



Raising Awareness about Dyslexia among English Language Learners

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Abstract

The article's objective clarify whether having a deep understanding of dyslexia might help lessen the stress associated with learning English. One of the skills people need to use as the world gets more interconnected is being multilingual. It is not a solution to be monolingual and give up on learning a second language. Speaking requires recalling previously taught material, such as reading, grammar, and vocabulary. It is essential to highlight that while studying a foreign language, some students experience difficulties with reading and spelling that may be related to dyslexia. However, neither teachers nor students have given the topic deep analysis. Thus, it is essential to raise awareness about dyslexia in an educational environment.

To research the topic in detail, an online survey was conducted among EFL students to clarify their level of knowledge about dyslexia. Despite the small sample size (60 participants), the study is valuable because the respondents who volunteered to take part came from Georgia's capital and two separate towns, representing both public and private colleges. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the results that were obtained.

The following are the conclusions reached: Most students know very little about dyslexia. Simultaneously, when students or their peers encounter difficulties throughout the reading process, social stress arises, which impacts students' self-worth.

Keywords: Dyslexia, Learning English Language, Social Stress, Memory.

Introduction

The Salamanca Statement clarifies that all people have a constitutional right to gain an education and the various needs of students should be taken into consideration. The ability of the brain to recognize spoken or non-verbal information is affected by a combination of genetic, epigenetic, and environmental factors, and learning difficulty is often seen as a neurodevelopmental problem consuming a biological cause. There are two models available: social and medical/deficit. The social model holds that built barriers can be removed by altering the environment to accommodate everyone's requirements, in contrast to the medical/deficit model, which states that barriers and disabilities should be addressed by specialized educational institutions. For students with dyslexia, a lack of social, emotional, and intellectual support can result in anxiety, sadness, lowered self-esteem, and worse academic performance (Zero & Pizorn, 2022, pp. 1-27).

It is essential to recognize that dyslexia affects language acquisition, particularly regarding reading. Teachers of foreign languages should be knowledgeable of dyslexia and prepared to assist pupils who experience it. The following

elements relate to readiness: 1) beliefs regarding learners with dyslexia, 2) classroom behavior toward learners with dyslexia, and 3) teachers' self-efficacy. In addition to the elements, listed above, there are other aspects, including national education systems, social attitudes, teachers' motivation, and the perception of dyslexia (Zero & Pizorn, 2022, pp. 1-27).

Not only should educators be knowledgeable about dyslexia, but students also need to understand it. Several cognitive deficits, including short-term memory, phonological abilities, information organization, and perception, are linked to dyslexia. Reading comprehension abilities are indicative of dyslexia's cognitive symptoms. The neurological disease known as dyslexia is influenced by biological, cognitive, and educational variables (Indrathne, 2019, pp. 630-654).

One learning disability that affects spelling and reading is dyslexia. Learning new words, reading, and spelling are double challenges when learning a foreign language. Students with the disorder have deficits in phonological awareness, which impacts their reading ability. Educators may lack sufficient knowledge or training regarding dyslexia, which could lead to students with dyslexia not receiving an

education commensurate with their peers' knowledge (Schneider, 2012, pp. 319-332).

More information about dyslexia is needed for English language teachers in order to support the students. To assist students with dyslexia more effectively in their foreign language learning process, teaching methods and resources should be enhanced. It must be acknowledged that reading abilities advance people's growth on both a personal and professional level. It increases people's opportunities for international communication (Schneider, 2012, pp. 319-332).

Aside from these aspects, learning a foreign language is a requirement for education. It is challenging for students with dyslexia to complete the above tasks. Spelling and reading issues arise when they try to reach the objectives. Students with dyslexia have trouble decoding, remembering, and retrieving language information (Schneider, 2012, pp. 319-332).

Specific approaches, such as the multisensory approach, which uses multiple senses to engage students, assist students with dyslexia in their foreign language learning process. Visual, aural, kinesthetic, and tactical stimuli are all incorporated into the teaching, reading, and spelling processes. Regretfully, the approach mentioned above is rarely employed; however, the main issue is that most educators are ignorant of dyslexia. Very little is known about dyslexia by foreign language instructors (Nijakowska, 2010, pp. 1-15).

Literature Review

1.1. Dyslexia's Influence on Memorizing Study Materials

The Greek word dyslexia means "difficulty with words." Since the 1800s, the well-known learning disability has been recognized; it is particularly noteworthy in adults. Teachers should be more effective in providing support to adults to understand better the role that memory plays in dyslexia. Learning disabilities are a common occurrence, and different adults face different difficulties with language-based tasks like speaking, writing, and concentration. These difficulties impact students' academic success (Alsulami & Ghazzai, 2019, pp. 1-7).

Dyslexia, a neurocognitive deficit that is inherited, causes learning difficulties that can range from minor to severe. Both short-term and long-term memory may not function as well in adults with dyslexia as in other adults. It is inherited genetically and is known to cause student learning challenges (Alsulami & Ghazzai, 2019, pp. 1-7).

The earliest known documentation of dyslexia dates back to German neurologist Andrew Kussmaul's research in Stuttgart in the late 1870s. He was particularly interested in the patients who struggled with word usage and reading. After learning about Kussmaul's research, another German physician named Rudolf Berlin coined "dyslexia" in 1887 (Alsulami & Ghazzai, 2019, pp. 1-7).

In England, dyslexia was first diagnosed in 1896, and the findings were published in the British Medical Journal. It was carried out by English physicians Pringle-Morgen and ophthalmologist James Hinshelwood. They thought that the inability to visually process the words and symbols that were presented to them was the root cause of dyslexia. In 1939, the field of study grew due to the research conducted by two German scholars on learning difficulties, Dr. Alfred Struss and Heinz Werner. They discovered that a variety of disorders can lead to learning difficulties and that each individual should be treated as a unique case that requires assessment and evaluation (Alsulami & Ghazzai, 2019, pp. 1-7).

Dyslexia and memory are directly related. There are three different kinds of memory: short-term, long-term, and sensory. A substantial amount of unconsciously acquired information can be stored in long-term memory. Three basic components are involved in the formation of long-term memory: procedural, semantic, and episodic memory. When it comes to semantic memory, procedural memory comprises knowledge gained through academic study and the development of motor skills, while episodic memory is linked to specific experiences. Seven items, give or take one or two, can fit in short-term memory. The short-term memory has a storage duration of twenty-thirty seconds. When it comes to sensory memory, the senses absorb information from their environment (Alsulami & Ghazzai, 2019, pp. 1-7).

In addition to memory problems, students with dyslexia encounter other challenges when learning a foreign language such as difficulty adjusting to the classroom, challenges in writing, and a lack of development in spelling (Jarsve et.al., 2022, pp.155-180).

In the process of learning a foreign language, teaching methodology is crucial, particularly for students with dyslexia. Effective unique education practices are provided by shadow education. Skilled educators, known as "shadow teachers," collaborate with the instructor in the classroom to offer students emotional and social support. They bridge the gap in the learning process and provide academic and emotional support to students. In addition to assisting students in developing their academic skills and self-confidence, the instructor helps students maintain focus in class (Gyori, et.al., 2021, pp.79-88).

It should be mentioned that, in addition to the fact that information regarding dyslexia should be considered when teaching, it is crucial that teachers receive training about the disorder at educational institutions and that special education topics be taught. Additionally, there should be more encouragement for students to attend lectures regularly.

Motivation, discipline, attitudes, and psychological aspects work together to produce effective learning outcomes. Determining students' interests is crucial to boosting their motivation, which can then be advanced by helping them pay better attention, which is enhanced by impressions (Herpratiwi, et.al., 2022, pp.424-435).

1.2. Dyslexia’s Interrelations with Social Stress

Hans Selye was the scientist who created the stress theory, also known as Selye's Theory of Stress. The theory above states that stress is the body's way of defending against enticing stimuli. Three stages are present: 1) Phase of Alarm 2) The Adjustment Period 3) The tiredness phase. In addition to the above theory, there is a four-phase stress model, which adds a near-exhaustion phase (Lipp, 2019, pp. 1435-1443).

Students' anxiety and social stress are reduced by educational programs that use mindful techniques and social-emotional learning (SEL) strategies. The method also alters how students behave and approach learning, and all of the elements above improve academic achievement. Social-emotional programs reduce anxiety and aid in developing goal-setting and emotion-management skills. Simultaneously, it boosts self-efficacy, which helps reduce social isolation. According to Albert Bandura, self-efficacy is linked to people's self-confidence, which affects their performance level. Self-mastery of skills and social modeling are two ways to increase self-efficacy. Additionally, reading activities benefit from SEL programs (McLeod, et.al., 2021, pp.815-847).

Students who have dyslexia would benefit from the addition of SEL programs in colleges because it would boost their reading abilities and self-esteem. Emotions are associated with social stress. Students who struggle with dyslexia face difficulties such as anxiety and high levels of stress in addition to their fellow students.

Ensuring equitable treatment for all students and fostering a positive classroom environment is crucial. Students with dyslexia have difficulty reading because they lack phonological awareness, a learning disorder. Students and teachers are not as informed about dyslexia, which prevents the students from receiving an education equal to their peers. There are numerous approaches to the issue. Teachers are ill-prepared to work with students who have dyslexia, and students' perceptions are influenced by the learning environment (Cooper & Aurbey, 2023, pp. 97-106).

The Social Safety Theory states that it's critical to structure human behavior and create a welcoming social environment. Social conflicts, rejections, and isolation are examples of situations that are linked psychological stressors (Slavich, 2020, pp. 265-295).

Method

To obtain the objective results, the quantitative method (survey) was used. To better understand students' perspectives on dyslexia, an online survey for EFL learners was designed. A survey was conducted based on the information found in the literature review.

It was forwarded to three experts to offer its content validity. Furthermore, it was piloted with ten EFL students following convincing development. The article's appendix contains the questionnaire. The software SPSS was used to apply descriptive statistics.

Procedure

The survey was posted on social media groups for English language learners, along with an invitation to complete it. As a result, a combination of snowball and voluntary response techniques was used. The approach made it possible for as many people to participate as quickly as possible. Bureaucratic procedures such as obtaining permission from the college administration to include students in research are prevented by it.

It should be mentioned that because not every student had an equal opportunity to participate in the research, the probability sampling method was used. While the results should not be applied to all cases, they can provide a compelling idea. However, the study is useful for carrying out additional research.

Participants

Male and female volunteers from the state capital and two distinct Georgian towns made up the research participants. Despite the small sample size of 60 participants, the study's value stems from its inclusion of both public and private colleges.

Results

The research's theoretical framework is based on medical/deficit and social models. In contrast to the medical/deficit model, which contends that special education facilities should handle barriers and disabilities, the social model maintains that created barriers can be eliminated by modifying the environment to meet everyone's needs. The research also addresses dyslexia from a number of angles, such as the role that shadow education plays in assisting students with dyslexia in learning (Zero & Pizorn, 2022, pp. 1-27).

The study's objective is to assess the degree of dyslexia awareness among students enrolled in vocational education programs, thus, data collection followed a quantitative approach. A survey was employed to find out how much was known about dyslexia.

Demographic Information of the Participants

Figure 1 – Demographic Information of the Participants

Demographic Information of the Participants

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Female	1	50.0	50.0	50.0
Male	1	50.0	50.0	100.0
Total	2	100.0	100.0	

Figure 2 – Age of Participants

Age of Participants

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 18 Years Old	1	20.0	20.0	20.0
19 Years Old	1	20.0	20.0	20.0
20 Years Old	1	20.0	20.0	20.0
21 Years Old	1	25.0	25.0	25.0
22 Years Old	1	15.0	15.0	15.0
Total	5	100.0	100.0	100.0

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) states that inclusive education ought to unite people of all backgrounds together and support them. Everyone should have equal access to services that are appropriate for their level of education (Cartagena, 2022, pp. 101-126).

The questionnaire aims to clarify the level of knowledge about dyslexia among EFL students. Before creating the final questionnaire, the tool was tested with a small sample of students, and their feedback was taken into account.

The study was conducted in two stages. A student focus group was given the questionnaire during the first phase of the study. To assess the amount of knowledge regarding dyslexia, sixty students enrolled in vocational education were asked to complete a questionnaire in the second phase.

Figure 3 – Rating Current Knowledge of Dyslexia among Students

Could you please rate your current understanding of dyslexia?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Have a low level of information about dyslexia	1	40.0	40.0	40.0
High level of Knowledge about dyslexia	1	15.0	15.0	15.0
Moderate knowledge of dyslexia	1	25.0	25.0	25.0

Not knowledgeable at all	1	20.0	20.0	20.0
Total	4	100.0	100.0	100.0

The findings indicate that 40% of participants had very little knowledge about dyslexia, 15% had a high level of knowledge, 25% had moderate knowledge, and 20% had no knowledge at all. Therefore, students in vocational education need to be more aware of dyslexia.

Figure 4 – Receiving Information about Dyslexia
Did you receive information regarding dyslexia?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2			
No	1	90.0	90.0	90.0
Yes	1	10.0	10.0	10.0
Total	4	100.0	100.0	100.0

According to the answers, only 10% of the students got information about dyslexia, which is a low percentage.

Figure 5 – Information about Shadow Education
Are you familiar with the concept of Shadow Education?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2			
No	1	95.0	95.0	95.0
Yes	1	5.0	5.0	5.0
Total	4	100.0	100.0	100.0

According to the answers, only 5% of the students have information about – Shadow Education, which means that they do not have enough information about special education aspects.

Figure 6 - Information about Special Education Provided by the College

Is there information about special education provided by the college?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2			
No	1	85.0	85.0	85.0
Yes	1	15.0	15.0	15.0
Total	4	100.0	100.0	100.0

According to the answers, only 15% of the respondents emphasized that the college conducts seminars in special education, which means that there is a problem with external factors, in the process of student's lack of knowledge about dyslexia.

Figure 7 – Students’ Attendance at the Lectures
Do you frequently attend the lectures?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2			
No	1	60.0	60.0	60.0
Yes	1	40.0	40.0	40.0
Total	4	100.0	100.0	100.0

Only 40% of the respondents indicated that they regularly attend lectures, which raises concerns about internal factors. If most students do not regularly attend lectures, there is a chance that they will not attend any special education seminars that may be held.

Discussion

The discussion revealed that the majority of participants only have a rudimentary knowledge of dyslexia. There are two sides to this problem: first, special education components are not considered in college curricula; second, students ought to be more encouraged to attend lectures regularly.

However, the study reveals a comprehension of dyslexia based on the medical/deficit and social models. Simply because the social model contends that barriers can be eliminated by modifying the environment to meet the needs of everyone, in contrast to the medical/deficit model, which holds that challenges and disabilities should be addressed by specialized educational institutions (Zero & Pizorn, 2022, pp. 1-27).

Special education and dyslexia's role in the English language learning process need to receive more attention. Nonetheless, a significant portion of participants underlined that since they are not consistently attending the lectures, the issue needs to be handled and their motivation raised to enhance the caliber of instruction.

Cooperative learning is one strategy to boost students' motivation. Additionally, the method enhances the learning outcomes for students. The fundamental tenet of the above approach is that students assist one another. Cooperative learning brings together five components: development of interpersonal and social skills, individual responsibility, interaction tendency, positive cooperation, and quality of group performance. Additionally, the approach enhances relationships between students and modifies their perspective when they collaborate with their group members.

Included in motivation itself are the following three components: 1) Self-efficacy – control, perception, and

learning performance; 2) Value – intrinsic and extrinsic goals; 3) Effectiveness – test anxiety. Students become more motivated through cooperative learning, which also creates stronger social networks (Tran, 2019, pp. 12-20).

Students' attendance would rise and they would learn more about dyslexia if educators used the cooperative learning approach and held seminars on the subject.

Limitations

The small number of participants in the study is one of its limitations. A small study is insufficient to review cause-and-effect relationships. However, this leads to the conduct a large-scale investigation in future.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The fact that there are no dyslexia seminars is the reason why participants consistently respond to the low level of information about the condition. The issue is related to college education activities as well because special education components are not given enough consideration concurrently.

In addition to the fact that dyslexia-related books should be available at the library, there should be seminars on the subject for vocational students. Students will learn about dyslexia on the one hand, and they may also find out that they have symptoms of the disorder that they were unaware of on the other. Additionally, it would be beneficial if the college representative oversaw dyslexia movies for the vocational students.

The teaching approach should also be changed; one way to help students with dyslexia is through the use of the Orthon Gillingham Approach. It focuses on what the students need to learn. The method bears Samuel Torrey Orton's name. Orton was a neuropsychiatric specialist who focused on identifying problems with reading, spelling, and writing. The method is centered on helping students with dyslexia and improving students' learning abilities. The strategy, which is centered on reading instruction programs, is well-liked in the American educational system (Ritchey, 2006, pp. 171-183).

The following are suggestions for helping students enrolled in vocational education become more cognizant of dyslexia:

- Both the medical/deficit and social models should be taken into account. Simply because the medical/deficit model states that obstacles and disabilities should be addressed by specialized educational institutions, the social model states that artificial barriers can be removed by altering the surroundings to accommodate everyone's needs.
- College administrators ought to include special education workshops for students.
- Students ought to be more motivated to consistently attend the lectures.

Lastly, the study suggests, drawing on the medical/deficit and social models, increasing student awareness of dyslexia. The focus of special education should not be on how to integrate a small number of students, such as those who struggle with

dyslexia, but rather on how to adapt educational environments and systems to accommodate all types of learners.

Appendix 1 – Questionnaire

1. Kindly indicate your gender.
2. Kindly indicate your age.
3. Could you please rate your current understanding of dyslexia?
4. Did you receive information regarding dyslexia?
5. Are you familiar with the concept of Shadow Education?
6. Is there information about special education provided by the college?
7. Do you frequently attend the lectures?

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