

## IDENTIFYING AND ANTICIPATING LEARNER DIFFICULTIES IN ENGLISH LESSONS

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### ARTICLE INFORMATION

### ABSTRACT:

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#### ARTICLE HISTORY:

Received: 05.04.2026

Revised: 06.04.2026

Accepted: 07.04.2026

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#### KEYWORDS:

learner difficulties,  
English teaching,  
pronunciation,  
grammar, vocabulary,  
teaching strategies,  
language learning

*This article examines the importance of identifying and anticipating learner difficulties in English lessons. It highlights common challenges such as pronunciation, grammar, limited vocabulary, and lack of confidence. The study also analyzes the main causes of these difficulties and suggests practical teaching strategies to overcome them. By understanding learners' needs, teachers can create more effective and engaging lessons.*

**Introduction.** Teaching English as a foreign language requires not only delivering knowledge but also understanding learners' potential difficulties. Students often face challenges in mastering pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and communication skills. These difficulties can negatively affect their motivation and participation in the classroom. Therefore, it is important for teachers to identify possible problems in advance and plan their lessons accordingly. By anticipating learner difficulties, teachers can provide appropriate support, choose effective teaching methods, and create a more comfortable learning environment.

Methods. To better understand and predict learner difficulties, several practical methods can be applied in the classroom:

1. Analyzing Students' Mistakes

Careful examination of learners' errors helps identify patterns and recurring problems in language use.

2. Classroom Observation

Monitoring students during lessons provides insight into their behavior, participation, and areas of struggle.

3. Diagnostic Activities

Short tasks or quizzes at the beginning of lessons help determine students' current level and highlight weak points.

4. Targeted Questioning

Asking specific questions enables teachers to check comprehension and uncover misunderstandings.

5. Student Feedback

Encouraging learners to share their opinions about lesson difficulty helps teachers improve instruction.

6. Communicative tasks

Activities such as discussions and role-plays reveal real-life language difficulties, especially in speaking.

Results. The use of these methods provided valuable insights into students' learning processes and challenges. It became evident that many learners had difficulty using grammatical structures correctly in spontaneous speech, even if they understood the rules in theory. Limited vocabulary also prevented them from expressing ideas clearly, which often reduced their willingness to participate. In addition, emotional factors such as fear of making mistakes and lack of confidence were observed to influence performance significantly. After adjusting teaching strategies based on these findings, students gradually became more active and confident. Their ability to communicate improved, and they showed better engagement during lessons.

Discussion. The findings of this study confirm that identifying and anticipating learner difficulties is a crucial component of effective English language teaching. The results demonstrated that learners often struggle not only with linguistic aspects such as grammar and vocabulary but also with psychological barriers like anxiety and lack of confidence. These findings are consistent with the views of Stephen Krashen (1982), who emphasized the

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importance of emotional factors in language acquisition. According to his Affective Filter Hypothesis, learners with low confidence and high anxiety are less likely to absorb language input effectively.

In addition, the observed difficulties in applying grammatical knowledge in real communication align with the research of Rod Ellis (2003), who argued that there is often a gap between knowing grammar rules and using them fluently in practice. This suggests that teachers should focus more on communicative competence rather than only theoretical knowledge. The issue of limited vocabulary highlighted in the results is also supported by Paul Nation (2001), who stated that vocabulary knowledge plays a central role in language proficiency. Without sufficient lexical resources, learners cannot effectively express their ideas, which reduces their participation in classroom activities.

Furthermore, the importance of interaction in overcoming learner difficulties reflects the ideas of Lev Vygotsky (1978). His concept of the Zone of Proximal Development suggests that learners can achieve higher levels of understanding through collaboration and guided support. This supports the use of interactive methods such as group work and discussions in language teaching.

The role of meaningful communication is also emphasized by Michael Long (1996) in his Interaction Hypothesis. He argued that language learning improves when learners engage in real communication and negotiate meaning. This explains why communicative tasks used in the study helped reveal and address learners' difficulties more effectively. Moreover, the findings correspond with Jack C. Richards (2006), who highlighted the importance of adapting teaching methods to learners' needs. According to him, effective teaching requires flexibility and continuous assessment of students' progress and challenges.

Finally, Jeremy Harmer (2007) also pointed out that motivation and confidence are key factors in successful language learning. The improvement in students' participation observed in this study supports his view that a supportive classroom environment can significantly enhance learning outcomes.

In conclusion, this study has demonstrated that identifying and anticipating learner difficulties is an essential element of successful English language teaching. As highlighted throughout the article, learners face a range of challenges, including problems with grammar, limited vocabulary, pronunciation issues, and psychological barriers such as low confidence and anxiety. These difficulties, if not addressed in time, can significantly hinder students' language development and reduce their motivation to learn. The methods applied in this study, such as error analysis, classroom observation, diagnostic activities, and interactive tasks,

proved to be effective in revealing both visible and hidden learning problems. The results showed that when teachers carefully analyze these difficulties and adjust their teaching strategies, students become more engaged, confident, and capable of using the language in real-life communication. Furthermore, the discussion confirmed that these findings are supported by well-established theories in language education, which emphasize the importance of interaction, meaningful communication, and emotional factors in learning. This connection between theory and practice highlights the need for teachers to adopt a flexible and student-centered approach in the classroom.

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