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PUJILÍ EXTENSION

DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE PEDAGOGY

ENGLISH MAJOR

RESEARCH REPORT

**TEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE TO STUDENTS WITH DOWN
SYNDROME**

Research report before obtaining the bachelor's degree in National and Foreign
Language Pedagogy, English Major

AUTHOR:

Saavedra Charcopa Venus Teresa

TUTOR:

Venegas Álvarez Gina, PhD.

PUJILÍ-ECUADOR

MARCH-2024

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Saavedra Charcopa Venus Teresa, with citizenship card No. 0803012426, declares to be the author of this RESEARCH PROJECT: "TEACHER ENGLISH LANGUAGE TO STUDENTS WITH DOWN SYNDROME", being the Gina Venega Álvarez, PhD., Tutor of this work; and, I expressly exempt the Technical University of Cotopaxi and its legal representatives from possible claims or legal actions.

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Pujilí, March 2024



Saavedra Charcopa Venus Teresa
ID: 0803012426

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As Tutor of the Research Project on the title:

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Venegas Alvarez Gina, PhD.
ID: 0501598643
TUTOR

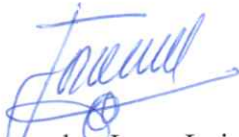
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As the Readers' Board, we approve the present Research Report in accordance with the regulatory provisions issued by the Technical University of Cotopaxi and the Pujilí Extension. This is due to the fact that the applicant: Saavedra Charcopa Venus Teresa, with the title of the Research Project "**TEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE TO STUDENTS WITH DOWN SYNDROME**", has considered the recommendations issued in a timely manner and meets the sufficient merits to be submitted to the defense of the thesis work.

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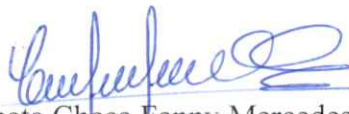
For proof they sign:



Rosero Menendez Jorge Luis, MsC.
ID: 0500862727
COMMITTE PRESIDENT



Nelly Patricia Mena Vargas, MsC.
ID: 0501574297
COMMITTE, MEMBER 1



Abata Checa Fanny Mercedes, MsC.
ID: 0502278740
COMMITTE, MEMBER 2

GRATEFULNESS

I want to express my deepest gratitude to God for being my constant guide and giving me the strength necessary to achieve this important achievement in my life. To my beloved family, I thank you for your unconditional support, love and sacrifice that have allowed me to get this far. To my dear teacher Mgs. Gina Venegas Alvarez, I appreciate your dedication, patience, and wisdom imparted throughout this academic path. Without her guidance and encouragement, this graduation project would not have been possible. I am infinitely grateful for having them in my life and for everything they have done for me.

Venus Teresa

DEDICATION

With deep gratitude and humility, I would like to dedicate this thesis first and foremost to God, who has given me the necessary strength and guided me along the right path to achieve this significant achievement. To my family but especially to my beloved mother Carmen and my grandmother Daicy who have supported me at every stage of my life, whose unconditional love and constant support have been my greatest motivation on this journey, to my little brother Liam who has inspired me every day to be a better person.

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Venus Teresa

TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY OF COTOPAXI

PUJILÍ EXTENSION

TITLE:

“TEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE TO STUDENTS WITH DOWN SYNDROME”

Author:

Saavedra Charcopa Venus Teresa

Tutor:

Venegas Álvarez Gina, PhD.

ABSTRACT

The main objective of this qualitative research was to describe the teaching and learning process of a pre-service English teacher and a student with Down Syndrome employing the Audio-Lingual Method in a rural public school in Pujilí-Cotopaxi during the academic year 2023-2024. This study was applied using the action research method. Data were collected using the teacher's journal, student survey, and observation file. The main findings regarding the teaching experiences with the Audio-Lingual Method showed that the pre-service teacher had difficulties in the first class to execute the lesson plans since the activities were not appropriate to the needs of the student, however, with The implementation of techniques based on the aforementioned method and teaching resources adapted to the girl with Down Syndrome, it was possible to obtain significant results such as the production of short sentences based on the topics covered. These results indicate that the use of the Audio-Lingual method facilitates the learning of students with Down Syndrome since it uses techniques that address the needs of these students such as short-term memory and pronunciation problems.

Keywords: Audio-Lingual Method, Down Syndrome, Pronunciation, Teaching English Language

UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA DE COTOPAXI

EXTENSIÓN PUJILÍ

TÍTULO: “ENSEÑANZA DEL INGLÉS A ALUMNOS CON SÍNDROME DE DOWN”

Author:

Saavedra Charcopa Venus Teresa

Tutor:

Venegas Álvarez Gina, PhD.

RESUMEN

El objetivo principal de esta investigación cualitativa fue describir el proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje de una profesora de inglés en formación y un estudiante con Síndrome de Down empleando el Método Audio-Lingual en una escuela pública rural de Pujilí-Cotopaxi durante el año académico 2023-2024. Este estudio se aplicó utilizando el método de investigación acción. Los datos se recolectaron utilizando el diario del maestro, la encuesta de los estudiantes y el archivo de observación. Los principales hallazgos respecto a las experiencias de enseñanza con el Método Audio-Lingual mostraron que el futuro docente tuvo dificultades en la primera clase para ejecutar los planes de lecciones ya que las actividades no eran adecuadas a las necesidades del estudiante, sin embargo, con la implementación de técnicas basadas en el método antes mencionado y recursos didácticos adaptados a la niña con Síndrome de Down, se logró obtener resultados significativos como la producción de oraciones cortas en base a los temas tratados. Estos resultados indican que el uso del método Audio-Lingual facilita el aprendizaje de los estudiantes con Síndrome de Down ya que utiliza técnicas que abordan las necesidades de estos estudiantes como la memoria a corto plazo y los problemas de pronunciación.

Palabras claves:

Enseñanza del idioma inglés, Método de Audio-Lingual, Pronunciación, Síndrome de Down

AVAL DE TRADUCCIÓN

En calidad de Docente de la Carrera de Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros de la Universidad Técnica de Cotopaxi; en forma legal **CERTIFICO** que:

La traducción del resumen al idioma español del proyecto de investigación cuyo título versa: “**TEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE TO STUDENTS WITH DOWN SYNDROME**” presentado por: **Venus Teresa Saavedra Charcopa**, egresado de la Carrera de: **Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros**, perteneciente a la **Extensión Pujilí**, lo realizó bajo mi supervisión y cumple con una correcta estructura gramatical del Idioma.

Es todo cuanto puedo certificar en honor a la verdad y autorizo al peticionario hacer uso del presente aval para los fines académicos legales.

Pujilí, febrero del 2024

Atentamente,


PhD. Gina Silvana Venegas Álvarez
DOCENTE DE LA CARRERA PINE-UTC
ID: 0501598643



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1. General Information

Theme: Teaching English language to students with Down Syndrome.

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Researcher:

Name: Saavedra Charcopa Venus Teresa

ID Number: 0803012426

Phone Number: 0993418112

E-mail Address: venus.saavedra2426@utc.edu.ec

Knowledge area: Education

Research line: Education, communication, and graphic design for human and social Development

Research line of the career:

Pedagogical, didactic, curricular practices and inclusion in the areas of knowledge.

2. Problem Statement

The lack of knowledge about teaching the English language to students with Down Syndrome in Ecuador has created a notable gap in the teaching-learning process of the English language that generates effective learning for students with Down Syndrome. While inclusive education policies strive to integrate students with disabilities into mainstream classrooms, English language teaching methodologies are often not addressed (Garcia, 2018).

This problem is particularly acute in Ecuadorian educational settings where there is limited research and resources available to support teachers in adapting language teaching to meet the diverse needs and challenges found in the classroom. Existing English language teaching methods may not adequately consider the cognitive and developmental characteristics of students with Down Syndrome, leading to ineffective instruction and limited language acquisition outcomes.

Therefore, addressing the lack of knowledge about teaching English to students with Down Syndrome in Ecuador is crucial to promoting inclusive educational practices and ensuring equal access to language learning opportunities. By identifying and addressing the specific challenges and barriers that educators face in this context, it is possible to develop specific interventions and instructional techniques that optimize language learning outcomes (Garcia and Kleifgen, 2018). Additionally, improving teachers' understanding and capacity in this area can help foster a more inclusive and equitable educational environment for all students in Ecuador.

This research aims to describe the teaching and learning process of a pre-service English teacher and a student with Down Syndrome using the Audio-Lingual Method in a rural public school in Pujilí-Cotopaxi during the 2023-2024 academic year. The study seeks to answer questions such as: What are the experiences of future teachers in teaching English to a student with Down Syndrome with the Audio-Lingual Method? Furthermore, what are the experiences of EFL students with Down Syndrome when learning English with the Audio-Lingual Method? By examining these questions, the research aims to shed light on the effectiveness and appropriateness

of the Audio-Lingual Method for teaching English to students with Down Syndrome, offering insights that can inform pedagogical practices and support inclusive language education initiatives.

3. Objectives

General objective:

To describe the teaching and learning process of a pre-service English teacher and a student with Down Syndrome employing the Audio-Lingual Method in a rural public school in Pujilí-Cotopaxi during the academic year 2023-2024.

Specific objectives

To analyze the theoretical underpinnings regarding the process of teaching and learning English for individuals with Down Syndrome.

To identify the pre-service teacher's experiences in teaching English with Audio-Lingual Method.

To determine the experiences of a student with Down Syndrome in teaching the English language with the Audio-Lingual Method.

4. Activities and task system concerning the objectives proposed.

Specific objective	Activities	Verification Means
To analyze the theoretical underpinnings regarding the process of teaching and learning English for individuals with Down Syndrome	Look for previous research information. Analyze papers, eBooks, thesis, etc. Summarize and write the theoretical framework.	Scientific foundation. Background. Theoretical Framework.

To identify the pre-service teacher's experiences in teaching English with the Audio-Lingual Method.	Lesson plan activities. Observation guide. Teacher's diary. Student's reflection. Analysis of results.	Lesson Plans. Extracts of the research instruments applied. Analysis and discussion of the results.
To determine the experiences of a student with Down Syndrome in teaching the English language with the Audio-Lingual Method.	Lesson plan activities. Observation guide. Teacher's diary. Student's reflection. Analysis of results.	Extracts of the instruments applied. Analysis and discussion of results.

5. Justification

The significance of English in academic instruction has grown exponentially, with educational institutions now designating it as a crucial subject to complement student learning. In this way, learning a language is an essential tool that makes a significant contribution to one's future. English has been considered as a second language, considering that a good command of this language would help the social and economic progress of the students (Bobur, 2023). However, students with Down Syndrome have been disadvantaged by the lack of knowledge and inclusion that has been present in the institutions over the years, leaving aside the responsibility to provide classes adapted to these students by integrating them into a regular classroom (Engevik et al., 2018).

There have been great challenges that pre-service teachers have to face in the process of teaching and learning to study. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to describe the teaching and learning process of a pre-service English teacher and a student with Down Syndrome employing the Audio-Lingual Method in a rural public school in Pujilí-Cotopaxi during the academic year 2023-2024.

This research directly benefits both the pre-service teacher and a student with Down Syndrome, while the indirect beneficiaries encompass the teacher, the educational institution, and any person engaging with this study. The insights obtained will be useful to contribute to the development of future research because it will help improve the teaching and learning process of students with Down Syndrome. The theoretical framework of this research includes vital information from diverse sources related to the teaching and learning experiences of these students. It involves a thorough describe of the process of a pre-service English teacher and a student with Down Syndrome within the context of classes taught using the Audio-Lingual Method.

6. Scientific and Technical Foundation

6.1. Background

Birkova (2019) addressed an examination of the pedagogy of the essay technique in personalized English lessons for a student with Down Syndrome where the main objective was to provide a brief insight into the problems that parents and that their children with Down Syndrome face in their lives using a qualitative approach and case study methodology in the Czech Republic. The central participant in this research was a 13-year-old girl with Down Syndrome, with the active participation of her parents and two educators. Data collection, using methodological triangulation through observations, interviews and surveys, which aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the teaching dynamics. The study findings affirmed that prioritizing extensive exposure and encouraging a strong visual bias significantly contributes to improving the short- and long-term working memory of students with Down Syndrome. Particularly noteworthy is the strategy applied in the trial, which emerged as the most effective approach to improving short-term working memory within this specific student population. This research, with its methodical approach and insightful results, underscores the critical role of personalized instructional methods in effectively fostering cognitive development among students with Down Syndrome.

Yanto (2020) conducted a qualitative study at SMPLB Negeri 5 West Jakarta, aiming to explore the strategies, approaches, and methods employed by 7th-grade English teachers for instructing students with Down Syndrome. The participants included 8th-grade and 9th-grade students, with

four individuals showcasing various levels of Down Syndrome. Through an experimental methodology, data collection involved observations, interviews, and documentation, analyzed via methodological triangulation. The study highlighted that English teachers made nuanced adjustments to the English curriculum, creating bespoke didactic materials aligned with the unique abilities and learning characteristics of students with Down Syndrome. The comprehensive findings underscored that the design of study plans, improvement of didactic materials, teaching strategies, approaches, and evaluation methods were all meticulously crafted, taking into account the specific needs and capacities of students with Down Syndrome, demonstrating a student-centered approach in the learning arrangements.

Polo (2017) research makes substantial contributions to our understanding of English language learning for students with Down Syndrome, with three central objectives: exploring vocabulary acquisition, understanding students' inclinations towards English studies, and providing effective pedagogical means for vocabulary teaching in a foreign language context. The study, employing a mixed-methods approach incorporating action research and classroom research, focused on four students with Down Syndrome in Madrid. Through meticulous data collection using surveys and observations, analyzed with narrative analysis, the research underscores the pivotal role of visual support resources in significantly facilitating the learning of English vocabulary. Moreover, it emphasizes the strategic incorporation of the student's first language, Spanish, to deepen comprehension of English terminology and expressions. In summary, Polo's study reinforces the notion that, with the application of tailored pedagogical techniques, learning English as a foreign language is not only possible but remarkably effective for students with Down Syndrome.

Amelia (2012) investigated to obtain data about the students' responses to the implementation of the Audio-Lingual Method, the problem faced by the teacher and students in the implementation of Audio-Lingual Method in teaching speaking, to know the implementation of Audio-Lingual method in teaching speaking using a qualitative approach at PUTRINDA DWI AMELIA school specifically with MT 8th grade students. Al-Ikhlas Mayung Cirebon. To obtain the data, some techniques were used such as observation, interview, questionnaire and documentation. Analyze the data by comparing it with relevant theories. After data collection and analysis, it was found

that the application of the Audio-Lingual Method in teaching speaking to eighth grade students is a good response, with 41.10% of the students choosing “yes”, 22.77 % chose “no”, and 19.45% choose “doubtful”. Concluding that teaching the Audio-Lingual Method is very important to increase the ability to speak.

Hartati (2012) conducted a research that aimed to know the influence of the Audio-Lingual Method on the vocabulary performance of first grade students at MTsN Leuwimunding, taking into consideration a quantitative approach with an observational method. The research was carried out at MTsN Leuwimunding, an Islamic secondary school, specifically on first grade students. To collect data, the researcher used observation, interview, test and questionnaire techniques and at the end analyzed the results through triangulation. In the end, the result of the product-moment correlation between the application of the Audio-Lingual Method and the student's performance in vocabulary was 0.67. This means that the null hypothesis is confirmed. Concluding that the null hypothesis is rejected and the research hypothesis is accepted.

6.2.Theoretical Framework

Special education

Special education remains a marginalized aspect within global educational systems, including Ecuador. Consequently, individuals with special needs face significant barriers in accessing education and securing their social, cultural, economic, and political rights. To address these challenges, it is imperative to provide support and resources that empower this demographic to overcome difficulties in the society.

According to the research of Demirok, M et al. (2016) Individuals with special needs have rights and obligations within them, they have the right to live autonomously in society and at the same time be accepted by it. However, true acceptance by other people has not yet been achieved. Special education should provide specially trained personnel, specially developed educational programs, and appropriate environments to ensure the education of individuals who have individual differences (Citil, 2009).

By considering the importance and need of people with special needs, specifically those who have Down Syndrome, society should better understand them and allow them the opportunity to improve their living conditions by boosting their confidence.

Inclusive education in Ecuador.

Inclusion seeks to implement an educational model that is flexible, versatile, and open to effectively identify the needs and create the necessary resources of those people who have been excluded in one way or another. (The Ministry of Education in the LOEI Regulation in Art.2, 2023).

According to the Ministry of Education of the LOEI regulation in art. 47 (2023) states that both formal and informal education will consider special educational needs to prevent them from representing an obstacle to accessing education (...). The government of Ecuador will commit to ensuring the inclusion and integration of these people in educational centers, eliminating any learning barrier.

Furthermore, the adaptability of the study plans becomes evident when considering the different cultural contexts that influence the learning environment or the needs that these require, as manifested in Article 228 of the General Regulations of the Organic Law of Intercultural Education (2011). Students with educational needs require reinforcement or adaptations, either permanently or temporarily, that increase the possibility of accessing a quality service according to their condition to ensure a more inclusive and effective learning environment.

History of special needs education

Over the years we have been collecting information about the steps that special education had to follow to get to where it is today:

Citil explains that around 1800, behaviors varied depending on the size and level of the disability; if it was mild, it was ignored, but if it was severe, it was used as an experiment, leading to death and even exclusion from society. Furthermore, with the spread of

Christianity, the view that disabled people were possessed began to dominate society's opinion until the 16th century (p. 5).

In 1975, the law on people with disabilities came into force for all people between 0 and 21 years old, regardless of their disability, who had to follow these 5 basic characteristics: adequate educational services; objective educational evaluation; individualized training plan; least restrictive educational environment; supervision of educational decisions and practices (Erol, 2010:22).

What is Down Syndrome?

It is important to know the genetic basis of the disease in order to understand the people who suffer from it. According to See et al. (2015), Down Syndrome is the result of the presence of an additional chromosome 21 that modifies the normal genetic composition and influences the general performance of the body and the mentality of people, generating several challenges intellectuals. Promoting social inclusion is of vital importance for people with Down Syndrome as it helps foster a sense of belonging and maximize the potential of these people (Kim et al., 2017).

Features of a child with Down Syndrome.

As scholars delve into the distinctive attributes of children with Down Syndrome, various studies provide valuable insights, forming the basis of this theoretical framework.

Cognitive Characteristics: Down Syndrome is commonly associated with cognitive delays, and as Frizelle et al. (2019) eloquently state, "individuals with Down Syndrome often exhibit cognitive functioning below typical developmental milestones." This cognitive lag encompasses language acquisition, memory, and overall intellectual functioning.

Physical Features: The unique physical traits of children with Down Syndrome, such as a flattened facial profile and almond-shaped eyes, are extensively discussed in the literature (Jean, 2017). These features contribute to the recognizable phenotype and can aid in early diagnosis and intervention planning.

Motor development: The motor development of children with Down Syndrome is characterized by specific challenges. Following the findings of Malak et al., (2013) they state that cognitive delay has been evident mainly in the areas of gross and fine motor skills. Understanding these problems is essential to design specific interventions that help improve motor skills.

Social and emotional aspects: Children with Down Syndrome often face social and emotional challenges, as highlighted by Cicchetti and Beeghly (2020), who point out that the challenges presented in social communication and when establishing relationships with other people prevail in this population. This aspect underlines the importance of promoting social skills and emotional well-being in educational and therapeutic settings.

Health Considerations: Beyond developmental aspects, children with Down Syndrome are prone to certain health problems. According to the comprehensive review by Thomas et al. (2018), heart difficulties and respiratory infections are more prevalent in people with Down Syndrome, which requires strict health monitoring and preventive measures.

Educational implications: The unique profile of children with Down Syndrome has implications for educational practices. In line with the observations of Giaouri et al. (2010), adapting study techniques to students makes it possible to address different individual and group learning styles and provide the necessary help to promote academic performance in this population.

Short-term memory: Baddeley and Jarrol (2001) found that people with Down's Syndrome have less short-term verbal memory capacity where their daily tasks often involve the auditory presentation of information to be remembered.

Teaching English to Students with Down Syndrome.

As Yanto (2020) states, teaching English as a foreign language has become relatively challenging and difficult for teachers as it involves teaching English to non-native English speakers. Moreover, it becomes even more challenging when these skills are to be taught to students with Down

Syndrome. When instructing English as a second language, the teacher must employ effective strategies, particularly when catering to students with disabilities like Down Syndrome.

The teacher must exhibit patience, especially when teaching a challenging foreign language to individuals with Down Syndrome. Guiding with care is essential for these children, fostering obedience, attentiveness, and improved focus on the teacher (Nuriyanti et al., 2021).

The role of the teacher and the student with Down Syndrome in English language teaching.

According to Jordan et al. (2009), teachers are more likely to devise effective instructional methods for the entire student body when they perceive accountability for all their students as their paramount responsibility.

According to Jordan et al. (2009), the role of an English teacher in the education of students with Down Syndrome involves adapting instructional methods, collaborating with support professionals, promoting inclusive practices, and fostering a positive and supportive learning environment tailored to the individual needs of each student.

Role of the Student with Down Syndrome

The Down 21 Ibero-American Foundation (2009) notes that individuals with Down Syndrome experience a slower learning pace and struggle with retaining information. Maintaining concentration for extended periods and problem-solving pose challenges for them as well. Moreover, their learning is enhanced when they achieve success in preceding activities.

Conversely, when students with Down Syndrome witness favorable outcomes from their efforts, they become motivated to persist in engaging in activities. It is also highlighted that when teachers allow active student participation in tasks, there is a tendency for significant learning gains, and the acquired knowledge is less likely to be forgotten.

English Language Teaching Methodologies

As Anderson & Larsen-Freeman, (2011) points out English Language Teaching Methodologies encompass a wide range of approaches and techniques used by educators to facilitate language learning. These methodologies aim to cater to diverse learner needs and preferences, employing innovative strategies such as communicative language teaching, task-based learning, and the use of technology-enhanced instruction. By integrating various methodologies, teachers can create dynamic and engaging learning environments that foster effective language acquisition and proficiency development among students.

Audio-Lingual Method

Mart (2013) believes that the Audio-Lingual method was proposed by American linguists in the 1950s and was developed on the basis that language is primarily a speech system used for social communication with writing being a secondary derived system from language. This method is known as the “Army Method” because it was used during World War II to teach soldiers enough language skills to infiltrate enemy territory (Suwarno, 2023). Therefore, we can say that this approach focuses on students' communicative skills through the formation of conversational habits, allowing them to form quick and automatic responses.

The method is firmly based on linguistic and psychological theory, which may have contributed to greater reliability and long-lasting popularity (Suvamo, 2023). It also had a significant impact on later language teaching methods, which can still be seen in large-scale demonstrations of language teaching methodologies.

The Audio-Lingual Method is a way of presenting foreign language lessons through listening exercises followed by exercises in speaking foreign words and sentences being studied. So, the learning process with this method uses ear training and speech training. The Audio -Lingual Method, just like the direct method, is additionally an oral approach.

Thus, the Audio-Lingual Method refers to the tactic that is compressed on the chain drill to master the target language by memorizing and repeating, and therefore the wrongness of speaking is

avoided. Besides, Audio-Lingual activities are presented not only in drilling short patterns but also in a variety of dialogues, which students have to listen to, repeat, and memorize.

Techniques of Audio-Lingual Method.

According to Larsen & Freeman (2000, p.45-50), there are several techniques:

Dialogue memorization: a type of technique that motivates students to produce language through speech by giving a brief conversation between two people where you must memorize the dialogue by imitating your partner's lines.

Backward Build-up (Expansion Drill): This is a technique that allows teachers to help their classes learn longer sentences by repeating small parts of them, starting at the end and working from the beginning until the students say the beginning sentence.

Repetition drill: Students repeat the teacher's model as quickly and accurately as possible. This is a kind of drill in which you practice pronunciation.

Chain Drill: In this drill, we practice a series of dialogues. For example:

S.A: How are you?

S.B: I am fine.

Mechanical Drill: For students who can't understand the meaning due to the lesson being complicated, make the lesson easier by expanding it.

Communication Drill: This is a kind of drill that while you are teaching, you communicate with students and students by using ideas. Motivate the students to share their ideas and discuss the topic.

Imitation of Sounds: Students imitate the pronunciation, intonation, and rhythm of native speakers to develop oral proficiency.

Cue Cards: Use of visual aids, cue cards, or flashcards to prompt and guide language production. These aids help reinforce vocabulary and language structures.

Songs: Songs often have repetitive lyrics and melodies, which can aid in the memorization of vocabulary and grammatical structures.

Visual Context: Videos offer a visual context for language use, aiding in comprehension. Students can connect words and phrases with actions, expressions, and non-verbal cues.

Characteristics of the Audio-Lingual Method.

According to Murcia (1997), the Audio-Lingual Method has its greatest emphasis on the oral-auditory side, which adds characteristics of cultural linguistics and theoretical psychology, such as: each class begins with dialogues, gestures and memorization exercises are used, grammar is taught inductively, language skills are sequenced: listening, speaking; reading and writing are postponed, pronunciation is emphasized from the beginning, vocabulary is very limited in the initial stages, great effort is made to avoid student errors, language is often manipulated later without meaning or context, and the teacher must master only the structures, vocabulary, etc. that he is teaching, as the activities and learning materials are carefully controlled.

Advantages and disadvantages of the Audio-Lingual Method.

Most descriptions will indicate that ALM was discontinued due to obvious criticism and widespread dissatisfaction with the results of the approach, but it still has advantages and disadvantages that have been taken into consideration (Arroway, 2023).

Among the advantages of the previously mentioned method we can find some such as: Students practice useful language from the first class and enhanced pronunciation and heightened engagement are outcomes stemming from the drilling exercises, likewise some disadvantages such as: Too much attention was paid to the teacher, who limited himself to presenting only mechanical aspects of the language and the reduction of vocabulary in favor of structure.

7. Methodology

7.1. Research approach.

The methodology used in this study was qualitative as it allowed the participants' experiences to be explored in detail, capturing the individual perspectives of each one. This methodology offered adaptability to the specific needs and characteristics of the study context, allowing the stated objectives to be met. As Mohajan (2018) states, this approach focuses on understanding social, cultural or human phenomena from a contextualized perspective.

7.2. Research method.

This research used action research since it allowed participants to be actively involved in the research process, reaching greater relevance of the findings in educational practice, identifying areas for improvement in the implementation of classes. As Stringer (2017) points out, it is a collaborative process between researchers and participants.

Regarding the steps used in the action research method in your research project, they can be described as follows:

Planning: In this stage, the research objectives are established and teaching activities based on the Audio-Lingual Method are designed. This includes the selection of teaching materials, the planning of teaching activities and the definition of evaluation criteria.

Action: The implementation of the classes is carried out using the Audio-Lingual Method. During this period, the teacher collects data through classroom observations, session logs, and student feedback.

Observation and reflection: After each class session, teachers reflect on their experience and the results obtained. The data collected is analyzed to identify the successful aspects and challenges encountered during the implementation of the Audio-Lingual Method in the student.

Evaluation and adjustment: Based on observation and reflection, adjustments are made to the teaching strategies and the design of the activities to improve the effectiveness of the method used.

Continuous feedback cycle: This continuous feedback allows for progressive refinements in teaching practices and the development of more effective techniques for teaching English to students with Down Syndrome.

7.3. Research context and participants.

This research was carried out in the city of Pujilí in the province of Cotopaxi, at the "Dr. Antonio Ante" Basic Education School. The reason this institution was taken into consideration was because it had students with Down Syndrome and an English teacher who was not trained to teach students with special needs. The study population was a 13-year-old student in the ninth grade of basic education.

This study used judgment sampling, also known as purposive sampling, "it is a sampling technique in which the researcher relies on his or her own judgment when choosing members of the population to participate in the study" (Robinson, 2014). This approach is based on the needs that the researcher has, looking for someone who adapts to her needs and objectives.

On the other hand, written permission was granted to the director of the "Dr. Antonio Ante" who authorized a field investigation within his institution and made known the purpose of this investigation within the educational field.

7.4. Data collection.

This research used observation to collect data in the implementation of 5 classes for different reasons. Firstly, direct observation allows researchers to gain a detailed and accurate understanding of how teaching and learning takes place in the classroom, which is crucial to evaluate the Audio-Lingual Method in this specific context.

To carry out the observation, several complementary tools and techniques were used. The teacher's diary was used by the teacher to record her observations and reflections on each class, including details about the activities carried out, interactions with students, and any challenges or successes experienced during teaching.

The student's checklist was used to record students' progress and performance during classes, allowing researchers to evaluate how students with Down Syndrome are responding to the Audio-lingual method and identify areas of strength and weakness in their learning.

Additionally, a semi-structured observation guide was used to direct the researcher's observation during classes, providing a framework to collect specific data on aspects such as student participation, use of the English language, and teaching techniques used by the teacher.

Finally, student's reflection was used as a way to collect qualitative information about the experience of students with Down Syndrome in the learning process. Students were encouraged to reflect on their feelings, experiences and perceptions after each class where they had to point to a happy or sad face depending on how they made sense of each lesson.

Therefore, it can be said that all the instruments mentioned above made it possible to collect detailed data on the implementation of the Audio-Lingual Method in teaching English to students with Down Syndrome, facilitating the understanding of this methodology.

7.5.Data analysis.

This research used a methodological triangulation and thematic analysis approach to analyze the data collected during the implementation of five classes. Methodological triangulation consisted of combining different data sources, such as classroom observations, interviews with teachers and students, and document analysis, in order to obtain a more complete and precise understanding.

First, a thematic analysis of the collected data was carried out, identifying emerging categories and subcategories based on personal reflections, attitudes and motivations, anxiety levels,

comprehension, resources used and specific problems related to pronunciation and memorization. These categories and subcategories were used to systematically organize and code the data.

Table 1: Categories and subcategories of data

Category	Subcategory	Results
<i>Personal reflections</i>	Understanding of the method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The pre-service teacher found initial planning challenging due to mismatched activities with the student's abilities. - The teacher felt confident in planning after understanding the tasks and procedures. - Challenges in finding suitable commands were overcome through experimentation
	Teacher's familiarity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The teacher felt fully prepared for the fifth planning due to familiarity with the method and materials. - The teacher recognized the method's simplicity and effectiveness in aiding memory retention.
	Student's difficulties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pronunciation difficulties, particularly

		<p>with the letter "r," were noted in the first class.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved execution of classes according to student needs was observed in subsequent lessons.
	Method flexibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Audio-Lingual Method was noted for its adaptability and ease of understanding by both teachers and students. - Various techniques were commended for facilitating interactive language learning and achieving learning objectives.
<i>Attitude and motivation</i>	Student enthusiasm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The student demonstrated a positive attitude and eagerness to learn, actively participating in all activities. - The student showed enthusiasm and enjoyment in class, as observed by peers. - Survey results reflected the student's increasing

		satisfaction with class sessions.
	Learning engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The student's consistent engagement and lack of boredom were highlighted by peer observations. - Positive responses in student surveys indicated increasing satisfaction and enjoyment of classes.
<i>Understanding</i>	Comprehension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The student obeyed simple verbal commands and made connections between vocabulary and daily life. - Visual aids significantly enhanced the student's understanding and recognition of vocabulary. - Survey responses indicated variations in comprehension clarity throughout classes.
<i>Resources</i>	Use of teaching aids	- Visual aids were praised for their effectiveness in facilitating comprehension.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The consistent use of audiovisual resources contributed to the student's understanding of class content. - Survey responses indicated high satisfaction with class preparation and materials.
<p><i>Problems pronunciation memorization</i></p>	<p><i>in and</i></p>	<p>Pronunciation difficulties</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pronunciation challenges, particularly with the letter "r," were noted. <p>The student's limited memory retention capabilities were highlighted, especially concerning recalling class content after the session.</p>

Next, a triangulation process was carried out, comparing and contrasting the findings obtained from different sources and data collection methods. Additionally, thematic analysis was used to explore patterns, trends and relationships within the data, identifying recurring themes and connections between different categories and subcategories.

Finally, triangulation and thematic analysis allowed a detailed and comprehensive exploration of the data collected in the research project, providing a solid basis to understand the effects and effectiveness of the Audio-Lingual method in teaching English to students with Down Syndrome.

8. Analysis and Discussion of Results

To address the first research questions about the pre-service teacher's interactions in teaching English to a Down Syndrome student with the Audio-Lingual Method, data from the teacher's reflection was examined.

Personal reflections

Understanding of the method

La primera planificación con el Método Audio-Lingual fue difícil debido a que las actividades no estaban adecuadas a las habilidades de la niña. [The first planning with the Audio-Lingual Method was difficult because the activities were not appropriate to the girl's abilities]

Se logró una comprensión completa de los procedimientos y tareas del método, facilitando la planificación posterior de las lecciones. [A complete understanding of the procedures and tasks of the method was achieved, facilitating subsequent lesson planning]

Inicialmente se encontró dificultad para encontrar órdenes apropiadas para la respuesta inmediata de los estudiantes, pero se superó mediante prueba y error. [Difficulty was initially encountered in finding appropriate commands for students' immediate response, but this was overcome through trial and error]

Encontrar los comandos correctos que permitieran la respuesta inmediata en la estudiante fue difícil en la primera y segunda clase, sin embargo, después de intentar con diferentes comandos pude identificar los que sí daban resultados de respuesta por parte de la niña. [Finding the correct commands that allowed the student to respond immediately was difficult in the first and second classes, however, after trying different commands I was able to identify those that did give response results from the girl]

Teacher's familiarity

Inicialmente se encontró dificultad para encontrar órdenes apropiadas para la respuesta inmediata de los estudiantes, pero se superó mediante prueba y error. [Difficulty was initially encountered

in finding appropriate commands for the students' immediate response, but this was overcome through trial and error]

Estaba completamente familiarizado con el método, las actividades y el material educativo necesarios para cada fase de la quinta planificación. [I was completely familiar with the method, activities and educational material required for each phase of the fifth planning]

Method flexibility

Cuando surgieron dificultades, fue necesario implementar técnicas para ayudar a la comprensión de los estudiantes. [When difficulties arose, it was necessary to implement techniques to help students understand]

Research conducted by Amelia (2002) highlights the significant impact of the Audio-Lingual method on the development of students' oral skills in English language teaching. However, Amelia also points out the challenges that teachers face when implementing this method, which can hinder the full development of the class. These findings contrast the results found, where the importance of adapting the activities to the specific abilities of the student with Down Syndrome is recognized.

The research emphasizes the need for educators to carefully consider each student's cognitive and linguistic abilities when designing teaching materials and activities. Additionally, considering the importance of continually evaluating and adjusting teaching methods to meet the diverse needs of all students, which can address the challenges identified by Amelia and allow for more complete development of the class.

Data from teacher reflection on teaching, peer observations, and student surveys were analyzed to answer the second study question on the experiences of EFL students with Down Syndrome when learning English through the Audio-Lingual Method.

Attitude and motivation

Student enthusiasm

Dado que participa en todas las actividades con entusiasmo, la niña demuestra una actitud positiva y ganas de aprender el idioma. [Since she participates in all activities with enthusiasm, the girl demonstrates a 3 attitude and desire to learn the language]

Al hablar, la niña siente comodidad y seguridad. [When speaking, the girl feels comfort and security]

Learning engagement

La niña realiza todas las tareas asignadas por el maestro. [The girl performs all the tasks assigned by the teacher]

Todas las clases son divertidas para la niña. [All classes are fun for the girl]

En ningún momento de la clase, la niña se aburre. [At no point during class is the girl bored]

La niña participa activamente porque tiene confianza en el maestro. [The girl actively participates because she trusts the teacher]

The results of this study show a positive and active commitment of the student with Down Syndrome in the English language learning process. Her evident enthusiasm in participating in all activities reflects a genuine interest and desire to learn the language, indicating a positive attitude toward the learning experience. Additionally, her consistent completion of all assigned tasks demonstrates her commitment and willingness to actively participate in the learning materials and activities provided by the teacher.

On the other hand, Polo (2017) study highlights how English teachers adapted the curriculum and created personalized teaching materials for students with Down Syndrome. This suggests a student-centered approach in the design of lesson plans and in the improvement of teaching

materials, demonstrating meticulous attention to the specific needs and abilities of students. This personalized approach in designing curriculum and teaching materials indicates precise adaptation to the unique abilities and learning characteristics of students with Down Syndrome, which can promote an inclusive and effective learning environment by creating interest in student.

Understanding

Comprehension

La niña hace conexiones entre el vocabulario y las cosas que usa en su vida diaria. [The child makes connections between vocabulary and things she uses in her daily life]

En las tres primeras lecciones, la niña casi siempre reconoce el vocabulario mirando las imágenes del vocabulario que se está tratando. Sin embargo, en la cuarta y quinta lección, se le dificulta un poco reconocer el vocabulario. [In the first three lessons, the child almost always recognizes the vocabulary by looking at the pictures of the vocabulary being covered. However, in the fourth and fifth lessons, she has a little difficulty recognizing the vocabulary]

En cuanto a la pregunta "¿Son claras las explicaciones del profesor?", el alumno eligió un rostro feliz en las tres primeras clases, lo que podría indicar que entendió perfectamente cada una, mientras que en la cuarta y quinta clase eligió un rostro triste, lo que podría indicar que entendió poco. [Regarding the question "Are the teacher's explanations clear?", the student chose a happy face in the first three classes, which could indicate that he understood each one perfectly, while in the fourth and fifth classes he chose a sad face which could indicate that he understood little]

El estudiante tuvo dificultad para entender el video presentado durante la cuarta clase, por lo que me tocó implementar técnicas que ayudarán al estudiante a una mejor comprensión. [The student had difficulty understanding the video presented during the fourth class, so I had to implement techniques that will help the student better understand]

El uso de imágenes facilita la comprensión. [The use of images facilitates understanding]

Se pudo determinar que el tema final de las clases implementadas fue un poco difícil para los estudiantes. [It was determined that the final topic of the implemented classes was a little difficult for the students]

En las cuatro primeras clases, la niña eligió una cara sonriente en respuesta a la pregunta "¿Puedo seguir con facilidad el ritmo de la clase?", pero en la última clase eligió una cara triste. [In the first four classes, the girl chose a smiling face in response to the question "Can I easily keep up with the class?", but in the last class she chose a sad face]

This study highlights the importance of employing diverse teaching techniques, such as the use of visual aids and adapting teacher explanations, to improve student understanding and engagement, Polo's (2017) findings indicate a broader approach. in the design of study plans, the improvement of teaching materials and teaching strategies. These differences highlight the complexity and diversity of approaches used by educators to support the effective learning of students with Down Syndrome in the context of English language teaching.

Resources

Use of teaching aids

El material audiovisual utilizado en las clases mejoró la comprensión de los estudiantes. [The audiovisual material used in classes improved students' understanding]

Los recursos audiovisuales se utilizaron en todas las clases y ayudaron a la niña a comprender la clase. [Audiovisual resources were used in all classes and helped the girl understand the class]

The results found highlight the importance of using audiovisual resources and teaching materials in the teaching and learning process of the English language for students with Down Syndrome. The improvement in student understanding as a result of using audiovisual materials suggests that these resources provide an effective means of conveying concepts and facilitating understanding

of content. On the other hand, the previous study conducted by Yanto (2020) emphasized adjustments in the curriculum and the creation of personalized teaching materials for students with Down Syndrome, focusing on adapting study plans, materials and teaching methods to meet the needs of students with Down Syndrome. specific needs of students. Both studies highlight the importance of adapting teaching resources and techniques.

Problems in pronunciation and memorization

Pronunciation difficulties

Se observaron problemas de pronunciación, particularmente con la letra "r". [Pronunciation challenges, particularly with the letter "r," were noted]

Se destacaron las limitadas capacidades de retención de memoria del estudiante, especialmente en lo que respecta a recordar el contenido de la clase después de la sesión. [The student's limited memory retention capabilities were highlighted, especially concerning recalling class content after the session]

The results highlight the specific challenges that girls with Down Syndrome face in their English language learning process, especially in terms of pronunciation and memory retention. Difficulty in the production of certain sounds, such as the letter "r", can hinder speech clarity and language comprehension, presenting a significant challenge in oral communication and language acquisition. Furthermore, the student's limited memory retention capacity, particularly in recalling class content after the session, highlights an additional obstacle in the process of learning and consolidating new knowledge.

On the other hand, the previous study carried out by Birkova (2019) pointed out that prioritizing extensive exposure and promoting a strong visual bias contribute significantly to improving the working memory of students with Down Syndrome. This research highlighted the effectiveness of a specific strategy applied in rehearsal to improve short-term working memory in this student population.

9. Research Impacts.

This research has implications for both social and educational domains. The implementation of the Audio-Lingual Method for students with Down Syndrome has resulted in a variety of opinions and experiences—both positive and negative—about English teaching and learning. These impacts go a long way toward improving the educational process.

For pre-service teachers who work with kids who have Down Syndrome, this research study may offer assistance and direction. Research on this topic has to be done in-depth and specifically since it hasn't been relevant in the setting of our nation. Ultimately, this study encourages English teachers to employ language-development activities, strategies, and resources to help students with intellectual impairments reach their full potential.

10. Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

In conclusion, this project has provided a detailed view of the experiences of a pre-service teacher and a student with Down syndrome in teaching the English language through the implementation of the audio-lingual method. Several positive points have been identified that highlight the progress and achievements made, as well as negative points that indicate areas for improvement and challenges to overcome.

Among the positive points, the pre-service teacher's complete understanding of the audio-lingual method and the active and enthusiastic participation of the student with Down syndrome in all learning activities stand out. In addition, the effective use of teaching resources and techniques is recognized, as well as the ability to adapt in the face of initial difficulties.

On the other hand, negative points are identified related to difficulties in pronunciation and memory retention by the student and difficulties in implementing the first class by the pre-service teacher. These aspects highlight the need for continuous adaptation and specific attention to the

individual needs of students, especially those with special needs such as the student with Down syndrome.

By recognizing both achievements and areas for improvement, the foundation is laid for future educational research and practices that promote an inclusive, effective, and meaningful learning environment for all students.

Recommendations

It is suggested that educational institutions and teacher training programs more systematically incorporate training in inclusive teaching methods and specific strategies for working with students with special needs, such as those with Down syndrome.

Based on the positive points identified, it is recommended that teacher training programs continue to emphasize the importance of a complete understanding of the teaching methods used in the classroom, such as the audio-lingual method. Additionally, educators are encouraged to continue exploring and using a variety of teaching resources and techniques to meet the individual needs of students and promote meaningful and enriching learning.

It is suggested that future teachers receive additional training in specific strategies to improve pronunciation and memory retention in students, as well as in adaptive teaching techniques to effectively address these difficulties. Additionally, teachers are encouraged to collaborate closely with multidisciplinary teams that include speech therapists, school psychologists, and other professionals to develop personalized support strategies and promote the academic and personal success of students with special needs.

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