

## *Language Acquisition*

An understanding of the English Language Learner's linguistic and cultural background is imperative for the learner's success. Languages are shown on accompanying pages so a comparison can be made to English. Are phonemic sounds the same? Are there sounds in the student's first or dominate language that are not present in English? Only 1% of languages have the /th/ sound. Shown below are some sounds found in English but not in these languages:

- Chinese /b/ /ch/ /d/ /dg/ /g/ /oa/ /sh/ /s/ /th/ /v/ /z/
- Japanese /dg/ /f/ /i/ /th/ /oo/ /v/ /schwa/
- Spanish /dg/ /j/ /sh/ /th/ /z/

When you teach an English Language Learner, you are not only teaching content, but also language.

Is the written language similar to English, or does the English Language Learner need to learn a new writing system? In addition to linguistic concerns, how fast an English Language Learner acquirers a new language is also dependent on a number of other factors:

- Literacy in the first or dominate language → there's a common underlying proficiency
- An intrinsic desire to learn
- Exposure to the new language → you need it!
- Aptitude
- Voluntary versus involuntary immigration
- Coming from a caste-like minority culture
- Coming from a culture that doesn't value education versus cultures that believe parents should be involved in education and that it's important

The last three factors are cultural in nature. So then, in order to understand language acquisition and to be able to understand and relate to the student and their parent(s), a cultural understanding is crucial for the student's success.

Cultural information is found directly after each language analysis.