INVESTIGATING TEACHERS PERCEPTION OF THE REASSONS OF LEARNING DISABILITIES IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE

UMA INVESTIGAÇÃO SOBRE A PERCEPÇÃO DOS PROFESSORES ACERCA DAS RAZÕES DAS DEFICIÊNCIAS NA APRENDIZAGEM DA LÍNGUA INGLESA

UNA INVESTIGACIÓN SOBRE LA PERCEPCIÓN DE LOS PROFESORES SOBRE LAS RAZONES DE LAS DEFICIENCIAS EN EL APRENDIZAJE DEL IDIOMA INGLÉS

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Abstract
This study aimed at identifying the English language teachers' perspectives toward learning disabilities, in addition to the teachers' suggestions for treating learning difficulties in English language to raise the achievement level of students. To achieve the objectives of the study, interviews were conducted with primary school teachers to identify more reasons and suggestions from their point of view on how to treat students' learning difficulties in English. The results indicated that there were statistically significant differences in the estimates of primary school teachers for the reasons for students' LDs in English language in several fields among the students. The study concluded with recommendations on the need to diversify in teaching methods, reduce the teaching burden for teachers from lessons, and open channels of communication between home and school to follow up on students' affairs. The study also recommended identifying all the problems students face in the process of learning the language and increasing the awareness of students and their families about the importance of learning English language. In addition, schools should be encouraged to establish a special laboratory for English language, equipped with the latest tools to enable students to listen to the language better and with sound pronunciation, and encouraging teachers to develop remedial plans to improve the achievement level of students.
Keywords: English language; teachers; primary school; learning disabilities.

Resumo
Este estudo teve como objetivo identificar as perspectivas dos professores de inglês em relação às dificuldades de aprendizagem, bem como as sugestões dos professores para tratar dificuldades de aprendizagem na língua inglesa a fim de elevar o nível de desempenho dos alunos. Para alcançar os objetivos do estudo, foram realizadas entrevistas com professores do ensino fundamental para identificar mais razões e sugestões do ponto de vista de como tratar as dificuldades de aprendizagem dos alunos em inglês. Os resultados indicaram que houve diferenças estatisticamente significativas nas estimativas dos professores do ensino fundamental sobre as dificuldades dos alunos em língua inglesa em diversas áreas.
O estudo concluiu com recomendações sobre a necessidade de diversificar os métodos de ensino, reduzir a carga de ensino para os professores das aulas e abrir canais de comunicação entre casa e escola para acompanhar os assuntos dos alunos. O estudo também recomendou identificar todos os problemas que os

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1

alunos enfrentam no processo de aprendizagem do idioma e aumentar a conscientização dos alunos e de suas famílias sobre a importância de aprender inglês. Além disso, as escolas devem ser incentivadas a estabelecer um laboratório especial para a língua inglesa, equipados com as ferramentas mais recentes para permitir que os alunos ouçam melhor a língua e com pronúncia sonora, e incentivando os professores a desenvolver planos corretivos para melhorar o nível de realização dos alunos.
Palavras-Chave: Língua inglesa; professores; ensino fundamental; dificuldades de aprendizagem.

Resumen
Este estudio tuvo como objetivo identificar las perspectivas de los profesores de inglés en relación con las dificultades de aprendizaje, así como las sugerencias de los profesores para hacer frente a las dificultades de aprendizaje en el idioma inglés con el fin de elevar el nivel de rendimiento de los estudiantes. Para lograr los objetivos del estudio, se realizaron entrevistas con profesores de primaria para identificar más razones y sugerencias desde el punto de vista de cómo tratar las dificultades de aprendizaje de los estudiantes en inglés. Los resultados indicaron que hubo diferencias estadísticamente significativas en las estimaciones de los maestros de escuela primaria sobre las dificultades de los estudiantes de habla inglesa en varias áreas. El estudio concluyó con recomendaciones sobre la necesidad de diversificar los métodos de enseñanza, reducir la carga docente para los profesores en las clases y abrir canales de comunicación entre el hogar y la escuela para monitorear las asignaturas de los estudiantes. El estudio también recomendó identificar todos los problemas que enfrentan los estudiantes en el proceso de aprendizaje de idiomas y crear conciencia entre los estudiantes y sus familias sobre la importancia de aprender inglés. Além disso, as escolas devem ser incentivadas a estabelecer um laboratório especial para a língua inglesa, equipados com as ferramentas mais recentes para permitir que os alunos ouçam melhor a língua e com pronúncia sonora, e incentivando os professores a desenvolver planos corretivos para melhorar o nível de realização dos alunos.
Palabras clave: Língua inglesa; profesores; ensino fundamental; dificuldades de aprendizagem.

Introduction

In recent years, English language has facilitated the widespread of electronic networks in the field of public communication. This spread in turn has contributed to improving the use of English as an international language (Almousah, 2020). In addition, Al-Arifi (2020) emphasized that English is the language of communication and understanding between many countries of the world, as it is the language of political and scientific conferences and forums, and the language of publishing and scientific research in many fields, especially technical and medical ones. Therefore, the Jordanian Ministry of Education has continuously developed the teaching of English language, as English is the second official language in Jordan.

There are clear indications of students' weakness in English language, as students are unable to speak English, and their ability to comprehend and understand written texts is also weak (Minshar, 2020). In addition, students are weak in understanding conversations they listen to in English and are weak in written expression. This led to the increase in learning disabilities in English language among students and its great impact on the future of children, their social and professional

lives, and their psychological stability. Such a phenomenon requires a comprehensive, careful, and insightful view of the familial, social, and economic factors interacting with the preparations, tendencies, and psychological trends of each student separately. It is also important to avoid random judgments and intolerant trends such as the misconception of some teachers and parents that learning disabilities are linked to misunderstanding and mental retardation (Musaed, 2018). Therefore, this problem triggered the researcher to investigate and identify the most important reasons behind the students' learning difficulties in English language, including those related to learning language skills (Khasawneh, 2021).

Problem Statement

The level of students in the elementary stage in English language does not meet the expected learning outcomes in various language skills (Al-Zoubi, 2013). Therefore, it has become necessary to identify the causes of students' learning disabilities in English language from its various aspects. The rationale behind this reason is that English language is very important in achieving the objectives of the educational system and the progress of individuals scientifically and practically. Therefore, it was necessary to take the opinions of teachers to face these difficulties, as taking their opinions will lead to a deeper understanding of the language, in addition to achieving better performance on the part of both the teacher and the learner alike.

Research Objectives

This study aimed at achieving the following objectives: Identifying the teachers' attitudes towards students' learning disabilities in English at the primary stage in Irbid Governorate.

Research Questions

The present study seeks to give answers to the following research question: What are the teachers' attitudes towards students' learning disabilities in English at the primary stage in Irbid Governorate?

Significance of the Study

The significance of the current study stems from the importance of English language as the first global language that contributes to the progress of individuals scientifically and practically, so everyone needs to learn it. Therefore, research on the relationship of language skills to students' learning difficulties in English language may contribute to finding solutions for these reasons. This will help reduce the number of students with learning difficulties in English language in the future. The current study also derives its significance from the importance of the elementary stage, which represents the first pillar of the next educational stage in the educational system, which depends on the quality, and developmentof students' academic performance (Saadeh and Dhmour, 2017). Therefore, the researcher had the idea of identifying how the English language teacher perceives learning disabilities (Khasawneh, 2021).

Delimitations of the Study

The results of this study are limited to human limitations, as it was applied to the fourth and fifth primary teachers of English. The study tools were applied in public primary schools in the Second Directorate of Education in Irbid Governorate during the second semester of the academic year 2020/2021. The results of the study also are limited to the validity and reliability of the study instrument.

Definition of Operational Terms

The primary stage: is defined as the stage at the beginning of the educational ladder, where students undertake their spiritual, physical, intellectual, emotional, and social care in a manner consistent with the nature of each student and according to the goals of the society in which they live (Al-Mutairi, 2009). The researcher defines it procedurally as the stage that includes students from the fourth grade to the sixth grade in public schools in the Second Education Directorate in Irbid Governorate.

Reasons: They are defined as the factors that stand behind a particular problem or work to make something happen (Olimat, et al, 2013).

Students with learning disabilities**:** those who have disorders in one or more of the basic psychological processes, which include understanding of written or spoken language and their use (khasawneh, 2019).

Literature Review

Students face difficulties in learning English as a second language, which is a multifaceted problem that requires organized and multidimensional solutions. They also face other challenges related to mastering the skills necessary for reading comprehensions, such as rapid recognition of words and an abundance of linguistic vocabulary. They need a kind of education that directly solves their deficits and promote their language level (Nuruzzaman, Islam & Shuchi, 2018).

The problem of students' weakness in English language is one of the challenges facing researchers in the field of teaching and learning English in general. The improvement of students' achievement in English language confirma the good progress of the education process in the right direction. In addition, the teacher grows a positive motivation towards the teaching profession and helping students achieve better. On the other hand, we will find that the achievement of many students in English language is a complex problem, as they feel that it is an unsuitable subject for them and that whatever they do they will not be good at. Therefore, so we must look into the reasons behind the formation of negative trends towards the acquisition of English language subjects, the most important of which is the low achievement rate (Turki, 2019).

The general atmosphere prevailing in elementary schools neither helps nor encourages learning English language. The student speaks Arabic with the school administration and teachers and learns Arabic language in all subjects. The remaining time to learn English is just limited to a class of forty-five minutes, most of which is covered with Arabic. The time specified to learning English language is very limited compared to other study subjects, which is of course not enough for students to practice and acquire the language. Therefore, it is necessary to take advantage of all the opportunities available to the student in learning the language. As for teaching methods, we find that they do not achieve their goal for several reasons, including that teachers do not speak English in their performance and focus on giving information and teaching it

as a subject only, regardless of the purpose of teaching English. In addition, teachers focus on the written contents of the curriculum and neglect the verbal side of the language.

Previous Studies

Several studies have been conducted to investigate the reasons behind learning disabilities in English language and these studies have come up with different results.

Al-Mawajdeh (2020) identified the reading difficulties facing the 9th-grade students in English language and how to deal with these difficulties from the teacher's point of view in Jordan. The sample of this study consisted of 100 teachers (40 males and 60 females) from Almazar Directorate of Education in Jordan. The author used the analytic descriptive method and developed a questionnaire where its validity and reliability were verified. The result of this study showed statistically significant differences in the teacher's perceptions and these differences are attributed to the variable of years of experience.

Abdel Moneim (2019) investigated the effectiveness of a training program based on strategies of attention and working memory to improve reading skills among students of the third primary with learning disabilities in English at Kafer El Bateek Al assay School, Kafer El BateekIdara. The sample of this study consisted of 30 students. The study followed the quasi-experimental where the students were randomly divided into 2 groups, a control group of 15 students and an experimental group of 15 students. A pre-test was applied to both groups and then only the experimental group took the training program which consisted of 24 sessions and after that, a post-test has been applied to both groups. A reading and writing scale and IQ test of Ahmad ZakySaleh were used alongside the training program. The results of the study revealed that there are significant differences in student's performance on post-test in the experimental group that proves the training program is effective

Williams (2020) examined the effects of an intensive reading intervention RIA (Reading Intervention for Adolescents) on reading outcomes (word reading, vocabulary, and comprehension) for ninth-grade English language learners with learning disabilities (LD). The sample of this study were students from 3 different large high schools in an

urban, diverse southwestern U.S. school district where all student were English Learners by the time of this study or during the past 5 years, this study analyzed the treatment effects only for the English Learners with learning disabilities from the full sample in the study of the (Reading Intervention for Adolescents (RIA) for English Learners (Vaughn et al., 2018). And to analyze the treatment effects, 2 groups (treatment and comparison) were created from the four originally randomized groups of 10 to 15 students. The results of the study exposed the challenges of improving reading outcomes for English learners with learning disabilities in high school.

Swanson (2020) examined the prevalence of latent classes at risk for reading or math disabilities for elementary school children whose mother tongue was Spanish. The sample of this study consisted of 394 students (155 first grade, 129-second grade, and 110 from the third grade) were selected from 30 classrooms from urban schools with a high poverty representation from two large school districts in the southwestern United States, 192 boys, and 202 girls. The findings of this study supported the idea that children at risk for certain LDs reflect a latent class group that can be separated from a heterogeneous sample of children who differ in reading, L1, and L2 measures of vocabulary, math, fluid intelligence, and attention.

Research Methodology

This section provides information on the methodology of the present study, which includes population and sample, research instrument, and validity and reliability of the instrument.

Population and Sample

The study sample consisted of (100) male and female teachers, who were interviewed for this study.

Research Instrument

To identify the teachers' suggestions to raise the level of students' achievement in English language, the researcher developed semi-structured interviews. The interviews were recorded on a recording device (after the teachers' approval), and then

each interview was completed separately. The teachers' interview questions focused on (6) questions related to the causes of students' learning disabilities in English language and their suggestions for treatment.

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

The interview schedule in its initial form was presented to a group of specialized experts to judge the appropriateness of the interview schedule in terms of its validity and affiliation with the subject to be measured and to suggest any amendments they deem appropriate. Some phrases were amended in the questions, and the interview questions consisted of (4) questions in their final form.

Findings

This section provides the findings obtained from the present study. These findings are presented based on the research question that guides the present research.

Interviews were conducted with (100) English language teachers to identify reasons related to students' learning disabilities. The teachers' response was analyzed to find out the reasons for students' learning difficulties in English as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. The reasons for students' LDs in English language from the point of view of their teachers, arranged in descending order

Rank	Statement	Frequency
1	Unavailability of an English language lab	100
2	The lack of teaching aids in the classroom, and they are limited to tapes and cassettes	90
3	Student neglect to prepare and memorize vocabulary	80
4	Not presenting the material in an interesting way	70
5	Not linking the curriculum to real life	70
6	traditional teaching	60
7	lack of follow-up of the parents	50

Source: Search data.

It is clear from the results in Table (1) that most of the reasons for students' weakness in English language according to teachers' interviews ranged in varying degrees. The reason (lack of an English language laboratory) got the highest frequency

8

of (100), while the lowest frequency was for the reason (lack of follow-up of the parents).

The following is a review of the reasons for students' weakness in English language from the point of view of their teachers, with quotations from what the English language teachers said in the interviews.

Reasons for students' weakness in English language at the elementary stage as seen by teachers:

Unavailability of an English language lab

This proposal was repeated (100) times by male and female teachers. The responses of teachers showed that the teacher's and students' lack of a laboratory for teaching aids for the language has the greatest impact on the students' weakness in English. This was confirmed by what one of the teachers said (holding a bachelor's degree in English, 10 years experience, and working in a government school). She said, "There must be a language lab with headsets. The student must receive the information correctly, hearing it from the native speaker."

The researcher attributes this to the school's lack of interest in English language teachers, especially concerning providing educational aids, whether basic or supportive. We find educational aids limited to a recorder. The lack of language labs is one of the obstacles that hinder the self-professional development of English language teachers, so it is necessary to provide an English language laboratory equipped with the latest language teaching aids

The lack of teaching aids in the classroom, and they are limited to tapes and cassettes

This reason was mentioned by (90) male and female teachers. The responses of teachers showed that the teachers' lack of teaching aids in the school and the school's failure to provide various means, which have a great impact on students' weakness in English language. This was confirmed by one of the teachers (who holds a bachelor's

degree, 15 years of experience), who said, "The student must have teaching aids, and the lack of them constitutes an obstacle to students' mastery of the language."

This may indicate the teachers' lack of teaching aids in the school and the school's failure to provide various means. Diversity in educational aids is an inevitable necessity, which aims to present topics in a way that appeals to students and thus achieve a good return in enriching their information.

Student neglect to prepare and memorize vocabulary

This reason was repeated by (80) male and female teachers. Teachers' responses showed that students' neglect has a major role in their weakness in different language skills. This was confirmed by what one of the teachers, who said, "The student is neglected, he comes to the class and does not even know the title of the lesson that the teacher has received." The researcher attributes the reason for this to the students' neglect of the English language and their feeling that it is a language other than the language he speaks, and their teachers did not encourage them.

Not presenting the material in an interesting way

This reason was repeated (70) times by male and female teachers. The responses of the teachers showed that the way the material is presented affects the level of the student's achievement in English language. This was confirmed by what one of the teachers, who said, "The student's success depends on the teacher's method. The majority of teachers are not motivated and feel frustrated".

The researcher attributes this to the fact that the teacher is not qualified in how to display topics interestingly. Hence, the importance of diversity in presenting the lessons presented to students, to avoid boredom that students may feel as a result of the teacher following one teaching method throughout the semester.

Not linking the curriculum to real life

This reason was repeated (60) times by male and female teachers. The responses of teachers have shown that the lack of linking educational learning situations with the local student environment has a major role in students' learning difficulties in English

language. This was confirmed by what one teacher said, "What matters to us in the language is that the student applies, not memorizes." The researcher attributes this to the inability of the teacher to appropriately formulate educational and learning situations that contributes to linking what the student learns to his local environment. Therefore, it is necessary to reconsider the way the scientific material is presented so that it relates to the life and experiences of the individual.

Traditional teaching

This reason was repeated (50) times by male and female teachers. Teachers' responses have shown that the teacher's use of traditional methods of teaching and the failure to employ modern teaching methods have a significant role in students' learning difficulties in English language. This was confirmed by one of the teachers, who said, "There is an urgent need for modern teaching methods." The researcher attributes this to the fact that the teachers are comfortable with the traditional method and do not want to develop. Therefore, it is necessary to train teachers in modern teaching methods and strategies.

lack of follow-up of the parents

This reason was repeated (50) times by male and female teachers. Teachers' responses have shown that parents' neglect and lack of follow-up of their children significantly affect the student's educational level. This was confirmed by one of the teachers, who said, "Parents do not follow up on their children and do not allow the teacher to communicate with them." The researcher attributes this to the family's preoccupation outside the home, which leads to student neglect. Therefore, the school must clarify the role of parents in following up with their children and advancing their achievement level. The family is the educational supplement to the school and what it aspires to.

Recommendation

One of the most prominent recommendations of this study is to focus on the need to diversify in teaching methods, reduce the teaching burden for teachers from

11

lessons, and open channels of communication between family and school to follow up on students' affairs. It is recommended to identify problems in the process of learning English and increasing the awareness of students and their families about the importance of learning English. In addition, encouraging schools to establish a special English language laboratory equipped with the latest equipment to enable students to listen to the language better and with sound pronunciation, and to encourage teachers to develop remedial plans to improve the achievement level of students**.**

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