



7th International Conference on Intercultural Education “Education, Health and ICT for a Transcultural World”, EDUHEM 2016, 15-17 June 2016, Almeria, Spain

ICT in teaching foreign languages to adult people with acquired severe visual impairment

Olga Malinovská* & Libuše Ludíková

Institute of Special Education Studies, Faculty of Education, Palacký University in Olomouc, Olomouc 771 40, Czech Republic

Abstract

Introduction. Learning a foreign language is an essential part of all levels of the education system in the modern society. Nevertheless a common language course may not be appropriate for a person with severe visual impairment. During the course of the English language for adults with visual impairment it was possible to ask the students which way of teaching was satisfactory for them and how it was possible to take advantage of new technologies such as email and the internet. **Methods:** This qualitative research was conducted through interviews and studying clients' documentation. The participants were persons with severe visual impairment acquired in adult age who had previously used eyesight in all areas of life. Currently, these individuals use language learning services provided by a local specialized center for persons with visual impairment, where the study was conducted. **Results:** Participant of the study were not able to read the Braille, or they could read it very slowly and ineffectively. Not using any text materials during the lessons and sending homework, vocabulary and writing exercises by email was considered very successful by the students. The interviewees were completely satisfied and stated this method was the most effective. As for the online resources (for example grammar explanation etc.) sent by email, some websites were non-blind-friendly, which can reduce the motivation to study.

© 2017 The Authors. Published by Elsevier Ltd. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

Peer-review under responsibility of the organizing committee of EDUHEM 2016.

Keywords: visual impairment; foreign languages; ESL; didactics, adults

* Corresponding author. *E-mail address:* olga.malinovska01@upol.cz

1. Introduction

Teaching foreign languages is a very modern trend today. Nowadays, language skills and knowledge are fundamental aspects that should be developed by all citizens of the European Union throughout their whole lives. Communication in foreign languages and the ability to understand brings more opportunities to meet other people and to find out about various cultures and nations, greater mobility across the EU member countries, but more importantly, better chances on the European labor market, which is currently focused on knowledge and performance.

Language education of the young generation is just as important as educating adults. Adult education has been neglected in the past, but today is gaining importance among educational disciplines. This is evidenced not only by the emergence of separate educational fields at universities, but also by the emergence of universities of the third age, various courses for both adults and seniors. Continuing education is not an exception today, but rather a trend and a modern direction with increasing popularity. The UN report mentioned above clearly implies that our society is rapidly ageing. However, the standard of living and health of this population is better compared with previous generations. Similarly, the retirement age increases. An important aspect is employment, not only as a source of finance, but also in terms of maintaining a certain social role and social status. All these factors point to a necessity for quality education in all areas, both for the intact population and persons with health disability.

As evidenced by statistics (Pascolini & Mariotti, 2012), the incidence of visual impairment increases with age – the number of visually impaired persons begins to rise in the middle age and gradually increases. Considering the above, the number of adult persons with acquired visual impairment is likely to rise. While persons with acquired mild visual impairment are able to compensate for this situation using technical aids, persons with acquired severe visual impairment need to adapt to a new life situation and learn to live differently.

Adults with severe visual impairment wish to study languages just as the intact population. Knowledge of a foreign language can help not only reduce the information deficit as a result of visual impairment, but also find a better job or attract new customers and partners. However, these people do not often have the opportunity to participate in usual language courses held by language agencies, because especially blind persons cannot work with printed material as other participants, and therefore cannot develop their language competences in an appropriate manner. As a result, there is a large niche – very few language courses adapted for adults with visual impairment, on the other hand, teachers in mainstream language schools and agencies often do not know how to work with these clients and whether and how they can adapt commonly used study materials. Although participants with visual impairment are usually provided with appropriate technical aids, teachers often do not know how to use these aids and how to adapt teaching materials for their clients.

An important part of the modern society is also the internet and related foreign language sources – blogs, videos, podcasts, wiki, recordings, chat programs, social networks, online games and exercises. Although not all of them will be used by persons with severe visual impairment, there are several means that can be used in teaching, especially electronic mail and online videos and recordings. The present research study also focuses on this area of teaching foreign languages.

2. Didactics of foreign languages

The term didactics comes from the Greek *didaskein*, which means “I learn” or “I teach”, another possible translation is “educating oneself”. Podlahová (2012) defines didactics as one of the disciplines in the system of educational sciences. The umbrella concept is general didactics, which is further divided into vocational didactics, extracurricular didactics and school didactics. Skalková (2007) further adds that “*field didactics form a separate discipline in addition to general didactics. At the moment field didactics is rapidly developing. ... Field didactics relates to all subjects in general or specific subject areas (... writing, basic humanities and natural science, foreign languages). ... Cultivating field didactics assumes good knowledge of educational sciences and psychology, as well as sound knowledge of the relevant disciplines, to which field didactics is related. At the same time, didactics and field didactics are closely correlated.*” (p. 18)

At present, a new term of linguodidactics emerged in the Czech scientific environment; this term is sometimes wrongly interpreted as foreign language didactics. Choděra (2006) states that the term linguodidactics includes foreign

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/5125743>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/5125743>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)