LEARNING PROBLEMS DETECTION

IN EFL STUDENTS FROM

COLOMBIAN SCHOOLS

A RESEARCH PROJECT

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ABSTRACT

Those who teach English as a Foreign Language (EFL), sometimes meet students with some characteristics of behavior that intrigue them. English teachers might discover these students could have emotional problems, difficulties at home, or may even be battling depression. It is not often that teachers think about learning disabilities as one of the most principal causes of low-level academic performances in all subjects, including English. For example, one student could have a specific learning disability that no one is aware of. For EFL teachers, it should be important to learn the main aspects related to learning problems or difficulties in order to pay attention to their student's needs. If teachers acknowledge the learning disabilities that can affect the development of some aspect in their students, teachers will be able to detect the learning disabilities manifested in their students in order to understand their needs and provide them with professional help.

Keywords: Learning Disabilities, Learning Problems, EFL Students, Detection, EFL Teachers.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Teacher meetings provide an opportunity for teachers to learn from one another. While at work one day, I listened as my colleagues talked about a teacher who was going to start working with us. This person had, what is in Spanish called, an "IMOC" or Incapacidad Motora de Origen Cerebral. In English, it means Motor Disability of Cerebral Origin. As they were speaking, I reflected on all the terms I did not recognize. I began asking myself, "How many terms are related to disabilities and which are not? How many terms are there that I do not know about?" I had heard of dyslexia but did not really know what it meant. "If I had a student with any type of learning disability, could I recognize it in order to be able to help him?" Maybe not. At that moment, I decided I needed to learn more about disabilities and learning problems. I meditated on the different behaviors I had encountered with my own students that I considered weird. Yet, that "rare" behavior they displayed could have been a representation of learning problems. Since I did not know what learning problems were, which are more common and how to identify them, I could hardly correct them. Consequently, I could not help my students.

This monograph is divided into different chapters; they are organized to show in an understandable way the analyzed information. Chapter One will show the general objective and the specifics ones. Chapter Two will explain the literature review which corresponds to the theoretical background where the reader can find a brief exploration, identification, and

description of the learning problem characteristics. Chapter Three will have the methodology used for this research work.   Chapters Four will present the results and discussion about this study, in the results section, there are the findings of this study based upon the methodology applied to collect information, in the discussion one is presented the advantages and disadvantages of the found information, finally there is the conclusion in Chapter Five which describes how this monograph gave me the opportunity to search information to help me and help others to learn about learning problems and their detection in our students of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in Colombia.

Significance of the Study

Learning a language means developing communicative skills in a target language, nonetheless, the author took into account that one of the possible causes of fails in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learning could not be directly related with the teaching and the acquisition process; it is true that different teaching methods or techniques can be used successfully in the teaching process aiming that the student develops communicative skills in a Foreign Language (L2), however, the way of acquisition of a foreign language is focused in the different learning styles, learning theories or teaching methods, but the acquisition will be blocked if the students have learning problems.

The detection of learning problems (LD) has significant reasons for study. First, there is a lot of information about teaching techniques and learning styles in the EFL context. However, the success of the teaching-learning process depends on the right learning condition in the student. There are many people like students, parents, and teachers who have little or no knowledge about learning disabilities. These are important issues in the language acquisition yet they are not taught in the training of EFL teachers. Second, when a teacher notices that their

students are failing English, the major responsibility is placed on the teachers and their method. Therefore, many EFL teachers feel confused as to the different causes as to why a student is not learning. Some might reason this is due to the context being difficult; they have a bad attitude, or a learning problem. The latter is the most common reason, yet is least known. Hence, teachers do not know how to detect learning problems or what to do when they discover "by chance" one of their students has one.

For the last reason, this monograph is worth as a literature tool, which could provide orientation for teachers to detect learning problems in their students. It is common to understand as an English teacher that there is not just one method to teach a L2, there is not just one style of student, nor one style of learning, in addition EFL learning cannot be measured like a quantitative process because there will never be homogeneity in the classroom, it heads an important need about analyzing learning problems in the students, currently, when a student fails, the EFL teacher is not trained to discern that one of the main causes of low performance might be due to a learning difficulty. Thus, this monograph will give clear, concrete and practical information about what are leaning problems and how EFL teachers can detect them in their students. Therefore, this study will benefit EFL teachers and their students as well.

Statement of the Problem

According to the bilingual project of Colombian Education Ministry in the last 10 years the EFL teachers have been working and making different efforts to teach English in order to develop communicative skills successfully in their students, this project has as objective that the student's communication skills reach a good level according to The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), thus, EFL teachers in Colombia are concentrated in teaching a language looking for the most correct methods to make their students able to communicate

effectively in L2, nevertheless, the efforts are being blocking for different factors, one of them is that teachers are not aware on the different student's difficulties like the learning problems and, those learning problems might affect the acquisition of a foreign language. When a student goes to school or an institute and he does not learn or cannot develop the different target language skills, he gives up thinking that learn a language is too difficult, at this moment the acquisition of the L2 becomes more difficult, not just for the attitude but aptitude, there are many people with some kind of mental disability and this situation makes that some students are not capable to learn a L2 and, this failure is not the students' fault nor the teacher's either, it is the ignorance about what is affecting the learning process in the student, because all the students are not going to respond to the same teaching method, it would be fantastic, but each student is different "everyone is a genius, but if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid" (Kelly, 2004 as cited in Quote Investigator, 2013).

In addition, nowadays at schools, English teachers are not just hired to teach English, they are responsible for a particular grade (homeroom teacher). They have to prepare different presentations like cultural acts during the school year, extracurricular activities and maintain under control the discipline of their homeroom in charge. Teachers have additional responsibilities which make that they have the duty to go beyond the classroom, for example, teachers have to be interested in helping with their student's life, family problems, health and everything which could affect the student learning performance. Therefore, teachers must meditate how they are going to create and develop different pedagogical tools to help their student in a holistic way. If a teacher does not have knowledge about their students' difficulties in learning how can he them?

Taking into account the statement of the problem a research question arises: How can English as Foreign Language (EFL) teachers detect learning problems in their students? It is very important to study learning problems or disabilities since language teachers are commonly trained to teach a specific language as part of their discipline, but they are not trained to detect learning problems nor handle them. Therefore, the purpose of this chosen problem is to create a tool which can help different EFL teachers when they meet in their classes some students with low performance of learning. Thus, teachers can analyze if that student has a learning problem or difficulty, as a result, teachers will have an idea about what is going on, how to identify some learning problems and how handle with these ones, consequently there will be less teachers who focus just in their discipline but more teachers who can help their students to cope their different learning problems; this study will be a tool to make EFL teachers are more involved in their students behavior looking for different the causes about why their students cannot learn in a "normal" way.

Objectives

General Objective

To learn the detection of Learning Problems in English as Foreign Language students through a critical compilation of literature review.

Specific Objectives

To compile information about Learning Problems in research studies previously done.

To reference information of other study works done previously about EFL Learning Problems.

To contrast different literature about learning problems detection through content

analysis.

To give the importance of the knowledge of learning problems in the teaching process.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will discuss published information on this research, explaining the pertinent

literature and offering a section for each area of study. It begins by exploring English as a

Foreign Language students in Colombian Schools. It also points out an understanding of

Learning Problems and Types of Learning Problems. Last but not least, this chapter displays

different information on how EFL teachers can detect learning problems in their students.

English as a Foreign Language students in Colombian Schools

The Colombian Education Ministry in 2004 settled a bilingual program which pretended

during 15 years (2004 to 2019) become Colombia in a bilingual country having English as a

foreign language in pre-kinder, elementary, middle, high school and higher education, besides

English as a second language in bilingual schools, however this bilingual program includes not

just English but indigenous tongues or mother tongues, and languages which are proper of the

ethno-education, thus Spanish becomes in a foreign languages for those indigenous communities;

this program is part of a project as a strategy of Competitiveness, which will let the improvement

of communicative skills in English in different educative sectors in Colombia.(Grimaldo, Cely,

Caballero & Gomez, n.d.).

This program of bilingual Colombia arose from the detection of different problems

related with the EFL teaching, mainly the low level of English in the students of public schools.

To make a description of the real situation about the reasons why the low level of English in the students it is necessary to understand that the situation includes the level of English in the teachers, the education ministry of Colombia in the document "Standard Guidelines for the project for the strengthening of the English" shows throughout of a tree of problems in figure 1, a useful tool for the identification and a logical organization of the core problem, according to the causes and the effects (Herrera, Urrutia, Avila & Jimenez, 2016).
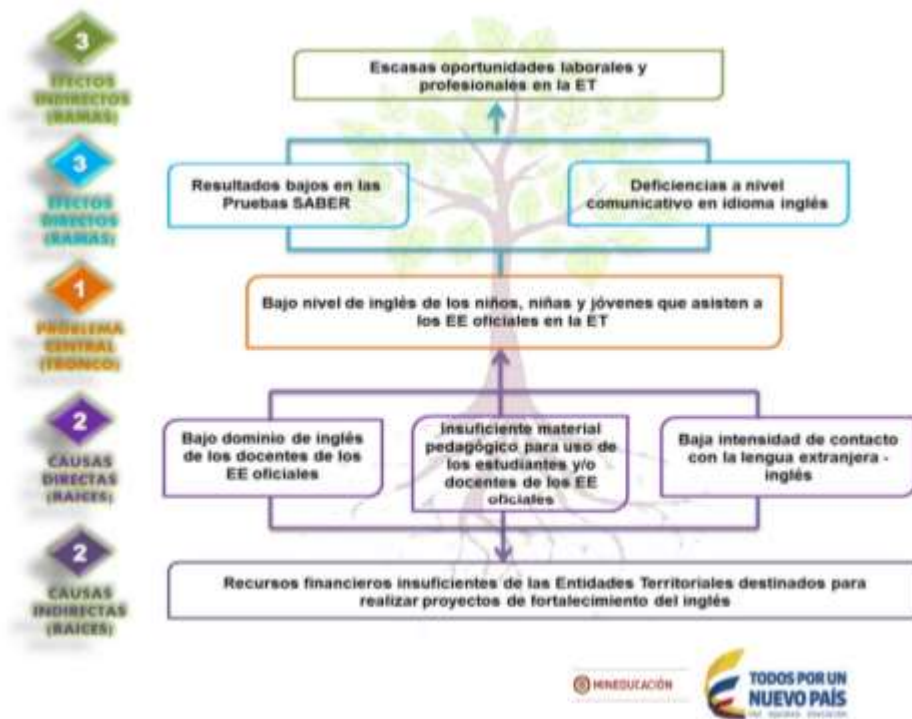
*Figure 1.*Tree of Problems. Source: Herrera, Urrutia, Avila, & Jimenez, 2016.

Figure1shows the indirect effects which are the low opportunities of working in the public schools, on the other hand the direct effects which are the results of the SABER test and the low communication level in English, these indirect and direct effects are the upshot from the central problem which is the low level of English in children and young who attend public schools in Colombia; at the same time, this problem is joined to three direct causes: Firs, the Low level of English in teachers of public schools. Second, there is no enough Pedagogical

material to be used by the teachers or students in the public schools. And third, Few hours per

week of English in the school, and little null contact with the foreign language (English) outside

the class, in fact Barcarcel, 2013 mentions:

> Class observations showed that teachers devoted large amounts of time to explanations,
>
> drills or drill-like questioning, and class management. Hence, learners have less
>
> opportunity to evaluate input and to produce creative target language. In some cases,
>
> students may want to speak out, but feel inhibited in doing so. Student utterances are
>
> generally one or two-word phrases long. (Barcarcel, 2013, p.13)

In addition, as indirect causes the problems tree mention the few or no enough financial

resources from the territorial Entities in order to make different projects to strength the English

teaching as a foreign language. On the other hand, as was mentioned before according to the

Colombian government EFL students have as the main problem their low performance in

communicative skills in English, the Government directs its efforts toward improving the

communicative competence in English by means of an appropriate program of effective teaching

of English, taking into account all of the external factors related to the teaching of learning;

factors such as economic resources from the government, educational materials necessary for

the appropriate English teaching, nevertheless none of the problems mentioned in the problems

tree of the MEN mention the human being, the student in a holistic way, it is mentioned the

results as consequence of a bad teaching, lacking factors which including the student; There are

also intrinsic factors related to low results in an academic performance, a confirmation of this is

the objectives tree of the Ministry of Education, which again is not considering the human being,

the student as an individual, with reasoning, ideas, thoughts, emotions, individual characteristics

and even learning problems, instead of that the objectives tree aims to achieve goals according to the program of bilingualism for Colombia 2019 not according the students need:
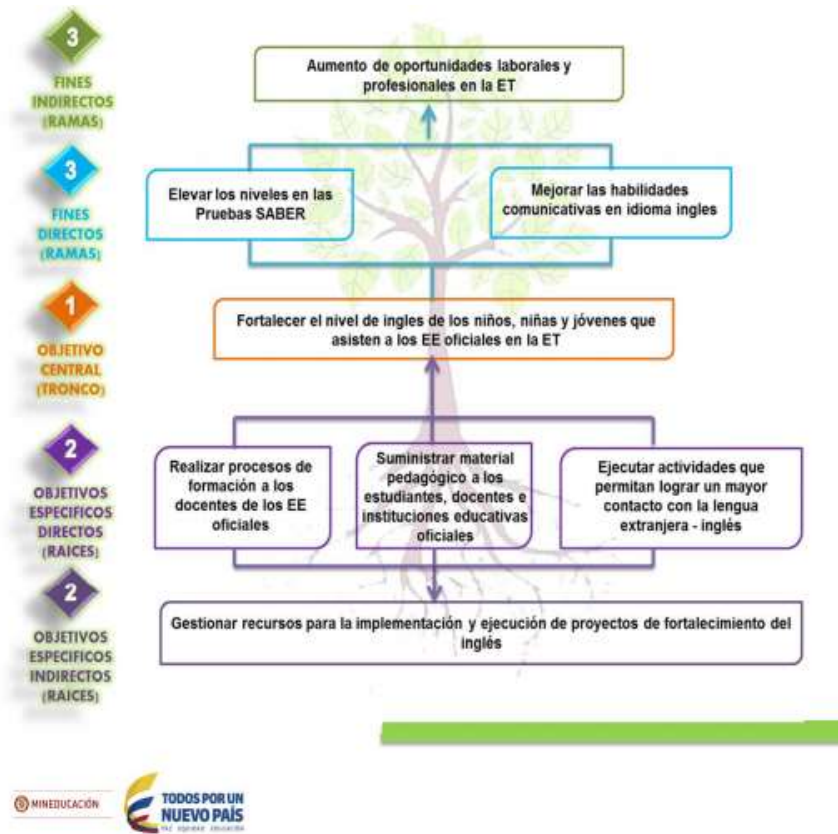

Figure 2. Tree of Objectives. Source: Herrera, Urrutia, Avila & Jimenez, 2016.

As can be seen in the Figure 2, in the bilingual program the direct objectives aim to improve the results in the SABER test and improve the communicative skills in English, these are objectives derivate from the central one which is to strength the English language in the children and young who attend the public school in the country and this will be achieved through three specific direct objectives such as: first, Make a formation process for teachers; Second, Supply pedagogical material for teachers, students and institutions; And third, Run different activities which create spaces for more contact with the foreign language.

The information above lets a clear idea about how the MEN (National Ministry of Education) does not make a characterization of the EFL students and their context, as part of the

problem to face in the bilingual program; this program was implemented in the country taking

into account the tree of problems showed and the low level of the students to communicative in

English in the public schools, but the MEN let out of analysis the context of the students in

Colombia, and other factors which are essential and involved in the teaching-learning process,

for example, one of the allied to support and give the strength of the English in Colombian

schools it is Cambridge university which offers the Common European Framework (CEF) as

standardization to evaluate the communicative skills in the EFL in Colombia, nonetheless this

(CEF) was created under different circumstances and with different purposes. Here a question

arises: Why did MEN choose this option and not others which might have been more culturally

sensitive to Colombian and even South American learners? (Sánchez & Obando, 2008), the

same authors to reinforce this in their article Is Colombia ready for "Bilinguism"? Cited from

Ayala & Álvarez (2005) the following:

> In general, standards have been obtained by importing the ones that were developed in
>
> other places, under different circumstances and contexts. Although those standards are
>
> valid and reliable for foreign academic communities, it does not mean that they would fit
>
> the particularities of our institutions, language learners and so on. (Ayala & Álvarez,
>
> 2005, p.12 as cited in Sánchez & Obando, 2008)

In Colombia the figure of EFL student is given in the context that the Ministry of

Education sets: students of English as a foreign language EFL, no more, that is all, and their

learning will depend mainly of the adequacy of the teaching, the teaching strategies and the

committed teacher, however whoever English teacher will be agree about teachers are essential

in the teaching and learning process, but as has been explained, other factors can intervene in

how successful foreign language instruction is (Sánchez & Obando, 2008).

The bilingual program was implemented and developed in other countries under certain conditions that favored teaching and learning, therefore if the MEN in Colombia wants to have a successful results in the teaching of English, it should pay less attention to the application of standards and more in the general learning circumstances that there are and are needed for the operative learning of a foreign language. For example, It is very important to analysis the learning condition in Colombia of the EFL students due to there are factors which are part of the students context the such as their life, their social context, their educational background, their health and mental condition to learn and, their school circumstances.

If the learning condition of EFL student is analyzed correctly, there will be more effectiveness to fulfill the different goals toward a better education; learning condition is the student's life and context, each student has a particular world, it includes their family, friends, habits and health; it is important to take into account if the students have a chronicle illness or disability; on the other hand, the student's social context, the teacher should be interested in knowing the student's family, culture, and the region where the student lives because these factors of learning condition affect the student perception of the reality; in addition other aspect to analyze is the student's educational background, for example the teacher could analyze if the student has a previous formation in English, finally, the teacher can analyze the school circumstances such as crowded classrooms, with little time to carry out effective learning practices also these classes contain students of mixed levels of proficiency and mixed ages, besides there are some schools where in a classroom there are students form different grades who are mixed.

Colombian teachers are not neglected to support the bilingual program, or being committed with the teaching of English in the schools, but their desire is, that the program is

implemented in an educational system and supported by polices according the EFL students

context, as Ana Clara Sánchez cited in her article Is Colombia Ready for "Bilingualism"? From

Cárdenas (2006):

> Schools and universities welcome the idea of placing teacher education at the cornerstone
> of the program, but serious concerns have also risen because we do not see clear policies
> to make language teaching conditions appropriate for the attainment of the defined goals.
> (Cárdenas, 2006, p. 2 as cited in Sánchez & Obando, 2008).

Learning Problems

To solve a problem effectively it is necessary to understand the cause of the problem in

order to deal with the consequences of the same, and that is applicable in the case of learning

problems; if a teacher could understand what are learning problems, he surely could detect

students with them. Nonetheless, when there is no detection of learning problems, proper

treatment for them is not possible. The progress in the 21st century has not achieved that learning

problems are treated effectively in the educational field; advances in science and technology

have not allowed that students with learning problems or disabilities can be treated in an

appropriate manner allowing effective learning performance. Learning problems or disabilities

(LDs) are not treated with the correct way due to three factors. First, there is no precise definition

of what is a learning problem. Second, if there is not a precise definition, there is no way to make

detection and correct diagnostic of LDs in the students. Third, if there is not a good diagnostic of

LDs, these last ones cannot be effectively treated in the education field. There are no concrete

treatments for a problem which is not properly defined and diagnosed.

The description of what is a learning problem cannot be regarded as a precise definition

because there is no specific expression for it. there are several authors that are based on different

research, and definitions vary from one author to another, besides this also relates to the time of

the research and the definition of the problem, for example trying to find a definition for

learning problems a review through the time shows over the year 1963 that learning difficulties

were associated with neurological damage, from 1963 until 1990 the learning difficulties were

understood as academic problems with origin in minimal brain dysfunction and from 1990 until

the time, learning difficulties are consolidated as a problem of educational (Castejón and Navas,

n.d.). On the other hand, there is a better concrete definition about what are learning problems; it

was given by Ana Isabel Echeverry in her book El *Manual Del Docente*:

> Learning problems are described as a disorder in one or more basic process in the
>
> learning, that disorder can be manifested in big difficulties for the acquisition and use of
>
> listening, speaking, reading, writing, spelling or the accomplishment of math operations.
>
> (Tennessee Department Education, 1982 as cited in Echeverry, 2003)

> Although the problems of learning are consolidated as an educational problem, teachers

often do not recognize what is a learning problem, since the difficulty of learning in student can

be from a simple difficulty for reading to a so-called "retardation" and these confusions are given

due to comments from several authors such as Mora and Aguilera who say: "It is crucial to

recognize with respect to the definitions and the process of identification that there are cases that

would be classified as mental retardation or learning difficulties according to operational

criteria" (Mora and Aguilera, n.d., p.26).

> Another interesting definition about children with learning disabilities is given by Haring

& Bateman (1969):

> > Those who have educationally significant discrepancies among their sensory-
> >
> > motor, perceptual, cognitive, academic, or related developmental levels which interfere

with the performance of educational task; who may or may not show demonstrable

deviation in central nervous system functioning; and whose disabilities are not secondary

to general mental retardation, sensory deprivation, or serious emotional disturbance

(Haring & Bateman, 1969, p.2-3 as cited in Hallahan, Pullen, & Ward, 2013).

      Learning disabilities (LD) varied from one person to another, as well as their

definition, one of the first formal definition was made by Kirk (1962) "A learning

disability refer to a specific retardation or disorder in one or more of the processes of

speech, language, perception, behavior, reading, spilling or arithmetic" (Kirk, 1962,

p.263 as cited in Hallahan, Pullen, & Ward, 2013). It is important to clarify that although

there is not one absolutely truth about definition and cause of learning disabilities these

can be maybe caused by a cerebral dysfunction, emotional or behavioral distresses, so

these are not caused by a mental retardation, sensory privation or instructions factor

(Macotela, 2006).

      It is important to keep in mind that not all children who show intellectual

disability in school have learning problems or learning disabilities for example, a deaf child has a

language and speech disability but those disabilities in language and speech are the result of his

inability to hear. Besides there is important to take into account that not all learning problems are

necessarily learning disabilities, for example, many children are basically slower in developing

determinate skills, this happens because children show natural differences in their rate of

development, sometimes what seems to be a learning disability may merely be a delay in

maturation, although this delay in some cases can be considered a learning problem; that is why

the difference between one and another can be determinate by the length of the learning issue

manifestation and the diagnose, so, to be diagnosed as a learning disability, specific criteria

must be met.(Neuwirth, 1993, p4).

Taking into account the information above for this study learning problems will be called

learning disability (LD) too and to enclose LD's in a more precise definition there are two

definitions which can help to understand what are LD, one is from The U.S. office of

education:

> The term "specific learning disability" means a disorder in one or more psychological
>
> processes involved in understanding or using language, spoken or written, which may
>
> manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, speak, read, write, spell or to do
>
> mathematical calculations. The term does not include children who have LD which are
>
> primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor handicaps, or mental retardation, or
>
> emotional disturbance, or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantages. (U.S.
>
> Office of Education, 1997, p.65083 as cited in Hallahan, Pullen & Ward, 2013).

The other one is by The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) in United States in

its publication Learning Disabilities are described as:

> A disorder that affects people's ability to either interpret what they see and hear or to

link information from different parts of the brain. These limitations can show up in many ways

as specific difficulties with spoken and written language, coordination, self-control, or attention.

Such difficulties extend to the school work and can impede learning to read or write, or to do

math (Neuwirth, 1993, p.4)

Types of Learning Problems

Learning disability is a wide expression which can contain many terms, issues and

situations related with the difficult of learning, there are some problems or difficulties which

affect the performance in a specific area like reading (dyslexia), writing (dysgraphia), or math (dyscalculia), hence trying to mention each learning disability is complicated, the following information will be about specific learning disabilities which might have more implications in the learning of a foreign language.

Learning disability can be divided into three broad categories, first, developmental speech and language disorder, second, academic skill disorders and third "others", a catch-all that includes certain coordination disorder and learning disabilities not covered by other terms. Developmental speech and language disorders include: developmental articulation disorder, developmental expressive language disorder like LPD and developmental receptive language disorder like APD; Academic skills disorder includes: developmental reading disorder (dyslexia), developmental writing disorder (dysgraphia) and developmental arithmetic disorder (dyscalculia). In others it can be mention NVLD, Visual Perceptual/Visual Motor Deficit, Dyspraxia and ADHD. Table 1 type of learning disabilities.

Common Learning Disabilities

There are countless disabilities or disorders which can affect or being related with learning process, for example disorders which are related with developmental language or academic skills or those ones which are related with social, emotional and behavioral aspect. Therefore in the next information will be described the most possible common learning disability in a classroom.

Developmental Speech and Language Disorders

This section covers disorders which are related with developmental language it means those disorders which affect the speech, the oral and language expression in the people or in this case in the students.

Auditory Processing Disorder (APD)

This LD is Also known as Central Auditory Processing Disorder, people with Auditory Processing Disorder (APD) do not recognize inferred differences between sounds in words, even when the sounds are loud and clear enough to be heard, because this difficulty is in 'listening', mainly to speech in a noisy environment, despite normal peripheral function. They can also find difficult to tell where sounds are coming from, to make sense of the order of sounds, or to block out competing background noises, at school this can lead to learning difficulties, especially affecting language and literacy. (Rosen, Cohen & Vanniasegaram, 2010); an example could be when the teacher gives language–related instruction or when classmates read and the teacher ask what do you understand about the read passage? And this become in an awkward question for the student with APD, although this student could not present difficulties interpreting the no verbal environmental sound, or music, birds singing etc., also this student may have problems following oral directions that is why is called developmental receptive language disorder too.

Language Processing Disorder (LPD)

The Learning Disabilities Association of America mentions while an APD affects the interpretation of all sounds coming into the brain, a Language Processing Disorder (LPD) relates only to the processing of language. LPD can affect expressive language and/or receptive language. In this case could fit a student who has difficulty understanding the meaning of the spoken language, or in other cases figuring out jokes, or might be frustrated by having much to say and no way to say it (developmental expressive language disorder), although the last one is common in many students no just in students with LPD.

Academic Skills Disorder

This section encompasses disorders or problems which are related with academic skills such us reading, writing, calculation, analysis, inferring.

Dyslexia

The reading is an activity which includes some levels of process: identification of letters, turn letters into sounds, join letter as syllables, codification of words, syntaxes codification, codification of prepositions and text comprehension, these is part the lexis process too. It is understandable that the dyslexia affects the reading comprehension and this consequently affects the academic performance.

According to Sampascual (2011) Dyslexia is a learning difficulty for reading and it is manifested when a student for many years fails in his attempt of learning to read, another definition is, disruption in the reading (Stanovich,1994), these are people who maybe have a good oral comprehension but they have difficulties recognizing the written word, that is why it must not be confuse retardation reader with dyslexic people, because the first ones corresponding to people who maybe read bad due to low level of education or low intellectual potential. The dyslexia is a LD which affects reading and writing. A student who confuses similar words or letters, for example, the letter B with D when is reading, he is going to make the same confusion in writing, that is why a student with dyslexia is going to have disortographia, and these aspects affect the student academic performance.

Kind of Dyslexia Disorders

The dyslexia has a foundation in biological or genetic causes there are two main groups of dyslexia according Serrano, & Defior, 2017:

Acquired Dyslexia: itis when a person has been a good reader but they lose the ability to read due to a neurologic lesion.

Developmental dyslexia: this kind of dyslexia is when a student at his beginning of secularity presents difficulties in the reading, these difficulties appears at the beginning of the learning process, some subtypes of dyslexia can be understood more clearly in figure 3.
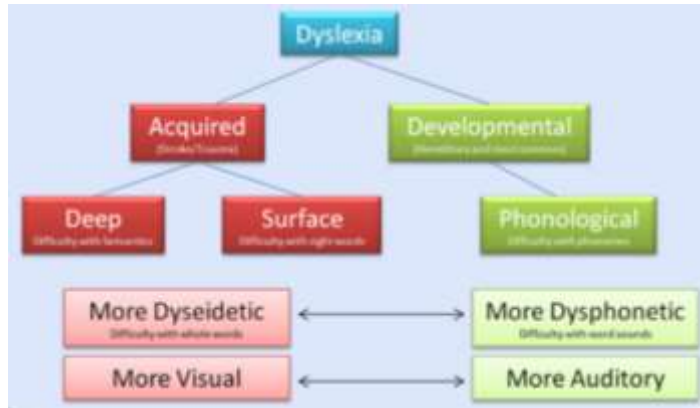

Figure 3. Subtypes of Dyslexia. Source: the reading Well, n.d.

Dysgraphia

Writing is the graphic expression of oral language, this learning difficulty correspond to a disorder in the written expression a handwriting deficiency , Agraphia or disortographia, the first one the partial or complete ability to produce written language and the last one it is the group or errors which affect the written word and no its graphic (Garcia, 1989 as cited in Fiuza & Fernandez, 2014) This learning disability is considered an evolutionary LD which affect reproductive writing and productive writing, the first one is about copy or transcriptions a text and the second one is related when the student write their own ideas and produce a text. In addition, this LD affects all about the written expression or manifestation for instance: spelling accuracy, grammar and punctuation accuracy, clarity or organization of written expression (Young & Beitchman, 2014)

Fiuza and Fernandez make a distinction between dysgraphia and disortographia where dysgraphia is related with the design or sketch of the graphical symbols while disortographia with the association between phonemes (sounds), graphemes (graphics) and the rules of spelling of the work. (Fiuza & Fernandez, 2014)

Dyscalculia

As Hornigold cited in her dyscalculia pocketbook "a condition that affect the ability to acquire arithmetical skills" (Hornigold, 2015,p.10), This LD is considered as a specific learning disability that disturbs a person's ability to figure out numbers and learn mathematics facts, for example those ones related with money, time, direction/orientation and sequencing. Furthermore individuals with this type of LD may also have poor comprehension of math symbols, may struggle with memorizing and organizing numbers, and having trouble with counting and performing calculation.

Another common problem is the language of mathematics: learners with dyslexia often have difficulty with word problems in math and in understanding math terminology. For example, words like 'product' and 'degree' have multiple meanings and can therefore cause confusion. Terms like acute can be ambiguous –is it a severe angle like an acute illness or is it a cute looking angle? (hornigold,2015,p.13), another example is when the student reads the instruction "Write the largest number you can" he/she may write a big 2 in the whole paper sheet instead of 1'250.999.562.365.325, so it is not weird that some learner with dyslexia has difficulties with mathematics.

Common Social, Emotional and Behavioral Disorders

This section presents other disorders which are not related with developmental language or academic skills, but they can affect the learning process, because the student is a holistic

human being and difficulties in social, emotional and behavioral aspects might easily affect the student's learning process.

Currently there are common social, emotional and behavioral disorders like depression, anxiety, low self-esteem and poor self-concept which could be affecting many students, because many learning disorders are associated with emotional problems and in turn these ones can hide learning disabilities consequently these ones can exacerbate emotional conditions. (Gorman, 2015)

Non-Verbal Learning Disabilities

The Learning Disabilities Association of America mentions that Non-Verbal learning disability (NVLD) "is usually characterized by a significant discrepancy between higher verbal skills and weaker motor, visual-spatial and social skills. Typically, an individual with NLD or NVLD has trouble interpreting nonverbal cues like facial expressions, body language, and may have poor coordination". Understand the interpretation of the language in different ways, for example, the sarcasm, irony, humor, emphasis or particular word or phrase, analogy, metaphor can be elude to learners with NLD.

This disability is called Non-verbal because the person has trouble with the competences which are not related with the oral language. For example, these "children generally could be described as socially inept, physically clumsy, and having difficulty with math and general visual spatial processing but able to generate language extremely well" (Stewart, 2007, p.7)

Another definition made by Brian Murphy for a person with NLD is:

Nonverbal learning disabilities gets its name from the fact that our major language functions, such us reading and verbal output, are not usually affected, in contrast to most other language –based learning disabilities. Those of us with NLD often are characterized

as "excellent" in certain academic areas such as spelling and grammar rules, history, geography, physical sciences, some standardized test, and in most areas that require logic and memorization. However, we may do poorly when it comes to English and social science courses, where written papers are required, as many of us tend to be deficient in executive functioning skills. This means that we may have trouble with prioritization, impulse control, attention, retention, and organization. The lack of ability to plan, to organize work, and to foresee consequences are common symptoms of NLD (Murphy, 2016, p.32)

As a definition of conclusion Hutching mentions:

Those with this disability have problem getting information from watching and prefer to get their information in written form or verbally. Because more than 654 percent of communication takes place through nonverbal means (facial expression, gestures, body language, speaking distance, and so forth), those with NLD miss the information that does not come directly through speaking and listening.(Hutching & Gerson,2006, p.131)

Visual Perceptual/Visual Motor Deficit

According The Learning Disabilities Association of America this is a disorder that affects the understanding of information that a person sees, or the ability to draw or copy. An example of this can be a student with blindness (Kurtz,2006), if the student has to draw a traffic light and describes the function of the different colors on it, maybe he is going to make a mistake if he is evaluate with the same assessment standard for students who do not suffer of blindness. This disability is a characteristic seen in people with learning disabilities such as Dysgraphia or Non-verbal LD, it can result in missing subtle differences in shapes or printed letters, losing place frequently, struggles with cutting, holding pencil too tightly, or poor eye/hand coordination.

Dyspraxia

This LD also called developmental co-ordination disorder (DCD) but in fact, there is a subtle difference between dyspraxia and DCD (Talukdar, 2012). The last one is a developmental disorder of the brain characterized by difficulty in muscle control, which causes problems with movement and coordination, language and speech, and can affect learning, those definitions depending on field of expertise, if it is a physiotherapist, language therapist or teacher (Boon, 2010). Although is not a learning disability, dyspraxia often exists along with dyslexia, dyscalculia or ADHD, it is normal that a child with dyspraxia (movement difficulties) often presents learning problems. In the dyspraxia the relations between the motor and psychology organization are not harmonious and systematically the role of the mobility is presented in the preparation of the thinking and cognitive function.

Executive Functioning

Sharon A. Hansen (2013) wrote that the executive functioning is a "set of skills that include self-understanding, organizational skill, time management ability, emotion control, behavior control, flexibility, initiative, attention, working memory, and persistence." (Hansen,2012,p.5) when that set of skills presents a weakness in one or more areas there is an inefficiency in the cognitive management systems of the brain that affects a variety of neuropsychological processes such as planning, organization, strategizing, paying attention to and remembering details, and managing time and space. (Learning disability association of America, n.d.); Although Executive Functioning is not a specific learning disability, it can affect the learning process because different patterns of weakness in executive functioning are almost always seen in the learning profiles of individuals who have specific learning disabilities or attention disorder/hyperactive disorder (ADHD).

If a teacher indicates that a student had several incomplete or late homework assignments and generally poor quality of work on projects this case might be analyzed as an Executive Functioning problem. Nonetheless, it covers more than fulfill homework's or organizing abilities "as a collection of directive capacities, Executive Functions cue the use of other mental capacities such a reasoning, language, and visuospatial representation" (McCloskey, Perkins, Divner, 2009, p. 15).

McCloskey, Perkins, Divner (2009) based in their researching mention Executive Functions as a set of multiple cognitive capacities that act in a coordinated way. There is an Executive functions disability when there are problems in directive capacities that are responsible for a person's ability to engage in purposeful, organized, strategic, self-regulated, goal-directed processing of perceptions, emotions, thought and actions.

Attention Deficit -Hyperactivity Disorder

This is a complex disorder; due to it can be related with social, emotional and behavioral aspect at the same time. A definition for this Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is given by Echeverry (2003) as a deflected behavior characterized by a fluctuant or damaged attention and concentration; distraction, impulsivity, aggression; and a restless motor and mental activity, often mild motor, memory and language incapacity.(Echeveryy,2003).

Another definition about ADHD is cited by Kearney (2016) as the "persistent pattern of inattention and /or hyperactivity- impulsivity that interferes with functioning or development" (Kearney, 2016, p. 64).

ADHD has a current polemic duet to the different opinions about its existence, for example some authors, researchers and professionals in the medicine field consider that ADHD is a real disorder. However, others knowledgeable people consider that this disorder does not

exist or at least feel it is related with a group of symptoms from other situations, illness and syndromes. There have been and are still many kids and teenagers who have been diagnosed with ADHD, while many questioners believe that ADHD is a production of medicine enterprises and the medical instituting, this conclusion increased when in the media was advertised that Leon Eisenberg, a recognized child psychiatrist who mentioned that ADHD was a real disorder in his publication "When "ADHD" was "the Brain-Damaged Child"", had said days before his death "ADHD is a prime example of a fabricated disease. ... The genetic predisposition to ADHD is completely overrated." Instead of prescribing a 'pill', Eisenberg said, psychiatrists should determine whether there are psychosocial reasons that could lead to behavioral problem (Blech,2012), in the same way Richard Saul mentions that not each single person who discoveries difficulties to pay attention or sit still-is affected by ADHD (Saul, 2014) .

Whether ADHD is real or not, the symptoms of attention-deficit and hyperactivity disorder are existent for millions of individuals who often cannot function in their daily activities without treatment. Nonetheless, Saul and Eisenberg opinions overlap about how ADHD has been over diagnosed in the last decades, "Have child psychiatrists and pediatricians become carpenter with hammers who see all problems as a nails? The majority of stimulant-treated children did not meet criteria for ADHD" (Eisenberg, 2007, p. 281).

ADHD can be the symptom of other affection. That is why, it is important to analyze the symptoms to understand the causes (Saul, 2014). Maybe the children have other conditions and disorders responsible of the ADHD symptoms such as: vision problems, sleep disorders, mood disorders (bipolar and depressive disorder), substance abuse, hearing problems, learning disabilities, seizure disorders, Tourette syndrome, Obsessive-compulsive disorder, Asperger

Syndrome (an autism spectrum disorder), Neurochemical distractibility/ impulsivity,

Schizophrenia, fetal alcohol syndrome, and other conditions.

There are many disorders related indirectly with the learning problems although this

paper is not going to mention every single disorder which could affect a student's learning. It is

important that teachers are aware that there exist countless disabilities, problems or disorders

actually affecting a learning process, even conditions like stress disorder, family conflict and

oppositional defiant disorder, conduct disorder and aggression, social anxiety and withdrawal,

eating disorder among others (Kearney, 2016) Take for example the eating disorder. A student

with hunger will not pay attention to the class. Consequently, he is going to fail his assignments

or test. Therefore when a teacher has knowledge about learning problems, disabilities or

disorder, he/she could be more acknowledge of the implications of those in the learning process

and their detection in order to help his/her students.

Table 1

Types of Learning Disabilities (Learning Problems)

Category of Disorder	Developmental Function	Specific LD
Developmental speech and language disorder	developmental expressive language disorder	LPD Learning Processing disorder
	developmental receptive language disorder	APD Auditory Processing Disorder
Academic skills disorder includes	developmental reading disorder	Dyslexia
	developmental writing disorder	Dysgraphia

	developmental arithmetic disorder	Dyscalculia
Social, Emotional, Behavioral Disorders and Others	Disorders which are not related with developmental language or academic skills	NLD
		Visual Perceptual/Visual Motor Deficit
		Dyspraxia
		Executive functioning
		ADHD

Source: Monograph Researcher

Implications of Learning Problems in the Learning of English as a Foreign Language

Teaching a foreign language (FL) has its own difficulties and challenges in the Colombian Context, in the case of teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) the lacking of teaching resources and the socio-cultural context of students, besides the student's learning disabilities.

The Learning Disability Association of America mentions that the learning disabilities can impede the development of the high level skills such as arrangement, coordination, organization, time planning, abstract reasoning, long or short term memory and attention. (LDA,2018), those skills are needed to learn a foreign language, memory is important to remind the structure, syntaxes, and vocabulary in the learning of a foreign language (FL), even if the student is not in a regular process in Colombia school where the English is taught during an intensity of just two or four hours per week, and this student is in a bilingual or intensive English school, memory will be necessary to remind the sound or the input language and the abstract reasoning to develop the output language.

On the other hand, "it is important to realize that learning disabilities can affect an individual's life beyond academics and can impact relationships with family, friends and in the workplace." (Learning disability association of America, 2018). Learning problems is a vice versa situation, hence a LD affects academic issues and this will be reflected with family and social difficulties and at the same time these difficulties in relationships will affect the academic issues. Consequently the FL learning will be affected by how the LD is affecting the student's academic performance or relationships.

Sparks (2016) in his article Myths about Foreign Language Learning and Learning Disabilities mentions how around the world trying to understand why some students fail in their FL learning it has arisen the idea that the withdrawal from FL learning might be evidence of a foreign language learning disability (FLLD):

> Such a comparison of both LD and non-LD students who exhibit problems with skills such as reading, spelling, writing, grammar, vocabulary, and short-term memory would substantiate the existence of a special FL "disability" only if the problems of students classified as LD are more severe than those of the non-LD, "at-risk" learners or non-LD students who are also having FL learning difficulties, and their problems with these skills are somehow different than those of non-LD students. To date, there is no empirical evidence that supports such findings. (Sparks, 2016, p. 255).

Due to the implication of LD in the FL learning many myths about learning disabilities (LDs) and foreign language (FL) learning have increased, one of them the FLLD; for example Sparks made an analysis of each myth and the evidence of its falsifies, these myths will be mention in this paper as the no implications of learning problems or LDs in the EFL, Table 2, although

These myths are false according Sparks, (2016) because there is no existence of FLLD and there are some people with LD who can learn a FL, therefore each person is an individual case.

Table 2

Myths about Foreign Language Learning and Learning Disabilities

Myths About Foreign Language Learning and Learning Disabilities by Richard L. Sparks
Myth #1: Students who are classified as LD will exhibit FL learning problems and fail or withdraw from FL courses.
Myth #2: Withdrawal from FL courses is evidence of an undiagnosed LD and an "inability" for FL learning.
Students classified as LD in FL courses exhibit weaker language learning skills and FL aptitude than low-achieving, non-LD students.
Myth # 4: Students classified as LD who are granted course substitutions or waivers exhibit low (below average) levels of language learning ability and are different from students classified as LD who pass FL courses.
Myth #5: A low score on an FL aptitude test and/or a discrepancy between IQ and FL aptitude scores are evidence of an LD and/or potential FL learning problems.
Myth #6: Discrepancy between IQ and academic achievement is evidence of a disability for FL learning.
Myth #7: Students in FL classes who are classified as LD meet criteria for the LD diagnosis

Source: Adapted from Richard L. Sparks, 2016.

The evidence does not support the existence of a specific "disability" for FL learning, i.e., an FLLD, and instead it has found that students who are and are not classified as LD exhibit similar levels of language ability; so, how should potential problems with FL learning be determined? Findings with students who fail FL courses have shown that students with average or better native language skills in reading, writing, oral language, and vocabulary achieve at least average grades in FL courses generally. On the other hand, students who fail FL courses exhibit below-average native language skills, that is, they have academic impairments in language skills, and achieve below-average scores on FL aptitude tests (Sparks, 2016, p. 263).

Learning disabilities can affect the foreign language learning even if there is no a Foreign language learning disability FLLD; It happens due to learning disabilities (LDs) are the discrepancy between the potential of the student and his level or school performance, in addition the language acquisition need the different aptitudes of the brain; the brain has three different units of function, One unit is about the alert and the mental estates, another is about reception, analysis and storage of information and the last one is program and verification of the activity (Fonseca, 1998).

It is important to clarify that although many students have difficulty learning foreign languages, not all of them have specific LD in the foreign language. Nonetheless, likely if a person started later than usual and had trouble learning to read, spelling, or grammar, it is probably that person had learning problem in those areas. At early as the 1960s foreign language educators suspected that student with "auditory ability" had problem learning a foreign language, for example while many believed that lack of motivation, laziness or anxiety were responsible for failure in foreign language Dr. Kenneth did not. He found that many students in Harvard who fail in their foreign language classes had disabilities related to dyslexia. A person with dyslexia

likely will have trouble learning to read and to spell, because they reversed symbol and letter, they can focus in sound, and they had trouble with verbal memory and obviously this affects the learning of a foreign language. (Hutchins & Gerson, 2006, p. 120)

The general learning activity imply the sensorial integration, integration rises in the nervous system where is organized, storage, and then it is done to generate mobility, answers and reactions. (Fonseca, 1998) when a child presents difficulties in some brain functions, his learning functions are affected and, these functions are important for the modern world like reading, writing and calculation. It cannot be denied that the students of FL need their learning functions of brain work properly and cerebral disposition which let them to acquire and develop the foreign language. Some students with academic delays caused by learning disabilities can present a language barrier or disability, but this should be evident in both language (native and foreign) (Duarte, Greybeck & Simpson, 2013)

LDs can affect social interaction taking into account that in the pragmatic view of language acquisition, the language is purposeful or functional, language is composed for linguistic and extra linguistic symbols, children use language intentionally to influence others, and the effectively use of language, children must engage in a form of social cognition to understand the mental states of others, (Wong, Graham, Hoskyn & Berman, 2008, p.34).

Learning Problems Detection in EFL Student

Class size is the most evident problem in the Colombian education context. Authors like Brown (2001), LoCastro (2001) and Sarwar (2001) have analyzed the difficulties of managing large-sized classes, for example LoCastro (2001) provides a list of problems related to class size and language learning, organized in three categories: Among the pedagogical difficulties it is found carrying out of speaking, reading, and writing tasks, the provision of feedback and

monitoring of work, the promotion of individual work, setting up of communicative tasks, and

avoidance of demanding activities. Regarding classroom management she mentions that

correction of student compositions is virtually impossible, pair and group work are difficult to

carry out, and there is a high noise level when classes are truly participative. Finally, affective

problems include not being able to learn students' names, not being able to establish good

rapport with students, and problems with weaker students who may get lost. (Brown, 2001,

LoCastro, 2001 & Sarwar, 2001 as cited in Sanchez, 2008)

Those pedagogical and management difficulties and affective problems make it difficult

for a teacher to detect if there is a student with a learning problem or LD, if a teacher has a lot of

students in a classroom, the implications of LD's in the EFL learning will be difficult of

detection, that is why the teacher has to be attentive to each student performance in order to help

them in their EFL learning.

On the other hand, it is difficult to diagnose something that is not known, the confusion

presented on what is a learning problem means that there is confusion about its detection;

consequently there is not a technically appropriate form of diagnosis for learning problems or

disabilities. In the field of education teachers can mention at least one learning problem, in

reality they do not know what happens with the brain of this "special situation" of learning and

much less know how to detect it. For example, simply on the basis of hearsay teachers might

define a dyslexia case if the student confuses letter like B with D, F, G; the teachers are not

aware of how to perceive a problem of learning in their students, even they are not trained on

how to perform a diagnosis to a student who likely present problems of learning.

If there is a precise definition of learning problem, there is a proper diagnosis which

allows an effective treatment. So, a teacher can detect one specific LD if they know what are

learning problems and their principal manifestation. A good source of LD's definition was given

by U.S. office of Education when stated in 1968:

> Children with special (specific) learning disabilities exhibit a disorder in one or more of
>
> basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using spoken and writing
>
> language. These may be manifested in disorders of listening, thinking, talking, reading,
>
> writing, spelling or arithmetic. They include conditions which have been referred to as
>
> perceptual handicaps, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, developmental
>
> aphasia, etc. they do not include learning problems that are due primary to visual, hearing
>
> or motor handicaps, to mental retardation, emotional disturbance or to environmental
>
> disadvantage(U.S. Office Education,1968 as cited Hallahan, Pullen & Ward,2013).

Taking into mind that the LD can manifested by listening, thinking, talking, reading,

writing, spelling or arithmetic, there are some methods which the teacher can detect a LD in their

students, as Newman and Sternberg (2004) cited:

> A specific learning disability may be found if a child has a severe discrepancy between
>
> and intellectual ability in one or more of several areas: oral expression, written
>
> expression, listening or reading comprehension, basic reading skills, mathematics
>
> reasoning, or spelling. A severe discrepancy is defined to exist when achievement in one
>
> or more of the areas falls at or below 50% of the child's expected achievement level,
>
> when age and previous educational experiences are taken into consideration. (Newman;
>
> Sternberg, 2004, p.33)

When teachers has a general idea about what a learning disability/problem is, then these

educators can analyzed some methods or formulas which can help them to detect LD's in their

students. First, as a method to defined LDs is mention by Lipka and Siegel (2006) they mention

as a formula the discrepancy between actual achievement and measured "intelligence" or "measure potential" in other words, discrepancy between ability and achievement. (Lipka & Siegel, 2006, P.413)

Second, For example to describe different formulas to define learning disabilities there is the achievement method or achievement formula, this method based in definitions, it supposes that student have to have a normal o common performance in the school but if there is a discrepancy between the students spelling, reading and arithmetic skill and his /her age this student, could be considered with learning disability (Lipka; Siegel, 2006). "Identification of LDs on aptitude-achievement models and toward models that explicitly incorporated response to instructions as a component of the eligibility process" (Fletcher; Lyon, Fuchs, Barnes, 2007, p.26). "the primary approach to identification has been the measurement of unevenness in academic or cognitive development as a marker for the 'unexpectedness' of LDs along with the exclusion of other causes of underachievement that would be 'expected' to produce underachievement." (Fletcher, Lyon, Fuchs & Barnes, 2007, p.28)

Third, Other aspect which evinces learning problems are tests, they are based in reading and cognitive aspects which will show the academic performance of the student. Due to the lack of other methods to identify learning problems in the students another kind of test was used, the intelligence quotient (IQ) tests, this method was not convenient due to the lack of measure criteria, for instance, many scholars have provided evidence that standard IQ test are not valid in the measurement of potential learning ability for individual of reading disability (RD), because IQ test measure expressive language skills, short-term memory, speed of information processing, speed of responding and knowledge of specific fact (Lipka & Siegel, 2006)

Learning disabilities (LD) are not easy to detect because are dissimilar to other illness, injuries or disabilities for example deafness is a hidden handicap (Neuwirth,1993.) for this reason when a person has a learning disability commonly this does not show visible signs, concrete facts or clear manifestations in order to teachers or family can make the proper detection and give the required support, that is why "The of the false-negative identification is, that children who may be at- risk for learning problems do not receive needed helper services." (Wong, 1991, p.493) For example depression is not specific learning disability but a student with depression does not have the appropriate disposition toward learning, but the teachers can detect some depression signs like the student's   tendency to isolate themselves; drinking every weekend, lacking of concentration on anything, not friendships, not even self-preservation, in addition they can be battled daily with feelings of extreme stress, sadness, loneliness, and anxiety.

The student with LDs can present different characteristic, some of them at the same time, other developed through the time, somehow the teacher can take these characteristics from Table 3 as a tool for LD identification; Kemp, Smith & Segal (2008) offers others signs and symptoms of learning disabilities:

Preschool ages: problems pronouncing words, trouble finding the right word, difficulty rhyming, trouble learning the alphabet, numbers, colors, shapes, days of the week, difficulty following directions or learning routines, difficulty controlling crayons, pencils, and scissors, or coloring within the lines, trouble with buttons, zippers, snaps, and learning to tie shoes; Elementary ages: trouble learning the connection between letters and sounds, unable to blend sounds to make words, confuses basic words when reading, slow to learn new skills, consistently misspells words and makes frequent errors, trouble

learning basic math concepts, difficulty telling time and remembering sequences;

Secondary ages: difficulty with reading comprehension or math skills, trouble with open-

ended test questions and word problems, dislikes reading and writing; avoids reading

aloud, poor handwriting, poor organizational skills (bedroom, homework, desk is messy

and disorganized), trouble following classroom discussions and expressing thoughts

aloud, spells the same word differently in a single document (Kemp, Smith &

Segal,2008,p.3)

Table 3

Behavior Indicator in Student with Learning Problems

Category	Indicators
General	- The students move constantly, he cannot concentrate for a few minutes. - Often is calm down or distracted. - The student has difficulty to share time with his classmates. - He is disorganized. - He gets distraction easily. - He is inconsistent in his behavior. - Sometimes he does not understand the oral instructions. - He doubt constantly when he is talking. - He has a poor oral expression for his age. - He is so aggressive and violent. - He uses strange language or irrelevant; echolalia. - The student might struggle with memorization and organization of numbers, operation signs, and number "facts" - Children with math learning disorders may also have trouble with counting principles or have difficulty telling time.
Reading	- He loses the words, repeat words. - Read without fluency or speed. - Confuse similar words and letter, has problems with letter and word recognition. - Uses his index finger to follow the reading. - He doesn't like reading. - Uses an incorrect order of the letter in the words. - Has difficulty to associate the sound with the correct letter - Switch the words. - He is struggling for understanding words and ideas. - The student cannot develop general vocabulary speed.

Writing	- The student cannot write over the line. - Has difficulty to write from the board or another source. - Uses cursive and manuscript writing in the same task. - He is slow to fulfill the written work. - Uses poor expression according to his age. - The student cannot be neatness and consistency in his writing. - The student cannot be accurately copying letters and words. - The student cannot spell consistency. - The student cannot have writing organization and coherence.
Deficit of attention	- He acts before speaking. - He doesn't finish what he begins. - He seems as he doesn't hear. - He distracts easily. - He has difficulty to concentrate in the works which require constant attention. - He problems to be focus in one activity. - He changes constantly form one activity to another one. - He has difficulty to organize his work. - Can be hyperactive.

Source: Adapted from Echeverry, 2003; Kemp, Smith, Segal, 2008.

The next table 4 by Newman and Sternberg (2004) can help to analyze if the student has some learning Problems, although this is specifically to show steps for identifying a gifted student as learning disable, teachers can use some steps in order to identify LD in their students:

Table 4

Steps to Identify Gifted Student as Learning Disable

Steps for identify gifted student as leaning disable
1. Examine student's school record longitudinally. Examine both classroom grades and standardized measures of achievement. The teacher can ask himself, is there a pattern of decreasing academic achievement overtime? Have score on standardized measures of achievement decreased over time?
2. Conduct observations of the student within the classroom environment. Evaluate the students' level of difficulty within the classroom environment as well as any observable compensation strategies that he or she uses to

cope with academic demands.
3. Conduct an academics assessment using both individually administered standardized achievement test and curriculum-based assessments.
4. Assess processing using standardized test/ scales that you have not used to assess intellectual functioning or academic achievement.
5. Collect and evaluate work samples from the student's teachers.
6. Conduct a short interview with the student to assess his or perceptions of any academic difficulties
7. Solicit input from teacher and parents.

Source: Newman and Sternberg, 2004.

The teacher can do procedures based on aptitude -achievement discrepancies. Fletcher, Lyon, Fuchs, Barnes (2007), they propose four models for the identification of individual with LDs: (1) aptitude -achievement discrepancy, (2) low achievements, (3) intra individual differences and Response to intervention (RTI); evaluating these models, we assumed that a valid classification must identify individual who represents a subgroup with unexpected underachievement. The pattern of differences among low achievers identified as learning disable or not learning disable in each model should lead to a unique group of low achievers when variables are used and were not part of the approach to identification. (Fletcher, Lyon, Fuchs & Barnes, 2007, p.31)

Johnson and Clohessy (2014) mentions that LD are most often diagnosed through the school system due to the school includes parents, teachers, administrators, and sometimes psychologists and all of them can play a significant role in the identification process. Psychological and academic measured and assessment processes are well documented. These

imperfect measures and procedures are currently the method used for learning disabilities identification because teachers play a critical role in the LD evaluation and intervention process. The accurate identification of LD can help to provide a service to students based on their specific needs. (Johnson & Clohessy, 2014)

Parents may be uncomfortable with the idea that their child has a LD, because the disable word has a prejudice connotation, or they may believe that their child's learning disabilities are developmental. Even some teachers may have strong beliefs about the developmental progression of learning and may be reluctant to refer students with LD; even teachers might also attribute learning difficulties to a lack of motivation, or a lack of trying (Johnson & Clohessy, 2014)

Finally, teachers can analyzed different signs and different methods to identify a possible LD in their student; however, the teachers cannot use certain procedures to diagnose LD in their students because the government and the health institutions are in charge of the correct identification criteria to diagnose students with LDs; nonetheless, the use of profile analysis is not a warranted; utilizing longitudinal data collection to identify declines in achievement across the primary and elementary years may help educator to identify special characteristic in their student like high –ability or LDs; finally more empirical research is needed to determine how to best identify and serve this unique population of student with LDs. (Newman & Sternberg, 2004, p.44)

Handling Learning Problems in EFL Students

Learning Disability covers a diversity of possible causes, symptoms, treatments and outcomes. Due to learning disabilities can show up in so many different ways, it is difficult to diagnose or to pinpoint the causes. Talking about the solution for the different learning problems

no one can know all therapies that will "cure" them, in more of the cases there is a treatment in order to the person can co-existence with the learning disability, no to cure or eliminate the LD.

In the absence of a clear decision about what is a learning problem, its implications and manifestations, accurate diagnostic methods and treatments for learning problems are ambiguous and are given by chance or luck. Perhaps something helps some person to overcome his "problem" of learning, but this is not conducive to another. It is not known whether the learning problem is only temporary or if it will last for the rest of the person's life or if the person must get used to it, therefore many forms of treatments are in the air because it is not possible to define if determinate treatment will be effective or not for a student with "learning disabilities".

When a teacher does his own investigation and wants to go beyond his classroom work maybe he considers that it is important that the students with some LD signals go to a therapy with occupational health, place where the student will take a Neuropsychological Assessment:

> The Neuropsychological Assessment is a procedure in which, through standardized tests, is intended to diagnose certain functional alterations related to the central nervous system. It is made with a dual purpose. On the one hand, to detect the existence of cognitive disorders, difficulties with attention, memory, visual, linguistic, planning and behavioral problems, etc. Getting a differential diagnosis (Propias, 2006, p.5)

The neuropsychology evaluation is a process which uses standard test, in order to find out functions alteration related with the central nervous system, in this way this evaluation can detect cognitive difficulties, like attention difficulties, memory, visual abilities, linguistics, plan, behavioral problems, etc. This evaluation uses an evaluation resources which can be classify in three groups: cognitive search, general batteries phycology, specific test of function. (Propias, 2006)

For the professionals of the education it is important to detect the LD if they want to contribute to their solution and not to increase the problems that these children cope in school, when a teacher detects a no common behavior in one of his students, he can analyze all the evidences of this "special" behavior, taking into account the signs and the tool of LD detection focus in student listening, writing, reading, calculation, and attention, besides the family antecedents, and if the teacher suspects of a LD in one of his students, he   must to refers the case to the principal, and with education community, talk with the parents in order to look for professional diagnosis and treatment.

Due to the teacher and school staff are not the specialist for giving the accuracy help to the student with LD, with the information of observation made by the teacher who is not a psychologist or pedagogue, the teacher must refer the child to the health services, in order to they study the case for a depth diagnosis and helping with the analysis to identify the specific problems that each student has and establish the best guidelines and methods of help.

Diagnosing a learning disability is a process. It involves testing, history taking, and observation by a trained specialist. Finding a reputable referral is important. Start with your child's school, and if they are unable to help you, ask your insurance company, doctor, or friends and family who have dealt successfully with learning disabilities. (Kemp, Smith & Segal, 2008)

According to Kemp, Smith and Segal, (2008) these are the types of specialists who may be able to test for and diagnose learning disabilities include:

1. Clinical psychologists or /and School psychologists

2. Child psychiatrists

3. Educational psychologists

4. Developmental psychologists

5. Neuropsychologist

6. Psychometrics

7. Occupational therapist (tests sensory disorders that can lead to learning problems)

8. Speech and language therapist

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This is a content analysis which is presented as a monograph, this analysis is an

independent research, leading by the student, for elaborating bachelor thesis in the School of

Education—ECEDU of the Open and Distance National University—UNAD, this monograph

has as foundation, the formulation of a research question, and the exploration of information

which can answer that research question, that exploration was throughout the collection and

analysis of information, and it was developed through a comparison to have final paper.

Research line

The research line for this monograph was Childhood, education, and diversity, this was

taken from the School of Education—ECEDU of the Open and Distance National University,

this research line was chosen because it got to analyze the topics related with learning problems

(Learning disabilities -LD) from a wide point of view, considering that LD can be acquired or

evolutionary, thus these learning disabilities affect the childhood and even the adolescence.

Consequently, the society, mainly the education staff has to reflect that those disabilities are part

of the diversity in the classroom.

Contextual framework

This research was created thinking about a concrete population, EFL students in

Colombian Schools and their teachers. There are many EFL teachers that are trained to create

effective method of teaching English and to improve their own English language communicative skills in order to be acknowledgeable in their English teaching. Also, their standard to teach and evaluate English is taking from the European context, unlike of teachers from other areas who are trained no just in a specific area like math or science but in all aspects related to education such as education laws, didactics, pedagogic, curriculum, student's context. The last one is the most unknown aspect for EFL teachers, this research paper considered the elementary and secondary EFL students in Colombian schools where there is a diversity of students in the classroom, students from different socio-cultural backgrounds, dysfunctional families or students with learning disabilities. There are other aspects which can affect the learning process and these should be known in so some way by the EFL teachers in order to understand their students in a holistic way.

Research Design

The methodological design was the content analysis, designed in this order: first, the problem was selected, second, the research question arose to understand the problem, and to give kind of contribution to solve that problem, third, to give accurate and organized information which could contribute to learning problems detection in EFL students from Colombian schools the literature review was divided into topics, fourth, the searching of different literature following a the methodological design was organized through the use of Index cards as instruments (See Appendix A).

The research style of this monograph carried out a qualitative investigating since this let to descriptive the different aspects related to answer the research question. It focuses more on the depth and quality of the information, than on the quantity or standardization hence the first one has to be analysis properly (Simon, Vlado & Maja, 2017). The research style lets that the

collecting analysis fulfils through the qualitative research the specific objects, due to this monograph compile information about Learning Problems in research studies previously done, to reference information of other study works done previously about EFL Learning Problems, so to contrast different literature about learning problems detection through a content analysis, to give the importance of the knowledge of learning problems in teaching process.

Instruments

The literature review came from different sources which were visual, written or audible information, when a student is doing a monograph this requires read and read a lot of information, so a table in excel was useful to organize the topics, authors, pages and URL. Other instruments were the index cards [model in appendix A] these were useful for the references hence a monograph requires the reading of different kind of information in order to clarify and understand the problem settled, there is a model of completed index card in Appendix B, which includes some characteristics such as date, author, and page.

Research Timeline

The process for finishing this monograph was carried out throughout t a schedule which lasted a period of ten months.

Table5

Timeline

Timeline										
Activity	Month									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Collecting data	X	X	X							
Classifying information				X	X	X				
Extend and deep information about theoretical					X	X	X	X		

Background											
Writing the result and the confronting information					X	X	X	X			
Writing discussions and conclusion								X			
Check spelling and grammar mistakes									X		
Prepare oral presentation											X
Oral presentation of the monograph before judges											X

Source: Monograph Researcher

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISSCUSSION

Complete information to understand what the learning problems are, was found through the content analysis. This information is really important because it contributes to be a tool for teachers in order for them to detect LD their EFL students, one point for the detention is mainly understand that there is no a difference between learning problem and learning disability, although in Spanish language would be more appropriate refer to a student with LD as a student with a learning problem. The word disability in Spanish it is a contemptuous term, nonetheless, in English there is no prejudge correlation with the expressions learning problem or learning disability, both expressions are related with a discrepancy in the student intelligence, his achievement and performance. However, there might be a difference between leaning problem and learning disability (LD) and this is about the duration of the inconvenience of learning and how this is related with the person' growth and development. In other countries like USA learning problems and learning disabilities are related to the same situation, disorder of learning.

As part of the answer for the research question, how can teachers detect learning disabilities in their student? The collection analysis showed that the teachers must be attentive to each student behavior, because each student can manifest his/her learning disabilities in different ways. Teachers and education staff can help their students with LD if they have the main knowledge about what are learning problems and their manifestations, taking into account that

each student will be a singular case of analysis. There are many syndrome and disabilities which

are not considered as LDs but they affect the learning process in the student, it can occur for a

moment or developmental due to no all LDs are going to be along the student' life. The

principle of equal opportunities means give to all the student unequal treatments because the

entire students are unequal. The idea is not build equals schools for all, but equal efficiency

school for all. (Barrios, Forte & Navarro, n.d.).

The results show that the settled objectives were fulfilled and the information in this

paper as new knowledge for teachers; it is an advantage because the result achieved to give the

importance of the knowledge of learning problems in the teaching process. In addition, the

results have many advantages for teachers, parents, and students due to the content analysis let

the teachers learn how detect learning problems in their students consequently teachers could

help their students. At the beginning of the researching Learning Problems was a common

expression in schools but without real meaning although an important significance of study; after

the collecting and analysis of the information it is clear what are learning problems, their

implication in the learning of a foreign language, how to detect learning problems and what to do

when there is a student in the classroom with LD.

This monograph gives a lot and precise information which EFL teachers can use as a tool

of consulting in every moment when they feel or notice a student with peculiar characteristics of

behavior or performance. It is important to emphases that EFL teachers should not be unaware

about the different signs from their EFL students related to social, emotional or behavioral issue

even their student's health, due to EFL teachers are not in charge just for teaching English. The

teacher labor requires many skills including the proactive attitude and the interest in their

students in order to ensure the learning. Many teachers maybe acknowledge some common

learning problems like dyslexia, but the majority of EFL teachers do not know about the different LD which might be presented in their EFL students; the detention of LD will be very useful for teachers, but this detection just will be accomplished in the proportion of teacher's knowledge about learning problems.

This research study presents some disadvantages. The information is not complete about syndromes and different health conditions of the students which could affect the learning process, for example, if a child comes to school with maturation delay in brain, or down syndrome or some intellectual disability, What must the teacher do? Separate the student from the others ones? Maybe not, because this child has rights of inclusion. Today many people talk about inclusion in the education field, no matter if the inclusion in some ways avoids the student gets the required assistant or the proper help according to the child's need. On the other hand, a student with one of the health conditions mentioned before could learn English as a FL? There are many situations and questions which cannot be answered in one research paper but can be a motivation for others ones.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

This monograph achieves to compile information in order to help teachers to learn the

detection of Learning Problems in English as Foreign Language students through a critical

compilation. This research and content analysis references information from other study works

done previously about EFL Learning Problems in order to contrast different literature about

definition of learning problems and ways of detection , in this way the information found gives

the importance of the knowledge of learning problems in teaching process. This monograph is

really important because when people have finished its reading they will have an open mind

about learning problems or LD and how these ones can interfere in the learning process. The

learning disabilities commonly are a disorder maybe with biological or genetic foundation,

characterized by deficit in some areas performance. It means a discrepancy between IQ and

performance IQ in academic, social and emotion issues.

Finding several authors who deal with or have researched learning problems from a

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) perfective, was one of the major challenges to complete

this monograph because there are not many authors who aboard this topic, nonetheless, this

situation let this monograph gathered in a concrete and practical way the required information to

learn What are learning problems? What are the most common ones?, and how to detect them in

our students of Colombian schools?; this information will give to the EFL teachers a plus in his daily teaching process.

As recommendations, due to the fact that there are many syndromes and disabilities which are not considered as a LD but they might affect the learning process in the student, it is important that teachers are attentive and pay attention to any particular characteristic in their student's behavior, in order to give the correct support to the children; even, an immigrant student, because this can have emotional and behavioral problems. Other aspect to consider is to take into account that there are syndromes like IMOC, Tourette, and different kinds of autism, which would be a good source of knowledge for teachers in order to be attentive toward their student's behavior which can be affected for these syndromes or additional problems related to social, emotional or health factors.

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APPENDIX A: MODEL OF INDEX CARD

INDEX CARD					
TOPIC		APA REFERENCES		PAG	

Type of Source Book

Bibliography Fields for APA Sixth Edition

Author ECHEVERRY, ANA ISABLE

☐ Corporate Author

Title EL MANUAL DEL DOCENTE

Year 2003

City BOGOTA

Publisher AULA ABIERTA MAGISTERIO

☐ Show All Bibliography Fields

Tag name

SOURCE1

APPENDIX B: SAMPLE OF INDEX CARD

INDEX CARD					
TOPIC	LEARNING PROBLEMS	APA REFERENCES	(ECHEVERRY, 2003)	PAG	13

learning problems are described as a disorder in one or more basic process in the learning, that disorder can be manifested in big difficulties for the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, spelling or the accomplishment of math operations. (ECHEVERRY, 2003) Tennesse Department Education,1982