The specifics of text perception and understanding by the students with mental retardation

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The problem of misunderstanding is particularly relevant for children with intellectual disabilities. In the study 60 people aged 15 to 19 years (20 of them with preserved intellect, and 40 students with reduced intelligence). In accordance with the International classification of diseases and behavioral disorders of the 10th review their official clinical diagnoses were F83 – mixed specific disorders of psychological development and F70 – mild mental retardation.

The method of eye movements registration was used and iView XRed 250 system (SMI, Germany) with a sampling rate of 250 Hz. A comparison of the peculiarities of perception and understanding of texts in a standard format and placed in a column was made. The number and duration of saccades and fixations, time of viewing/reading, the "zone of interests", the subjective assessment of understanding of presented stimuli, key concepts observed in the responses of the examinee were assessed. The students with mental retardation compared with normally developing peers had the worst indicators of duration of the text reading and the accuracy of it understanding. All students better read and understood the text in a column. But those of them who have reduced intelligence had difficulties in the gaze fixation on some words and could not mobilize the efforts. The correlation between the subjective rating of understanding and the number of words in the description of the plot of the texts and between the number of fixations and the number of words in the annotation content were found out.

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