

CHALLENGES AND EFFECTIVE PRACTICES IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE ACQUISITION FOR LEARNERS WITH DYSLEXIA

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Problems of reading and writing disorders (dyslexia and dysgraphia) are among the most pressing issues today, since reading and writing constitute the primary means of acquiring knowledge essential for learning. Learners with dyslexia encounter specific difficulties when exposed to traditional teaching methods, which necessitates adjustments in the educational process. It should be emphasized that reading and writing disorders do not diminish with age; therefore, the ability to organize effective instruction for students with dyslexia remains relevant at any level.

The ability to work with students exhibiting signs of dyslexia is particularly significant for teachers of English. Several studies indicate that dyslexia and dysgraphia may not manifest strongly when learning the native language, yet they become considerably more pronounced in the process of foreign language acquisition [1]. Specifically, in learning English, students may experience difficulties with reading accuracy and spelling due to discrepancies between graphic and phonological representations, which create serious challenges in mastering grapheme–phoneme correspondences. The development of spelling skills requires prolonged practice in both reading and writing, and it is precisely this process that poses difficulties for learners with dyslexia.

The aim of this article is to examine the specific features of foreign language learning at any level by students with dyslexia.

There are various approaches to the interpretation of dyslexia. According to the **International Dyslexia Association**, dyslexia is a specific learning disability of neurobiological origin, characterized by difficulties in accurate and fluent word recognition, poor decoding, and spelling skills, despite the preservation of other cognitive abilities and the provision of adequate instructional support [7].

Dyslexia is characterized by impairments in both the speed and manner of reading, which result in a variety of errors such as omissions of letters and syllables, substitutions and transpositions of letters and syllables, letter-by-letter reading, replacement of one word with another, and skipping of lines. In many cases, learners with dyslexia also exhibit dysgraphia—an inability or significant difficulty in mastering writing skills [7]. Dysgraphia is manifested in written work by a large number of grammatical, orthographic, and punctuation errors, among others.

The successful acquisition of a foreign language by students with signs of dyslexia and dysgraphia depends on specific pedagogical and methodological conditions in the classroom [3], appropriate support, the creation of a comfortable learning environment, and, as noted in several studies [2-3, 9], the personality of the teacher. Personal qualities such as empathy and tact contribute to the establishment of a favorable and trusting atmosphere in the learning process. Building positive relationships enables students to inform the teacher about the difficulties they encounter in their studies.

The main approaches to the effective integration of students with dyslexia into the educational process can be identified as follows:

- **Individualized instruction,**
- **Multisensory learning,**
- **Explicit teaching.**

An individualized approach is one of the most important strategies in education, as it involves the differentiation of tasks according to the individual characteristics, needs, interests, level of preparation, and potential abilities of each learner (in terms of task complexity, pace of work, etc.) [6]. Learners with dyslexia require an individualized approach to the presentation of material and the organization of learning activities, taking into account the pace and volume of assignments, as well as sustained support for their attention and motivation throughout the lesson. Such measures allow students to be actively engaged in the educational process and contribute to effective learning outcomes.

Practical experience demonstrates that students with dyslexia often need more time to complete assignments; therefore, it is necessary to extend the time allocated for task performance. In this context, the quality of task completion should be prioritized over the quantity of exercises. As noted in some studies [Salyakh], alternative methods of assessing learning outcomes are more appropriate for students with dyslexia.

The multisensory approach to learning, which relies primarily on vision, hearing, and touch, also contributes to enhancing the effectiveness of reading and writing instruction in English. According to Davis's method, which is currently considered one of the most effective approaches to dyslexia correction [8], reading instruction should engage as many sensory modalities as possible. In the process of foreign language learning, various audio and video materials, visual aids, and teaching resources can be employed, such as picture dictionaries, computer programs, and mobile applications.

It should be noted that distance learning, supported by modern information technologies and offering a wide range of colorful and engaging online resources, provides certain advantages for learners with dyslexia.

The use of audio and video recordings of instructional material, as well as media presentations consisting of slides with a single idea, rule, or task, significantly facilitates comprehension for learners with dyslexia. Lesson presentations can be shared with students for further independent study. In this context, it is advisable to employ fonts that are more accessible for individuals with dyslexia, such as sans-serif fonts (Arial, Tahoma). For English-language materials, specialized fonts designed to enhance text perception, such as *OpenDyslexic* (<https://www.wfonts.com/font/open-dyslexic>), created specifically for people with dyslexia, may also be utilized [5].

Digital technologies can provide substantial support to students with dyslexia by offering tools and functions that help overcome difficulties in reading texts, as well as in writing and communication, including in foreign languages. Among the most useful applications for learners with dyslexia are:

- **Text-to-speech and speech-to-text applications** (Read&Write, Speechify, Voice Dream Reader, Natural Readers);
- **Applications providing audiobooks** (MyBook, PlayBooks, Bookshare);
- **Voice input applications**, which allow users to dictate text that is then transcribed onto the computer screen (Voice Notebook, Voice to Text, Live Transcribe);
- **Portable electronic devices and specialized tools** for reading texts, communication, and organizing study activities, such as digital pens, scanners, and talking dictionaries.

In other words, students with dyslexia are introduced to a wide range of accessible options and are able to identify the tools that best meet their individual needs. By effectively utilizing digital resources, learners with dyslexia can achieve success in their studies, including foreign language acquisition, and develop skills essential for academic and professional achievement.

It should be emphasized that instruction for learners with dyslexia and dysgraphia should be predominantly **explicit rather than implicit**. Explicit instruction deliberately reveals all

concepts and principles of their application through continuous interaction between the learner and the teacher. This approach involves a system of clearly articulated, purposeful actions by the instructor, who organizes both the cognitive and practical activities of the students [1].

Practical experience demonstrates that the presentation of learning material to students with dyslexia must be clearly structured and systematic, based on the principle of “little but often,” and accompanied by precise instructions and illustrative examples.

As specific pedagogical and methodological techniques that can help learners overcome difficulties and contribute to the effective study of a foreign language at any level, the following may be highlighted:

- **Use of supplementary didactic materials**, including visual supports such as illustrations, step-by-step instructions, samples, pictures, diagrams, and tables [4];
- **Segmentation of texts into small semantic units**, accompanied by careful oral articulation, emphasized pronunciation, and subsequent practice of similar words and expressions;
- **Application of reproductive and reconstructive-variational exercises** when working with texts (e.g., “Connect the words with arrows according to the model,” “Find the odd one out,” “Fill in the blanks,” “Insert the missing word,” “Group words according to reading type”). To facilitate the task, worksheets with prompts and designated spaces for writing may be provided;
- **Use of the blending method**, which involves combining individual sounds into whole words;
- **Practice of synchronizing incoming information across different modalities** (visual, auditory, articulatory), including simultaneous listening, reading, and verbal repetition of the text;
- **Use of color highlighting in grammar instruction** to demonstrate semantic distinctions between vowels and consonants, word parts, and parts of speech;
- **Employment of mnemonic techniques**, such as “memorizing a word (or letter) through images and shapes” or “phonetic associations”;
- **Integration of specialized digital tools** that support the learning process;
- **Adaptation of instructional materials**, including simplification of task instructions, provision of additional visual support, minimization of dual requirements, and reduction of task volume.

Dyslexia and dysgraphia can have a significant impact on learning and academic achievement, including in the study of English as a foreign language. The main approaches to the successful integration of students with dyslexia into the educational process include individualized instruction, a multisensory approach to learning, and explicit teaching.

The individualized approach involves the differentiation of tasks according to the learner’s individual characteristics, with adjustments in the presentation of material and organization of work based on the pace and volume of assignments. The multisensory approach to foreign language learning presupposes the use of various audio and video materials, visual aids, and computer programs. At the same time, the presentation of learning material to students with dyslexia should be explicit, clearly structured, systematic, and accompanied by precise instructions and illustrative examples.

The successful acquisition of a foreign language by students with signs of dyslexia and dysgraphia will depend on the application of specific pedagogical and methodological techniques in the classroom, as well as on the provision of support and the creation of a favorable and trusting atmosphere.

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