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Uses of Learning Media for Improving the Use of Proverbs in Communication of Students with Vision Disabilities

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Abstract

The purposes of the study were (1) to develop a learning media for improving the use of proverbs in the communication of students with vision disabilities, (2) to study the effect of the developed media on the use of proverbs in the communication of students with vision disabilities, and (3) to study students' satisfaction toward the developed media. The study was divided into two phases the development of learning media and the implementation of the media. The participants were a group of 5 scholars in related areas employed in developing the learning media and a group of 7 visually impaired students employed in the implementation phase. The instruments were a learning media developed in an audiobook in the DAISY system, a media evaluation form, a pre-posttest, and a questionnaire. The data were analyzed using the mean score, standard deviation, t-test, and content analysis. The results of the study show that (1) the learning media for improving the use of proverbs in the communication of students with vision disabilities was designed in an audiobook in the DAISY system and evaluated to be appropriate by experts in the area; (2) The developed learning media was effective in developing the use of proverbs in the communication of

students with vision disabilities; (3) the developed learning media could bring about satisfaction in learning to a language class of visually impaired learners. The results of the study could be beneficial for teachers seeking ideas in managing language classes with blind students and scholars who are interested in studying how assistive technology help visually impaired students learn language skills.

Keywords: Students with vision disabilities, Language learning, Assistive technology

1. Introduction

Learning disparity is an issue scholars aim to deal with in the 21st century. Advance in technology is used to help learners with fewer opportunities in learning to cope with the difficulties faced in classes. This includes learners with vision disabilities who are expected to have equal rights in education. According to the United Nations (2006), countries must take steps to ensure that people with disabilities have access to an inclusive, high-quality, and free primary and secondary education on an equal footing with others in their communities. Therefore, educators have to figure out ways to empower disabled people's learning and their opportunities in life.

Communicative skill is one of the crucial skills for the human being. As Human beings are a social species, we rely on cooperation to survive in nature and modern world society. Therefore, to develop a county, the government should make sure that communicative skills are to be acquired by its citizens. According to Hargie (2019), communicative skills are diverse as people could use both language and non-language mediums of communication to express messages. From a receptive point of view, people have to process input to comprehend the message and provide output that could respond to it (Wikins, 1972). Therefore, the achievement of instructing communication skills relies on success in developing learners' ability to maintain the processes of communication using language abilities, body movements, etc.

Moreover, the communicative skill also includes the use of proverbs as art in language expression. Learners who can process proverbs in the receptive skill and use proverbs in their output production could be considered in a more advanced stage of language acquisition (Ellis, 2004). According to Bronshteyn and Gustafson (2015) the use of proverbs and phrasal verbs proves that a learner of a language, develop their knowledge enough to apply techniques to develop aesthetic of language expression. Therefore, the use of proverbs could also be included in the language curriculum in many countries.

It could be seen that the ability to maintain communication and to use proverbs in communication becomes a challenge for learners as they need to develop both verbal and physical language skills to interpret input and create output. Moreover, the challenge is greater for persons with visual disabilities in learning communication skills. According to Safitri (2020) human beings start learning language by imitating verbal movements of caretakers and trying in their processes of sound making. Without vision, persons with visual disabilities do not have the same opportunity to learn using language in the same method. Moreover, children also learn words by making the connection between words and

surrounding objects. Being unable to see makes it difficult to learn words used to describe objects and results in a delay in language development in toddlers with visual impairment (Harrison & Crow, 1933). However, adaptability normally found to be greater among the impaired plays a great role in language learning and equals the quality of visually impaired leaners' language uses to the sighted one's (Warren, 1994).

Therefore, an instructional method that could help learners with visual impairment cope with the learning difficulty and develop the use of proverbs in their communication should be applied in the class. In detail, the nature of visual disabled learners in language learning to select an appropriate approach that can develop their abilities. The current study applied the research and development approach in the design by studying the needs in developing communicative skills and the use of proverbs to create learning media to instruct Thai proverbs for Thai L1 students with visual disabilities. The purposes of the study were (1) to develop a learning media for improving the use of proverbs in the communication of students with vision disabilities, (2) to study the effect of the developed media on the use of proverbs in the communication of students with vision disabilities, and (3) to study students' satisfaction toward the developed media.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Learning Development and Visual Disability

It's a must to note that visual impairments need specific teaching to develop their learning. Harrison and Crow (1993) suggested that visually disabled learners rely on their learning on concrete experience. For example, in learning a word they need to touch the object to acquire it. Learning the word "water" needs conceptualization of something they touch and feel wet. Therefore, abstract ideas should not be instructed if learners do not understand specific concepts. Moreover, it should be noted that visual impairments utilize different cognitive processes in learning. Students normally process information using any senses they can. Poor or low eyesight makes it difficult for learners with visual impairment in making connections between experiences. They have to rely on other senses such as smelling, touching, and hearing to develop a piece of knowledge. Instructors should be aware that there is some information that could not be learned through these senses to avoid failure in teaching visually disabled students (Kızılaslan, 2020). In addition, it has to be noted that visual impairment disrupts the motor skills of the students. Therefore, curriculum designers should not include learning activities that require movements as it could be a disadvantage to students with visual disabilities (Schreuer, Sachs, & Rosenblum 2014). Moreover, what cannot be forgotten is the emotional aspects of instruction. For example, teachers should focus on other senses to replace eye contact to form a relationship with students (Roe & Webster, 1998). Touching and the use of tones could help the students ease with the learning environment. These issues should be considered when managing learning experiences for students with visual impairment.

2.2 Visual Impairment and Language Learning

Regarding language learning, there are also issues needed to be considered in teaching

communicative skills for visual impairments. First, it should be noted that learners with visual impairment can master their first and second languages. According to Mills (1993), lack of vision is not the reason why a visually disabled person fails to learn a language but the input they receive. Warren (1994) found that with adaptive abilities, the reason why visually impaired children learn a language later than sighted children is that they go through the same stags at a slower speed. It could be noted that even though blind children could not develop some linguistic concept, they can learn a language properly. The flexible nature of language makes it possible for infants with learning adaptability. For example, instead of making the connection between what they see and the word they heard, visually impaired children can use touching and hearing. Başaran (2012) suggested that visually impaired and sighted children similarly employ language. Evidence shows that blind people can better remember audio input and faster process speech sound than the sighted (Amedi et al, 2003; Stevens & Weaver, 2005). In addition, Pérez-Pereira and Conti-Ramsden (2001) found that they have a better focus on language which results in greater attention in learning. At this point, with an appropriate instructional method, visually impaired students could progress in their language learning.

2.3 Teaching Language to Students with Visual Disabilities

As mentioned visually impaired students need specific instruction to master a language. There are some principles needed to be considered in designing an instructional tool to develop their language skills. First, it must be noted that separating the blind from the class is contradict to human rights principle. Visually impaired students need social aspects in learning and life. The assistance should apply in regular class environments. Creating a specific class for the blind should be avoided (Scheiman, Scheiman, & Whittaker 2011). Moreover, educators should note that learning language skills is different but not difficult for visually impaired students. Arenas (2012) suggested that memory, hearing, and attention are protagonists in language learning for the blind. Therefore, curriculum designers should make sure that the method applied in the class make use of these sensories. Moreover, the communicative approach is recommended for language teaching as it matches how the blind exposes to language in real life (Couper, 1996). As visually impaired learners rely on hearing and trying to copy the sound, they learn a language in chunks. Therefore, teaching grammar in an audio-lingual approach might not match the nature of learners.

2.4 Previous Studies

As language is a means of communication, and it needs specific consideration in developing visually impaired students, scholars have been studied possible solutions for the problems encountered by the visible impaired. For example, Álvarez (2019), conducted a qualitative study to understand the processes of language learning in both L1 and L2 of visually impaired students in Mexico. The study found that blind children can develop their language skills successfully using a different path but at the same speed as the sighted ones. They can also use techniques in language expressions such as communicative strategies and phrases. Moreover, it was also reported that information technology tools such as videos, video streaming, and audiobooks are beneficial in the development of language skills. Susanto and

Nanda (2018) studied the processes of teaching and learning English of visually impaired students in Indonesia using a qualitative method. It was found that technology such as Non-Visual Desktop Access (NVDA) and Job Access with Speech (JAWS) could assist learners in learning English. It could be interpreted that with the support of assistive technology, visually impaired students can develop unique ways of learning a foreign language. Likewise, Hersh and Johnson (2008) suggested that assistive technology helps blind learners to immediately access information. Therefore, the use of computer-assisted language learning, computer-assisted vocabulary learning, screen reader, DAISY books and players, digital recorder, and the reading machine is recommended. However, Jannok and Suppasetseree (2019) found that one of the challenges faced by language learning for the blind is learning material as teachers are incapable of creating their instruments due to lack of time or limited knowledge of technology. It could be noted from the previous studies that technology plays a great role in supporting blind learners in learning a language. However, the technology used with the blind is complicated, and not every individual could develop the teaching material themselves. Therefore, developing learning media needs careful consideration of situations, problems, and needs in a certain educational context. .

3. Methodology

The study was divided into 2 phases namely the learning media development and the implementation of the media. The detail of each phase could be seen below.

3.1 Phase 1: The Development of Learning Media

The participants were 5 scholars in Thai Language teaching, visually impairment instruction, and information technology selected by a purposive sampling method. The instruments were a focus group discussion and media evaluation form. The former was employed with the main discussing issue in developing learning media to teach Thai Proverbs to the visually impaired students considering both teacher and student aspects, and the latter consists of 4 aspects of feasibility, correctness, validity, and appropriateness designed in 5 Likert scales. The data analysis employed mean score, standard deviation, and content analysis.

3.2 Phase 2: The Implementation of the Learning Media

The participants were 7 visually impaired students in Rajabhat Maha Sarakham University, Thailand selected by a purposive sampling method. All participants were with blindness according to the definition of the World Health Organization (2021). The instruments were the developed learning media, pre and postest, and a satisfaction questionnaire. The data analysis employed mean score, standard deviation, t-test.

4. Results

The results of the study are discussed along with the purposes of the study. The detail can be seen below.

4.1 To Develop a Learning Media for Improving the Use of Proverbs in the Communication of Students with Vision Disabilities

The result of the focus group discussion could be concluded that the learning media for improving the use of proverbs in the communication of students with vision disabilities was to be developed in a DAISY audiobook which is the tool that matches teachers' technology knowledge, time, and budget. It was also considered matching students' needs in terms of user comfortability and learning processes. The content of the learning media included the background information of Thai proverbs, Thai proverbs used in daily life, and a summary. A software called T Tobi v 2.5.0.0 was used in the production. The learning media quality evaluation can be seen below.

Table 1. Learning media quality evaluation

Aspects	$\bar{x}$	**S.D**
Feasibility	4.60	0.54
Correctness	4.40	0.54
Validity	4.60	0.54
Appropriateness	4.60	0.54
Overall	4.55	0.54

The results of the study indicate that The developed learning media for improving the use of proverbs in the communication of students with vision disabilities was found to be of a very high quality ($\bar{x}$ = 4.55, S.D. = 0.54) rated by 5 experts in the related areas. In detail, 3 aspects of feasibility ($\bar{x}$ = 4.60, S.D. = 0.54), validity ($\bar{x}$ = 4.60, S.D. = 0.54), and appropriateness ($\bar{x}$ = 4.60, S.D. = 0.54) were rated at a very high level while the aspect of correctness ($\bar{x}$ = 4.40, S.D. = 0.54) was rated at a high level. It could be interpreted that the developed learning media was in a quality that appropriates for improving the use of proverbs in the communication of students with vision disabilities.

4.2 To Study the Effect of the Developed Media on the Use of Proverbs in the Communication of Students with Vision Disabilities

Table 2. The effectiveness of the learning media on the development of the use of proverbs in the communication of students with vision disabilities

Students' performances	**N**	**X̄**	**S.D.**	**t**	**p**
Pretest	7	13	4.95	2.8701	0.014
Postest	7	15.8	2.93		

The results of the study show that the implementation of the developed learning media on 7 blind students in Rajabhat Maha Sarakham University indicates the improvement of improving the use of proverbs in communication. A paired samples t-test shows that the students' performances in the posttest ($\bar{x}$ = 15.8, S.D. = 2.93) were significantly higher than in the pretest ($\bar{x}$ = 15.8, S.D. = 2.93), t = 2.87, p = 0.01. It could be interpreted that the developed DAISY audiobook was beneficial in developing visually impaired students' abilities to use Thai proverbs in communication.

4.3 To Study Students' Satisfaction toward the Developed Media

The aspects of satisfaction toward the developed media include content and presentation, language and audio quality, Thai proverbs, and tests. The questionnaire was verbally read for the participants to rate each aspect. The questionnaire was designed in 5 Likert scales. The detail of students' satisfaction toward the developed media can be seen below.

Table 3. The detail of students' satisfaction toward the developed media

Aspects	**$\bar{x}$**	**S.D.**
Content and presentation	4.28	0.45
Language and audio quality	4.17	0.73
Thai proverbs	4.36	0.65
Tests	4.00	0.93
Overall	4.17	0.77

The results of the study indicate the satisfaction toward the developed media as the overall satisfaction of students toward the learning media on the use of proverbs in the communication of students with vision disabilities was at a high level ($\bar{x}$ = 4.17, S.D = 2.77).

In detail, the aspects of content and presentation ($\bar{x}$ = 4.28, S.D. = 0.45), language and audio quality ($\bar{x}$ = 4.17, S.D. = 0.3), Thai proverbs ($\bar{x}$ = 4.36, S.D. = 0.65), and tests ($\bar{x}$ = 4.00, S.D. = 0.93) were all found at high level. It could be interpreted that the visually impaired students participating in the current study were satisfied learning with that the developed DAISY audiobook.

5. Discussions

The results of the study lead to the issues discussed below.

5.1 The Benefits of Assistive Technology in Visually Impaired Learner Language Learning

The results of the study show that the developed DAISY audiobook positively affected the use of proverbs in the communication of visually impaired students as their performances were improved after learning with the media. The results of the study confirm the benefits of assistive technology in language classrooms for the visible impaired (Álvarez, 2019; Hersh & Johnson, 2008; Jannok & Suppasetseree, 2019; Susanto & Nanda, 2018). In this study, an audiobook created with the daisy system help learners to understand how Thai proverbs are used in communication. Therefore, it is also evidence to prove that the advanced and accessible technology of the modern world provides more opportunities for anyone willing to learn.

5.2 Visually Impaired Learners and Process of Language Learning

In the current study, the participants successfully developed the use of proverbs in communication with the assistance of the DAISY audiobook. This could explain by the content of the audiobook that helped the learners to connect the proverbs to the context they should be used. Even though the students could not visibly expose to the context themselves they can use the sense of hearing and imagination gained from the illustration provided through the audiobook to comprehend the concept. The result of the study was related to Susanto & Nanda (2018) as the students could develop their methods of learning with the help of technology. Moreover, the results of the study also confirm Warren's (1994). With effective adaptability, visually impaired learners also could develop language skills at the same level as the sighted ones. In this study, the blind students not only use language to communicate, but they also add techniques (proverbs) to make their speech more aesthetic.

5.3 Teaching a Language for Visually Impaired Learners

The results of the study show that visually impaired learners could rely on hearing sense in learning Thai proverbs. With good quality of audio input visually impaired learners could connect bodies of knowledge and understand the concepts of what they learn. This requires a good sense of hearing, input processing, and attention—the qualities found in learners with visual disabilities (Amedi et al., 2003; Stevens & Weaver, 2005). This also confirms Arenas (2012) who also recommended the use of audio learning materials in teaching language skills for the blind. Moreover, the results of the study also indicate that visually impaired learners can also acquire the complex use of language expression. This extends the notion of visually impaired learners' language learning processes that rely on imitating the audio input (Couper,

1996). However, copying is not enough for learning proverbs as learners have to analyze their meaning and use them in the right context. Therefore, this is to prove that visually impaired learners could also master the language using different ways of learning.

6. Conclusion

The results of the study could be concluded that (1) the learning media for improving the use of proverbs in the communication of students with vision disabilities developed in the current study was appropriate to use in real practice; (2) The developed learning media was effective in developing the use of proverbs in the communication of students with vision disabilities; (3) the developed learning media could bring about satisfaction in learning to a language class of visually impaired learners. The results of the study could be implicated in the learning management of the blind. Educators should note that selecting assistive technology to develop language skills for visually impaired learners needs consideration of each learning context. With a limited budget, the situation could not be controlled. For example, Braille learning material could not be accessed in certain contexts and the development of computer-assisted instruction software requires high-level computing knowledge. Therefore, teachers should consider free ready-made software that could help them develop learning material for the blind. In this study, free software was employed, and it successfully develop learners' skills without asking for budget from the organization. Moreover, instructors should note that making audiobooks for the blind need more than context. Insightful explanation and demonstration would help visually impaired learners connect the form and usage of the proverbs. From an academic point of view, scholars should consider investigating how visually impaired learners expose to techniques in language expression. The uses of phrasal verbs, idioms, and jargon should explore the processes of language learning of the blind.

In terms of limitations and suggestions, the current study employed only 7 participants which might be dubious from a quantitative point of view. This is because they are the population of visually impaired learners in the university. Moreover, the study employed only quantitative data collection. Further studies are encouraged to put the qualitative aspect to broaden understanding of how the participants learn using proverbs in communication. Moreover, it can be noted that this might be a development of language learning in a local context. The international research community should note that using assistive technology could develop the complicated use of language in Thai proverbs. Therefore, it is likely that with appropriate technology aids, visually impaired language learners should also develop their skills in other languages. Further studies are, consequently, encouraged to find the most appropriate way to bring assistive technology in different learning contexts.

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