of general economic status” (as cited in Roe & Webster, 2002, p. 29).

### **1.1.3. Types of Visual Impairment**

Different factors may cause a vision impairment that affects different functions of the eye. Thus, the needs of the visually impaired pupil vary according to the type of the vision impairment he is suffering from. Therefore, instructors or teachers should be knowledgeable about the functional implications of each visual impairment in order to use the most effective approach that meets the learner’s needs. In his book, Salisbury (2007) summarized the visual impairments’ types. He mentioned

- Partial sight: Salisbury (2007) used this term to refer to visually impaired pupils who work through print (p. 5). According to Roe and Webster (2002), “in legal terms, partial sight is defined as a visual acuity of between 3/60 and 6/60”. However, in educational terms, “it refers to individuals who may use their eyesight to follow educational tasks but will need to have access to some special methods or support” (p. 227). While Corn and Koenig (1996) referred to the term partially sighted using the terms visually limited and a person with low vision. They defined it as someone “who has difficulty accomplishing visual tasks, even

with prescribed corrective lenses, but who can enhance his or her ability to accomplish these tasks with the use of compensatory visual strategies, low vision and other devices, and environmental modifications” (as cited in Harley et al., 2000, p. 5). In the same vein, Hallahan et al (2014) stated that those “who have low vision have visual acuity falling between 20/70 and 20/200 in the better eye with correction” (p. 286).

- Poor acuity: Visual acuity is “the clarity or sharpness of the overall image”. As well as it is defined as “a measure of central vision which provides the ability to distinguish detail” (Harley et al., 2000, p. 6). Having a poor acuity means that both near and distant vision can be affected, the effect can be noticed through the ability to see close or distant objects; in some cases people can see better from distance while others may be able to see close objects better than distant once ( Salisbury, 2007, p. 5). Additionally, “images are blurred or unclear to varying degrees depending on how much vision is present. The ability to read and detect visual detail is reduced” (Harley et al., 2000, p. 6).
- Central vision loss: this type of visual impairment affects the individual’s ability to detect the details. Those who are suffering from a central vision loss are likely to face difficulties in reading and writing (Salisbury, 2007, p. 5).
- Peripheral vision loss: Peripheral vision “provides information regarding light and motion in the surrounding environment. It is important for mobility and allows safe travel in the environment” (Harley et al., 2000, p. 7). Peripheral vision loss is considered as the opposite type of the central vision loss because people who have a peripheral vision loss can read and write small print size effectively. However, they “are likely to experience difficulties moving around and locating objects” and they “may find scanning tasks difficult” (Salisbury, 2007, p. 5).

- Interrupted vision: it refers to “irregular patches of poor vision and may pick up visual information in disjointed fragments”. Furthermore, Severe interrupted vision makes several visual tasks very difficult and sometimes impossible (Salisbury, 2007, p. 6).
- Low-contrast sensitivity: someone who has a low-contrast sensitivity faces difficulties in “differentiating an object from its background”. Clarity, lighting and color schemes are very helpful for such case (Salisbury, 2007, p. 6).
- Adaptability to light: some visual impairments cause an abnormal sensitivity to light. For instance, people who suffer from Photophobia cannot handle bright light because it causes them a serious pain. As well as those who “find it difficult to adjust to a change in lighting conditions” (Salisbury, 2007, p. 6). However, other eye conditions cause a need for increased lightening such as Macular degeneration and High Myopia (Harley et al., 2000, p. 9).
- Impaired ocular mobility: includes the inability or loss of control of the eye’s muscles, which directly affects its functioning. To mention, Nystagmus that “involves a continuous involuntary movement of the eyes, usually from side to side, which creates difficulties in focusing”. As well as difficulties “to focus both eyes on the same object at the same time, while others may find it difficult to shift their focus between different objects and distances” (Salisbury, 2007, p. 6). This eye condition causes eye fatigue and a reduction in reading speed (Harley et al., 2000, p. 9).
- Color loss: refers to the inability to recognize colors, which may occur individually or with several vision impairments. People with color loss may face difficulties “to distinguish details in pictures, maps and diagrams” (Salisbury, 2007, p. 6).

- **Blindness:** Salisbury (2007) used the term ‘educationally blind’ to refer to “pupils who have insufficient sight to access print and rely on their other senses to access information. For most pupils, this involves accessing information in braille” (p. 6). Moreover, Harley et al (2000) mentioned two different definition of blindness. According to Koestler (1976); “legal blindness” refers to having a  
  
central visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye with corrective glasses or central visual acuity of more than 20/200 if there is a visual field defect in which the peripheral field is contracted to such an extent that the widest diameter of the visual field subtends an angular distance no greater than 20 degrees in the better eye

While the term “Functional blindness” refers to those “who have little or no usable vision. Generally these persons are taught using tactile materials and braille” (as cited in Harley et al., 2000, p. 5). In the same vein, Roe and Webster (2002) defined blindness as the inability “to use vision to perform any work for which eyesight would be essential. This usually corresponds to a visual acuity of 3/60 or less in the better eye and after correction” (p. 225).

## **1.2. The Learner with Visual Impairment**

### **1.2.1. Definition of the VI learner**

Vision is a primary sense that enables the learner to receive a great amount of input from the environment, which has an important role in learning and interpreting information. The visually impaired learners, according to the World Health Organization (1992) is

a person with low vision is one who has impairment of visual functioning even after treatment and /or standard refractive correction, and has a visual acuity of less than

6/18 to light perception, or a visual field of less than 10 degree from the point of fixation, but who uses, or is potentially able to use, vision for planning and/or execution of a task. (as cited in Kazim, 2007, p. 34)

In the same vein, Best (1995) referred to the visually impaired learner as the learners who faces difficulties in the educational setting because of his visual disability. These difficulties include “fulfilling their educational needs and accessing the national curriculum, thus hindering their learning” (as cited in Kazim, 2007, p. 34).

### **1.2.2. Characteristics of the VI Learner**

Visually impaired learners differs from their non-disabled colleagues in a number of characteristics, which are due to their special needs and requirements for learning. Furthermore, Friend and Bursuck (2002) emphasized that “vision plays a contributory role in all aspects of the child’s participation in the world. Yet the children with visual impairment may vary in their social and emotional development, as is true for all children” (as cited in Kazim, 2007, p. 35). Moreover, Hallahan et al (2014, pp. 417-418) summarized some psychological and behavioral characteristics of the visually impaired learner in these points

- Language development is largely unaffected, although subtle developmental delays can occur, especially in infancy.
- Individuals may experience early delays in conceptual development, which do not last long.
- Motor delays in infancy are common; it is important that adults encourage infants to explore their environment to help overcome these delays.
- Orientation and mobility (O & M) skills depend on spatial abilities:

- People with visual impairment can process spatial information either sequentially or as a cognitive map; the latter is more efficient.
- Some people with visual impairment have the obstacle sense, the ability to detect objects by noting subtle changes in high-frequency echoes (the Doppler Effect).
- Two myths are that people who are blind have an extra sense and they automatically develop better acuity in their other senses.
- Studies suggest that some students who are blind experience low academic achievement, which is most likely due to low expectations or lack of exposure to braille.
- Phonological awareness is important for learning to read print or braille.
- Any social adjustment problems that people with visual impairment have are largely due to sighted society's reactions to blindness.
- Some people with visual impairment engage in stereotypic (repetitive) behaviors;
  - Most authorities attribute stereotypic behaviors to an attempt to stabilize arousal levels.
  - Professionals disagree about whether to intervene with these behaviors.

### **1.2.3. Learning Systems of the VI Learner**

In his academic career, the visually impaired learner relies mainly on Braille as the first medium for reading and writing, besides the Moon in rare cases. In addition, he depend on the listening skill as the main source of input.

#### **1.2.3.1. Listening Skill**

To master a language we have to develop the four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). Vandergrift (2007) in his contemporary studies considered the listening skill as the most

“researched of all four language skills”. Moreover, according to Allen, an ordinary language learner spends forty percent of the communication time on listening, thirty five percent on speaking, while reading and writing represents only twenty-five percent. However, for a visually impaired learner much more focus is giving to listening rather than the rest skills (as cited in Nehari, 2017, p. 12). Regarding the importance of this skill in learning, a number of scholars and researchers proposed different definitions of the listening skill. To mention, Richard and Shmidt (2010) defined it as

The process of understanding speech in a first or second language. The study of listening comprehension processes in second language learning focuses on the role of individual linguistic units (e.g. phonemes, words, grammatical structures) as well as the role of the listener’s expectations, the situation and context, background knowledge and the topic. (as cited in Nehari, 2017, p. 13).

Furthermore, the visually impaired learner needs “a classroom environment as free from auditory distractions as possible (Hallahan et al., 2014, p. 404). As well as he needs to be taught how to listen effectively. In the same vein, Kirk Horton and Hellen Keller (1988) emphasized that the visually impaired learner

not only has to be able to hear and follow what is being said but he also has to be able to pick out main ideas, ignore distracting noises, identify activities by their sounds and be able to locate the position of an object or person by their sounds. (as cited in Nehari, 2014, p. 14) .

Thus, developing the listening skill should be giving a great attention for its important role in learning for those who have visual disabilities.

### 1.2.3.2. Tactile Written Information

The written systems are experiencing a great development throughout time, which facilitates the task of reading and writing and makes it accessible for all individuals. Thus, it has been suggested that those who have vision impairments could read and write through touch.

#### 1.2.3.2.1. Braille

Braille is a tactile method invented by Louis Braille (1824), which enables visually impaired pupils to read and write using fingertips. This tactile system consists of raised dots arranged in a systematic way that is made of two columns, each column consist of three dots, known as Braille cell; each cell represents a letter, a word, a combination of letters, a numeral or punctuation mark. Furthermore, There are three types of Braille writing devices used by hand; slate and stylus, Braille writer and Braille notetaker.

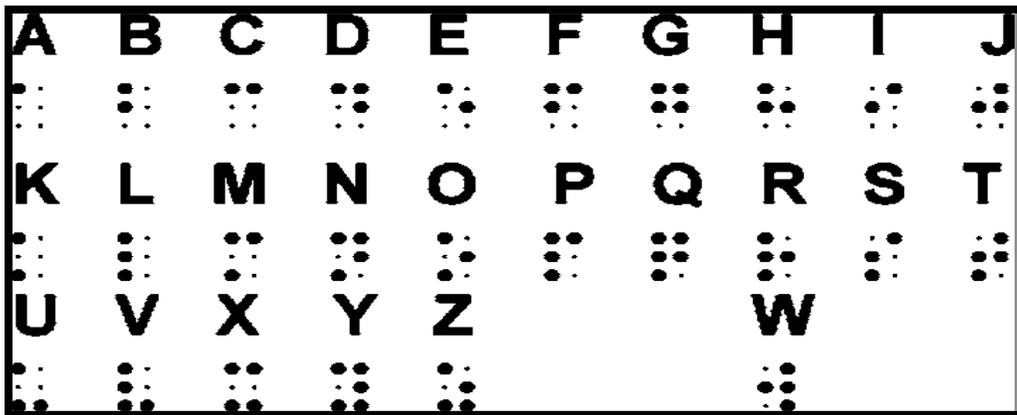


Figure 1. Letters in Braille (Hersh & Jhonson, 2010)

#### 1.2.3.2.2. Moon

Moon is another reading method for the visually impaired pupils; it was developed by Doctor William Moon in 1847 (Hersh & Jhonson, 2010, p. 408). Moon is used by pupils who have other

disabilities besides the visual impairment “such as learning difficulties or poor finger sensitivity” because it is much easier for reading compared to the Braille. There are two grades of Moon. The first grade “uses lines and curves to create 9 basic shapes; rotating or reflecting these shapes in different ways creates the 26 letters of the alphabet. These 26 characters, along with some punctuation marks and a numeral sign”. However, the second one “uses some additional signs and a simple form of shorthand; for example the word ‘yesterday’ is represented by ‘yd’” (Salisbury, 2007, p. 32).



**Figure 2. Example of Written Form Using Moon (Salisbury, 2007)**

#### **1.2.4. Requirements of VI pupils in Education**

Due to the special needs of visually impaired learners, they require several readjustments and changes for being safe and having access to the educational subjects. Thus, The DfES (2001) summarized what the visually impaired learner needs in the educational setting in the following points

- Flexible teaching arrangements
- An appropriate seating, acoustic conditioning and lighting
- Adaptations to the physical environment of the school
- Adaptations to school policies and procedures
- Access to alternative or augmented forms of communication

- A provision of tactile and kinesthetic materials
- Access to different amplification systems
- Access to low vision aids
- Access in all areas of the curriculum through specialist aids, equipment or furniture
- Regular and frequent access to specialist support (as cited in Wearmouth, 2008, p. 53)

### **1.2.5. Academic Achievement of the VI Learner**

Learners with visual impairments usually are expected to progress in a slower rate compared to their non-disabled colleagues because of the absence of a major source of learning, which is the sight. Tihomir Nikolic (1987), a blind professor of English in Belgrade emphasized on the importance of the utility of senses in learning by a “golden rule” states that “the more senses one engages the better and quicker the process of learning” (as cited in Couper, 1996, p. 6). However, there are “non-avoidable barriers to learning associated with a visual loss” as long as the learner’s needs are met throughout several considerations. For instance, modifications in the teaching methods and tools such as the use of large prints and slowing down the learning process, as well as relying more on the listening and speaking skills (Roe & Webster, 2002, p. 138).

In the same vein, Nikolic (1991) emphasized that those with vision impairments “can benefit from all areas of the national curriculum”, however “The teaching approaches or the detailed content of some subjects may need to be modified”. Particularly concerning foreign language learning, Nikolic (1986) believed that “the visually handicapped often display a marked talent for learning foreign languages... especially during the oral stage” (as cited in Couper, 1996, p. 6). Thus, a learner with visual disability may achieve the same progress as his ordinary colleagues if he is addressed with effective teaching methods and techniques.

### **1.3. Assistive Technology for the VI Learner**

Researchers have developed a number of devices and programs designed to facilitate and enhance the learning process of the visually impaired learner; these devices are under the field of “assistive technology”. “Adaptive technology” and “enabling technology” are also used to refer to it (Salisbury, 2007). Moreover, assistive technology was defined by Alvez (2007) as “an interdisciplinary field of knowledge comprising products, resources, methodologies, strategies, practices, and services that aims to promote functionality for visually impaired people with regard to autonomy, independence, quality of life, and social inclusion” (as cited in Alves, Monteiro, Rabello, Gasparetto & Carvalho, 2009, p. 148). In his book, Salisbury (2007) provides a set of assistive technologies, to mention:

#### **1.3.1. Screen Magnifier Software**

Screen magnifier software helps the visually impaired learner to read on the computer screen without “straining their eyes or adopting a poor seating posture”; it zooms the details on the screen and makes it more big and clear so that the visually impaired learner can read at ease. As well as “colors, contrast and brightness can be altered” so that it suits the needs of the visually impaired user (Salisbury, 2007, p. 36).

#### **1.3.2. Video Magnifier**

Video magnifier or Closed circuit televisions is a technology usually used for reading; however, it may be used for writing. It helps visually impaired learners in reading throughout providing large and clear letters through using a “small camera connected to a computer monitor or television screen” (Salisbury, 2007, p. 36).

### **1.3.3. Screen Reader Software**

Screen reader software is for those with severe vision impairments or totally blind, as they cannot access the computer visually. Screen reader “can magnify information on the screen, convert on-screen text to speech, or do both” (Hallahan et al., 2014, p. 408). It translates the written texts on the computer screen into vocal texts in a synthesized voice. Thus, the visually impaired user is supposed to put the headphones, listen, and control the computer through the keyboard (Salisbury, 2007, p. 37).

### **1.3.4. Scanner**

Scanners are used for turning any printed text into a digital one so that the visually impaired learner can use a screen reader to magnify or read the text aloud. A scanner is significantly useful for those “in a central location such as a library or resource base, where pupils need to do large amounts of research” (Salisbury, 2007, p. 38).

### **1.3.5. Braille Displays**

Braille displays are used to present the texts on the computer screen in Braille. They are “lightweight electro-mechanical devices that protrude from underneath the front of a standard computer keyboard”, “Braille displays can be used independently or with a screen reader. Braille displays are especially useful for those who have both visual and hearing impairments” (Salisbury, 2007, p. 38).

### **1.3.6. Braille Notetaker**

Technology brought new devices for Braille writing, besides slate and stylus Braille notetakers “offer additional speech-synthesizer and word-processing capabilities”. Which is an

electronic personal digital device for the visually impaired learner. Braille notetaker facilitates the task of writing and note taking for the visually impaired learners, he “enters information with a Braille keyboard and can transfer the information into a larger computer, review it using a speech synthesizer or Braille display, or print it in Braille or text” (Hallahan et al., 2014, p. 407).

## **Conclusion**

Foreign language learners depend on their visual and listening senses. Thus, the role of the visual and audio materials is crucial in foreign language teaching; however, when a learner is unable to use one or both of these senses, they are likely to replace it with another sense. The teacher is responsible to notice their needs and address to it to achieve a successful teaching process, which is the main concern of this chapter; giving an idea about the causes and types of visual impairments. Besides providing a clear image of the visually impaired learner’s characteristics, their learning systems, and the readjustments needed to provide them with an effective teaching environment. Thus, when the teacher is knowledgeable about his learners’ needs he will use the most appropriate techniques for them, which will enhance the teaching-learning process.

# **Chapter Two**

## **The Role of the Teacher**

## **Introduction**

Education is not only for promoting adults literacy; it also offers them an opportunity to develop a high self-esteem, a strong sense of creativity, and to build their characters. Improving the quality of education is a significant goal of any educational system. Since teachers are considered as the power of education, high quality competent teachers are the key for ensuring a successful education. Usually researchers focus on school curriculum and program, working conditions, and factors affecting the students' achievements. Whereas, the teacher's role is giving less attention. Hence, this chapter attempts to shed light on the roles of the teacher in general. Later, it provides a background information about the teacher of visually impaired learners. As it highlights the importance of the roles teachers play in enhancing the academic achievements of the visually impaired learner.

### **2.1. Background Information about the Teacher**

#### **2.1.1. Definition of “Teaching”**

Teaching and learning are usually interrelated because of the direct connection between the two; i.e. learning is an outcome of the teaching process. According to Heck, Shirley, Williams and Ray (1984), teaching can be referred to as a “process that demands sensitivity to the multiple contexts of which both learners and teachers are a part” (p. XV). In the same vein, Klein (2006) stated that teaching is to assist or to explain to an individual in order to learn how to do a particular activity, to study a particular subject, to understand something, or to give orders (p. 7). In addition, Klein believes that when the teacher is knowledgeable about the learning skills of his students, he will choose the approach, methods and techniques of teaching accordingly. Furthermore, dictionaries defines teaching in different ways. To mention, Cambridge International dictionary of

English referred to teaching as “to give (someone) knowledge or to instruct or train (someone)”. While teaching is to “show somebody how to do something” or to change his ideas about a particular thing according to Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (as cited in Harmer, 2010, p. 56).

### **2.1.2. Definition of “Teacher”**

The teacher enjoys a great value in the society because of the significant role he plays in the educational field. However, Oxford Advanced Learners’ Dictionary (1995) provides a simple definition of “teacher” when referring to him as “a person who teaches, especially in school” (p.1225). This definition underestimates the real value of the teacher in societies. Particularly the Islamic societies, which regards him as a prophet. Moreover, Harmer (2010) provides a set of metaphors teachers use to describe their job; he mentioned that:

...they are like actors because ‘we are always on the stage’. Others think they are orchestral conductors because ‘we direct conversation and set the space and tone’. Yet, others feel like gardeners, because ‘we plan the seeds and then watch them grow’. (p. 56)

Thus, the teacher is responsible of different activities in the classroom including presenting the lesson, controlling the tasks, observing and evaluating the learners’ progress, and organizing conversations during the session.

### **2.1.3. Teacher’s Roles**

The main concern of any teacher is to develop the student’s skills and good quality, to provide reliable information, and to create a suitable environment for learning. Thus, the teacher’s roles change according to the different situations in the classroom. His “role may change from one

activity to another, or from one stage of an activity to another”; if the teacher is “fluent at making these changes” his effectiveness is improved (Harmer, 2010, p. 57). Furthermore, Harmer (2010) suggested some roles of the teacher

...such as prompter, resource, or tutor may well fulfill this concept. Yet in one sense any role which the teacher adopts and which is designed to help students learn is to some extent facilitative... (p. 57)

In the same vein, Harmer (2010) identified nine roles of the teacher, summarized as follows:

#### **2.1.3.1. Facilitator**

The teacher as a facilitator, usually this role dominates the learner-centered classrooms. In such classes, the teacher is no longer the provider of knowledge, “but rather a facilitator and a source for the students to draw on” (Harmer, 2010, p. 57). Positively, Rogers (1967) insured that “The goal of education, if we are to survive, is the facilitation of change and learning. The only man who is educated is the man who has learned how to adapt and change; the man who has realized that no knowledge is secure, that only the process of seeking knowledge gives a basis for security” (as cited in Heck et al., 1984, p. 72). Furthermore, scholars emphasized that teachers should have a number of qualities in order to play this role effectively. Particularly, Tudor (1993) suggested a set of qualities including “maturity, intuition, educational skills, an openness to students input, and a greater tolerance of uncertainty” (as cited in Harmer, 2010, p. 57). Therefore, the success of the lesson in this case depends on the performance of the students.

#### **2.1.3.2. Controller**

In this case, the teacher is responsible for the whole teaching and learning process unlike the role of an assessor in which the learners are the source of knowledge. Thus, he is supposed to

present the lesson, provide the activities, give instructions, read aloud, and organize exercises. As an illustration, Harmer (2010) emphasized that “controllers take the role, tell students things, organize drills, read aloud, and in various other ways exemplify the qualities of a teacher-fronted classroom” (p. 58). Acting as a controller is workable in many situations in the class such as making announcements, giving orders, or explaining. However, sometimes it may prevent the learners’ engagement and participation during the lesson.

### **2.1.3.3. Organizer**

Acting as an organizer, the teacher performs one of the most important roles in which he is supposed to arrange the learners to do different activities. This role is based on four fundamental steps. To mention first, getting the learners engaged; in which the teacher is expected to motivate the students and get them involved in the activity through answering the question (why are they going to do the activity?). When the learner understands the purpose of the activity, he will be enthusiastic to participate. The second step is giving instructions and demonstrations; here teachers should explain to the learners what they have to start with and what comes next using a simple and clear language in order to insure that most of them understood the instruction provided. For the purpose of making sure whether the students got the idea clearly, demonstration “is almost always appropriate and will almost always ensure that students have a better grasp of what they are supposed to do than instructions can do for their own” (Harmer, 2010, p. 59). After, comes initiating the activity; at this step the teacher tells the students when to state the activity and how much time they are giving to finish it. Finally, the last step is providing feedback. It is of great importance of teacher to organize a set of feedbacks after finishing the activity, whether through asking the students if they enjoyed the activity or through discussing with them. Thus, the role of an organizer is considered as one of the most significant and difficult roles teachers play.

#### **2.1.3.4. Assessor**

Here, the teacher is supposed to provide the learners with feedback, correction, and grades. Learners need to know their weaknesses and strengths in order to know their level and work hard to improve themselves. As well as they need to know why and how they are being evaluated or assessed. Moreover, when assessing learners, the teacher should consider the issue of fairness. In addition, he should pay attention to the feelings of students especially when their grades are low. As an illustration, Harmer (2010) stated that “when we act as assessors (whether in the matter of “instant” correction or more drawn out grade giving) we must always be sensitive to the students’ possible reactions. A bad grade is a bad grade, however, it is communicated but it can be made far more acceptable if it is given with sensitivity” (p. 60). Thus, teachers have to use a suitable and acceptable way in addressing learners.

#### **2.1.3.5. Prompter**

The teacher needs to play the role of a prompter when students are in a situation of losing words; for instance when they are interacting with the teacher or with their classmates, they sometimes cannot find words due to the lack of vocabulary. Here, the teacher should support the student to think creatively and continue the task he is doing. He can “offer words or phrases, suggest that the student say something, or suggest what could come next in a paragraph a student is writing” (Harmer, 2010, p. 60). However, the teacher should not help learners often in order to make them able to rely on themselves and be creative in solving their own problems.

#### **2.1.3.6. Participant**

When doing different tasks and activities in the classroom, the teacher is usually expected to let the students do the activity and offers them his feedback at the end. However, when the teacher

actively participates with learners they are more likely to enjoy the activity. Yet, if the teacher chooses to participate s/he is taking the risk of dominating “the proceedings” since he is more knowledgeable than students are, he knows almost all the answers, and students will listen to him more than their colleagues. Thus, s/he needs a “great skill and sensitivity to avoid this situation” (Harmer, 2010, p. 61).

#### **2.1.3.7. Resource**

In situation such as preparing a presentation or doing group works, students do not need the teacher’s control or prompting; however they need him as a resource. The teacher should be ready to provide information and support to students, when necessary. When doing their activities, students may ask several questions in order to do the task correctly; they may ask the teacher to simplify a question and how to answer it, to provide them with the meaning of some utterances or phrases, or to tell them how to write something. Nevertheless, the teacher should be careful not to encourage students to rely on him all the time because it is important “to encourage students to use resource material for themselves and to become more independent in their learning generally” (Harmer, 2010, p. 61).

#### **2.1.3.8. Tutor**

The role of a tutor is a combination of both teacher roles as a prompter and a resource. The teacher can play this role effectively when working with individuals, pairs, or small groups, because this role requires the teacher to pay an individual concentration to each learner. This can be of great help for the teacher to know about his learners needs and adjust his course accordingly. Furthermore, this direct interaction with learners and the closeness is “a real chance to feel supported and helped, and the general class atmosphere is generally enhanced as a result” (Harmer,

2010, p. 62). Yet, the teacher should be careful when acting as a tutor in order not to encourage students to become reliant.

### **2.1.3.9. Observer**

When playing the role of an observer, the teacher observes and take notes about the performance of students whether individually or in groups. This role enables the teacher to provide feedback, to measure the success of the lesson, and to evaluate the workability of the activities and materials he uses in class. As a result, he can make the appropriate readjustments and changes for enhancing the teaching-learning process. Moreover, this role may be present when playing other roles. As an argument, Harmer (2010) emphasized that “when we are acting as controllers, giving feedback, or organizing students, we need to be observing at the same time too”. So that, “we need to be able to work and observe simultaneously, listening, watching, and absorbing so that we can create the best king of rapport between ourselves and our students” (p. 62).

## **2.2. Teacher of the VI Learner**

### **2.2.1. Definition of the VI Learner’s Teacher**

Due to the special needs of the learners with visual impairments, they require a special care and a special way of teaching. Here comes the responsibility of the vision teacher, or as Harley et al (2000) referred to him “the teacher of the visually impaired”. This teacher is supposed to be “trained and certified to work with students who are visually impaired or blind”. Furthermore, the teacher of the visually impaired works at both special and ordinary schools, as emphasized “these specialists may also be certified in regular education or general special education” (Harley et al., 2000, p. 6).

### **2.2.2. Principles for the Teacher of the VI Learner**

Teachers of learners with special needs are under a great pressure due to the difficulties they face in the teaching task. Thus, they need to be more aware of and concerned with a number of principles in order not to lose their patience and tolerance. Itard and Séguin are famous French educators specialized in teaching learners with special needs. They came with a number of revolutionary ideas in the special education field. Their ideas has a significant role in shaping the principles of special education, represented by Hallahan et al (2014) as the following:

- Individualized instruction, in which the child's characteristics, rather than prescribed academic content, provide the basis for teaching techniques
- A carefully sequenced series of educational tasks, beginning with tasks the child can perform and gradually leading to more complex learning
- Emphasis on stimulation and awakening of the child's senses, to make the child more aware of and responsive to educational stimuli
- Meticulous arrangement of the child's environment, so that the structure of the environment and the child's experience of it lead naturally to learning
- Immediate reward for correct performance, providing reinforcement for desirable behavior
- Tutoring in functional skills, to make the child as self-sufficient and productive as possible in everyday life
- Belief that every child should be educated to the greatest extent possible, because every child can improve to some degree (as cited in Hallahan et al., 2014, pp. 23-24).

### **2.2.3. Requirements of Teacher of the VI Learner**

In order to achieve a fruitful teaching-learning process, teachers should develop several skills including language, management, and planning skills. However, teachers of learners with special need are expected to have a number of additional requirements that will help them through the teaching task. In addition, it will help in facilitating the learning task for those special learners. In their book 'Exceptional Learners: An introduction to special education', Hallahan et al (2014, pp. 57-58) mentioned a set of "expectations for special educators" summarized as the following:

- The special teacher, as ordinary teachers, should be competent in his domain.
- Learner suffering from "sensory impairments, physical disabilities, and intellectual or emotional disabilities" are more likely to face difficulties in the academic learning, these difficulties varies from one learner to another. Here, the teacher needs to have a great sense of patience, as well as he needs to be skillful in instructing students in a way that enables them to well understand and encourages them to participate. As an illustration, Hallahan et al (2014) emphasized, "what makes special education special is not the instruction alone but instruction that is altered to meet the needs of exceptional learners" (p. 57).
- Most of the times, disabled learners have behavior problems, which makes it difficult for the teacher to deal with them. Thus, he should be understanding, empathetic, and know how to control the situation effectively.
- A number of assistive technologies were designed to facilitate the learning task for those who have special learning needs. Here, the teacher should be able to evaluate its "advantages and disadvantages" in order to know what is beneficial for his learners and what is not.

- Special teachers must be aware of the “special education law” including “legal requirements and prohibitions” (p. 58).

## **2.3. Responsibilities of Teacher of the VI Learner**

### **2.3.1. Being Knowledgeable about Individual Needs**

Having a visually impaired learner in the class requires the teacher to put a great amount of concentration on this learner for particular, in order not to be a direct cause of his ill performance or poor achievement. Thus, the teacher should be knowledgeable about the needs of his learners, particularly those with special educational needs. In fact, he may be confused about a number of issues. For instance, “whether children wearing glasses should rest their eyes, and whether getting too close to printed material or reading in poor light can be harmful”. Therefore, the teacher must consider several needs related to vision disability of the learner. To mention first, the lightening condition. Some visually impaired learners are very sensitive to the light, which requires a reduction in the overall illumination throughout “task-lighting and the elimination of glare”, which “can contribute markedly to the effective use of vision”. However, other visually impaired learners need a high level of illumination in order to make the most of their lasted vision. In addition, those of poor sight need to be close to visual materials that the teacher use because “getting very close to visual material is one way of enlarging it” (Roe & Webster, 2002, p. 170). In conclusion, it is the teacher’s responsibility to know the individual needs of his learners and try to cope with them in order to achieve a better performance in the classroom.

### **2.3.2. Enhancing Classroom Language Environment**

The teacher uses both verbal and non-verbal language in delivering information to learners, giving instructions, praising them for good performance, evaluating their understanding and

assessing them. In order to enhance the classroom language he needs to consider some effective practices, which a number of them was mentioned by Roe and Webster (2002, p. 164). First, the teacher have to use less formal language style, which can be a beneficial aspect to achieve a “dramatic increase in the spontaneous contributions made by the child”. Whereas, some wrong practices may contribute in preventing the learners’ engagement such as interrupting the student when performing for correcting his grammar and pronunciation mistakes and keep asking questions without giving them enough time to answer. Thus, the teacher should give learners more time to answer, which “promotes more effective classroom dialogue”. In addition, he should ask learners often in order to achieve a classroom interaction “high in ‘power’ and ‘control’”. Finally, teachers needs to have a “rapid ‘turn rate’” that means each participant is allowed to speak for a short time in order to give the opportunity to most of students to participate.

Furthermore, Wood (1992) suggested other practices a teacher may implement for increasing the classroom language environment including:

teachers giving their own thoughts and ideas to children, speculating, suggesting, surmising, interpreting, illustrating, listening, planning with, sharing and acknowledging what children have to say. These features create an atmosphere in which classrooms are concerned with raising hypotheses and testing these out in a shared spirit of problem-solving, where ‘showing’ and ‘telling’ replace ‘demanding’ and ‘asking’. (as cited in Roe & Webster, 2002, p. 165).

Therefore, the language a teacher use has a direct effect on the learners’ participation. In the next figure, Roe and Webster (2002) summarized some features of classroom discourse and its implications for learners, particularly, for those with visual impairments.

### **2.3.3. Creating a Warm and Inclusive Classroom**

One of the main goals a teacher seeks to achieve is establishing a warm classroom environment that encourages the cooperative work between students, because it has a direct impact on the students' learning and their sense of belonging. According to Stronge (2002), educational research encourages "creating an atmosphere of mutual respect, where students feel relaxed in asking questions and expressing their thoughts and feelings" (as cited in Buchloz & Sheffler, 2009, p. 1). Moreover, Buchloz and Sheffler (2009) highlighted three areas the teacher should focus on for creating such classroom environment, which are classroom design, classroom procedures, and classroom strategies. Summarized as the following:

- Since the classroom atmosphere has a great impact on the student's sense of comfort, security, and belonging. The first thing the teacher should think about is organizing, arranging, and decorating the classroom.
- The teacher should implicate the universal design, which is "designing products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for modification or specialized design", according to Burgstahler (2008). In the same vein, Samuels (2007) defines it as "a set of principles that help in the process of designing the classroom environment and instruction so that they are contributing to the learning of all students" (as cited in Buchloz & Sheffler, 2009, pp. 2-3).
- The teacher may create a special tradition for the classroom such as using a memorable quote or a song to begin the day with, which works as an inviting element and creates a positive feeling for the students to start the lesson. The teacher can use the same tradition at the end of the session, or he can use a reflective activity such as discussing what the students learnt and what confusions they have in the last five minutes.

- The use of classroom meetings helps to increase the students’ sense of belonging and encourages them to work together to solve classroom problems. According to Lundeborg, Emmett, Osland, and Lindquist (1997), there are three types of classroom meetings. Open-ended meetings in which any issue of interest can be discussed. Problem-solving meetings in which all the members try to solve a classroom or an individual problem. Finally, Educational-diagnostic meetings which purpose is to evaluate and assess the students’ knowledge about something they learned before or they will learn later (as cited in Buchloz & Sheffler, 2009, p. 4).
- The teacher should empower his students to advocate for themselves. Particularly, those with disabilities who needs to be able to express their needs and wants. Jones (2006) suggested five steps to empower students, summarized in the following table:

Steps	Description
1. Encourage disability awareness and self-discovery	Help students identify their areas of strength and areas of need.
2. Teach students about special education services	Help them understand what services are available to them based on the needs identified in their IEP
3. Teach students to self-monitor their work	This allows them to see their own progress and identify areas they need to work on. This gives them ownership for making the steps necessary to meet their goals.
4. Prepare students for participation	Students need to be aware of what takes place in an IEP meeting so that they have the understanding to be an active participant.
5. Evaluate the effectiveness of your efforts	Educators need to evaluate their own teaching of these steps to ensure that the students are getting our best.

**Table 1. Five Steps for Empowerment (Buchloz & Sheffler, 2009)**

- Due to the great importance of the listening skill in learning, especially for those with visual impairments, the teacher should teach students active/reflective listening. As well as he should be an active listener. In order to achieve a comprehensible and collaborative work inside the classroom.
- Using children's literature helps to model the social behavior of students; including how to behave in different social situations and how to make friends in order to feel more secure and welcomed in the school, which is much harder for disabled learners. Teachers can use literature including books, stories, and poems to teach students several moralities. To mention, increasing awareness about diversity, accepting and appreciating disabled colleagues, and understanding that differences makes people special. As well as teaching them social skills, how to cope with individual or social problems, and providing possible solutions.

#### **2.3.4. Organizing Physical, Visual, and Auditory Environment**

In their book 'Children with visual impairments: Social interaction, language and learning', Roe and Webster (2002) mentioned several areas the teacher of visually impaired learners should arrange and organize according to the needs of the visually impaired learners, in order to facilitate the learning task for them. These areas were classified into three major environments; including Physical, visual, and auditory environment. Summarized as follows:

##### **2.3.4.1. Organizing Physical Environment**

Due to their vision impairment, visually impaired learners need to be taught individual mobility in order to learn how to move and act effectively, as to learn how to deal with unexpected obstacles. Which is a hard task for them. Henceforth, teachers should put a great attention on the

classroom organization. He should arrange the classroom in a way that “there are clearly located areas, stimulating visual displays and explicit means of organization” (p. 168). In addition, the teacher must consider the type of vision impairment the student have and “the curriculum demands on the pupil concerned” when choosing the position of the visually impaired learner within the classroom. Therefore, the visually impaired learner can feel more comfortable in the classroom and the learning tasks become much accessible for him.

#### **2.3.4.2. Organizing Visual Environment**

The visual environment including decoration, colors, and lightening of the classroom; are conditions that may affect the use of the lasted vision of the visually impaired learner, either positively or negatively. Therefore, teachers must work on “providing visual environments that are clear and unambiguous, with flexible and appropriate lighting and contrasting décor that serves to define different areas” depending on the needs of the student concerned (p. 168). Consequently, the learning conditions of both sighted and visually impaired learners will be improved.

#### **2.3.4.3. Organizing Auditory Environment**

The listening skill is an important source of information for visually impaired individuals that enables them to understand, locate, and orientate the surrounding environment. However, it is a difficult task to accomplish, as emphasized by Roe and Webster (2002); “the ability to attend to sound stimuli, ignore competing sound distractions and make sense of events involves a complex hierarchy of skills that depend on experience and training” (p. 170). A noisy environment will prevent the visually impaired learner from using his listening skill effectively. Thus, his learning will be affected negatively. Henceforth, in order to establish good listening conditions two main ways are adopted. The first way is “by keeping out unwanted sound”. While the second is “the

reduction of noise within a room” (pp. 170-171). Therefore, visually impaired learners can make the most of their listening skill, well grasp the information communicated, and understand what is going on inside the classroom.

## **Conclusion**

The teacher is a source of knowledge, an ideal example for the students, and a source of motivation. Thus, the teacher should be of great literacy and education, as well as he must be of good values. The teacher should know that his job is not only concerned with delivering information, giving instructions, and enhancing learners’ intelligence. Yet, it is more a distinctive mission that is concerned with moralities and emotional intelligence, which can help in molding societies and giving vision and direction its members. Henceforth, the teacher plays a predominant role in the educational field; his success is related to understanding the great role he plays, having confidence on his abilities, and caring about his learners especially those with disabilities.

# **Chapter Three**

**Methodology, Data Analysis and Results**

## **Introduction**

The third chapter is devoted for the analysis and interpretation of the obtained findings through this study, which intends to interpret the effectiveness of the EFL teacher's role in facilitating the learning process of the visually impaired learners and lessening the negative impacts of their disability on their academic performance. Throughout this chapter, answers of the raised research questions will be provided after analyzing and interpreting the results drawn from this study. Moreover, the answers provided will determine the validity of the two hypothesis presented at the beginning of the research work, which say that the lack of knowledge and materials may cause problems for the teacher when teaching a visually impaired learner. While the second hypothesis say that teachers may rely on the listening skill when teaching the visually impaired learner. The current chapter represents a description of the three data collection tools used in the study, which are the observation checklist, the learner's questionnaire, and the teacher's interview. Then, it represents the analysis and interpretations of the results drawn from the last mentioned data collection methods. Finally, a number of suggestions and recommendations will be presented for teachers in order to provide the visually impaired learners with accessible instructions.

### **3.1. Research Methodology**

Due to the descriptive nature of the present research, the methodology adopted is:

#### **3.1.1. Method**

The approach of gathering information will be used in the current research study is the qualitative method due to the limited period of time provided for exploring and investigating the

phenomenon of the study. In addition, the qualitative method will be useful to make the connection between the two variables that are the EFL teacher's role and the visually impaired learners.

### **3.1.2. Population and Sampling**

The population targeted are the pupils of Taha Houssin Middle School. The sample chosen is the fourth year class at Taha Houssin middle school throughout a simple random sampling technique. Moreover, two EFL teachers were selected to interview in order to have an insight about how they teach the visually impaired learners and how the process of teaching goes on. The number of teachers is limited because they are the only two teachers of English at Taha Houssin School.

### **3.1.3. Research Tools**

Questionnaires and interview were chosen as the main instruments of data collection, including semi-structured questionnaires for students and semi-structured interviews for teachers, besides a classroom observation to generate in depth knowledge about the studied phenomenon.

## **3.2. Classroom Observation**

In order to have a clear insight about how teachers deal with the visually impaired learners and what techniques they implement in the English course in order to provide them with accessible instructions, a classroom observation took place in Taha Houssin middle school for the blind. Observation is an effective tool to generate in-depth data about a phenomenon. In the same vein, Robson (2002) defined it as “What people do may differ from what they say they do, and observation provides a reality check; observation also enables a researcher to look at everyday behavior that otherwise might be taken for granted, expected or go unnoticed” (as cited in Nehari, 2017, p. 37).

### **3.2.1. Setting**

Our classroom observation took place on 11<sup>th</sup> March, 2020 with fourth year level at Taha Houssin Middle School in Biskra. Four observation sessions were planned to be carried out. However, when the unexpected vacation had been announced on March the 12 because of the dilemma of Covid-19, it was impossible to continue the rest observation sessions since fourth year level have only one English session per week. Furthermore, the classroom observation took a semi-structured form because of the use of an observation checklist prepared in advance. In addition, during the observation session we sat at the back of the classroom so that we can observe well and do not disturb the teacher or the learners during the session, taking into consideration that each student has his fixed place and any changes or additions will disturb him when moving in the classroom.

### **3.2.2. Structure**

In order to observe precise elements an observation checklist was prepared and used during the observation session, which functions as a guide for the observation process. The checklist is divided into three sections. The first section is particularly about the learning environment; i.e. the physical atmosphere, the seating arrangement, and the materials used during the session. Then comes the second section that is mainly concerned with the visually impaired learners including their rapport with the teacher, their engagement, and participation in the English session. Finally, the third section is mainly about the teacher's role; his relationship with learners, the techniques he uses when presenting the lecture, and the evaluation methods he uses to assess his learners. Furthermore, each sections contains a rating scale that contains three options arranged as follows: well observed, fairly observed, and not observed. The results earned from the observation checklist

will provide an insight about how the EFL teacher deal with visually impaired learners and what techniques he use.

### 3.2.3. Description of Procedures

As the main purpose of this classroom observation is to explore the pedagogical techniques English special education teachers implement in their classes, to investigate the challenges they face during the teaching process, and to have a clear insight on how the English language teaching is taking place. We organized three regular observation sessions, however, due to the previous mentioned obstacle we attended only one English course on 11<sup>th</sup> March, 2020, from 13pm to 14pm.

In Taha Houssin School, the first thing we observed is the setting; the classes contains large windows which helps to inter more light to the classroom and make it more luminous, which is of great benefit for those learners who have a lasted vision or short sighted learners. The classroom contains only the teacher’s desk and the student’s tables and a small closet at the back of the classroom in which students keep their school stuff including slate and stylus, books, and copybooks. The board is placed but it is not used. In addition, the number of students is small; there are only ten students in one class. Students differ in the level of vision disabilities, some of them can see somehow, others can hardly locate things, while the rest are blind.

<b>Levels of visual disability</b>	<b>Learners’ number and characteristics</b>
Mild Visual Impairment	Three girls have a mild residual vision; they can read Braille through sight not touch and can locate things through vision.

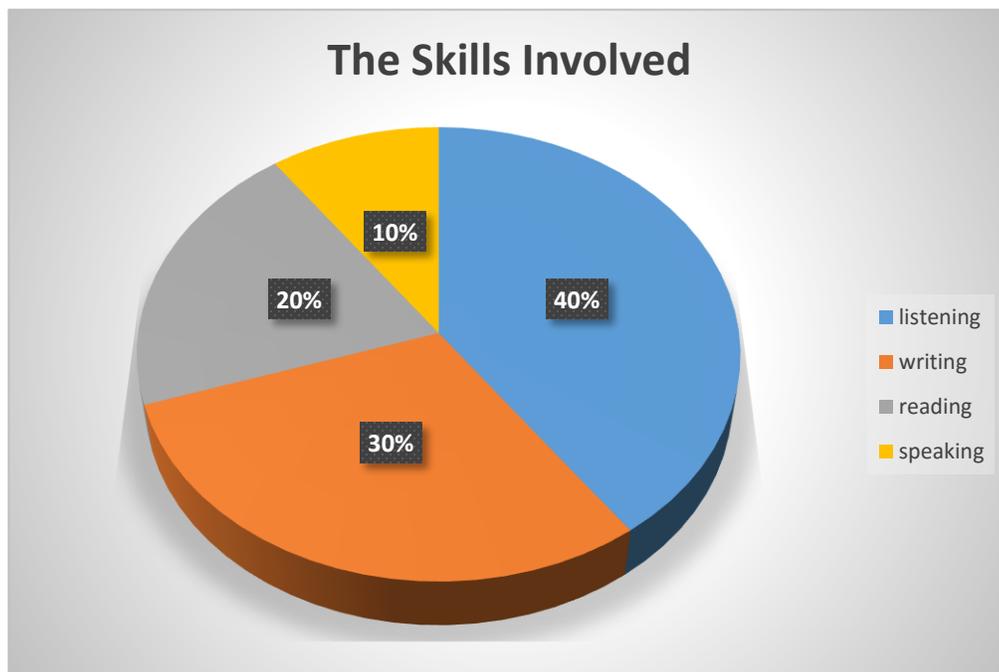
Moderate Visual Impairment	Two boys have a moderate residual vision; they can hardly locate things and they read braille through touch.
Sever Visual Impairment	Five boys are totally blind; they rely basically on the listening skill, and in they read Braille through touch only.

**Table 2. Learner's Characteristics**

Concerning the flow of the lecture, at the beginning of the session the teacher presented the topic after asking the students to open their books. This last is the same as the books used in ordinary schools including the curriculum and syllabuses; however, it is translated into Braille in order to be accessible to the learners. Then, he started explaining the lesson and each time he dictates and spells the words and punctuation. In addition, we noticed that the students were highly participating, asking questions all the time, and interacting with each other that reveals a sense of collaboration in the class.

#### **2.3.4. Analysis of Classroom Observation**

Although observing one teacher during a limited period of time (one session) can be considered as insufficient, but this classroom observation was of great help for the researcher to have an idea about special education, and to have a close look on how the English language is taught out there. Furthermore, during the course, it was revealed that listening and writing are highly used; taking into consideration that writing in braille takes more time than the ordinary writing, while reading is less used, and speaking is nearly absent. The following pie chart indicates the aforementioned idea.



**Graph 1. Skills Involved in Teaching the Visually Impaired Learner**

Finally, the results of the classroom observation can be summarized in two points. First, it is well noticed that the EFL teacher provides each student with a special care and assistance, which builds a good rapport between the teacher and his students and between students themselves, and encourages them to participate. In addition, learners rely more on the listening and writing skills during the course. Therefore, it is worth pointing out that the results of the classroom observation are somehow insufficient, that was the reason why we felt the necessity to collect more in-depth

information. Consequently, we designed a questionnaire for students and an interview for teachers in order to have a clear idea about the significant role the EFL teacher plays when teaching visually impaired learners.

### **3.3. Learner's Questionnaire**

#### **3.3.1. Administration of the Questionnaire**

In addition to the classroom observation, we designed a questionnaire for the learners. The questionnaire was delivered after doing the classroom observation. It was distributed to the pupils of fourth year level, which are the representatives of the conducted research; it was distributed to ten students with different visual disabilities. The number of students is limited because of the fact that they study in a special school, in which each class contains a small number of students; sometimes one classroom may contain only three students. Furthermore, due to the previous mentioned circumstances it was impossible to distribute the questionnaires at the time planned. In addition, because of the student's visual disabilities, using online questionnaires was not a choice. As a result, we contacted the school administrators and asked for the student's numbers or their parent's numbers. After, we have had a call conversation with each student apart, which was the only solution to collect the data needed for the research.

#### **3.3.2. Description of Questionnaire**

The questionnaire is divided into two sections. The first is entitled "Background Information", while the second section's title is "The Teacher's Role with Visually Impaired Learners". The two sections are made of sixteen close-ended questions where the student is asked to answer with "Yes" or "No" or to choose the appropriate answer from the suggested options. The first section is particularly for collecting general information about the learners in order to have a

clear image about our sample. However, the second section is devoted for the role of the teacher; it is presented in a form of a table that contains seven statements with “Yes” or “No” options. Furthermore, the statements are generally about the techniques the EFL teacher implies with visually impaired learners in order to facilitate the language-learning task for them.

### 3.3.3. Analysis of Questionnaire

Under the present title, a qualitative analysis of the answers provided by the visually impaired learners who took part of this research study will be presented.

#### Section One: Background Information

The first section of the questionnaire is divided for collecting general information about the learners; including their gender, age, and school grades.

#### Question 1: Students’ Gender

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Female	3	30 %
Male	7	70%
Total	10	100 %

**Table 3. Students’ Gender**

As it is illustrated in in table 3, males that participated in this work are seven with the percentage (70 %), while three females only participated in the conducted study with the percentage (30 %). According to the results presented in the table above, males represents the majority of fourth year level at Taha Houssin School, whereas females are the minority of students.

#### Question 2: Students’ Age

<b>Options</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
16 years old	5	50 %
17-19 years old	5	50%
Total	10	100 %

**Table 4. Students' Age**

As it is demonstrated in table 4, learners who took part in the conducted research are between sixteen and nineteen years old. Five students are sixteen years old representing (50 %) of the total number of students, while the rest (50 %) of learners are between seventeen and nineteen years old. Whereas the other half are intermediate or good learners.

**Question 3: Family's Standard of Living**

<b>Options</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Excellent	1	10%
Good	6	60%
Bad	3	30%
Total	10	100 %

**Table 5. Family's Standard of Living**

According to the results presented in table 5, only one student said that his family enjoys an excellent living standard (1%), while six students declared that their economic conditions are good representing (60%) of the total number of learners, and three students argued that their standard of living is bad with the percentage (30%). If the family suffers from bad economic conditions this enables them from covering the needs of their visually impaired child, which may negatively affect his academic achievements.

**Question 4: Students' School Grades**

<b>Options</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Excellent	1	10%
Good	2	20%
Intermediate	7	70%
Bad	0	0%
Total	10	100 %

**Table 6. Students' School Grades**

As table 6 demonstrates, one student declared that his grades are excellent presenting (10%), two students have good grades (20%), and seven students are intermediate (70%). While the choice “Bad” presents (0%). The results shows that the majority of learners have intermediate level, which means that most learners are facing difficulties and challenges that negatively impacts their academic achievements. In the same vein, it is worth pointing out that Taha Houssin School for the blinds is one of the best special schools in Algeria (ranked the third nationally since 1976).

**Question 5: Students' Grades in the English Course**

<b>Options</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Excellent	1	10%
Good	2	20%
Intermediate	2	20%
Bad	5	50%
Total	10	100 %

**Table 7. Students' Grades in the English Course**

The table above illustrated that the major of students gets bad marks in the English course with the percentage (50%). While (20%) are good, (20%) are intermediate, and only (10%) are

considered as excellent. The results indicates that most of the learners are facing difficulties in learning the English language.

**Question 6: Difficulties in Learning English for the Students**

<b>Options</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	8	80%
No	2	20%
Total	10	100 %

**Table 8. Difficulties in Learning English for the Students**

According to the table above, learning the English language seems to be an easy task for two learners with the percentage (20%), while eight learners have difficulties in learning English representing (80%) of the total number of learners. Thus, we can say that learning English as a foreign language may be difficult because of the differences between the learner’s mother tongue and the English language in terms of grammatical, phonological, and morphological structures. Especially for those suffering from disabilities.

**Question 7: Areas of Difficulty in Learning English for the Students**

<b>Options</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Reading	2	20%
Writing	0	0%
Listening	5	50%
Speaking	3	30%
Total	10	100 %

**Table 9. Areas of Difficulty in Learning English for the Students**

As illustrated in table 9, the majority of learners have difficulties in listening with the percentage (50%), while the rest learners face difficulties in reading with the percentage (20%) and in speaking with the percentage (30%). Since the listening skill a basic skill for the visually impaired learner, the development of this skill should be taking into consideration by the EFL teacher.

**Question 8: Students' Favorable Work Condition**

<b>Options</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Alone	3	30%
In pairs	0	0%
In groups	7	70%
Total	10	100 %

**Table 10. Students' Favorable Work Condition**

According to what table 10 illustrates, 70% of the learners prefer to work in groups, whereas 30% find working alone more preferable. Yet, no one of the students prefer working in pairs. This may be related to the fact that most students have difficulties in the English language, which is the reason why they prefer to work in groups in order to collaborate and share ideas with each other.

**Question 9: Students' Preferable Choice of School**

<b>Options</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Special	4	40%
Regular	6	60%
Total	10	100 %

**Table 11. Students' Preferable Choice of School**

The table above demonstrates that 60% of the learners would like to study in a regular school; however, 40% of them find it better to study in a special school. Their choice can be referred to the learners' desire to get used to ordinary schools from the beginning of their educational career, in order not to face extra difficulties when moving from a special middle school to regular secondary school.

## Section Two: The Teacher's Role with Visually Impaired Learners

**Question 1:** When you face difficulties in understanding a lesson or doing a particular activity. Do your teacher assists you?

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	8	80%
No	2	20%
Total	10	100 %

**Table 12. Students' Answers about the Teacher's Assistance**

As illustrated in table 12, the majority of learners answered with "Yes" with the percentage (80%), while a minority (20%) answered that they do not receive help from their teacher. This indicates that the teacher is making an effort to cover all the students with assistance even though some students do not find it satisfying.

**Question 2:** Do you enjoy a special care from your teacher?

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	8	80%
No	2	20%
Total	10	100 %

**Table 13. Students' Answers about the Teacher's Special Care**

According to the results illustrated in table 13, eight students claimed that the teacher offers them a special attention and a special care representing (80%) of the total learners. However, two students said that they do not perceive a special care from the teacher with the percentage (20%). The results indicates that the teacher provides each student with a special care taking into consideration his special needs and his level.

**Question 3:** Do your teacher encourages your participation in the classroom?

<b>Options</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	10	100%
No	0	0%
Total	10	100 %

**Table 14. The EFL Teacher's Encouragement of the Visually Impaired Learner**

According to the demonstrated data in table 14, (100%) of the students claimed that their teacher encourages them to participate in the EFL class. Which revealed that the teacher supports the student's engagement in the class through different activities.

**Question 4:** Do your teacher use technology in the session (laptop, audiobooks...)?

<b>Options</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	7	70%
No	3	30%
Total	10	100 %

**Table 15. The Use of Technology**

According to the table above, seven students claimed that they rarely use technology in the English course representing (70%), yet, three others said that the do not use it with the percentage

(30%). The absence of technologies may go to the reason that the school cannot offer them due to financial issues. However, it is highly needed in order to motivate the learners.

**Question 5:** Do your teacher raise his voice when explaining the lesson?

<b>Options</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	10	100%
No	0	0%
Total	10	100 %

**Table 16. The Teacher's Tone of Voice**

As illustrated in table 16, (100%) of the students agreed that the teacher usually raise his voice when presenting the lecture, which drives us to say that this is one of the positive effect of small sized classrooms; when the classroom contains small number of students they can enjoy a calm environment in which they can concentrate with their teacher.

**Question 6:** Do your teacher give you enough time for doing the activities or passing exams?

<b>Options</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	9	90%
No	1	10%
Total	10	100 %

**Table 17. The Time Provided for Activities and Exams**

The table above illustrates that the majority of learners claimed that their teachers provides them with enough time for doing the activities or passing the exams (90%), and only one student answered with “No” representing (10%). This leads us to infer that the majority of students are provided with enough time to answer. Yet, those who needs extra time they may have difficulties

in writing with the slate and stylus of suffering from other disabilities, which should be taking into consideration.

**Question 7.** Does your vision disability affects your achievements in English?

<b>Options</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	10	100%
No	0	0%
Total	10	100 %

**Table 18. The Effect of Vision Impairment on Learning English**

According to data reported in table 18, (100%) of learners agreed that their vision disabilities do not affect their achievements in learning English as a foreign language, which supports Roe & Webster (2002) who claimed that vision loss do not affect the learning achievements as long as the needs of the learner are met.

#### **3.3.4. Interpretation of Learner's Questionnaire**

The ultimate goal of the current research is to investigate the role EFL teachers plays when teaching visually impaired learners, so that we designed a questionnaire for learners of fourth year at Taha Houssin Middle School for the Blind, which was an important source of information and provided us with the needed data. Relying on the date collected by the questionnaire, we infer that the visually impaired learners differ in terms of needs and assistance. The EFL teacher provides learners with assistance in order to facilitate the language-learning task for them. In addition, he encourages them to participate in the session. Moreover, the results indicates that the majority of learners face much more difficulties in listening comparing to the other skills, taking into consideration that listening is a fundamental skill for learning for the visually impaired learner.

Finally, their vision disability added more challenges for them to learn and for the teacher to meet their needs.

### **3.4. Teacher's Interview**

#### **3.4.1. Description of the Interview**

Besides the classroom observation and the learner's questionnaire, another instrument was used for collecting the data; an interview was designed for the EFL teachers at Taha Houssin School. Due to the limited number of students, there are only two English teachers at the school, with which we have done the interview. However, the previously mentioned circumstances prevented the researcher from achieving face-to-face conversations with the teachers. Consequently, the interview was done through phone call conversations. Furthermore, the interview contains of twelve open-ended questions, which precisely aims at collecting information about the difficulties EFL teachers face with the visually impaired learner and what are the techniques they implement in order to cope with the needs of this category of learners.

#### **3.4.2. Analysis of the Interview**

The following is a detailed qualitative analysis of the data collected throughout the interview with the teachers, which one of them is visually impaired. Symbols "A" and "B" will be used to refer to the teachers in order to differentiate between them; "B" refers to the visually impaired teacher.

**Question 1:** How long have you been teaching English in this special school?

Teacher "A" answered that he is teaching in TahaHoussin School since (2014); he has been teaching there for 8 years. Which leads us to say that he is an experienced teacher. Having such an

experienced teacher as a respondent would be of great benefit for our research because he could provide us with the most effective techniques an ordinary EFL teacher can implement in order to deal with his visually impaired learner. Yet, teacher “B” is still a novice teacher with one year of experience in this special school.

**Question 2:** Have you received any kind of training about teaching the visually impaired learner?

As teacher “A” claimed, he had been trained to teach this category of learners before starting the work as an EFL teacher at Taha Houssin School. However, Teacher “B” answered with “No, I received no training”. He added that even if he had not been trained, he was well prepared to work with visually impaired learners since he is blind and studied in a special school too.

**Question 3:** How the training is going (the program, the duration, the activities... etc.)?

For this question, teacher “B” was not concerned because he have had no training. Yet, teacher “A” argued that he was trained for nine months in a special school at Costantine. In which he had been taught methodology, psychology, and Braille basics in order to be qualified to meet the needs of the visually impaired learners.

**Question 4:** How do you find the English-teaching task for visually impaired learners?

Teacher “A” declared that teaching visually impaired learners was a difficult task at the beginning, as time is passing it became much easier after his considerable experience of teaching. He inserted that teaching a foreign language to someone with a total or a partial visual disability is a challenge itself, because of the lack of materials (books and dictionaries) and the limitation of time (one hour per week). However, teacher “B” still finds it hard to teach the visually impaired learners due to the fact that he have just started his educational career in this special school.

**Question 5:** What are the methods and techniques you use in teaching visually impaired learners?

As both teachers declared, they implement more listening activities in the English class including reading, games, and audios. In addition, teacher “B” insisted on the need to test the learners’ progress regularly through asking them questions about the content of the course in order to make sure whether they got the information or not, and to keep them engaged with the lesson because they usually lose attention fast.

**Question 6:** Why do you use these techniques for particular?

The answers of both interviewees were nearly the same; they use the aforementioned techniques in order to facilitate the communication of information to the students and to make the lecture more entertaining for them. Furthermore, teachers “A” and “B” asserted that implementing the listening skill, the reading skill, and guided activities in the EFL course is of great advantage for learners because they positively respond to such activities.

**Question 7:** Do you use technology often?

Teacher “A” claimed that he always use his phone or PC in the EFL course, by which he make students listen to audios (conversations, songs, or short stories) in order to break the routine and make students enjoy the lesson. While teacher “B” responded with “no, I do not”, yet, he insisted on the effectiveness of implementing technological aids to teach the English language to visually impaired learners.

**Question 8:** What are the main difficulties you face when teaching visually impaired learners?

The answer of teacher “A” revealed that he face difficulties in teaching phonetics, as well as the lack of motivation of students. However, teacher “B” mentioned the limitation of time because

Braille writing takes longer time and one hour is not enough for presenting, explaining and writing the lesson. In addition, he mentioned the difficulty in taking control over the learners.

**Question 9:** Do you provide learners with assessment to facilitate the language-learning task?

Both teachers claimed that assessment is a crucial part of each session, in addition to tests and exams; they always assess their learners' understanding of the lesson through using written and oral assessment. By asking comprehension questions and preparing activities.

**Question 10:** Do you have any other suggestions to facilitate the difficulties both students and teachers face?

Teacher "A" insisted on the necessity of providing books and dictionaries in Braille in order to help the learner to enrich his vocabulary, as well as the audios that would be of great help to enhance the learners' listening skill and improve their pronunciation. Teacher "B" proposed nearly the same suggestions.

**Question 11:** Do you help ordinary teachers from secondary school and university who have visually impaired learners (advice, guidance, typing or reading Braille papers...)?

As teacher "A" declared, it rarely happens when a teacher from secondary school or university come and ask for their help because he have a visually impaired students in his class. However, those who come, they usually ask the teacher to write for them lessons and test/exam papers in Braille. Yet, teacher "B" answered with "No, I did not face such a situation before". He added that he personally suffered when he was studying at university because he could not read the exam papers, and he was obliged to wait until a teacher come and read for him the questions than he dictate for him the answers. Which consumes his time while no extra time was giving. He

assured that teachers of visually impaired learners should contact such special schools in order to decrease the difficulties a visually impaired learner encounter in his education.

**Question 12:** Do you think that ordinary teachers in secondary school and university need to be trained to teach visually impaired learners?

The interviewees has different point of view concerning the necessity of training for secondary and university teachers. Teacher “A” believes that it is not necessary for non-special teachers to be trained to teach visually impaired learners, yet, he insisted on their duty towards those learners. He added that they should get in touch with special teachers in order to ask for guidance, or for writing or reading for them Braille papers. However, teacher “B” argued that teachers have to be trained in order to be ready in case they teach a visually impaired learner they would know how to deal with him appropriately.

### **3.4.3. Interpretation of the Interview**

The ultimate goal of the interview was to get in touch with special teachers of the visually impaired and explore how the English teaching task is undergone, and how the EFL teacher overcomes the challenges raised because of the special needs of the visually impaired learner. Thus, we designed an interview of twelve questions seeking for collecting the necessary data to answer the research questions. The answers provided by the two interviewees, who are two EFL teachers at Taha Houssin School for the Blind, leads us to say that teaching English as a foreign language to a visually impaired learner is not an easy task at all.

EFL Teachers of visually impaired learners encounter several difficulties. To mention first, the lack of materials such as dictionaries and books written in Braille in order to use them in the class. In addition, the time allotted for the English language is not enough, mentioning that the

Braille writing takes more time than the ordinary one. Finally, the lack of technological aids for the learners, for instance, Braille writers and audios. The previously mentioned difficulties affects directly the visually impaired learner's achievements in the language.

Furthermore, besides the challenges that encounter EFL teachers, the answers of the interviewees revealed a number of techniques that EFL teachers implement in order to help the visually impaired learner to learn the English language better. For instance, Teachers implement the listening skill as the first source of information. Additionally, the reading skill; each time the teacher asks the student to read in order to engage him in the lesson and enrich his vocabulary. As well as they implement guided activities.

### **3.5. Analysis of the Findings**

As previously mentioned, the ultimate goal of the current research is to investigate the EFL teacher's role when teaching a visually impaired learner and how he manage to deal with them appropriately in order to help them to overcome their disability and achieve better in the English language. Thus, we opted for three data collection tools, which are a classroom observation, a questionnaire for learners, and an interview for the teachers. The data provided by these three instruments are orderly summarized in the following points.

To start with, the classroom observation illustrates that visually impaired learners enjoys a special care from the teacher; each student is addressed according to his disability and to his level in the English language. In addition, the listening and reading skills are the most used skills in the lesson. Moreover, the results obtained from the learner's questionnaire revealed that teachers always provides the visually impaired learners with assistance and they encourage them to participate. Yet, students faces difficulties in the listening skill.

Furthermore, the interview was an essential source of data that enriches the present research. From the interviewees' answers, we obtained information about the challenges that faces the teacher of the visually impaired learner. To mention, the lack of materials such as dictionaries, books, and audios. As well as the limitation of time provided for the English language. Besides, the techniques he use in order to overcome these obstacles including utilizing more the listening skill, the reading skill, and the guided activities. So that the visually impaired learner will be more engaged in the lecture and do not lose concentration.

## **Conclusion**

Through the present chapter, we presented the methodology that was adopted for the interpretation and analysis of the data. The last was collected through three data gathering tools, which are a classroom observation, a questionnaire for students, and an interview for teachers. In this chapter, a detailed qualitative description and analysis of the data were presented. Starting from describing the instrument used to collect the data, presenting the answers of the respondents, analyzing the results, and lastly providing an interpretation of the findings. Finally, the results obtained from the three data collection tools were discussed under the title "Analysis of the Findings". Thus, the current chapter is an attempt to draw conclusions of the case under investigation. The research findings leads us to infer that the results obtained confirm the proposed research hypothesis about the difficulties EFL teachers face when teaching visually impaired learners and their reliance on the listening skill.

# **General Conclusion**

## **General Conclusion**

In order to investigate the effective role EFL teacher can play when teaching a visually impaired learner, the present study was conducted. This latter opted for a descriptive method in order to explore the most workable methods and strategies that the EFL teacher should implement in order to facilitate the language-learning task for his visually impaired student. The current study was conducted in Taha Houssin Middle School at Biskra; a special school for the visually impaired learners in which both primary and middle school students study, and after they graduate they study in ordinary secondary schools and universities. This fact was one of the motives to conduct this research.

The present research was based on a number of questions, concerning the difficulties that the EFL teacher face when teaching a visually impaired learner and what techniques he may implement to overcome them and deal with his visually impaired learner effectively. Thus, In order to answer the previous mentioned questions two hypothesis were formulated, which stated that the EFL teacher faces several difficulties and challenges when teaching a visually impaired learner, for instance, the lack of previous knowledge about this category of learners as well as the lack of materials. In addition, their reliance on the listening skill only.

In order to test the formulated hypothesis, we opted for a random sampling to choose the sample of the study, which was the fourth year level students of Taha Houssin Middle School at Biskra, as well as the EFL teachers of this school. Furthermore, three data collection tools were used in order to gather the needed data; a classroom observation, a questionnaire for students and an interview for teachers. Henceforth, regarding the results gathered from the classroom observation and the student's questionnaire, visually impaired learners enjoys a special care and assistance from their EFL teacher, which encourages and motivates them to participate in the

classroom activities. In addition, the teacher's interview revealed that the EFL teachers face serious problems when teaching visually impaired learners especially when it comes to the special education knowledge of this category of learners and the lack of assistive materials and technologies that may facilitate the language-teaching task. This leads us to say that the results confirmed the research hypothesis. Therefore, a set of recommendations were suggested in order to help the EFL teacher to effectively deal with his visually impaired learner.

To conclude, due to the vast scope of the field of special education for learners with special needs, and the fact that the present research was conducted with only one class at Taha Houssin Middle School at Biskra, it is difficult to generalize the results on a larger sample. Thus, further studies can be conducted. For instance, a study on the significant role the EFL teacher play with visually impaired learners in order to come up with other helpful techniques for the teacher, a study on the implication of assistive technology in teaching the visually impaired learner, or on the effectiveness of the use of audio-books to enhance the language proficiency of the visually impaired learner. Therefore, additional studies will provide with effective solutions that may facilitate the language teaching-learning process for both the EFL teacher and the visually impaired learner.

### **Limitations of the Study**

As aforementioned, the study aims at investigating the significant role EFL teacher can play when teaching a visually impaired learner in order to facilitate the language-learning task for him. However, the present research examined the experience of only ten students of fourth year level at Taha Houssin Middle School in Biskra, who were chosen randomly. Therefore, the limitation of the sample contributes in limiting the ability to generalize the results of the study on a larger population. Additionally, the dilemma of Covid-19 was such an obstacle for the researcher; the

sudden declaration of the vacation prevents us from finishing the programmed observation sessions, as well as from administering the questionnaires and interviews at time.

## **Recommendations**

To conclude, a set of recommendations concerning the effective strategies that should be implemented by the EFL teacher who is responsible to teach a visually impaired learner in ordinary schools or universities. In fact, the suggested solutions can help the EFL teacher to overcome the difficulties he face during the teaching process of a visually impaired learner, as well as to effectively deal with the visually impaired learner and encourage him to challenge his disability and make the best of his learning. In addition, some recommendations are meant for the ordinary students who have a visually impaired colleague in the class.

### **1. Recommendations for the EFL Teacher**

- The teacher should take into consideration the place where the visually impaired learner should sit in in the classroom, which depends on his vision disability's level. As for the visually impaired learner who have a residual vision, it is necessary to place him in the front in order to help him better see the board and better hear the teacher's explanation. Thus, the teacher should have a clear idea about the learner's disability in order to place him appropriately.
- The teacher should notify the students when he enters or leaves the class, so that the visually impaired learner can notice his presence or absence.
- The teacher should address the visually impaired learner by his name in order to let him know that he is the one addressed and keep his attention and concentration on the lesson or the task undergoing.

- The teacher should address the rest of the students using precise language, especially when they are working in groups, so that the visually impaired learner know if his group is the one addressed by the teacher.
- When the teacher writes on the board, he should read aloud what he wrote so that the visually impaired learner can follow him and take notes.
- When using pictures or any other material that requires the learner's vision sense, the teacher should describe them with details in order to help the visually impaired learner grasp the information and keep up to date to his classmates.
- The teacher may intensify the group activities during the session, so that the visually impaired learner get in touch with his classmates and feel more comfortable instead of feeling excluded, as well as to keep him active and motivated.
- During the lesson, the teacher should control the noise for the fact that visually impaired learner's attention is easily constructed, so that he enables him to concentrate better. As well as he should raise his voice when explaining in order to help the visually impaired learner to grasp every information communicated in the lecture.
- The classroom environment should be organized and free from obstacles in order to guarantee a safe and comfortable mobility for the visually impaired learner.
- The teacher should have an idea about the visually impaired learner's ability to read and write; students with residual vision may be able to read and write large size prints, however, those who suffer from sever vision disability can read and write only using the Braille forms. At this level, the teacher may provide the visually impaired learner with homework, test, or exam papers with a large size print. However, for the totally blind student he may

ask the help of special teachers to type or read for him the Braille forms, which will be of great help for the learner in terms of saving time and effort.

- In tests or official exams, the teacher may use this web site to translate the papers from the English alphabet to the Braille (<https://www.branah.com/braille-translator>). After, he can contact the special schools of blind pupils in which he can ask them to print the exam cheats.

## **2. Recommendations for Ordinary Students**

For a visually impaired learner, it would be of great help if his ordinary classmates provides him with assistance as much as possible. For instance, reading for him a book, an article, or an essay that the English teacher asks them to read or analyze. Yet, if the student is unable to read for his visually impaired classmate, he can use recording, which can be an effective way to enable the visually impaired learner to catch up the tasks or even the lectures.

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# Appendices

# Appendix A: Classroom Observation Checklist

## Classroom Observation Checklist

**Observer:** .....

**Session:** .....

**Course:** .....

**Teacher:** .....

**Number of students:** .....

**Date:** .....

**Time:** .....

### Section One: Learning Environment

Classroom Organization	Well observed	Fairly observed	Not Observed
1. The physical atmosphere is suitable for the learners' special Needs(well organized, large space, no noise)			
2. The seating arrangement favors effective interaction between the teacher and the learners			
3. The seating arrangement is according to the severity of the learners' visual impairments			
4. The materials ( the use of assistive technology for the Visually impaired)			
<b>Comments</b>			

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**Section Two: the Visually Impaired Learners**

<b>Statements</b>	<b>Well observed</b>	<b>Fairly observed</b>	<b>Not observed</b>
1. students have good rapport with the teacher ( teacher knows the names of all students, mutual understanding, empathy)			
2. Students show willingness to participate in the classroom Tasks and activities			
3. Students are continually engaged (listening, taking notes, answering questions)			
4. Students are encouraged to ask clarification questions about the content of the lesson			
5. Students rely on the teacher in different tasks (guidance, assistance, and support)			
6. Students enjoy effective communication with the teacher ( discussions, debates, and conversations)			
7. Students show willingness to practice classroom activities and tasks individually			
8. Students show willingness to practice classroom activities and tasks on pairs			
9. Students show willingness to practice activities and tasks in small/ large groups			

<b>Comments</b>

### **Section Three: The Teacher's Role**

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Well observed</b>	<b>Fairly observed</b>	<b>Not observed</b>
1. The teacher establishes a good relationship with learners (addresses each one by his name, effectively communicates with them, sense of humor, warm classroom climate)			
2. The teacher considers the different visual disabilities of learners when delivering the lessons, giving instructions, and doing classroom activities			
3. The teacher uses various techniques, instructions, and tasks in order to make things more comprehensible and accessible for learners			
4. The teacher applies multiple methods for evaluating the learning outcomes (informal observation, collaborative activities, oral questions, simple tasks at the end of the lesson)			
5. The teacher encourages learners' engagement and praises their efforts (asks them questions, gives them time to answer, encourages them to answer each other's questions)			
6. The teacher uses assistive technologies to facilitate the students' learning task (computer, audiobooks...)			
7. The teacher always guides, monitors, and assists learners' practice of skills and procedures			

8. The teacher uses individual instructions			
9. The teacher uses peer/small or large group instructions			
<b>Comments</b>			

# Appendix B: Learner's Questionnaire

## Students' Questionnaire

Dear student,

You are kindly requested to fill in this questionnaire, which is an attempt to gathering information needed for the accomplishment of the research entitled "Investigating the EFL Teacher's Role in Dealing with Visually Impaired Learners". We would be so grateful if you could sincerely answer the following questions.

### Section One: Background Information

- Gender: Male  Female
- Age: ..... years old
- Your family's standard of living: Excellent  Good  Bad
- Your school grades are: Excellent  Good  Intermediate  Bad
- Your Grades in English are: Excellent  Good  Intermediate  Bad
- Do you find difficulties in learning English? Yes  No

If yes, in which of the following categories? (You can choose more than one option)

1. Reading
2. Writing
3. Listening
4. Speaking

➤ How do you prefer to work?

- Alone  In pairs  In groups

➤ Where do you like to be taught?

a. Special school

b. Regular school

## Section Two: The teacher's Role with Visually Impaired Learners

Tick (✓) on the answer you find appropriate:

Statement	Yes	No
1. When you face difficulties in understanding a lesson or doing a particular activity. Do your teacher assists you?		
2. Do you enjoy a special care from your teacher?		
3. Do your teacher encourages your participation in the classroom?		
4. Do your teacher use technology in the session (laptop, audiobooks...)?		
5. Do your teacher raise his voice when explaining the lesson?		
6. Do your teacher give you enough time for doing the activities or passing exams?		
7. Does your vision disability affects your achievements in English?		

**Thank you.**

## **Appendix C: Teacher's Interview**

### **Teacher's Interview**

Dear teacher,

You are kindly invited to take part in our research that is entitled "Investigating the EFL Teacher's Role in Dealing with Visually Impaired Learners". Your answers of this interview will be very helpful for us to do this research.

1. How long have you been teaching English in this special school?
2. Have you received any kind of training about teaching the VI learner?
3. How the training is going (the program, the duration, the activities... etc.)?
4. How do you find the English-teaching task for VI learners?
5. What are the methods and techniques you use in teaching VI learners?
6. Why do you use these techniques for particular?
7. Do you use technology often?
8. What are the main difficulties you face when teaching VI learners?
9. Do you provide learners with assessment to facilitate the language-learning task?
10. Do you have any other suggestions to facilitate the difficulties both teachers and students face?
11. Do you help ordinary teachers from secondary school and university who have VI learners (advice, guidance, typing or reading Braille papers...)?
12. Do you think that ordinary teachers in secondary school and university need to be trained to teach VI learners?

**Thank you for your cooperation.**

## Appendix D: Authorization

الجمهورية الجزائرية الديمقراطية الشعبية  
وزارة التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي



كلية الآداب و اللغات  
قسم الآداب و اللغات الأجنبية  
رقم : 39... / ش. / 2020  
شعبة الإنجليزية

إلى السيد: مدير مدرسة الأطفال المعوقين بصريا لولاية  
بسكرة

### الموضوع : طلب تصريح لإجراء تربص

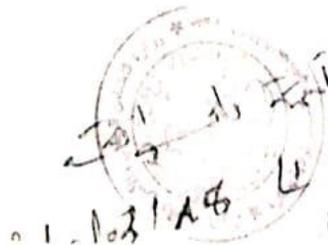
يشرفني أن ألتبس من سيادتكم تمكين الطالب (ة): أسماء عتروس صاحبة رقم التسجيل :  
15/35049926 من إجراء تربص مع التلاميذ والأساتذة في مؤسستكم .  
أحيطكم علما سيدي أن هذه الطالبة تدرس لغة إنجليزية في السنة الثانية ماستر بجامعة  
محمد خيذر ببسكرة وهي بحاجة إلى هذا التربص من أجل بحثها.  
وفي إنتظار قبول هذا الطلب ، تقبلو منا سيدي فائق الإحترام وخالص الشكر و الإمتنان.

بسكرة في : 2019/02/17

نائب العميد المكلف بما بعد التدرج والبحث العلمي  
والعلاقات الخارجية

مسؤول الشعبة

مسؤول شعبة الإنجليزية



Handwritten notes and signatures at the bottom right of the document, including the number 08 and a signature.

## المخلص

الدراسة الحالية تهدف لاكتشاف بعض الصعوبات التي قد تواجه أستاذ اللغة الإنجليزية عند تدريس تلميذ معاق بصريا، وكذلك للتحقق من الدور الفعال الذي يمكن أن يلعبه من أجل تقليل تأثير إعاقة التلميذ على أدائه الأكاديمي. كما نسعى من خلال هذا البحث إلى اكتشاف بعض استراتيجيات التعليم الفعالة التي يطبقها أساتذة متخصصون في تدريس التلميذ المعاق بصريا. كمنطلق للبحث افترضنا أن كون الأساتذة غير ملمين باحتياجات التلميذ المعاق بصريا قد يخلق صعوبة في التعامل معه، بالإضافة إلى نقص الوسائل التقنية المساعدة. كما أن الأستاذ قد يعتمد كلياً على مهارة الاستماع في التدريس. من أجل التأكد من صحة الفرضيات المقترحة تم اختيار المنهج الوصفي كمنهج للبحث باستخدام ثلاثة أدوات لجمع البيانات اللازمة. والتي تم تنفيذها في متوسطة طه حسين للتلاميذ المكفوفين بولاية بسكرة، تحديداً مع قسم الرابعة متوسط. الأدوات التي تم استعمالها في هذا البحث تتمثل في قائمة الملاحظات العينية التي ستساعد على كشف طريقة تعامل الأستاذ مع التلميذ المعاق بصريا داخل القسم وطريقة تعليمه. كوسيلة ثانية لجمع المعلومات تم توزيع استبيان على تلاميذ نفس الفصل (مستوى السنة الرابعة). بينما تم إجراء مقابلات مع أستاذي اللغة الانجليزية بمدرسة طه حسين. بعد جمع البيانات باستخدام الأدوات الثلاثة المذكورة سابقاً تم تحليلها وتفسيرها، حيث أظهرت النتائج أن أستاذ اللغة الإنجليزية يواجه صعوبات معتبرة عند تدريس التلميذ المعاق بصريا. من بين الصعوبات غياب لغة الجسد التي تساعد على إيصال الفكرة للتلميذ، كذلك اعتماد تقنيات قديمة لعدم توفر الوسائل اللازمة. من خلال المعطيات نستطيع القول بأن معرفة الأستاذ للصعوبات التي تواجه التلميذ المعاق بصريا وادراكه لاحتياجاته الخاصة قد يساعده في التعامل معه ويزوده بطرق تعليمية فعالة. كذلك ضرورة توفر الوسائل التكنولوجية الجديدة الذي سيكون عاملاً جديداً لمساعد الأستاذ من أجل التقليل من التحديات التي تواجه التلميذ المعاق بصريا ومساعدته على تحقيق مستوى أفضل في تعلم اللغة الانجليزية وتحصيل نتائج جيدة في المادة.