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A Suggested Program for the Hearing Impaired Students at the Primary Stage and Its Effect on Developing their English Vocabulary

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Abstract

The present study aimed at investigating the effectiveness of using CL techniques on fostering HI pupils' English vocabulary. The sample of the present study comprised an experimental group (N=8) and a control group (N=5). The subjects of the experimental group and control group were from Al-Amal school for Hearing impaired students at El-Kablat.

The instruments of the present study consisted of:

- 1- The pre-post vocabulary achievement test (The VAT),
- 2- The social skills holistic scoring rubric (The SSHSR),
- 3- The checklist for assessing pupils' social skills,
- 4- The cooperative learning (CL) vocabulary program, and
- 5- The HI pupils' satisfaction questionnaire.

The results of the study were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The pupils' responses to the satisfaction questionnaire revealed positive attitudes towards the use of CL. The results proved that the CL vocabulary program was satisfactorily effective in developing HI pupils' vocabulary at the primary stage.

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List of Abbreviations

1	The Pre-Post Vocabulary Test (The VAT)
2	The Social Skills Holistic Scoring Rubric (The SSHSR)
3	Cooperative Learning (CL)
4	Hearing Impaired (HI)

Chapter One

Background and Problem

1.1 Introduction

1.2 Problem of the Study

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1.4 Hypotheses of the Study

1.5 Limitations of the Study

1.6 Definition of terms

1.7 Significance of the Study

1.8 Organization of the Remainder of the Study

Chapter One

Background and Problem

1.1 Introduction

No one can deny that the hearing impaired students must have the right to get the care and attention which they really deserve. They must be given every possible chance to learn and benefit from the various branches of knowledge. The educational sector could help them to become active and productive in their society.

As defined by **Cloud (1988)**, special education is "instruction designed for students who require some degree of modification in their educational programs because of intellectual, emotional, sensory, or physical impairments". Special education tailors its educational services to develop the fullest potential of students with disabilities, including the hearing impaired (HI) students who have special needs and characteristics.

The hearing impairment have a strong effect on the HI student's psychological characteristics, which have a strong effect on all the HI student's actions. They feel hampered by their handicaps, they have a strong feeling of isolation and frustration, as indicated by **Marschark (1993)**, and they suffer from social stigmatization and low self-esteem as a result of hearing impairment, as mentioned by **the world health organization (2006) and Worehan, Clark and Langueser (2001)**.

The HI students often experience delayed development of speech, language and cognitive skills, which may result in slow learning and difficulty progressing in school. The impact of hearing impairment on students' speech, language, education and social integration depends on

the level and type of hearing impairment, as mentioned by **World Health Organization (2006)**.

In developed countries, the HI students attend regular public school classes with their hearing peers, researches such as those of **Sperces, Deyo and Grind (1990) and Katz and Mirerda (2002)** in the field of deaf education proved that they could reach a high level of achievement in education. According to **Stainack, Stainack, and Shevir (1994)** mainstream classes provide the deaf student with the opportunity to share his needs and interests.

On the contrary, in Egypt, the HI students are taught, away from their heard peers, in special schools called Al Amal institutions. Studying the situation in such school, (**Mohamed ,1996, p.105**) concur that:

- All the curricula that are being taught to deaf students are not designed for them.
- Teachers almost complain about the dearth of teaching aids and materials appropriate for the HI, they depend only on the blackboard.
- Ways of teaching depend often on lecturing instead of engaging students in group work and other reinforcing activities.

Looking at the various curricula which are designed for the HI students reveals that English is at a prominent position as it is an integral part of all fields of knowledge.

Ghoneem (2000) stressed that in Egypt learning English language is a must for the hearing students and the hearing impaired students as well. He stated that teaching English language as a foreign language to the hearing impaired students works for enhancing their social and cultural identity, developing their cognitive and vocational abilities.

In addition to its effect on psychological aspects, as it works for releasing them from the feeling of inferiority.

According to *Smith (1997)*, the four skills of English depend basically on acquiring vocabulary, students, can not communicate, convey ideas and a grasp others transmitted to them without vocabulary. Vocabulary acquisition is a key component to successfully developing communication and literacy skills (*Belisle, 1997*).

There is a close relation between vocabulary recognition and reading comprehension (*Izwan, 1997; Paul, 1996 & Baker, 2000*), in the sense that "messages are composed of ideas, and ideas are expressed in some vocabulary". Consequently, any deficiency in learning vocabulary leads to difficulties in learning English in general.

Henceforth, teaching vocabulary needs more attention on the teacher's part in order to meet the HI students' needs. **Paul (1996)** concludes that it is important for HI students to "learn" vocabulary. **Thompson, Simonson and Hargrave (1992)** indicate that pictures are very helpful in increasing comprehension and to facilitate recognition and recall for vocabulary. **Oweensland Deaf Society (2006)** indicate that it is important to give visual clues to HI students, these include concrete materials, real life or life-like materials, hands-on experiences, and pictures captioned video to make instructional material easy to learn. Thus, pictures and visual materials are prerequisites for teaching vocabulary. Also, using gesture and facial expressions is important, as indicate by **Nottingham University (2006)**.

Schimer (1994) indicate that games and simulations can be very effective in teaching. Researchers in the area of teaching vocabulary, namely **Waring (1998) and Moras (2001)**, state that working in groups produces greater academic progress and encourage students to:

- a) Become independent learners instead of being dependent on their teacher's knowledge.
- b) Use the items learnt to overcome forgetting them and
- c) Construct meaning rather than to memorize items.

A good learning for hearing impaired students is to a large extent a sub-set of good learning for all (*Wareham; Clark & Laugesen, 2001*). The important properties of good teaching are a commitment to encouraging student independence and using teaching methods and academic tasks that require students to learn actively, responsibly and cooperatively (*Ramsden, 1992*).

One of needs of hearing impaired students is to have opportunities to work cooperatively in groups (*British Columbia Ministry of Education, 1994*). Students with disabilities in the cooperative learning condition demonstrated significantly greater achievement than did those in the individualized instruction group (*Hunt; Staub et al., 1994; Kamps; Barbetta; Leonard & Delquadri, 1994, King-Sears, 1997*). Equally important, the positive impact of co-operative learning on students' social interactions and self-concept development has also been documented (*Mc Donnell, 1998*).

In the light of what is previously mentioned, an urgent question poses itself. How English vocabulary is taught and learnt in Al Amal classes for HI pupils in Egypt? A close examination of the current situation in these classes reveals the following:

- The HI students study the same curriculum being taught to the hearing students. The activities included in it concentrate on developing the student's listening and speaking skills. For example, the exercises: listen and repeat, Look and say, sing the song....etc. cannot be taught to the HI students. These activities are deleted and

substituted with lists of words and students are asked to memorize these lists as they are.

- The teacher's Guide is directed only to teachers of the hearing students, no advice is given to teachers of the HI about the methodology and teaching aids for this category of students in order to facilitate learning English, especially its vocabulary.
- Teachers use lecturing techniques almost all the time. They barely engage students in active vocabulary learning. They do not present suitable stimuli that help students reach the meaning by themselves.

Thus, it can be said that in such classes the most important thing is 'what' no 'how' vocabulary is learnt. This does not meet the needs of the HI and deprives them from having rich vocabulary learning experiences'. as **Dochrell and Messer (1999)** mention.

1.2 Problem of the study

In spite of the importance of teaching vocabulary, and based on the previously mentioned drawbacks, it could be said that vocabulary teaching at Al Amal schools for the HI was restricted to memorizing lists of vocabulary and asking students to write them over and over. Deprived from seeing visual aids and providing them with reinforcing tactile and visual aids, the HI students easily forget and fail to recognize English vocabulary. Consequently, they have problems in reading comprehension.

This problem is supported by:

Mohamed's (1996) study which is the Egyptian study in the field of teaching EFL to the HI students. This study highlighted the fact that English vocabulary is one of the problematic areas faced by the HI students.

Interviews were conducted by the researcher with both teachers and students at Al Amal school for the HI. During these interviews,

certain questions were asked such as: How do you teach English vocabulary? Do you use teaching aids to facilitate vocabulary learning?

What do you know about cooperative learning (CL) and how to use it in teaching vocabulary? Are you satisfied with your students' level of vocabulary? Results of these informal interviews showed that teachers teach vocabulary through some lists of words; that they heard of CL but they do not know how to implement it in their classes; that they do not use teaching aids in English classes and that they are dissatisfied with their students' level of learning vocabulary.

Similarly, a group of students were asked the following questions (by using sign language , lipreading , finger spelling , speech reading and written communication) : Do you like studying vocabulary? Do you like working in groups? Their responses showed that they consider learning vocabulary a tedious job as reflected in their statement', we write words over and over, then a few hours later we forget them. Thus, we hate learning vocabulary'. In addition, they reported that they do not know how to work in groups. At the end of the interview, the HI students asked for techniques that would make learning vocabulary easier and more pleasant.

1.3 Statement of the problem

The problem of this study is 'the poor vocabulary of the HI students as well as their poor motivation towards learning English vocabulary". Thus, this study attempted to answer the following main question:

How can a program based on CL be designed for developing 4th year HI primary students' vocabulary?

To answer this main question, the following sub-questions were be also answered:

- 1) What is the vocabulary that the 4th –year HI primary students need?
- 2) What is the current situation concerning the students' vocabulary?