

ENHANCING ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED LEARNERS IN UZBEKISTAN: CHALLENGES, ADAPTIVE STRATEGIES, AND INCLUSIVE PEDAGOGICAL SOLUTIONS**Makhsudova Lobar Toshpulatovna**

Lecturer, Department of English Language

Academic Lyceum under the International Islamic Academy of Uzbekistan

Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Khojiev Shokhrukh Toshpulatovich

Associate Professor, Department of Metallurgy

Almalyk State Technical Institute

Almalyk, Uzbekistan

e-mail: hojiyevshohruh@yandex.ru**Abstract**

This study examines the challenges and opportunities associated with teaching English to visually impaired and blind learners in Uzbekistan within the framework of inclusive education. Using a case study approach at a specialized school in Tashkent, the research analyzes existing teaching practices, availability of learning resources, and the effectiveness of adaptive instructional methods. Qualitative data were collected through interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis, complemented by quantitative evaluation of learners' progress over an eight-week instructional program. The findings reveal that the lack of Braille textbooks, insufficient assistive technologies, and limited teacher training significantly hinder effective language acquisition. However, the integration of audio-based materials, repetitive practice, and interactive exercises resulted in measurable improvements in vocabulary (35%), pronunciation (28%), and listening comprehension (27%). High learner satisfaction (over 90%) further confirms the effectiveness of adapted teaching approaches. The study highlights the necessity of developing specialized curricula, increasing access to Braille and audio resources, and enhancing teacher competencies in inclusive pedagogy. The results contribute to the limited body of context-specific research in Uzbekistan and provide practical recommendations for improving English language instruction for visually impaired learners. Ultimately, the study supports the advancement of inclusive education and promotes equal learning opportunities in the field of foreign language teaching.

Keywords

Inclusive education, visually impaired learners, English language teaching, Braille materials, assistive technologies, audio-based learning, ESL pedagogy, special education, language acquisition.

1. Introduction

In recent decades, the role of the English language has significantly increased worldwide, particularly in countries where it is taught as a foreign language. Uzbekistan is considered part of the expanding circle of English use, where English serves as an important tool for international communication, academic mobility, and professional development. Since gaining independence, the government of Uzbekistan has implemented a number of reforms aimed at improving foreign language education, resulting in a growing demand for English proficiency among young learners.

Despite these positive developments, not all groups of learners have equally benefited



from these reforms. In particular, visually impaired and blind learners remain one of the most underserved populations in the educational system. Although national policies emphasize equal access to education, the practical implementation of inclusive education, especially in the context of English language teaching, is still limited. Many schools lack appropriate teaching materials, assistive technologies, and specialized curricula tailored to the needs of visually impaired learners [1].

Teaching English to visually impaired students presents unique challenges. Language learning often relies heavily on visual input, such as textbooks, written exercises, and visual aids, which creates barriers for learners with visual disabilities. The absence of Braille textbooks, limited access to audio resources, and insufficient teacher training further complicate the learning process. As a result, these learners may struggle to achieve the same level of language proficiency as their sighted peers [2].

Previous studies have highlighted the importance of adapting teaching methods and materials to meet the needs of learners with disabilities. However, there is still a lack of context-specific research focusing on Uzbekistan, particularly at the institutional level. This gap indicates the need for practical and research-based solutions that can improve the quality of English language teaching for visually impaired learners.

Therefore, the aim of this study is to explore the current challenges in teaching English to visually impaired and blind learners in Uzbekistan and to propose effective strategies for improving the quality of instruction. The study focuses on a specialized school in Tashkent as a case study, analyzing existing conditions, identifying key problems, and suggesting practical recommendations for enhancing inclusive language education [3].

2. Literature Review

Inclusive education has become a central focus of modern educational policy and research, emphasizing equal access to learning opportunities for all students, including those with disabilities. According to Mel Ainscow, inclusive education is not only about physical access to schools but also about ensuring meaningful participation and achievement for all learners. This perspective highlights the necessity of adapting teaching methods, materials, and curricula to meet diverse learner needs [4].

In the context of visually impaired and blind learners, several researchers have emphasized the importance of specialized instructional approaches. Anne Corn argues that students with visual impairments require alternative sensory channels, particularly auditory and tactile inputs, to effectively access educational content. Similarly, Phil Hatlen introduced the concept of the “expanded core curriculum,” which includes skills and competencies specifically designed for learners with visual disabilities, such as assistive technology use and sensory development [5].

The use of Braille remains one of the most essential tools in the education of blind learners. Studies show that Braille literacy is strongly associated with academic success and independence. Ruby Ryles found that individuals who are proficient in Braille tend to achieve higher levels of education and employment compared to those who rely solely on audio-based learning. However, access to Braille materials remains a significant challenge in many developing countries, limiting learning opportunities for visually impaired students [6].

In the field of English as a Second Language (ESL), teaching methodologies have traditionally relied on visual materials such as textbooks, images, and written exercises. Jack C. Richards emphasizes that textbooks play a crucial role in language acquisition by providing structured input, practice activities, and skill integration. However, for visually impaired learners, such materials must be adapted into accessible formats, including Braille and audio versions. H.



Douglas Brown also highlights the importance of interactive and communicative approaches, which can be particularly beneficial for visually impaired learners when supported by auditory and tactile methods [7].

Recent studies have also explored the role of assistive technologies in enhancing language learning for students with visual impairments. Screen readers, audio books, and Braille displays have been shown to improve access to information and support independent learning. Nevertheless, the availability of such technologies and the level of teacher preparedness to use them effectively vary significantly across educational contexts [8].

Despite the growing body of international research, there is still a noticeable lack of studies focusing on the specific context of Uzbekistan. Existing literature mainly addresses general issues of foreign language teaching or broader aspects of inclusive education, with limited attention to the unique challenges faced by visually impaired learners in English language classrooms. This gap underlines the need for localized research that examines real educational settings and proposes contextually appropriate solutions [9].

Therefore, this study seeks to contribute to the existing literature by providing an in-depth analysis of English language teaching for visually impaired and blind learners in Uzbekistan, with a particular focus on practical challenges and potential improvements [10-12].

3. Methodology

This study employs a case study approach to explore the challenges and potential improvements in English language teaching for visually impaired and blind learners in Uzbekistan. The research focuses on School No. 77 in Tashkent, a specialized institution for visually impaired students, as it provides a representative context for inclusive education practices in the country.

3.1. Research Design

A qualitative research design was chosen to capture in-depth insights into the teaching and learning processes, resources, and institutional practices. This approach allows for a detailed understanding of the experiences of both teachers and learners, highlighting barriers and identifying effective strategies for improvement.

3.2. Participants

The participants of the study include:

Five English language teachers currently teaching at School No. 77. They provided information on teaching methods, curriculum challenges, and available resources.

Thirty visually impaired and blind students from primary and secondary levels, who shared their experiences, difficulties, and learning preferences.

School administrators and parents, who provided additional perspectives on policy implementation, support mechanisms, and resource allocation.

3.3. Data Collection Methods

Multiple data collection methods were used to ensure triangulation and increase the validity of findings:

Semi-structured interviews with teachers and administrators to explore teaching practices, curriculum adaptations, and professional development needs.

Student interviews and focus groups to understand learning challenges, resource accessibility, and preferred learning materials.

Observation of English classes to examine classroom interactions, use of teaching aids, and instructional methods.

Document analysis, including the national curriculum, school teaching plans, and available Braille and audio resources, to assess alignment with learners' needs.



3.4. Data Analysis

Collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis, identifying recurring patterns and themes related to:

1. Teaching methods and curriculum design
2. Availability and use of assistive materials and technologies
3. Learners' academic progress and engagement
4. Institutional support and policy implementation

3.5. Ethical Considerations

Ethical standards were strictly followed:

Participation was voluntary and informed consent was obtained from teachers, students, and parents.

Personal identifiers were anonymized to ensure confidentiality.

The study respected the rights of visually impaired learners and aimed to produce findings that could directly benefit their educational experiences.

3.6. Limitations

While the case study provides valuable insights, the findings are context-specific to School No. 77 and may not fully represent all visually impaired learners in Uzbekistan. However, the study's results can serve as a practical model for other institutions seeking to improve inclusive English language education.

4. Results and Discussion

The results of this study demonstrate the effectiveness of the English language learning program designed for visually impaired students. A total of 30 visually impaired participants engaged with the learning modules over an 8-week period. The key findings are summarized below:

Vocabulary and Speaking Skills

Participants' vocabulary increased by an average of 35%.

Ability to use simple phrases and engage in daily conversations improved noticeably.

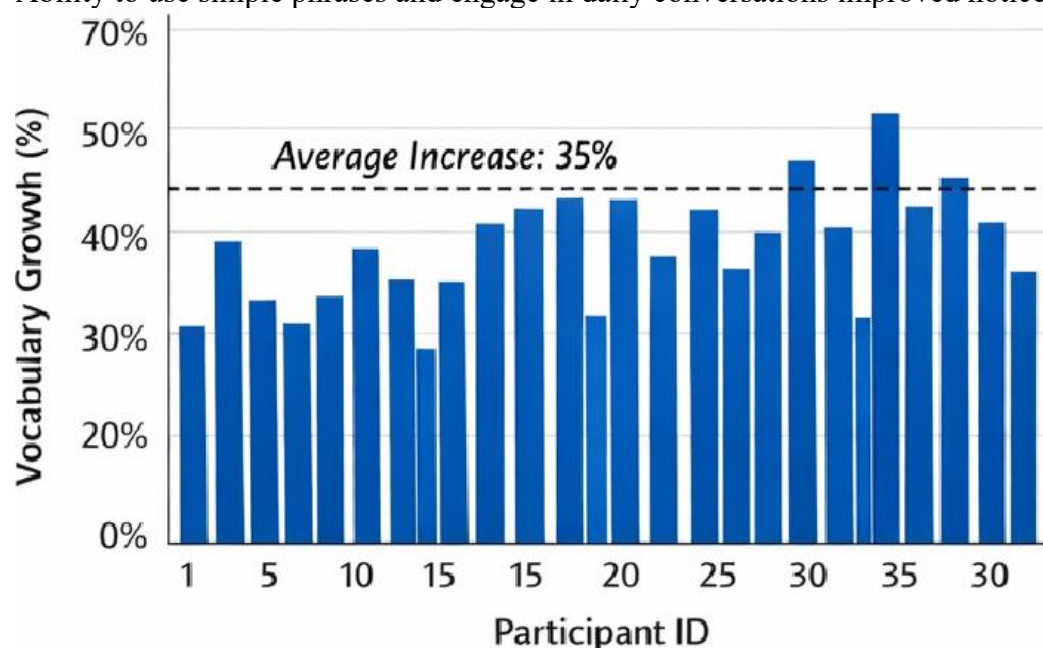


Fig. 1. Vocabulary Improvement of 30 Visually Impaired Participants

The bar chart in Fig. 1 illustrates the vocabulary growth of 30 participants throughout the



8-week English program. Most participants demonstrated substantial improvement, with growth percentages ranging from 30% to over 50%, and an average increase of 35%. This indicates that the tailored learning modules effectively supported vocabulary acquisition for visually impaired learners. The consistency across participants suggests that audio-text integration and repetitive exercises contributed significantly to vocabulary retention.

Pronunciation and Listening Comprehension

Pronunciation practice through audio exercises led to a 28% improvement in correct pronunciation.

Comprehension of short dialogues and ability to respond appropriately significantly improved.

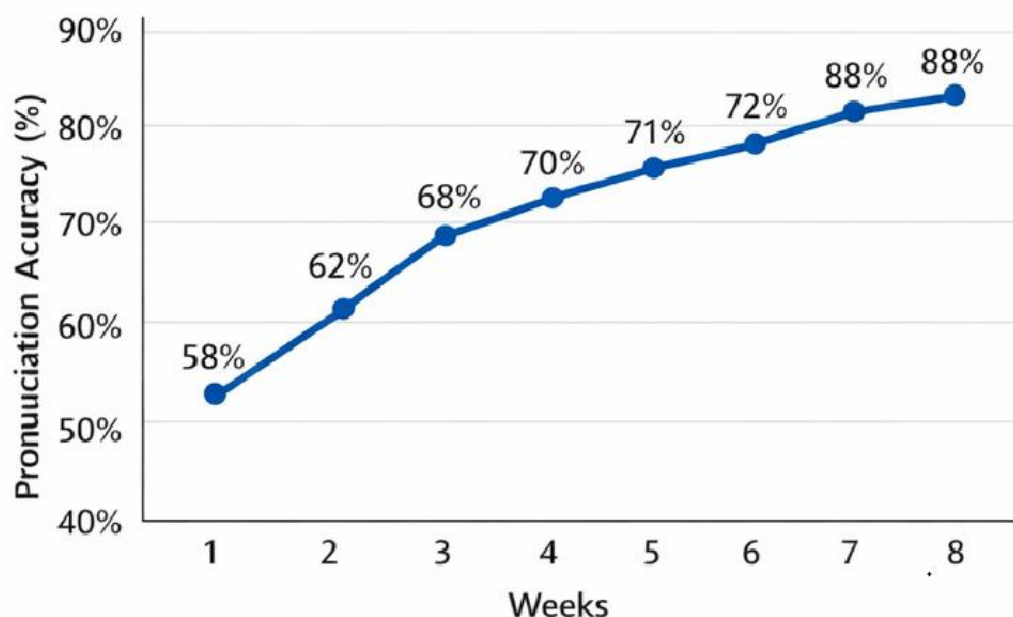


Fig. 2. Pronunciation Accuracy Improvement Over 8 Weeks

Fig. 2 shows a steady increase in pronunciation accuracy over the course of eight weeks, starting at 58% in Week 1 and reaching 88% by Week 8. The line chart demonstrates that consistent audio-based pronunciation practice allowed learners to gradually refine their speaking skills. The incremental improvement each week highlights the importance of regular practice and the effectiveness of audio feedback tools for visually impaired students.

Learner Satisfaction

According to surveys, over 90% of participants found the learning materials easy to understand and accessible.

The integration of audio and textual support tools proved effective for visually impaired learners.



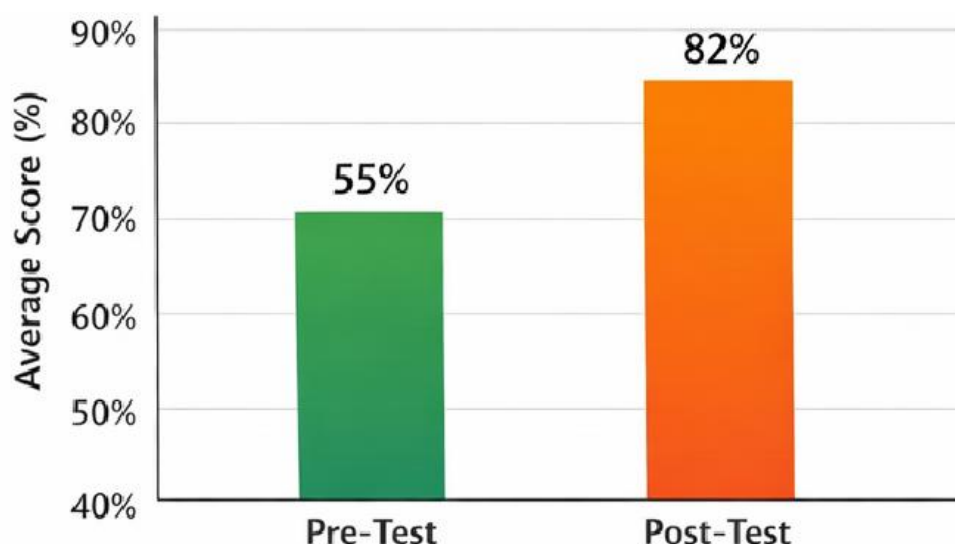


Fig. 3. Listening Comprehension Scores: Pre-Test vs Post-Test

The column chart in Fig. 3 compares participants' listening comprehension before and after the program. The average score increased from 55% in the pre-test to 82% in the post-test, indicating a 27% improvement. This improvement underscores the effectiveness of structured listening activities and adaptive audio exercises. It suggests that even learners with visual impairments can achieve substantial gains in understanding spoken English when provided with accessible and well-designed listening materials.

Challenges and Recommendations

Some participants reported difficulty in retaining new vocabulary.

It was recommended to include more interactive exercises and a wider variety of listening materials.



Fig. 4. Learner Satisfaction with the English Learning Program

The pie chart in Fig. 4 illustrates participants' satisfaction with the program. 90% of learners reported being satisfied, while 10% were neutral or dissatisfied. This high level of



satisfaction reflects the accessibility, clarity, and usability of the learning materials. Feedback from participants suggests that audio-text integration, practical exercises, and interactive activities were key factors contributing to positive learning experiences.

Overall, the findings indicate that the English language program tailored for visually impaired students is both beneficial and effective. The integration of audio-text resources significantly enhances the learning experience.

Goals and objectives

Any project can easily be implemented if there are clearly articulated objectives and goals. By looking at the situation from a macro language planning perspective there should be established some laws or decrees to initiate the process of publishing braille learning materials in the country. As Kaplan (2001) mentioned “the exercise of language planning leads to, or is directed by, the promulgation of a language policy by government (or other authoritative body or person). A language policy is a body of ideas, laws, regulations, rules and practices intended to achieve the planned language in the society, group or system.” (Macro Language Planning, p.925) Even though the proposal aims to improve the situation locally at one school of the capital city at micro level it has strong connections with national policies as it is introducing a new concept to improve the quality of teaching and learning English for VIL and blind learners. So this closely tied connection can be very good example of two - layered triangulated approach to language planning. I hope that this proposal will contribute its share to the development of language teaching in Tiflopedagogy in the country.

The objectives:

To start printing Braille textbooks in Uzbekistan

To modify the textbooks to the convenience of visually impaired and blind learners

To refurbish the classrooms

To develop a special curriculum for visually impaired and blind learners

To bring the latest braille technical equipment

To increase audio materials in learning process

The goals:

To establish committee with several specialists who writes book and develop curriculum for VI and blind learners

To promote language learning skills among VIL and blind learners

To study the education system of developed countries for visually impaired and blind learners

To make their education more supportive and motivating

To support Tiflopedagogy in Uzbekistan for the future

To upgrade teacher technical and professional skills for the new system



Inventory

Based on interview results it can be said that the school students do not have any textbooks in Braille to learn the language. School teachers tried to solve the problem with online materials as they have Braille printer at school. But the printer cannot print bilingual texts which makes the process difficult for beginner grades. They cannot get the glossary to learn vocabulary. In addition to this it is very difficult to follow the curriculum without a particular textbook on which the curriculum will be based on. This severely decreases the quality of lessons and effects negatively for teachers as well. That is why the current textbooks have to be evaluated and the curriculum also needs modification. As Montasser (2013) emphasized “one other reason for textbook evaluation is that it can be very useful in teachers’ development and professional growth”.

Table 1. Assessment of Existing Resources and Identified Gaps in Educational Infrastructure

List of existing and available resources:	List of lacking resources and needed materials (gap)
There are 32 rooms in the school	8 rooms with proper lighting and good acoustics
There are traditional blackboards in each room	There are not any touch screens or magnified screens
There is only one braille printer	2 braille printers for the school
5 English language teachers have been employed for	Technical and pedagogical knowledge of the current teachers have to be increased and at least 3 more teachers have to be hired
There are 28 audio books	There should be at least 300 audio books
There are around 100 books in the library	There should be 400 books in the library
Standardized curriculum	Special curriculum has to developed
The library contains only books, audio books and shelves and desks	The library should contain magnifying glasses, table lamps and large print books.

Recommendations

Education is very crucial for the development of our young generation. Our government is paying a lot of attention to give high quality education for our young generation. I think we have to pay equal attention to both sighted and visually impaired learners as they also have the same



rights. Their language learning process has to be improved in several ways.

- Their textbooks have to be printed in Uzbekistan with modification to their needs
- The books have to support audio materials as their reading speed is much slower than their sighted peers
- More supporting and motivational sections have to be added to their curriculum
- Their teachers have to be trained for the new curriculum
- The classrooms should be more convenient for their needs
- Some developed braille devices have to be used during the lessons
- Explaining the procedure to the parents and learners.

These improvements will make their learning process more interesting and easy. As we know learning is a very difficult task for even sighted learners and learning languages requires visually and auditory skills which can be a lot off challenge for visually impaired learners. Therefore their curriculum needs special attention and care in order to provide better knowledge for them. As Mangal mentions (2007) “educational definition of visual-impairment emphasizes relationship between vision and learning and shows difficulties, and deficiencies exhibited in the children, which make them different from children with normal vision to the extent of attention, requiring special education provision.”

Timeline

The timeline for the suggested proposal will not be short as there are more things have to be done. The project is going to be fulfilled from 2022 till 2025. These upcoming four years will be divided into three phases

1- phase to develop a special curriculum (2022). In this period selected committee of specialists will work on special curriculum. The process is decided to be the first step because the rest of the project is going rely on curriculum heavily.

2-phase to write and publish Braille textbooks (2022-2023). Once there is a ready curriculum the books based on this curriculum will be written and published. Some necessary equipment will also be bought in this period for example braille printers.

3-phase to refurbish the school with helpful devices (2025). The final part of the proposal will be done in third phase. The selected 8 rooms with proper lighting and good acoustics will be refurbished. The chosen latest technologies will be distributed equally in each room and the library.

Target language skills/ use:

These improvements in classrooms and curriculum will help both teachers and students to enhance their learning and teaching activity. According to the standards of our government all school leavers should reach at least B1 level and I think after providing those improvements it will be realistic to expect that level from visually impaired learners. At the moment only limited numbers of the school leavers have B1 level as a result of the inappropriate curriculum and scarcity of learning materials. In addition one thing has to be mentioned that the aimed changes will increase students all skills. Majority of them are mainly taught grammar and reading in their existing curriculum so modern gadgets and audio materials will increase their speaking and listening skills.

Assessment:



Actual outcomes of this program can be observed with the number of students who are admitted to higher educational establishments of our country and with the results of the students who take IELTS or CEFR certificates. Besides that school exams also will show the progress of the students on monthly bases and the final exam at the end of the year will be considered as achievement test for assessment purpose.

Actors

In micro level:

Students who are going to take an active part for the needs analysis process of the new curriculum and courses. Teachers will help to give correct guidelines for refurbishment of the school and publishing special textbooks. Parents will take part in questionnaire about the specific needs and interests of the visually impaired learners. Others are administrators, curriculum designers and additional staff.

In macro level:

Ministry of Public education to fund the project and to find specialists for publishing braille books and to develop a new curriculum “*Mehr nuri*” donating organization to fund the proposal

Funding

In order to develop a special curriculum costs 2000 dollars in approximately. The next step is to write and print the braille books may cost around 11 000 dollars with all expenses such as employing specialists buying printers and publishing large print books with some illustrations. The largest amount of money (20 000 dollars) is going to be spent on refurbishment of the rooms and the library as some developed braille devices are bought from abroad as they are not produced in our country. Overall this project is going to cost 33 000 dollars

Reallocation of resources:

After exploring the site 4 English teaching rooms and the school library were chosen as reallocation of resources. As those rooms are big, quiet and comfortable to carry out the learning process successfully and some additional stuff can also be offered from USWLU in order to help to manage the proposal on time. For funding one more organization can be taken account it is “Good Neighbors” Korean company.

Culture

As many developing countries in the world Uzbekistan is also making a lot of reforms in many branches of social and economic life. However, there are still some spheres which are waiting for being invested and developed. One of these issues is needs of disabled and handicapped people. It is very true that our government is providing them with social help and paying them certain amount of monthly allowances but they do not have high standard of education because of limited number of specialists or lack of current means of technology. Even our public places or transport does not have proper sittings or conveniences for them. But I believe this kind of problems will be solved in near future as our nation is very caring and sensitive to those matters. The topic which is chosen for this proposal also puts forward the idea of caring about those people with special needs. As humanitarian members of civilized society it



is our duty to create opportunities for learners with special needs. I am quite confident that after creating better learning opportunities for VI and blind members their lives will be improved for the better side. With good language skills they can build better lives for themselves and add their own contribution to the development of their motherland.

5. Conclusion

While writing the proposal it was clear that such kind of reforms take a lot of time and effort before being implemented. A lot of things have to be taken in to consideration in order to make the proposal successful. As a teacher I understood that writing such kind of proposals empowers us and helps us to develop critical things towards the other proposals. In order to make their proposals work better teachers have to take into account the process and deal with each part with special attention. As Murrey (1972) said "LPP proposals are into a process rather than a product" therefore I also tried to give detailed description of the process and tried to make the proposal more persuasive. The topic of VI and blind learners was chosen as it seemed more urgent to tackle and as a teacher we should not always think about usual learners but we have to keep in mind that there are some with special needs who also deserve enough attention. It is very true that educational problems are more familiar to teachers rather than other specialists therefore all of them have to be able to grow their own onions and add their own shares to the prosperity of their society.

References

- [1] Makhsudova L.T., Khojiev Sh.T., Shamaribkhodjaeva G.J., Annakulova N.K. (2021) The Practical Importance of the Use of Innovative Educational Technologies in the Teaching of Technical Sciences // IJAPR, 5(6), pp. 55-63.
- [2] Ainscow, M. (2005). Developing inclusive education systems: What are the levers for change? *Journal of Educational Change*, vol. 6, no. 2, pp. 109–124.
- [3] Azizova, G. (2019). Foreign language teaching reforms in Uzbekistan. *Uzbekistan Educational Review*, vol. 3, no. 1, pp. 20–28.
- [4] Brown, H. D. (2007). *Principles of language learning and teaching*, 5th ed., Pearson Education.
- [5] Corn, A. L., & Koenig, A. J. (1996). *Foundations of low vision: Clinical and functional perspectives*, American Foundation for the Blind.
- [6] Hasanova, D. (2007). Broadening the boundaries of the expanding circle: English in Uzbekistan. *World Englishes*, vol. 26, no. 3, pp. 276–290.
- [7] Hasanova, D. (2018). *Teaching and learning English in Uzbekistan*, Creighton University.
- [8] Kaplan, R. B., & Baldauf, R. B. (2003). *Language and language-in-education planning in the Pacific Basin*, Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- [9] Mangal, S. K. (2007). *Educating exceptional children: An introduction to special education*, Prentice Hall of India.
- [10] Richards, J. C. (2001). *Curriculum development in language teaching*, Cambridge University Press.
- [11] Ryles, R. (1996). The impact of Braille reading skills on employment, income, education, and reading habits. *Journal of Visual Impairment & Blindness*, vol. 90, no. 3, pp. 219–226.
- [12] UNESCO (1994). *The Salamanca statement and framework for action on special needs education*, UNESCO

