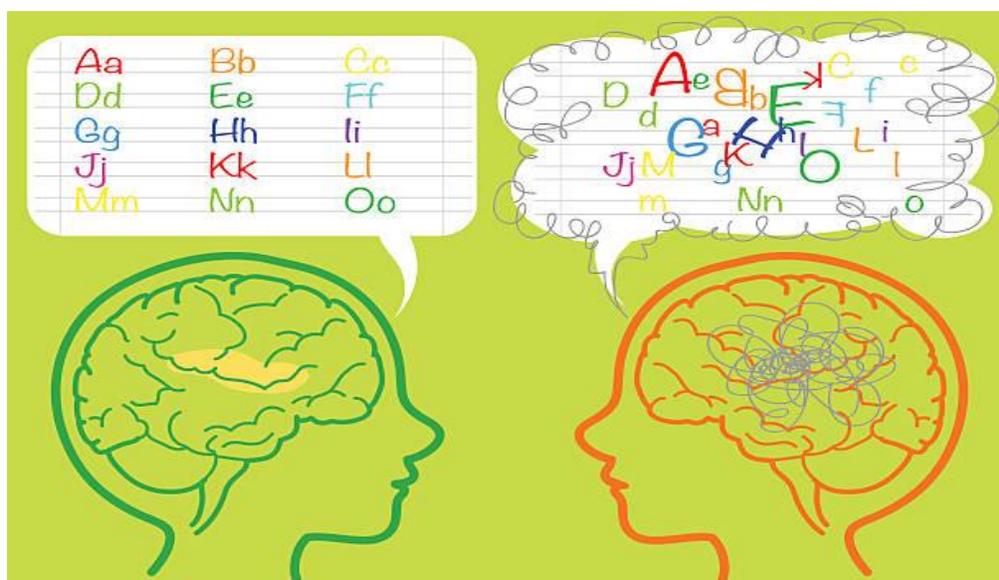


TEACHING ENGLISH TO STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES AND DIFFICULTIES

Solijonova Orzuxon

English Philology Language Teaching
FerSU



Abstract: This article intends to present a short review of the factors significant for foreign language learning, with special emphasis on students with language learning disabilities and difficulties. In this case, teachers' role, teaching methods, instructional modifications have a huge effect on success in foreign language acquisition for students who have difficulties in foreign language learning.

Key words: foreign language disabilities and difficulties, aptitude, materials, educators' position

Introduction: In today's global world, the importance of English cannot be denied and ignored since English is the greatest common language spoken universally. To learn English requires constant practice and patience. English is important for students as it broadens their minds, develops emotional skills, improve the quality of life by providing job opportunities. In addition, this language is the language of our international communication in all areas, such as politics, science, media or art and it is often the language of entertainment. So at primary schools

of Uzbekistan, since 10th December of 2012 English is taught to children. But are all children the same like us?! Are they intelligent, healthy, eager to learn?! Absolutely, no. There are some kids who have disabilities in terms of learning.

Inclusion is defined “as a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all children, youth and adults through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing and eliminating exclusion” (UNESCO, 2009:8). In an inclusive environment, all students with special needs, regardless of the type and severity of their disability or difficulty, attend regular schools in their neighborhood, and they are the responsibility of general education teachers (Hallahan, Kauffman & Pullen, 2009). Furthermore, it is a general teacher’s responsibility to address weakness areas of students with disabilities and difficulties by making instructional and content modifications, and in some cases, to take part in identification of these students in class. This especially refers to the identification of students with language-based learning disabilities (LBLD). Newhall (2012) defines language-based learning disabilities as “a spectrum of difficulties related to the understanding and use of spoken and written language” (Newhall, 2012). Some students with LBLD are identified at an early age. However, many students with this disorder go through early elementary school with few problems. It is only when the educational demands and expectations rise that their language-based learning disabilities become identified (Newhall, 2012). Schwarz (1997) suggests that sometimes even those students who were not previously diagnosed with a learning disability (LD) turned out to be learning disabled in a foreign language class. If a child has language delays in the native language, difficulties in native language literacy skills, specific language weaknesses in both native language and English (e.g. phonological), and if there is a family history of reading disabilities, and no progress after appropriate intervention, the possibility of a learning disability is present (Spear-Swerling, 2006).

In every case, teachers have a part and parcel role in fulfilling language curriculum. Because encouraging pupils in a foreign language classroom is a task of them and they have to make the best materials, as well as use the best methods. However, there is another matter that although classroom is filled with well-designed materials, sometimes the outcome may not be as expected. Good materials do not mean an excellent success. If a teacher lacks all qualifications, motivation, training, knowledge and language proficiency. Also, they face other additional obstacles because of insufficient training. Patience and being open-minded is most-demanded from each instructor with children who have language learning disabilities and difficulties. Ganschow and Schneider (2006) state that training and education for foreign language teachers usually prepares them for the “ideal learner” who is expected to master language skills (pronunciation, reading, writing, speaking and listening) through exposure and practice. They point out the need for additional training in meeting the needs of students with special needs. Foreign language teachers should learn to determine the most beneficial accommodations for their students, and to identify students at risk of developing a foreign language learning disability as early as possible (Ganschow & Schneider 2006).

Conclusion: By creating a variety of opportunities for students to learn and demonstrate what they have learned, teachers will make their class more accessible to all students. By dialoguing with students with LD, they will achieve a lifelong relationship with a foreign language.

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