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VERBALISM AMONG BLIND AND SIGHTED STUDENTS A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The study made a comparison of verbalism features between the blind and sighted students in district Faisalabad, Pakistan. Descriptive research method was used in this study. Survey design was used to approach and collect the data from participants through a closed ended questionnaire based on quantitative approach.The population of the study included the blind and sighted students of the Govt. Primary Schools of the special education and mainstream /ordinary schools of Faisalabad city.. The sample of the study consisted of 10 blind students and 10 students with normal vision/sighted peers. Convenient sampling technique was used to collect data. The data were collected from 7 public and private schools of district Faisalabad. A questionnaire was developed consisting of 15 items based on 3 activities (color association with objects, defining verbs by gestures interpretation and storytelling). Each item based on 5 multiple choice questions (Null to Perfect rating). Researchers personally approached the participants for the data collection. The researcher fully explained the process of data collection. The collected data were analyzed to arrive at final conclusions. The results of the study indicated that verbalism features of the blind students were significantly higher ($p<0.05$) than their sighted counterparts regarding the colour association (grass, blood, tea, cotton with examples) except colour association of coal. On the other hand, both the groups of blind and sighted students had almost similar level (no significant difference, $p>0.05$) of verbalism features pertaining to the defining of verbs (stir up, sweep, jump and squeeze) as well as story telling (thirsty crow) containing the explanation of verbs such as thirsty, color, crow, stone and pour. However, in verb defining activity, blind students showed more verbalism features in the verb of 'kneading the flour'.

Keywords:Verbalism, blind, sighted, students

INTRODUCTION

Verbalism represents a controversial issue in the field of visual disability. It is frequently stated that blind people use statements with words and expressions which are not based on direct sensory experience. Sometimes it is considered pathology or something specific to blind people. In taking the work of three blind researchers, Pierre Villey, JoanaBelarmino and Bertrand Verine, as a guideline, this paper emphasizes two

main points: 1) The usage of words with visual references constitutes a strategy of inclusion in a social environment dominated by vision; 2) The importance to develop new affirmative actions to stimulate embodied and multisensory discourse, favoring experiences of belonging and sharing between the blind and the sighted beyond the hegemony of vision.

Verbalism is linked to a historically constructed discursive network that includes negotiations between the sighted and the blind that are characterized by hierarchy and a focus on vision. The blind are not the only ones who experience it, nor is it a pathological or individual phenomenon. A particular cognitive policy, or mode of knowledge built on a collective network, is expressed verbally. This policy is influenced by one's relationships with others, the outside world, and oneself. Verbalism is a position of abstract speech that is based on knowledge and mental images. Through concrete practices, this position can be changed and changed into one of embodied speech. Based on firsthand experience, embodied speech engages the cognitive and multisensory bodies in addition to the mental space. Blind individuals' relationships with others and with themselves are impacted when they substitute multisensory discursive production for verbalist strategies (Kastrup and Valente, 2018).

Review of Related Literature

Verbalism is described as loss ofthat means of visually impaired children`s phrase, whereas, visually orientated verbalism existed while a toddlerhired a phraseregardingshadeation or brightness to outline the call of a given item from a list (Harley, 1963). Verbalism has been cited as a specifichasslewithinside the literature at theschooling of blind, viathe to be hadstudiesturned into scanty and incomplete (Civelli, 1983).

Verbal learning without appropriate foundation in concrete experience has been frequently mentioned in the literature as one of the major problems in the education of the blind (Tobin, 1992). Concern has been expressed that excessive dependence on verbal learning may have negative effects upon both academic learning and personality development (López, 2008). The child may often accept verbal descriptions of others instead of gaining the necessary impressions from concrete experiences through the senses (Nigmatullina et al., 2018). Child may be able to verbalize quite readily about objects and tangible materials that could not tactually or otherwise, identify if given the opportunity (Keppel, 1964).

A study by Rosel et al. (2005) examined the use of verbalism among children aged 7-14 years who were blind from birth and their sighted peers. The findings indicated that age, rather than visual ability or gender, significantly influenced the frequency of verbalism. Older children displayed greater adaptability in language use, underscoring the flexibility of linguistic structures in blind children as they adapt to their environment.

Verbalism can be mitigated through systematic vocabulary acquisition activities, reading and listening comprehension exercises, and the development of tactile learning resources. These approaches aim to bridge the gap between abstract verbal knowledge and concrete understanding (Cole &Pheng, 1998; Zaki and Khan, 2021).

In Pakistan, the majority of visually impaired students face significant barriers to accessing quality education. Therefore, the educational and social development of students with visual impairments remains a critical area of concern, given the limited

resources and lack of awareness about their unique needs. This study, conducted in district Faisalabad, addresses the disparities in linguistic and conceptual development between blind and sighted students.

Statement of the problem

The study was conducted to assess the verbalism features among the students with visual impairment in district Faisalabad.

Objectives of the study

Following were the objectives of the study:

1. To assess the verbalism features among the blind and sighted students.
2. To compare the level of verbalism features among the adolescents with blind and sighted and sighted students.

Questions of the Study

1. What sort of verbalism features exist among the blind and sighted students?
2. Is there any difference in the verbalism features between the blind and sighted students?

METHODOLOGY

This segment describes methodology of the study. The purpose of the study was to know the concept of verbalism among adolescents with visual impairment. The methodology deals with type of research, population of the study, sample size, development of instrument, data collection, and analysis of the study.

Research Design

Descriptive research method was used in this study. Survey design was used to approach and collect the data from participants through a closed ended questionnaire based on quantitative approach.

Population of the study

The population of the study included the blind and sighted students of the govt. and private
primary schools of the special education and ordinary school setup of district Faisalabad city areas.

Sample of the study

The sample of the study consisted of 10 blind students and 10 students with normal vision/sighted peers. Convenient sampling technique was used to collect data. The students of following schools were selected to collect data:

1. Govt. Special Education Center ChakJhumra Faisalabad
2. Govt. Higher Secondary School for Blind, Madina Town, Faisalabad
3. The Arqam school ChakJhumra, Faisalabad
4. Islamic foundation school Jhumra, Faisalabad
5. IqraRozaTulItfal school Shahdara, Lahore
6. Ikhlas International School Jhumra

Development of instrument

On the basis of literature review, research objectives, and opinion of faculty members, researcher developed a questionnaire as tool of the study and used it for data collection from the study participants. The questionnaire consisted of 15 items based on 3 activities (color association with objects, defining verbs by gestures interpretation and storytelling). Each item based on 5 multiple choice questions (Null to Perfect rating). The detail of the activities has been presented below:

Activity 'A' – Level of verbalism in Colour Association

- Recognize the colour of grass with at least 2 examples
- Recognize the colour of coal with at least 2 examples
- Recognize the colour of blood with at least 2 examples
- Recognize the colour of tea with at least 2 examples
- Recognize the colour of cotton with at least 2 examples

Activity 'B' – Level of verbalism in defining verbs followed by gestures interpretation

- Stir up-How do we stir up?
- Sweep-How do we sweep?
- Jump-How do we jump?
- Squeeze-How do we squeeze a lemon?
- Kneed the flour-How do we knead the flour?

Activity 'C' – Level of verbalism in story telling (Thirsty Crow)

Students with blindness were asked to tell story of thirsty crow and the various words from the story were asked to define and show gesture:

- Thirsty- What is thirsty?
- Crow- What is crow?
- Color- What is the color of crow?
- Stone- What are the stones?
- Pour- How do we pour the stones in a container?

Data collection:

Researcher visited the govt. and private special education schools and ordinary schools. Researcher approached 10 blind students and 10 sighted students for the data collection. Researcher collected the data personally in order to obtain the required information from study participants. The researcher fully explained the purpose of the study to respondents. Researcher asked the respondents about the colour association followed by 2 examples and rated them from Null to Perfect, then researcher asked the respondents to explain about various verbs such as stir up, squeeze etc. Lastly, researcher asked the respondents to tell the story of thirsty crow and they were asked to explain various verbs such thirsty, crow, stone etc. and the score obtained by the respondents were noted in the questionnaire.

Data Analysis

The data collected from the blind and sighted students was analyzed to arrive at final conclusions. The demography of the study participants was analyzed through frequency,

percentage, and cumulative percentage. The independent t-test was used to analyze data to compare the verbalism features between the blind and sighted students regarding the color association, defining of verbs and storytelling (thirsty crow).

RESULTS

The study results have been presented below:

Table 1

Respondent's Demography

		Frequency	*Percentage*
Gender of students	Male	14	70.0
	Female	6	30.0
Student Category	Sighted	10	50.0
	Blind	10	50.0
Age of students	8-9 Years	4	20.0
	10-11 Years	6	30.0
	12-13 Years	4	20.0
	14-15 Years	6	30.0
Student Grade	Class 1-2	5	25.0
	Class 3-4	2	10.0
	Class 5-6	9	45.0
	Class 7-8	4	20.0
Sector of School	Public	10	50.0
	Private	10	50.0
Institution of students	Blind School Madina Town Faisalabad	4	20.0
	Govt. Special Education Center Jhumra	6	30.0
	Ikhlas International SchoolJhumra	1	5.0
	IqraRozaTulAtfal Lahore	2	10.0
	The Arqam SchoolJhumra	2	10.0
	The Arqam School Jhumra	3	15.0
	The Islamic Foundation SchoolJhumra	2	10.0

The demographic data presented provides insight into the distribution of students across various categories. The majority of the students were male (70.0%), while females constitute 30.0% segment of research participants. This indicates a significant gender

disparity in the sample. There is an equal representation of sighted and blind students, each comprising 50.0% of the total. This balance may be intentional, reflecting inclusivity in the study or program. The research participants distributed across four age groups including 8-9 years with 20.0%, 10-11 years with 30.0%, 12-13 years with 20.0%, and 14-15 years with 30.0%. This showed a concentration in the middle age ranges (10-11 and 14-15 years), making up 60.0% collectively. Study participants were enrolled in various grades including the class 1-2 with 25.0%, class 3-4 having 10.0% portion, class 5-6 with 45.0%, and class 7-8 with 20.0% segment of the research. The majority participants were in class 5-6 (45.0%), suggesting that the sample primarily targets students in this educational stage. Study participants were enrolled in seven different institutions incorporating; Blind School Madina Town Faisalabad with 20.0%, Govt. Special Education Center JhumraFaisalabad with 30.0%, Ikhlas International School with 5.0%, IqraRozaTulAtfal with 10.0%, The Arqam School with 10.0%, The Arqam School Jhumra with 15.0%, and The Islamic Foundation School with 10.0%. The highest proportion come from the Govt. Special Education Center JhumraFaisalabad (30.0%), followed by the Blind School Madina Town Faisalabad (20.0%).There is an equal split between students attending public schools (50.0%) and private schools (50.0%), suggesting a balanced representation from both sectors.The data represents a diverse cohort of students in terms of gender, ability (sighted and blind), age, grade level, institutional affiliation, and school sector. However, some categories (e.g., gender and institutions) show uneven distribution, which could influence analyses or interpretations of the study.

Table 2

Activity 'A'- Colour Association

Level of verbalism in colour association	**Category**	**N**	**Mean**	**S.D**	**t**	**df**	**Sig.**
Recognize the colour of grass with at least 2 examples	Sighted	10	4.00	.000	4.019	18	0.001
	Blind	10	2.30	1.337			
Recognize the colour of coal with at least 2 examples	Sighted	10	3.70	.949	1.754	18	0.096
	Blind	10	2.80	1.317			
Recognize the colour of blood with at least 2 examples	Sighted	10	4.00	.000	3.674	18	0.002
	Blind	10	2.80	1.033			
Recognize the colour of tea with at least 2 examples	Sighted	10	3.30	1.252	5.811	18	0.001
	Blind	10	1.00	.000			
Recognize the colour of cotton with at least 2 examples	Sighted	10	4.00	.000	3.791	18	0.001
	Blind	10	2.30	1.418			

The independent t-test compared the mean level of verbalism (ability to associate colors with examples) between sighted and blind students across five scenarios. The mean score of sighted students is significantly higher than blind students in recognizing the colour the Grass with at least 2 examples with values of sighted Mean (4.00, SD =

0.001)vs.Blind Mean (2.30, SD = 1.337) and t-value = 4.019, df = 18, Sig. = 0.001. The significance value (0.001) is less than 0.05, indicating a statistically significant difference in verbalism for recognizing the color of grass.

Although sighted students scored higher with values Mean (3.70, SD = 0.949)vs.Blind Mean (2.80, SD = 1.317)andt value = 1.754, df = 18, Sig. = 0.096, the difference is not statistically significant (Sig. = 0.096 > 0.05) in recognizing the colour of coal with at least 2 examples. This suggests similar verbalism levels between the two groups for recognizing the color of coal.

Sighted students showed significantly higher verbalism than blind students with values of sighted Mean (4.00, SD = 0.001)vs.Blind Mean (2.80, SD = 1.033)andt score = 3.674, df = 18, Sig. = 0.002 in recognizing the colour of blood with at least 2 examples. The low significance value (0.002) confirms a meaningful difference in their ability to associate the color of blood.

There was a highly significant difference in verbalism, with sighted students scoring much higher than blind students with values of sighted Mean (3.30, SD = 1.252)vs.Blind Mean (1.00, SD = 0.001)witht = 5.811, df = 18, Sig. = 0.001 in recognizing the colour of tea with at least 2 example. The zero standard deviation for blind students suggests a uniform response, likely indicating limited knowledge in this area.

Sighted students outperform blind students significantly in recognizing the color of cotton with sighted Mean (4.00, SD = 0.001)vs.Blind Mean (2.30, SD = 1.418)havingt value = 3.791, df = 18, Sig. = 0.001. The significance value (0.001) supports this difference as statistically meaningful.

Table 3

Activity 'B' - Defining words (verbs) followed by gestures interpretation

Level of verbalism in defining the verbs	**Category**	**N**	**Mean**	**S.D**	**t**	**df**	**Sig.**
Stir up-How do we stir up?	Sighted	10	3.60	.516	.976	18	.342
	Blind	10	3.30	.823			
Sweep-How do we sweep?	Sighted	10	3.60	.516	1.200	18	.246
	Blind	10	3.20	.919			
Jump-How do we jump?	Sighted	10	4.00	.001	1.765	18	.095
	Blind	10	3.40	1.075			
Squeeze-How do we squeeze a lemon?	Sighted	10	3.40	.516	.847	18	.408
	Blind	10	3.10	.994			
Kneed the flour-How do we knead the flour?	Sighted	10	3.70	.483	2.508	18	.022
	Blind	10	2.50	1.434			

The independent t-test compares the level of verbalism between sighted and blind students in defining actions associated with verbs. Sighted students scored slightly higher

with the values sighted Mean (3.60, SD = 0.516)vs.Blind Mean (3.30, SD = 0.823)with t = 0.976, df = 18, Sig. = 0.342, however the difference is not statistically significant (p = 0.342 > 0.05). This indicates that both groups demonstrate comparable verbalism in defining the verb "stir up".

Sighted students again scored higher, but the difference is not statistically significant (p = 0.246 > 0.05) with sighted Mean (3.60, SD = 0.516)vs.Blind Mean (3.20, SD = 0.919)and t-score = 1.200, df = 18, Sig. = 0.246. Both groups showed similar verbalism levels in defining verb "sweep."

While sighted students scored higher, the difference approaches significance but does not meet the threshold (p = 0.095 > 0.05) in defining the verb ‘jump’ with sighted Mean (4.00, SD = 0.001)vs.Blind Mean (3.40, SD = 1.075)andt-value = 1.765, df = 18, Sig. = 0.095. This suggested some variability in verbalism, with sighted students having a slight advantage in defining verb ‘jump’.

The difference between sighted and blind students is not statistically significant (p = 0.408 > 0.05) in defining verb squeeze with sighted Mean (3.40, SD = 0.516)vs.Blind Mean (3.10, SD = 0.994)**,** t-score = 0.847, df = 18, Sig. = 0.408. Both groups demonstrated similar verbalism in defining the verb of "squeezing of lemon."

The mean score of sighted students is significantly higher than that of blind studentswith sighted Mean (3.70, SD = 0.483)vs.Blind Mean (2.50, SD = 1.434)and t-value = 2.508, df = 18, Sig. = 0.022. The significance value (p = 0.022 < 0.05) indicates a statistically significant difference in verbalism for defining verb "knead."

Table 4

Activity ‘C’ - Story telling (Thirsty Crow)

Blind were asked to tell the story of thirsty crow and the various words from the story were asked to define and show gesture:

Level of verbalism in story telling	**Category**	**N**	**Mean**	**S.D**	**t**	**df**	**Sig.**
Thirsty- What is thirsty?	Sighted	10	3.50	.527	1.000	18	.331
	Blind	10	3.20	.789			
Crow- What is crow?	Sighted	10	3.90	.316	1.411	18	.187
	Blind	10	3.40	1.075			
Color- What is the color of crow?	Sighted	10	4.00	.000	1.769	18	.111
	Blind	10	3.30	1.252			
Stone- What are the stones?	Sighted	10	3.80	.422	.600	18	.556
	Blind	10	3.60	.966			
Pour- How do we pour the stones in a container?	Sighted	10	3.80	.422	.493	18	.628
	Blind	10	3.70	.483			

The independent t-test results compared the verbalism levels between blind and sighted students in storytelling based on their responses to various categories. There was no significant difference between the two groups in their understanding of verb "thirsty" with Mean (Sighted students) was 3.50 whereby Mean (Blind students) was 3.20 and t-value (18) = 1.000, p = .331.

No significant difference between the groups in their understanding of verb "crow," though the sighted group has a slightly higher mean as (Sighted mean) was 3.90 whereby Mean (Blind students) was 3.40 with t(18) = 1.411, p = .187.

The sighted group scored higher, but the difference is not statistically significant defining the colour of the crow with Mean (Sighted students) was 4.00, and Mean (Blind students) was 3.30 with t(18) = 1.769, p = 0.111.

No significant difference between the groups in their understanding of "stone" with mean value of the (Sighted students) was 3.80; however the mean of (Blind students) was 3.60, and t(18) = 0.600, p = 0.556.

No significant difference between the groups in their understanding of "how to pour stones in container" with mean of (Sighted students) was 3.80, whereby mean of (Blind students) was 3.70 and t(18) = 0.493, p = 0.628.

Findings of the study

Verbalism features in Colour Association

1. Blind students consistently demonstrated higher verbalism in color association across all scenarios.
2. Statistically significant differences are found for recognizing the colors of grass, blood, tea, and cotton.
3. The only non-significant result is for recognizing the color of coal (p = 0.096), suggesting that verbalism levels for this specific association are more comparable between the groups.

These findings indicate that the ability to associate colors with examples is more developed in sighted students, potentially due to direct visual experiences, while blind students rely on indirect knowledge, leading to variability.

Verbalism features in defining verbs

1. Sighted students generally scored higher in for defining verbs, but significant differences were only observed in the definition of "knead the flour" (p = 0.022). So blind students had higher verbalism in defining the verb of kneading the flour.
2. No statistically significant differences were found for "stir up," "sweep," "jump," or "squeeze."
3. Higher lack of significance was noted in defining the verbs.

Verbalism features about story telling

For all categories, the p-values are greater than 0.05, indicating no statistically significant differences in the verbalism features between the blind and sighted students regarding the story telling of thirsty crow against the verbs of thirsty, colour, crow, stone and pour. While there were slight variations in the means, none of the differences were strong enough to conclude a meaningful disparity in their storytelling abilities based on the analyzed features.

CONCLUSIONS

The study was conducted assess the verbalism features among the students with visual impairment in district Faisalabad. The verbalism features of the blind students were significantly higher than their sighted counterparts regarding the color association (grass, blood, tea, cotton with examples) except color association of coal. On the other hand, both the groups of blind and sighted students had similar level of verbalism features pertaining to the defining of verbs (stir up, sweep, jump and squeeze) as well as story telling (thirsty crow) containing the explanation of verbs such as thirsty, color, crow, stone and pour. However, in verb defining activity, blind students showed more verbalism features in the verb of 'kneading the flour'.

Limitations of the study

Following are the limitations of the study:

1. The questionnaire was developed by researcher, so it may affect the results.
2. Due to the shortage of resources the sample size of the study was delimited up to 20 students.

Acknowledgement

Researcher acknowledged the support provided by the staff, teachers and blind and sighted students during the data collection. The behavior of the people was very cooperative and supportive which made the process of data collection easier and worthwhile.

Financial Support

The study was carried out on personal finance and no any monetary aid was taken from any organization, private or public office.

Ethical Consideration

An informed consent was obtained from the respondents officials to conduct the study in the respective educational institution. The personal information and data statistics were kept in secure hands to ensure its safety. The respect, prestige and safety of the respondents was given special consideration in the study.

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