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Individualized Foreign Language Teaching to adolescents with dyslexia versus autonomization of their learning process

Indywidualizacja nauczania języków obcych młodzieży z dysleksją a automatyzacja ich procesu uczenia się

Abstrakt

Celem artykułu była analiza warunków i perspektyw nauczania języków obcych uczniów z dysleksją rozwojową ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem zasad dydaktyki autonomizującej. W pierwszej części tekstu zdefiniowano dysleksję rozwojową, postrzegając ją jako przejaw różnic indywidualnych w poznawaniu i uczeniu się. W części drugiej problem nauczania języków obcych młodzieży z dysleksją umieszczono w kontekście autonomizacji jej procesu uczenia się. W tym zakresie dokonano charakterystyki kategorii „autonomizacja uczenia się”, która objęła także omówienie podstawowych terminów, takich jak: „autonomia”, „półautonomia”, „autonomizacja”. Problematyką kolejnej części artykułu stało się rozwijanie autonomii uczniów poprzez stymulowanie ich do przyjmowania odpowiedzialności za własne uczenie się i rozwój. Ponieważ za podstawowy warunek autonomizacji uczenia się uznano otwarcie procesu nauczania, w ostatniej części tekstu omówione zostały założenia oraz możliwości realizacji nauczania otwartego ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem otwartych form pracy.

Słowa kluczowe: młodzież z dysleksją, autonomizacja procesu uczenia się, dysleksja rozwojowa, indywidualizacja nauczania języków obcych

Abstract

The aim of this article is to provide an analysis of conditions and perspectives of teaching a foreign language to students with developmental dyslexia, following the rules of autonomising teaching. The first part of the article discusses developmental dyslexia, which is considered to be a reflection of individual learning differences. In the second part, teaching young people with dyslexia is considered in the context of autonomisation of their learning process. Further analyses are preceded by characterising the category of “autonomisation of learning”, including such basic terms as “autonomy” “semi-autonomy” “autonomisation”. The subsequent part refers to developing dyslexic students’ autonomy, since stimulating students to take responsibility for their own learning and

development has been found important and effective. As opening the process of teaching students is believed to be the most basic condition of autonomisation of learning, the final part is concerned with assumptions and possibilities of implementing open teaching in educating dyslectic learners, with a special focus on open forms of learning.

Key words: adolescents with dyslexia, autonomization of a learning process, developmental dyslexia, individualized foreign language teaching

1. Introduction

Developmental dyslexia is a problem much discussed in the academic discourse (e.g. Firnhaber 2000; Snowling 2000; Thomé 2004; Reid 2005; Łockiewicz and Bogdanowicz 2015). The past twenty years have brought much progress in understanding it, primarily by means of improved awareness of the impact of specific learning difficulties related to reading and writing on the student's functioning and progress in school education. As the problems in this area are manifested, frequently in an intense way, also when learning foreign languages, this phenomenon is also an important subject of glottodidactic deliberations (see Sellin 2008; Gerlach 2010; Nijakowska 2010). The process of learning foreign languages by dyslectic students has been analyzed and there have been searches for ways to support them in foreign-language school education. Despite numerous studies and publications in this field, the knowledge is still insufficient and the special needs of dyslectic students, especially at higher education stages, are frequently reduced to different evaluation criteria, extended test duration and checking the information not in a written, but in an oral form. However, the group of dyslectic students is highly heterogeneous and the type of difficulties they experience depends on many individual features. Different information processing, resulting from a dissimilar development of brain structures and neuronal connections, not only leads to disorders related to reading and writing, but is also a cause of cognitive deficits manifested in various functional areas. This results in the development of an individual learning style which may make learning foreign languages easier or more difficult, and thus requires considering in planning and organizing all didactic areas.

2. Dyslexia in adolescents and individualization of their learning process

A conspicuous dynamics of changes in dyslexia symptoms in various stages of life can be observed, with the characteristic increased intensity of versatile symptoms. At the secondary-school level, it is usually possible to eliminate or at least minimize reading difficulties (what persists is slow reading pace and aversion to reading) and specific writing mistakes (with the predominance of persisting spelling mistakes). However, new problem areas appear frequently, related to the extended life activities and learning new school subjects, e.g. foreign languages. Moreover, non-intellectual, emotional and motivation related, as well as personality disorders, related to the reduced sense of self-esteem and unstable self-assessment, may overlap with the original cognitive dysfunctions (cf. Bogdanowicz 2009: 57f.). Adolescents suffering from developmental dyslexia are a highly diverse and heterogenous group. They can be offered support by imposing high requirements and encouraging to reflect and attempt at autonomous problem solving (cf. Brzezińska et al. 2016: 295). Those skills may turn out crucial for them as they enable to learn various aspects of their own cognitive functioning and they are grounds for the development of the strategy to cope with difficulties.

Perceiving developmental dyslexia as a certain otherness or dissimilarity related to using the language system, resulting from highly diversified forms of its manifestation, enables the analysis of the phenomenon in the context of individual human differences in terms of cognitive activities, preferences and other ways human functioning. Considering those differences related to the psychophysical properties of a dyslectic teenager (as they determine the intellectual, emotional and locomotor capacities) and the preferred learning methods (determined by mental and social properties) is aimed at improving their competences and ensuring optimal development in school context (Riemer 2006). To enable the change process, it is necessary to create a friendly foreign-language teaching environment, considering special educational needs of dyslectic students, by initiating activities to individualize teaching.

The essence of the individualized teaching is considering individual differences between students who are independent, autonomous subjects. Such an assumption leads to attempted improvement of the learners' awareness in terms of meeting their own objectives, expectations and preferences, as well as efficient learning methods. Acknowledgment

of individual differences and individual specificity, as well as conditions pertaining to dyslectic students, does not mean, however, that foreign-language teaching should “adapt” to each of them. In school context, it seems hardly possible to individualize the teaching process perceived as adapting work methods, teaching methods and techniques to the profile of every student suffering from developmental dyslexia. The tendencies to homogenize are predominant at school as an unchanging component of its institutional dimension which is not, however, equivalent to the need to achieve the same objectives by everyone in the same way. It should be considered feasible and effective to introduce stimulating measures to take over responsibility for the students’ own learning and development. Considering the students’ specific features, it may be an important component of individualized teaching to dyslectic adolescents to show them efficient strategies, encourage experimenting with various techniques, as well as stimulate self-reflection over ways of learning and their efficiency. Otherwise, such learners will find it difficult to learn a foreign language successfully.

Keeping the above-mentioned aim in mind, the following conditions should also be considered grounds for individualization of young dyslectic learners (cf. Billington 2000):

- safe environment and individual support – which ensure the sense of self-assurance, of self-esteem and potential opportunities, sense of learning-related pleasure and absence of any fears related to any failure,
- the broadest intellectual freedom possible – independent decision making, sense of freedom to look for, opportunity to experiment are crucial,
- ability to use personal experience – partner relationships between the learners and the teachers who also learn from their students are highly important,
- autonomous planning – teachers plan consecutive steps together with students, they individualize the curriculum and in this way the learner takes over much of responsibility for the result,
- attractive but achievable objectives – an optimal objective should be a challenge but cannot discourage being too difficult,
- activity – everybody learns better when they are able to act, obtaining regular feedback – learning autonomy does not minimize the teacher’s role when evaluating learning results. It is best when evaluation provides not only the indication of strengths and weaknesses but also tips for the future.

The core of individualizing the process of teaching dyslectic students relies on taking cognizance of particular differences between students

as well as creating educational situations which will support optimal development, given the school environment. What is required here is to take into consideration numerous factors such as psychosomatic features of the learners, their intellectual, emotional and physical capability as well as preferred learning styles. Another crucial aspect is making students autonomous in regard to their own learning. Such understanding of the term individualization is the answer to varied learning profiles of respective students and is tightly connected with being accountable for oneself and with before-mentioned autonomy, which is why it cannot be included in closed forms of teaching and can be achieved exclusively by opening up the process of teaching.

3. Autonomized learning as an individualized teaching component

3.1. Autonomy, semi-autonomy, autonomization – terminology

A response to the need to develop the independence of dyslectic learners and to support them in taking over responsibility for themselves and their learning is covered by the concept of *autonomy* in contemporary glottodidactics. It assumes the development of active and responsible attitude of the learner towards their own learning process. Its grounds are the assumption that a human being is an independent subject who looks for information in an independent and active way, collects experience and makes decisions about their own fate and acts in an aware and intentional way. The autonomy presumes the learner's participation in the decision making process related to all stages of their learning, i.e. goal setting, selection of content, methods and techniques used, checking and evaluation (cf. Holec 1981: 3). Taking over the responsibility refers to such didactics areas as

- learning process preparation, requiring some knowledge on the possible objectives, own communicative needs, orientation related to appropriate learning materials and to the ways of creating a situation when specific objectives may be pursued;
- initiating activity aimed at knowledge acquisition and the development of skills connected with the intention to understand and memorize the learned content, integrating it with the knowledge acquired before and then applying in practice;

- controlling the learning activity, including checking and evaluating learning processes, selecting strategies adequate in a given problem situation, prioritizing one's own activities, reflecting on their efficiency, but also an overall reflection on the entire learning course;
- result evaluation, requiring an adequate evaluation of one's results;
- sustaining an appropriate motivation and concentration level which is the basic prerequisite for efficient activity (cf. Simons 1992: 255).

Autonomy studies, inspired by a cognitive approach, perceive the learner as a conscious subject of language activities. In this context the learning process is perceived as an active but, first and foremost, individual knowledge building, involving not only the brain, but also the whole body. It is not enough to have some contact with the language, as it is necessary to process information in the scope available to individual learners, and the language activation takes place as a result of a certain reconstruction (cf. Grucza 1979: 10). This means the teacher is not able to pass the knowledge as only the students' activity and their deliberate acts enable learning foreign languages successfully (cf. Grucza 1997: 15). This assumption is particularly important in the context of learners with specific learning difficulties related to reading and writing, as teaching them is frequently reduced solely to the teacher's, frequently objectifying, corrective measures, compensating for the disorderly functions, or "equalizing educational opportunities". And since the educational process provides assistance during the individual meaning construction, and adolescent learners are characterized by intense development and high awareness of their own cognitive processes, it should be believed that the teacher's priority is to support them to become aware of the learning and thinking process to the same degree as they are of the learned subject (cf. Bruner 2006: 97). In such circumstances, the fundamental teaching principle is constructivism, founded on regarding the educational process as mutual knowledge sharing, reality construction and negotiating meanings. In such approach, the learner becomes a creator of their own knowledge and, consequently, also of learning, and the teacher accompanies them in that process as a learning environment organizer (cf. Olechowska 2016: 52).

Warning against relatively superficial perception of autonomy primarily as an incentive to gain complete independence and freedom, Wilczyńska (2008: 5) observes all individual activities cannot be perceived as a value in itself. The autonomy results primarily from acknowledging someone's right to a certain individuality and freedom in terms of self-definition. As it is the most crucial aspect, in foreign-language didactics

it should be understood as an attitude of specific participants of a didactic relationship, i.e. teaching and/or learning individuals, towards teaching and/or learning foreign languages. The attitude comprises three aspects, including intellectual, affective and behavioral, with the intellectual one usually being most prone to change (cf. Wilczyńska 2008: 11). Behaviors and emotions are changed in a more difficult way. Conscious autonomy is based on communicative and educational cooperation, by using social resources, knowledge and assistance of others, and offering the same to the other party to the greatest extent possible.

Complete autonomy is difficult to attain and hardly feasible in institutional/formal education, e.g. due to the need to pass certain curriculum-determined contents to all learners, to time limitations, and also reluctance to change the role in the learning/teaching process. However, it may be feasible and effective to teach in cooperation with the learners, oriented towards building individual and specific communicative competence, i.e. teaching in a *semi-autonomy* (cf. Wilczyńska 2001: 6). That cooperation is aimed, on the other hand, at creating open educational space, considering the needs and capacities of dyslectic students to the broadest extent possible, but on the other hand at the development of tools to help them develop the sense of responsibility towards themselves and broaden the scope of their independence, or their *autonomization*. In the formal system, autonomy should be perceived as the acquisition of the learner's awareness that successful foreign language learning is dependent first and foremost on the learner themselves, as a preparation to improve language skills outside school and to start independent studies of the language after school education has been completed. In semi-autonomy, the learners undertake activities which are to prepare them to autonomous education (cf. Dickinson 1987: 11). Considering such an approach in FL didactics may be highly important for students with specific learning difficulties who have problems with reading and writing, as they usually need to devote more time than their peers during schooling and also after graduating to cope with their difficulties.

The autonomization of learning consists of gradual discoveries and realizing one's own capacities and conditions, as well as of selecting what seems the most appropriate in the perspective of own foreign-language development (cf. Wilczyńska 1999: 129). Hence, it is connected also with preparing for lifelong education. However, it should not be understood as leaving the students alone or limiting the teacher's scope of activity. This is rather related to acknowledging the idiosyncratic nature of communicative competence development and accentuating the personal efficiency with

respect to setting its directions (cf. Wilczyńska 2008: 11). This requires from the teacher to introduce the student gradually into the didactic process organization, shifting stress from the learning results to its processual nature. Consequently, it needs departure from the dependence on the teacher to the state of independence or mutual dependence. Hence, autonomization consists of developing the ability to be independent (cf. Blin 1998: 217).

3.2. Assumptions and performance of autonomization of learning

Autonomizing didactics highlights the importance of increased autonomy, development of strengths and weaknesses, learning strategy training and self-esteem building. Its grounds include:

- communicative awareness building,
- learning skills' development,
- gathering positive experience within both above areas (cf. Wilczyńska 2002: 94).

The development of the awareness of the learning process nature and mechanism in dyslectic learners requires series of steps, with one of the most important steps being the use of verbalization, i.e. commenting, recording what is done and how it is done during a specific task. It is important for the teacher to present a model behavior showing strategies to reflect on one's own behavior and a way to self-correct mistakes. Another component is stimulating and requesting students' response by means of gestures, mimic and questions encouraging them to analyze their own behavior (cf. Nijakowska 2011: 326).

In autonomization-oriented teaching, the basic role of a teacher is stimulating the learners to observe themselves and reflect on themselves in the learning process (cf. Wilczyńska 1999: 218). It is also essential to

- understand how and how much the learners can differ from one another,
- plan teaching in combination with the learners' diversity, including but not limited to using a more open teaching style, aimed at inclusion in participation and building trust in one's capacities,
- identify learning problems and help to overcome them.

The teacher imposes cognitive requirements, indicates activity directions and expected results, as well as the sources of the sense of competence and satisfaction with the activities and results achieved (cf. Brzezińska 2009: 18). Their role is no longer reduced to planning, controlling and lecturing, but becomes the issue of the educational situation management.

The teacher moderates individual learning forms, organizes a learning process and social environment for their students, but also for themselves. Their role consists primarily of creating conditions for autonomous learning and ensuring the interaction takes place in an appropriate environment, context and didactic system (cf. Lewicki 2013: 252). This requires changing the attitude towards the relationship between the teacher and the students, and perceiving it as bilateral and reciprocal, oriented not only from the teacher to the students, but also from the students to the teacher. Only the system of multilateral relations between the teacher and the students, and also among the students themselves, shapes the social environment stimulating both parties to develop. What is more, the teacher using knowledge and skills acquired outside school in school education strengthens and not weakens their position (cf. Brzezińska 2009: 7f.).

The support which can be offered by the teacher to their students in the autonomization process should be based on the following principles (see also Komorowska 2011: 72f.):

- use of induction techniques, encouraging independent development of hypotheses concerning language mechanisms and conclusions;
- encouragement to make choices, initially within the offer prepared by the teacher and then more and more independent;
- provision of materials for independent studies, devoted to various subjects, in various graphic forms and differing in terms of language structures to ensure the actual choice can be made. In dyslectic adolescents, it is necessary to develop the ability to look for and select materials independently, e.g. on the Internet, in a library;
- ensuring the students have sufficient time to perform the task, think after the question was heard, after the exercise instructions were given, without demanding immediate response. Dyslectic students process new information more slowly if compared with their non-dyslectic peers, especially written information, as they have difficulties recalling and focusing their attention;
- encouragement to cooperate in pairs or groups, resignation from constant comparison to the other students. As a dyslectic student may find it difficult to read the assignment aloud, they can be encouraged to have it read aloud by someone else or to request someone else to take notes they will be able to use in the future.

To pursue the above objectives, the teacher should show an autonomous readiness or a well-thought-out and active approach to didactic activities and their work, consistent in terms of methodology (cf. Zawadzka 2004: 231). Teaching in cooperation with learners requires high didactic skills,

high language competences, ability to negotiate objectives and also, first and foremost, to stimulate and support individual learning processes to ensure the activities are deliberate and purposeful, and the results not accidental. What counts, is the open-minded personality, open teaching style and also belief in the value of measures activating the learner, as this is a *sine qua non* prerequisite for their efficiency (cf. Myczko 2008: 30).

Surely, there are limitations restricting the teachers (cf. Wysocka 2008: 16f.), which may reduce or entirely eliminate their autonomy, affecting negatively their didactic efforts. Those can be:

- teaching-related attitudes and beliefs, frequently solidified by the educational environment;
- teachers' survival strategies, i.e. providing assignments to students not considering any other solutions, routine strategies (using the same, proven solutions) or withdrawal (creating a situation making it possible to not react to what takes place in the classroom);
- a conflict of teachers' roles leading to consolidating behaviors, routine avoidance of disliked or unwelcome roles in the classroom in the situation of their great versatility and the need to adopt various roles at different lesson stages;
- authority regulations and decisions, when the teacher focuses on requirements stipulated in education authority's regulations (especially the ones concerning job promotion of teachers) and the components of the learning and teaching process which are evaluated, as well as the need to follow internal school regulations concerning the traditions of a given school, its habits, students' rights;
- adverse impact of exams on the teaching process (*backwash effect*) as teachers focus solely on the aspects tested during external exams and are required to prepare the students for the exams. The teachers are restricted also by the sample exams in student's books and teaching materials, usually in the form of tests. They do not look for any different ways to evaluate students' achievements but focus on making their students achieve the highest results which will prove also their teaching skills.

Education for autonomization cannot be just one training session. Instead, it should be carried out whenever it is possible to initiate reflection strengthening autonomous attitudes or to accompany the results with an appropriate remark. Autonomy cannot be imposed on anyone. It is necessary to show a certain conduct, direction which is of particular relevance for foreign-language education, as the communication problem is experienced by everyone. Deepening the understanding of communication, both in the social and the individual dimension, should be considered

valuable as it may be highly useful when managing one's own personal development. Foreign language learning at school by young dyslectic students aimed at extending their autonomy is to provide positive experience related to language experiments but also to promote trust in one's own communicative capacities in a language other than the mother tongue, at a realistically determined level. Autonomization should not be perceived also as a teaching method, but rather as strengthening the subjectivity of learners and teachers (cf. Wilczyńska 2008: 9, 13f.).

A prerequisite for developing the learner's autonomy and increasing their co-responsibility for the organization, course and results of learning is the learner's activation. It may assume various forms, e.g. stimulating to formulate learning objectives and evaluate oneself, to structure language data, to construct meaning together in language interactions, to realize learning strategies and evaluate them. Learner's activation is connected with supporting the language system construction processes and its use as well as with constructing knowledge on the learning process. It imposes high requirements on the teacher who is a stimulator, initiator, but also supporter and advisor here (cf. Myczko 2008: 26).

The key components of the autonomizing activities include:

- perceiving the foreign-language learning process in the perspective of the whole person, combining the process with one's own development vision and living goals;
- recognizing and accepting one's individuality, acknowledging the need to develop communicative competence in compliance with one's own specific features and for personal objectives;
- realizing and employing the vision of oneself, one's attitudes, personality traits, learning styles;
- learning strategies and techniques which are effective in the context of one's own situations and capacities;
- increasing control over the learning process;
- developing reflective attitude and self-assessment (cf. Kaczmarek 2002: 69).

Implementation of the above objectives requires introducing appropriate techniques and tools, with some of them related to developing self-consciousness and reflection on one's own learning profile and appropriate strategies, while other comprise tools helpful to manage one's own learning process. The autonomization techniques and tools may help students with dyslexia to master the skill of describing the way covered, encourage to evaluate themselves, enable to discover a wide range of strategies, facilitate perception of even minutest progress and thus

build the sense of success. There is not a single, universally perfect method of teaching languages to students with specific learning difficulties, as each of these learners must cover their own, individual way. Autonomization techniques and tools should be, therefore, adapted to specific teaching situations, while the structure and nature of the teacher's didactic activities must allow for adaptation to the actual requirements and conditions.

The broadly-taken autonomous activities are undertaken by learners depending on many cognitive and affective properties characteristic of the learner, including

- emotional and evaluative predispositions, e.g. self-confidence, perceiving the communicative and educational activities as the source of satisfaction;
- cognitive predispositions, e.g. high communicative and educational self-consciousness, including knowledge of oneself, of own features, resources, openness to information, reflectiveness when monitoring and evaluating own activities, awareness of reasons for one's own failure and success;
- behavioral predispositions, related to planning and initiating learning, cooperation, communicative contacts and overcoming any communicative and educational difficulties (cf. Wilczyńska 2002: 65f.).

Autonomization of learning requires readiness for the process, because otherwise various difficulties may be expected. One of them is the sense of the lack of control over the result of their activity, frequent among dyslectic students and leading to the reduced sense of efficiency which, in turn, decreases motivation. Dyslectic students often experience frustration and disappointment caused by consecutive failures when learning foreign languages which is why the support provided by the teacher is so important. Various factors affecting the students' behavior may determine their autonomy limits (cf. Wysocka 2008: 14f.):

- age – an older learner, e.g. a teenager, is able to describe their learning needs better, distances themselves from the adults' decisions, has better developed ability to specify their preferences related to learning styles and strategies;
- personality traits – the autonomous behavior development may be slower in people anxious about autonomy and individual decision-making process or about risk taking which, consequently, results in the unwillingness to look for any new solutions;
- survival strategies employed – they are used to oppose the authority the learners are subordinated to at school. They sometimes result from fear of being rejected by the group or perceived as ridiculous when a mistake is made;

- adverse effect of exams on the learning process (*backwash effect*) – the learners wish primarily to achieve good results during any external exam, which is why they try to get acquainted with the exam papers and to answer the questions in a way ensuring the teacher or the examiner hears what they want (or need) to hear, so that the exam criteria are met;
- autonomous teacher – may restrict the student's autonomy as they follow the teaching style developed by themselves and determine the students' autonomy boundaries and because of their superior position in the classroom and responsibility for the students in front of educational authorities, parents and the students themselves.

A key component of the autonomization process is the improvement of skills related to “learning to learn”, being a prerequisite for independent foreign language learning. Dyslectic students usually must work harder than their peers which is why working at home is an important component of their language education. Developing educational competence, creating opportunities to learn and improve learning techniques and testing language skills may be particularly important for them. The goal is not to organize a separate course devoted to learning strategies and techniques but rather to combine reflection on learning with teaching, with the likely starting point being students' difficulties during specific tasks (cf. Cichoń 2013: 276).

3.3. Open teaching as a prerequisite for autonomization of learning in dyslectic students

Autonomization of young dyslectic students' learning as a way to individualize their teaching requires opening of the teacher, their thinking, perception of teaching, preventing schematic teaching on the one hand, but also the ability to adapt to the changing situation and students' needs, showing interest in the way students cope with problems, displaying understanding to the fact that they try out various strategies. On the other hand, it refers to the lesson and organizing it in a way promoting multi-lateral, cognitive activity by offering sufficient time for problem solving, experimenting, studying and evaluating one's own work (cf. Pachociński 1999: 83).

Closed learning environments structure materials hierarchically, introduce new information step by step, one after the other, have narrow time structure, follow a traditional pattern and their course depends primarily on the teacher. Open teaching, through creating a friendly learning environment, enables students to be successful in learning and to prove

their competence. Because it has an exploratory structure and flexible time frames, learners are given the opportunity to make decisions concerning the order of learning-related activities and to determine the learning duration themselves, while the teacher becomes first and foremost an advisor. The closed learning environments, in turn, puts the students off the school and learning, and also demotivates the teachers instead of building and strengthening the sense of competence (cf. Brzezińska 2009: 7).

In open teaching, students develop their autonomy related to knowledge acquisition and language skills, develop team-work skills, increase responsibility for the learning process. Such a form of cooperation enables also consideration of students' individual personality and cognitive traits. The teacher is able to get to know the student, obtain important information about their personality, cognitive and social traits. Content and institutional opening is to enable dyslectic students primarily to perceive school and classroom situations as open real-life situations and not only the ones determined institutionally. In the curriculum and methodology dimension, the objective is to support students' initiatives, own responsibility for selecting activities aimed at the goal, distribution of tasks and time, with the supreme objective being the processes promoting self-knowledge and gathering experience of one's own learning (cf. Timm 1998: 130). The important factors include efficient use of learning time, methods of cognitive activation and structuring, favorable climate related to mistakes and individual feedback (cf. Munser-Kiefer 2014: 366).

Creating open space for activity, allowing dyslectic students to construct and reconstruct the learning process independently, is possible first and foremost thanks to using open learning/teaching forms (cf. Munser-Kiefer 2014: 365). Because of its organizational, social and cognitive form, they are a crucial component of students' autonomy development, enabling them to get to know themselves. Among many forms of open teaching which can be employed to individualize teaching the following may be particularly advantageous when teaching dyslectic adolescents: work in the form of learning stops (didactic stands, stations), uncontrolled work, project work, work based on a plan (day, week, month) and workshop work (cf. Gudjons 2003: 9f.; Bauer 2004: 17f.; Karpeta-Peć 2008: 211f.).

In the open teaching context, it is worth mentioning a relatively new educational phenomenon, e.g. universal designing (see also Olechowska 2016: 296). It consists of preparing the curricula, materials and environment to ensure they can be used by a broad spectrum of learners on the one hand, but on the other to enable to inclusion of versatile, individual needs. Universal designing may comprise classrooms, computer software,

students' books, e-learning courses, websites (cf. Burgstahler 2012: 2), and in the context of foreign-language teaching/learning, regarding dyslectic students, its rules comprise:

1. space where teaching takes place — to ensure it is comfortable, attractive and functional for people with various personality traits and needs;
2. information technologies — such as adaptation of computers to ensure the information can be received not only visually but also audibly and in a sensory way;
3. planning and designing teaching materials, including students' books and worksheets:
 - provision of the whole text in a PDF file,
 - provision of script for all audio materials,
 - ensuring appropriate captions for photos and figures appropriate from educational perspective,
 - preparation of auxiliary materials to be used when solving cognitive problems,
 - provision for summaries of the most important information in a given area,
 - provision for the ability to use the information in practice,
 - provision for the ability to evaluate information, skills and attitudes in a given area,
 - care about the clarity of goals set and methods employed (cf. Orkwis and McLane 1998: 14f.).

Following the rules of universal planning in regard to foreign language education of dyslectic students makes it possible to break away from adjusting the already existing curriculum to the needs of specific students, in favour of creating from the start educational context and environment, in which learning will be friendly and accessible to varied types of people. The overarching aim is to create such didactic environment that a young person can negotiate successfully, where he/she will feel competent, independent and socially included.

Open design of didactic space facilitates individualization of teaching dyslectic youth in a natural sort of way. It helps satisfy student's individual needs, enables him/her to recognize their weak and strong points, positively affects their willingness to learn as well as involvement in their own learning process. Nevertheless, it requires courage and trust, both on the part of the student as well as the teacher, as its execution may prove to be difficult due to the fact that the roles of the student and the teacher have undergone significant changes in comparison with the tradition way of teaching.

4. Final comments

Monitoring and regulating one's own activity may be particularly important for young dyslectic students. Familiarity with various aspects of one's functioning in cognitive, social or personality related area, is crucial in the lifelong education process, in being competitive in the labor market, in developing strategies to overcome difficulties. It is necessary to develop one's own individual attitude first at school and later at work and in everyday life. Success in those areas will depend not only on any corrective and compensating measures related to deficits, but also on the expansion of skills which develop correctly or even better than the population average (cf. Łockiewicz and Bogdanowicz 2015: 10f.).

Opening up the process of teaching a foreign language to the special needs of young people with dyslexia, which results from acknowledgement of individual differences, cannot be brought to fruition in any other way than by individualizing this process. In turn, its one-to-one dimension cannot solely have the aim of adjusting educational requirements to the individual needs and capabilities of every student, but rather focus on creating certain open educational environment conducive to optimal growth of all students in any given language class. The main way of implementing this version of individualization is to develop autonomy among the learners by teaching them how to realize and discover their own capabilities and limitations and how to make choices when it comes to personal development of language acquisition. Students with dyslexia should be capable of taking personal responsibility for recognizing surrounding them reality as well as developing metacognitive awareness and self-knowledge. The before-mentioned premise equals possessing the knowledge about learning in the most effective way while taking into consideration not only one's own individual difficulties but also cognitive preferences.

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