

## Factors Influencing the Lack of Information on Dyslexia among Future English Language Teachers (A Case of Four Universities in Georgia)

*Nino Zaalishvili*

Black Sea International University, Georgia

[Doi: 10.19044/esipreprint.11.2023.p283](https://doi.org/10.19044/esipreprint.11.2023.p283)

Approved: 07 November 2023

Posted: 09 November 2023

Copyright 2023 Author(s)

Under Creative Commons CC-BY 4.0

OPEN ACCESS

*Cite As:*

Zaalishvili N. (2023). *Factors Influencing the Lack of Information on Dyslexia among Future English Language Teachers (A Case of Four Universities in Georgia)*. ESI Preprints. <https://doi.org/10.19044/esipreprint.11.2023.p283>

### Abstract

The main purpose of the study is to investigate factors that influence the lack of information on dyslexia among future English language teachers. In particular, the factors under investigation in this study are a low level of knowledge about dyslexia; not enough readiness to teach students with dyslexia; universities not providing enough information about dyslexia; there is a lack of information about shadow education and there exist internal and external factors like: there are not conducting training regularly about dyslexia among students, and students do not attend the lectures regularly.

A quantitative research approach based on a questionnaire was employed. 120 students from the program of English Philology were asked to complete the survey from four universities in Tbilisi, Georgia. The research was conducted in October 2023. A quantitative method was used to examine future English language teachers' level of knowledge about dyslexia.

The findings indicated that insufficient information about dyslexia negatively impacts the future English language teachers' readiness to teach students with dyslexia. Another factor is students' motivation to attend the lectures, if they are not attending the lectures regularly, there is less chance that they would attend the training about dyslexia.

It is suggested to raise awareness and provide information to future English language teachers about dyslexia, but at first, their motivation should be increased. University programs should have special education subjects and

should persuade future teachers that special education is beneficial for the whole class, to be created a healthy classroom climate.

---

**Keywords:** Dyslexia; English Language Teachers; Students Motivation.

## **Introduction**

According to the Salamanca Statement, everybody has a constitutional right to be educated, and there should be recognized learners' diverse needs. Generally, learning difficulty is considered a neurodevelopmental disorder with a biological origin that unites the interaction of genetic, epigenetic, and environmental factors, which affects the brain's ability to recognize verbal or non-verbal information. There exist two models – medical/deficit and social. According to the medical/deficit model – barriers and disabilities should be met by specialized educational institutions, while according to the social model – constructed barriers can be deconstructed by a change in the environment to meet all needs. Lack of social, emotional, and academic support for learners with dyslexia might cause anxiety, depression, reduced self-confidence, and lower academic achievements (Zero & Pizorn, 2022, pp. 1-27).

It has to be noted that dyslexia influences the process of learning a foreign language, especially in the aspect of reading. Foreign language teachers should have information about dyslexia and be ready to work with the students who suffer from it. The readiness is connected to the following factors: 1) Teachers' self-efficacy; 2) Classroom behavior toward dyslexic learners; 3) Beliefs about dyslexic learners. Besides the above factors, there exist factors such as social attitudes, teachers' motivation, national education systems, and perception of dyslexia (Zero & Pizorn, 2022, pp. 1-27).

It is important the education programs to have syllabuses with special education, where future teachers will have a piece of information about various aspects, including dyslexia.

## **Literature Review**

Dyslexia is a Greek word that means “difficulty with words.” It is a well-known learning disability that has been identified since the 1800's, it is especially notable among adults. In order to better understand memory's role in dyslexia, educators should be more efficient in taking measures for the adults who need it. Learning Disabilities are common phenomena and different adults have different challenges like – concentration, and attention problems, as well as language-based tasks such as – reading, writing, and speaking, which might influence learners' academic achievements (Alsulami & Ghazzai, 2019, pp. 1-7).

Dyslexia is an inherited neurocognitive deficit that results in challenges of learning, which might be mild and serve. People with dyslexia might discover that their short-term and long-term memory may not be as functional as other adults. It is genetically inherited and is characterized as causing learning difficulties among learners (Alsulami & Ghazzai, 2019, pp. 1-7).

The history of dyslexia starts with the late 1870 when a German neurologist Andrew Kussmaul examined the phenomenon in Stuttgart. He had an interest of the patients who had difficulties in reading and word usage. In 1887, another German doctor Rudolf Berlin heard about Kussmaul's work and created the term "dyslexia." (Alsulami & Ghazzai, 2019, pp. 1-7).

The first diagnosis of dyslexia occurred in 1896 in England and was reported in the journal - British Medical. It was conducted by English ophthalmologist Hinshelwood and medicine practitioner Pringle-Morgen. They believed that dyslexia was caused by the impaired ability to visually process the words and symbols placed before them. The field of study was expanded in 1939, when the works of Dr. Alfred Struss and Heinz Werner – two German scholars, who worked in learning difficulties and they identified that variety of disorders that can cause learning difficulties and every person should be considered as a unique case who should be assessed and evaluated (Alsulami & Ghazzai, 2019, pp. 1-7).

There is a strong connection between dyslexia and memory. There exist short-term, long-term, and sensory memory. In the case of long-term memory, it can long a large storage of information that is collected unconsciously. There are three intrinsic components in the process of creating long-term memory: procedural, semantic, and episodic memory. Procedural memory unites the components connected with the development of motor skills, concerning semantic memory – it includes memory gained through academic study, while episodic memory is linked with experiences. In the case of short-term memory, it can store seven items, plus-minus one or two. The storage duration of short-term memory is twenty-thirty seconds. Concerning sensory memory, information is received from the environment via the senses (Alsulami & Ghazzai, 2019, pp. 1-7).

Besides memorizing issues, there are several factors that students with dyslexia face in the process of learning a foreign language, like dyslexic students' adaptation to the classroom, writing difficulties, and lack of developing spelling skills (Jarsve, Flaten, Tsagari, & Dina, 2022, pp. 155-180).

Teaching methodology is very important in the process of learning a foreign language, especially among students with dyslexia. Shadow education gives successful practices about special education. Shadow

teachers are skilled educators who work together with the teacher in the classroom to provide social and emotional support to the learners. Shadow teachers give support to students both academically and emotionally, and fill the gap that exists in the learning process. The teacher supports learners to be focused in the class, as well as helping them to build self-confidence, and develop academic skills (Gyori, Gordon, Bray, & Mark, 2021, pp. 79-88).

It has to be noted that besides the fact that information about dyslexia should be taken into account in the process of teaching, as well as it is important at the universities to be pieces with training about dyslexia for future teachers and subjects to be taught about special education. As well as students' motivation should be increased to attend the lectures regularly.

Achieving good learning outcomes unites psychological factors, attitudes, discipline, and motivation. To increase students' motivation it is important to determine their interest and it can be increased by improving students' attention, and attention itself can be increased by the impressions (Herpratiwi, Tohir, & Ahmad, 2022, pp. 424-435).

### **Context of the Study**

The quantitative study of the research on - The Lack of Information on Dyslexia among English Language Teachers and its Influence on the Learning Environment (A Case of Four Universities in Georgia) aims to investigate the factors that influence the lack of knowledge of dyslexia among future English language teachers.

### **Aim and Research Questions**

The research aims to investigate which factors influence that there is lack of knowledge among future English language teachers about dyslexia. It is everybody's constitutional right to be educated, despite the different possibilities. Gaining knowledge is a fundamental right equally to all learners. All of them should have the same educational conditions.

### **The research questions are the following:**

- What is the current knowledge about dyslexia among future English language teachers?
- Are future English language teachers prepared to teach students with dyslexia?
- Do university programs provide information about dyslexia to future English language teachers?
- Is dyslexia discussed from various angles and perspectives like uniting shadow education aspects in the process of teaching the English language?

- What are the internal and external factors of the lack of information about dyslexia among future English language teachers?

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework of the research relies on - Medical/Deficit and Social Models. According to the Medical/Deficit model – barriers and disabilities should be met by specialized educational institutions, while according to the social model – constructed barriers can be deconstructed by a change in the environment to meet all needs. As well as in the research there is discussed dyslexia from various angles like Shadow Education’s role in the process of teaching students with dyslexia.

### **Methodology**

Since the purpose of the study is to determine future English language teachers’ level of knowledge about dyslexia, a quantitative methodology was used to gather the data. A questionnaire was used to investigate the level of information about dyslexia.

### **Participants**

120 students from the English Philology program at four different universities in Georgia took part in the research. A survey was given to them to identify the answers to the questions about dyslexia.

It was quantitative data collection. People who participated in the research were future English language teachers, most of the participants were aged - 21-22 years. 70% of the participants were female, while 30% were male.

### **Demographic Information of the Participants**

Demographic information		Percentage
Gender	Female	70%
	Male	30%

### **Data Collection**

The students’ level of knowledge about dyslexia was measured by a questionnaire which consisted of two parts: 1) Personal Background; and 2) Information about Dyslexia. The instrument was piloted among a small sample of the students and their comments were taken into consideration before designing the final questionnaire.

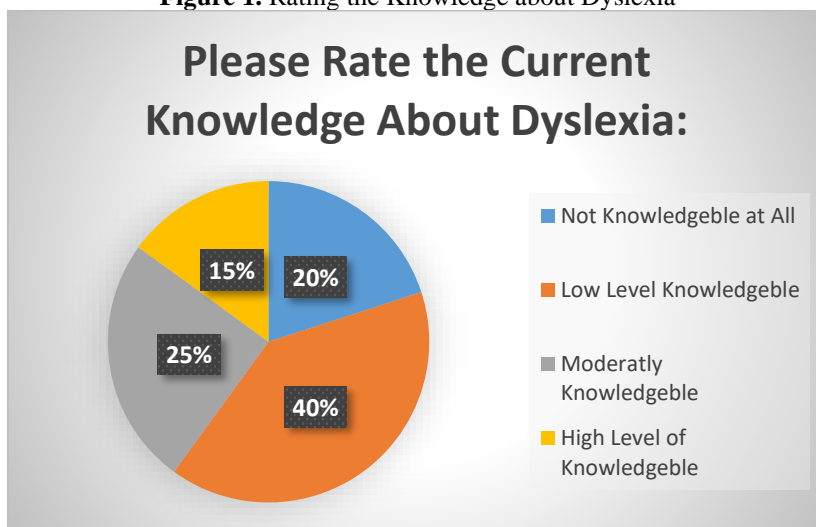
The students' reflections on dyslexia, their preparedness in teaching students with dyslexia, and recommendations on how to improve the initial teacher education program were collected with a focus group.

### Data Analysis

The study followed a two-phase procedure. In the first phase, the questionnaire was distributed among a focus group of students. In the second phase, 120 future English language teachers were asked to fill out the questionnaire, to investigate the level of information about dyslexia.

### Quantitative Analysis Results

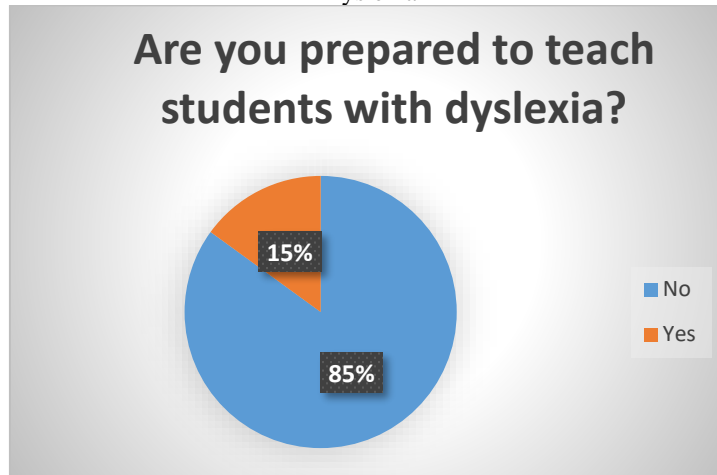
**Figure 1.** Rating the Knowledge about Dyslexia



**Analysis of Figure 1:** According to the results of Figure 1 – 40% of the future English language teachers have a low level of information about dyslexia; 25% have moderate knowledge, for 20% it is not knowledgeable at all, and 15% have a high level of knowledge.

Thus, it is important to increase the level of knowledge about dyslexia among future English language teachers.

**Figure 2.** The Readiness of Future English Language Teachers to Teach Students with Dyslexia

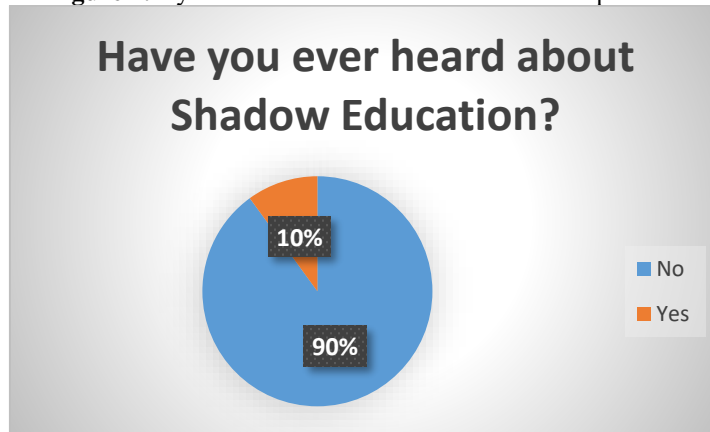


**Analysis of Figure 2:** According to the answers of Figure 2, only 15% of future English language teachers are ready to teach the students with dyslexia, which is a low percentage and needs to be taken into consideration, in order to be managed the problem.

**Question 3:** Did you study information about dyslexia at the University?



**Figure 3 Analysis:** According to the answers in Figure 3, only 15% of the students of English Language have been taught about dyslexia, which is a low percentage.

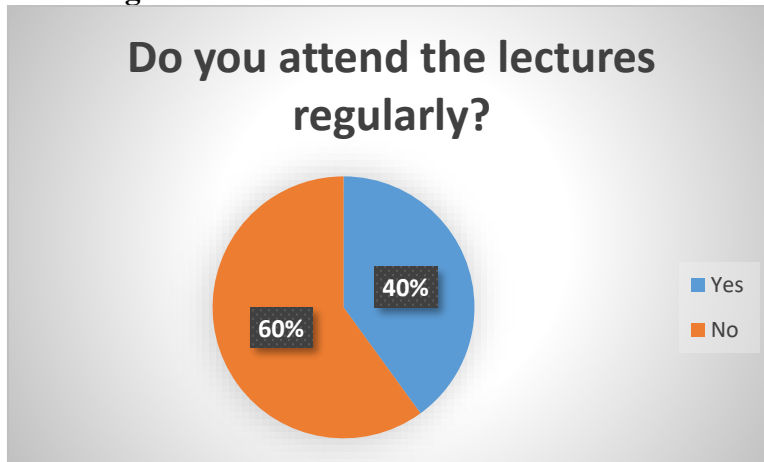
**Figure 4.** Dyslexia's Discussion from Various Perspectives

**Analysis of Figure 4:** According to the answers, only 10% of the students from the program of English Philology have information about – Shadow Education, which means that they do not have enough information about special education aspects.

**Figure 5.** Universities' Role in the Process of Raising Awareness about Special Education

**Analysis of Figure 5:** According to the answers, only 15% of the respondents emphasized that the university conducts training in special education, which means that there is a problem with external factors, in the process of future English language teachers' knowledge about dyslexia.



**Figure 6.** Students Attendance at the Lectures

**Analysis of Figure 6:** According to the answers of the respondents, only 40% of them attend the lectures regularly, thus, there is the problem in the internal factor – if the majority of the students do not attend the lectures regularly, there is a risk that they will not attend the special education trainings, if there were conducted.

### **Trustworthiness and Credibility of the Quantitative and Qualitative Components of the Study**

To enhance the study's trustworthiness and credibility, the study was validated by three education specialists and three psychologists. Feedback was provided and the survey was altered for clarity.

### **Results and Discussions**

The discussion confirmed that most participants have low-level information about dyslexia. The issue has two sides: on the one hand, university programs do not take into account special education aspects in the syllabuses, and on the other hand, there should be increased students' motivation to attend lectures regularly.

Nevertheless, the research finds an understanding of dyslexia according to both Models – Medical/Deficit and Social. Just because, according to the Medical/Deficit model – barriers and disabilities should be met by specialized educational institutions, while according to the social model – constructed barriers can be deconstructed by a change in the environment to meet all needs.

Since the group consisted of students who planned on becoming English teachers, they should have more information about dyslexia and

there should be more focus on special education and dyslexia's role in the process of learning the English language.

However, a considerable number of participants emphasized that they are not attending the lectures regularly, the problem should be managed, and should be increased their motivation, to improve the quality of learning.

## **Conclusion**

Participants have shown a consistent response in feeling insufficiently prepared to teach students with dyslexia, it is caused by the fact that they are not learning about dyslexia at the universities and there are no pieces of training about dyslexia, as a result, their level of knowledge is low and they are not ready to teach dyslexic students. It might cause a lack of confidence in their efficacy as teachers. The problem links with teaching methodology issues as well – since the programs at the universities do not pay attention to the special education aspects and at the same time, do not teach future English language teachers how to treat students with dyslexia.

Considering recommendations on how to raise awareness of dyslexia among future English language teachers:

- It should be taken into consideration both models - Medical/Deficit and Social. Just because, according to the Medical/Deficit model – barriers and disabilities should be met by specialized educational institutions, while according to the social model – constructed barriers can be deconstructed by a change in the environment to meet all needs.
- University programs should add special education to the curriculum;
- There should be pieces of training about dyslexia among future English language teachers;
- There should be increased students' motivation to attend the lectures regularly.

Finally, the study recommends raising awareness about dyslexia among future English language teachers, based on Medical/Deficit and Social models. Indeed, teachers' preparation for special education has to become a priority of the education system. Special education must not be regarded as a marginal topic of how to integrate several students, like students with dyslexia, but how to change education systems and learning atmospheres to react to all varieties.

**Conflict of Interest:** The author reported no conflict of interest.

**Data Availability:** All of the data are included in the content of the paper.

**Funding Statement:** The author did not obtain any funding for this research.

**References:**

1. Alsulami, & Ghazzai, S. (2019). The role of memory in dyslexia. *International Journal of Education and Literacy Studies*, 7(4), 1-7.
2. Gyori, Gordon, J., Bray, & Mark. (2021). Learning from each other: Expanding and deepening international research on shadow education. *Hungarian Educational Research Journal*, 11(2), 79-88.
3. Herpratiwi, Tohir, & Ahmad. (2022). Learning interest and discipline on learning motivation. *International Journal of Education in Mathematics, Science and Technology*, 10(2), 424-435.
4. Jarsve, Flaten, C., Tzagari, & Dina. (2022). Dyslexia and English as a foreign language in Norwegian primary education: A mixed methods intervention study. *Center for Educational Policy Studies Journal*, 12(4), 155-180.
5. Zero, A., & Pizorn, k. (2022). Undergraduate and graduate students' beliefs about dyslexia: Implications for initial foreign language teacher education. *CEPS Journal*, 12(4), 1-27.