

# Communicative Competence Enhancement in Teaching Students with Special Needs

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**Abstract:** Communication is powerful instruments of interaction that provide equality to those who have a severe intellectual disability. We are presenting a comprehensive communication model to enhance their chances of interacting with others and improving professionals' understanding of intellectual disability. Most of the existing literature on different disabilities focuses on people who have some capacities to perform certain skills to a certain degree. Our model allows effective learning and proactive interaction for both the disabled and the professionals. Moreover, it offers resources and a wide range of knowledge about the syndromes and the right strategies to be used.

The idea of this research paper arose out of an awareness that students with language learning disabilities are completely ignored in the educational system, and there are no special programs that cater to these students. They are placed in normal schools that are not prepared to deal with their unique difficulties. This paper, therefore, is an attempt to provide teachers with multiple-strategies models for teaching English language skills to these students at the intermediate level and beyond. Also, this research paper describes strategies for language learning and language use in regular language activities.

**Keywords:** Communicative, competence, enhancement, teaching, students, special needs.

## INTRODUCTION

Communicative competence, according to some psychologists, including the ability to perceive and understand the individual, his emotional state, knowledge of the rules of behavior in communicative situations, the ability to navigate in them, and establish contacts with individual and groups of people to own the culture of discussion and debate, to be able to manage while communicating their mental state and emotions. This comparative - educational research shows that, despite differences in educational systems, curriculum content, the general idea of the traditional educational process in different countries of the world has similar features. It is traditional at the same time the activity with the whole audience, in which teacher says, transfers of knowledge, skills, and experience forms the basis for the presentation of new material (message, presentation) and play it by students, and evaluates the results of the play. Traditional training is primarily reproductive in nature. The teacher's work is primarily oriented to the message of knowledge and modes of action, which are transmitted to students in the form of ready-made and designed for the playback of assimilation. The teacher is the only player in the educational initiative process. Innovative in the world of pedagogy of the last decades is considered the orientation to the students' productive activity in the

way of problems decision. Corresponding construction training is based on the development of self-studying theoretical concepts of the world's objects and phenomena.

While communication tools have been around in healthcare and disability environments for a long time, most of the efforts have not had the desired effect of achieving a standardized use among all agents involved in the communication or assistance tasks with the ill or the disabled. Information processing disorders can also lead to frustration, disappointment, low self-esteem, and withdrawal from school [1].

In view of the importance of language in education and social life, students with learning disabilities need all possible help to enhance their communicative competence. In this regard, language teachers must come to the rescue. The language teacher needs to be empowered with instructional choices if he must still retain the role of an instructor, a facilitator, a motivator, an experimenter, a therapist, and an effective communicator. This is important because it is only when language teachers are empowered that students' communicative competence with learning disabilities can be enhanced.

In simple words, having a learning disability means that the brain does not process information normally. This, of course, requires modeling effective cognitive processes through learning strategies instruction to help students with learning disabilities change their

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ineffective learning processes and employ effective ones in a reflective, purposeful way [2]. "Learning Disabilities" is a compact term describing a number of some other, more specific learning disabilities, such as dyslexia, dysgraphia, Auditory Processing Disorder (APD), Dyscalculia, Language Processing Disorder, Non-Verbal Learning Disabilities, Visual Perceptual/Visual Motor Deficit, etc.

Because of the nature of their learning difficulties, students with learning disabilities need to become *strategic* learners, not just haphazardly using whatever learning strategies or techniques they have developed on their own but becoming consciously aware of what strategies might be useful in a given learning situation and capable of using those strategies effectively. Teachers can be enormously helpful in this regard [3]. They can introduce students to specific techniques and demonstrate when and how these techniques will be used. Students can then see how a person thinks or what a person does when using the strategies. Teachers can provide opportunities for students to discuss, reflect upon, and practice the techniques with classroom materials and authentic tasks. By giving feedback, teachers help students refine their use of strategies and learn to monitor their usage. Teachers may then gradually fade reminders and guidance so that students begin to assume responsibility for strategic learning [4].

In teaching students with language disabilities, especially to help them overcome their own learning difficulties, we need to arrange the classroom instruction as its aim of the improvement the underlying processes and strategies, because these students depend upon to learn language skills as these skills are rooted in complex procedures [5].

Therefore, the present paper recommends learning strategies in general and language learning strategies, in particular, to help teachers become more aware of the various strategies that they can use to enable students to learn independently and effectively. More specifically, this research deals with the definition of learning strategies and discusses the benefits and types of these strategies. It also addresses the most widely used models of learning strategies instruction. Then, it discusses the methods of identifying and assessing these strategies. Finally, it reviews research into effective/ineffective learning strategies as well as research on teaching-learning strategies to students with learning disabilities. Definitions of learning strategies are many [6]. Learning strategies are

techniques, approaches, or deliberate actions that students take to facilitate the learning and recall of both linguistic and content area information. Learning strategies are "any sets of operations, steps, plans, routines used by the learner to facilitate the obtaining, storage, and use of information"[7].

Learning disability encompasses everything that causes learning difficulties. Learning disability is an umbrella term for several disorders in which a person has difficulty learning in a typical manner. Different typologies are used in the classification of learning disabilities. Here, we shall use the typology that is related to general processing.

1. Attention- The ability to stay on a task in a sustained way.
2. Working memory- The ability to retain and process information for short periods.
3. Processing speed- The rate at which the brain handles information.
4. Long-term memory- The ability to both store and recall information for later use.
5. Visual processing- The ability to perceive, analyze and think in visual images.
6. Auditory processing- The ability to perceive and conceptualize what is heard.
7. Logic and Reasoning- The ability to reason, prioritize and plan.

These processes affect a person's competence in language and, as such, maybe function impaired. This could mean any of the following conditions.

- a. Dyslexia- A reading disability. The student has trouble reading written words.
- b. Dysgraphia- A writing disability.
- c. Dyscalculia- A math disability.
- d. Dyspraxia- A motor coordination disability.
- e. Dysphasia- A language disability.

The students have difficulty with reading comprehension.

- f. Aphasia- A language disorder. The student has difficulty understanding spoken language.

- g. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder- The student has difficulty sustaining attention.

These conditions affect the communicative competence of students, as exemplified by their experience of language difficulties.

## METHODS

### Participants

The study was done on a hundred fifty Kazakh undergraduate learners learning English as a foreign language at University. Most of the students were juniors (45 %), (55%) were seniors. In terms of gender, the students did not balance with 100 Females (80%), 20 males (20%), and their ages ranged from 17 to 22.

In support of the benefits of learning strategies instruction for students with learning disabilities, we found that these students scored lower on the measures of learning strategy use than did their non-disabled peers as a result of comparing the learning strategies used by 60 postsecondary students with disabilities to those used by 30 students without disabilities. We also found evidence that unsuccessful learners "apparently...lacked...what are often called metacognitive strategies...which would enable them to assess the task and bring to bear the necessary strategies for its completion". This intentional teaching can benefit students with learning disabilities in particular because it will help them grow more aware of their thinking processes, recognize when meaning breaks down, and understand what strategies work best for them. It has also been suggested that strategy instruction can help learners with disabilities overcome certain psycholinguistic and effective classroom constraints.

Strategy instruction "helps overcome nervousness, the inability to remember, and the need to immediately produce language during oral communication. Being able to overcome these limitations will make learning

more efficient". In short, learning strategies instruction benefits all students, including those with learning disabilities. Learning strategy research also suggests that less competent students improve their skills through training in more successful learners' strategies. Therefore, many educators propose that learning strategy instruction should integrate into regular courses [8].

### Instrument

Determine the effect of language teaching methods on students with special needs; the learners took a test at the beginning of the study to achieve homogeneity between the two groups. The test is a standardized, reliable, and valid test, which is known all over the world. Regarding the scores on the test, most of these selected learners could be assumed to be elementary. This pre-test contained the reading section of the test, and it included 30 items. But the scores were calculated out of 100.

The version of the test used for this study contained 30 items. Items were scored on a five-point: AD= strongly disagree, D= disagree, U= undecided, A= agree, SA=strongly agree.

### Procedure

This study was conducted in 2019 and was carried on once a week for twelve sessions at University. After selecting the students and assigning them into two homogeneous groups, the researcher (who was actually the instructor too) applied our methodology in group 1 and traditional methodology in group 2.

During-task phase, the students were engaged in completing different kinds of tasks, and in the post-task phase, they gave a report through, for instance, repeating the tasks and practicing some formal and linguistic features of the text.

Here, the students read authentic materials, and all the exercises and class activities were designed

**Table 1: Demographic Information of Participants for the Study**

| Category    |        | Number | Percentage |
|-------------|--------|--------|------------|
| University  |        | 100    | 100%       |
| School year | Junior | 45     | 40%        |
|             | Senior | 55     | 59%        |
| Gender      | Male   | 20     | 14%        |
|             | Female | 80     | 86%        |

**Table 2: Survey Result: Learning and Communication Strategies**

| Item  | Source | AG  | DA  | M    | SD   |
|---|--------|-----|-----|------|------|
| it is important to repeat and practice a lot.   | 1      | 94% | --  | 1.22 | 0.53 |
|   | 2      | 96% | --  | 1.34 | 0.63 |
| it is ok to guess if you don't know a word in a foreign language.   | 1      | 61% | 21% | 2.48 | 1.01 |
|   | 2      | 63% | 19% | 2.48 | 0.93 |
| it is important to speak a foreign language with an excellent accent.   | 1      | 59% | 19% | 2.52 | 0.95 |
|   | 2      | 68% | 18% | 2.26 | 1.1  |
| you shouldn't say anything in a foreign language until you can say it correctly.  | 1      | 26% | 50% | 3.28 | 1.22 |
|   | 2      | 43% | 39% | 2.94 | 1.33 |
| I heard someone speaking in the language I am trying to learn, I would go up them so that I could practice speaking the language. | 1      | 89% | --  | 1.93 | 0.54 |
|   | 2      | 79% | 2%  | 2.3  | 0.69 |
| It is important to practice with cassettes or tapes.  | 1      | 85% | 2%  | 1.83 | 0.72 |
|   | 2      | 80% | 7%  | 1.97 | 0.85 |
| I felt self-conscious speaking a foreign language in front of other people.   | 1      | 50% | 2%  | 2.57 | 0.72 |
|   | 2      | 53% | 19% | 2.56 | 0.95 |

Note: AG=agree, DA=disagree.  
The percentages (%) have been rounded to the nearest tenth.

around the reading text. The researcher used realia, pictures, and technological aids, as much as possible, to strengthen the learning of the subject matter. The treatment was given for 12 sessions. This procedure was carried on for the whole semester.

**RESULTS**

The responses to the items in this category are reported in Table 2 shows the following results. In the table, we shoed the most important questions for the research.

Regarding the learning and communication strategies (Table 2), the majority of students (94% of group 1 and 96% of group 2) agree that it is important to repeat and practice a great deal.

Many from both groups (85% of group 1 and 80% of group 2) believed that it is important to practice with cassettes or tapes. The groups were equally disposed of (61% of group 1 students, 63% of group 2 students) towards guessing unknown words in English. However, exactly half (50%) of students from group 1 disagree or strongly disagree with the idea that you shouldn't say anything in a foreign language until you can say it correctly, while only 39 percent of group 2 students had the same beliefs about it.

Slightly more than half (53%) of the group 2 students thought that they felt self-conscious speaking

the foreign language in front of other people, whereas exactly half (50%) group 1 student had some idea about it. 59% of group 1 students and 68 percent of group 2 students believed excellent pronunciation is important.

Summing up the research results, it is better to mention that the recommendations and methodology help the students improve their learning strategy.

**DISCUSSION**

Specifically, the use of language learning strategies in people with disabilities is a fundamental requirement for successful learning. They contribute to the development of comprehension and production of the target language. In this respect, it is better to mention that learning strategies are "especially important for language learning because they are tools for active, self-directed movement, which is essential for developing communicative competence".

Learning strategies are also seen as a means of enhancing learners' self-efficacy, motivation, and self-confidence. Strategic learners perceive themselves as more able to succeed academically than students who do not know how to use strategies effectively, which in turn increases their motivation. We believe that "strategy training can enhance both the process of language learning (the strategies or behaviours

learners use and the effective elements involved) and the product of language learning (changes in students' language performance)" [9].

Besides, learner behavior strategies instruction is an important factor for developing independent learning as it helps learners discover what particular strategy works for them in a particular situation and develops their control over their own learning. The more students become aware of their learning strategies, the greater their control over their learning. In this regard, Wenden says, "to be self-sufficient, learners must know how to learn" [10]. Along the same line, Cohen argues that strategy instruction helps learners explore ways to learn the language more effectively. He further emphasizes the significant role that strategy instruction plays in developing learners' independence in the following way:

The strategy training movement is predicated on the assumption that if learners are conscious about and become responsible for the selection, use, and evaluation of their learning strategies, they will become more successful language learners by taking more responsibility for their language learning and enhancing their use of the target language out of class. In other words, the ultimate goal of strategy training is to empower students by allowing them to take control of the language learning process [11].

Research has also shown that self-regulated learners engage in the use of both cognitive and metacognitive strategies for learning and that students who use effective strategies are better able to work outside the classroom, where teacher direction and teacher input are not present because learning strategies enable them to become more independent, lifelong learners [12].

Moreover, learning strategies enable students to stretch their learning styles. In this respect, we can say that teachers can actively help students "stretch" their learning styles by trying out some strategies that are outside of their primary style preferences. She adds that this can happen through strategy instruction [13].

Furthermore, learning strategies instruction holds a significant benefit to students with learning disabilities because these students often lack effective learning strategies. In this regard, it is better to point out that when students with learning disabilities become strategic learners, they become productive lifelong learners, and as a result of strategy use, they trust their

own minds, know that there's more than one right way to do things, acknowledge their mistakes, evaluate their products and behavior, feel a sense of power, and know-how to try. It is better to note the importance of teaching students with learning disabilities to use learning strategies in the following way:

An increasingly robust research base points to the potential of strategy instruction to help support struggling learners, including students with learning disabilities. Specifically, teaching students how to use learning strategies and helping them choose and implement them effectively helps to strengthen their metacognitive abilities, which, in turn, connects to improved student learning [14].

## CONCLUSION

The importance of the use of the method has been proposed in this study. The use of the method is geared towards applying the pedagogical strategies for the enhancement of the communicative competence of learners with learning disabilities. The adoption of the presented strategies would go a long way to improve students' communicative skills with learning disabilities. This is important if these students must use language for communication in real life [15].

The essence of language teaching is to improve the communicative competence of students. Students' frequent poor performance in language means that language teachers need to reconsider the appropriateness of the teaching methods. In view of the fact that there are students with learning disabilities, this paper highlighted some motivational strategies that can enhance students' communicative competence with learning disabilities. The paper explains in detail strategies and the benefits. Finally, the paper concludes by calling on language teachers to adopt language teaching methods through the use of the pedagogical strategies examined. It is hoped that these motivational strategies would be adopted for corrective and remedial instruction in language teaching.

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