

Comparison of Auditory and Visual Learning Styles in Second Language Acquisition

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ABSTRACT

The following research is dedicated to comparison of auditory and visual learning styles in Second Language Acquisition. As the main objectives of this small-scale research are to analyze and compare the two different styles of language learning and identify which learning style is more effective in terms of second language acquisition. Regarding learning styles, several types of research methods are implemented in this research in order to get results that are more reliable.

KEYWORDS: *learning styles, questionnaire, auditory learning, visual learning*

INTRODUCTION

Many researchers have done numerous researches, which focus on analyzing of impact of learning styles on second language acquisition. Some of them stated the relationship between learning style and personality, as Brown (2000) stated that "...unlike factors of age, aptitude, and motivation, learning styles' role in explaining why some L2 learners are more successful than others has not been well established, it involves a complex interaction with specific L2 social and learning contexts". However, learning styles can be separated into several types, which differ from each other according to the way of receiving information. Accordingly, learners differ from each other related to their learning styles. Moreover, learning styles have been researched several times to analyze and find out more effective one in learning a second language.

Many of researchers mainly tried to include three main types of learning styles, which are auditory, visual, and kinesthetic in their studies. In their studies, some of them mentioned that auditory learners are good at language learning, while others insist on that visual learning style is the most effective one for learning a second language. There are many argues on which learning style is more effective and common among the learners. This small-scale study aimed to compare auditory and visual learning styles in second language acquisition and determine which is more effective in learning process.

Methods

One of the most important factors that influence second language learning is considered "learning style". So what is learning style? Many researchers that define the term "learning style" differently in second language acquisition. One of them, Zafar and Meenakshi (2012) define "learning styles" as a type of cognitive variation in second language acquisition. According to definition by them, learning styles is an individuals' preferred way of learning and receiving information that is related to language learning process. Zhan and Sternberg (2005) stated that many scholars defined that the term "Learning styles" is closely connected

to individual differences and it may be seen in personality and learning styles.

According to research of Felder and Spurlin (2005), The preferences of the learners differ from each other depending to their learning styles, and the teacher should take into consideration that learning style of the student that they are teaching and it help them to be more sensitive to different students' learning style. Some of the most famous researchers, Dunn, Beuardy, and Klavas (2002) defined "learning styles" as an individual like a signature of people. Learners can remember information easier by their senses as listening, watching, manipulating, or a mixture of them. They also stated that learning styles is related to other processes like motivating, required structure and other processes.

Additionally, Junko (1998) stated that "learning styles" could affect to not only the learning process, but also learners' behavior. He adds that different learning style preference will be differently depending on learning environment. Furthermore, Honey and Munford (1992) defined that learning styles as the way of learners' processing knowledge. «Learning style" can be defined as Felder and Henriques (1995) stated student who are learning could receive information by seeing, hearing, acting a role and memorizing. Accordingly, learning styles can be divided into visual, auditory, kinesthetic and other learning styles. Additionally, Felder and Silverman (1988) defined it in another way that people receive information through the way related to their characteristics, preference. He stated that each individual use their own way of learning. Some researchers divided learning styles into some groups according to receiving information and learning. In their researches, Sanjanaashree, Kumar, and Soman (2014) demonstrate that the main types of learning styles: Auditory learner, Visual learner. They give an explanation to all of them. They argue that auditory learners are good at listening and they pay attention oral discussion and listening. When defining visual learning, Sanjanaashree, Kumar, and Soman (2014) showed that visual learner always believe the slogan "Show me, and I will understand". According to their research, visual learners could not learning by hearing that's why they prefer to observe and watch things colorful

Moreover, Kanar (2013) stated that auditory learners prefer to learn by listening. In addition, he adds that auditory learner can improve their skills by hearing others' speeches, discussing a topic, expressing ideas and instructing others. In contrast, Kanar (2013) also claimed that visual learning is associated with reading and watching. Additionally, he stated that visual learners are able to learn by observing and looking at pictures and graphics. However, Kanar (2013) argued that learners who can use different learning method depending on situation could achieve success.

In addition, the relations between learning styles are also taken into consideration as Felder and Soloman (2000) in their article "Learning Styles and Strategies" claimed that visual learners are capable of remembering what they have seen and it may include that pictures, diagrams, demonstrations. Moreover, he adds that visual learning is associated with verbal learning and it can be useful for learners to use both of them in the same context. The several researchers claimed that the term "learning styles" is associated with personality, even though they differ from each other in terms of many cases. As Gass and Selinker stated that, the learning styles and personality are related to each other and used interchangeably. Moreover, Gass and Selinker (2008) demonstrated that three main types of learning styles. They defined the visual, auditory and kinesthetic learning styles in terms of receiving information. They stated that the visual learning style is always organized by means of reading materials and presentations, while auditory learner prefer to receive information by hearing others. The movement and acts are the key elements of kinesthetic learning style. However, Gass and Selinker strongly recommend that the best way of being successful learner is to be able to use a variety of this modality.

Methods

In this case study, I used two research methods in order to compare auditory and visual learning styles in second language acquisition, Firstly, I devised a two-section modality questionnaire, which is reproduced by Lynn O'Brien (1985) in the research article of Learning Styles: Make The Student Aware. The first section of the modality questionnaire consists of 10 items that is related to visual learning style. In this section, learners are supposed to indicate how often the sentence applies to participant and it is demanded to evaluate its usage. First section statements are directed to analyze learners learning skills in term of visual learning style. Statements 1, 2, and 3 are about note-taking skill, which is important to remember things, and statements 4, 5, and 6 are based learner remembering skills by taking a picture of information in their mind. Additionally, 8, 9, and 10 are about problems that visual learners can face while they hear information.

In the second section of the questionnaire, a ten-item statement is associated with auditory learning style and learners have to assess each statement according to how often the sentence relates to them. Second section statements are organized to clarify learners ability who good at learning things by hearing. Statements 1 and 6 are difficulties, which auditory learners came across while they see the written forms. Statements 7, 8, 9, and 10 are about negative sides of reading skills, which can create problems for auditory learners. Secondly, I used a proficiency test based on entry test, which is taken from Cambridge Grammar for IELTS by Diana Hopkins and Pauline Cullen (2007). The proficiency test is used in order to identify learners' level in learning English language and compare which learning style is more effective in learning process. The test is consist of fifty question that each question of the book will analyze learners' knowledge on grammar structure of English language.

Results

The participants completed the questionnaire. The research participants were chosen randomly. Although the questions were easy and related to the common learning process, I gave them a full instruction in order to keep them away from

misunderstanding before distributing the questionnaire list. It took 20 minutes for participants to fill the questionnaire. After gathering the questionnaire list, I began to assess participants' choices for each statement. There are not any correct or incorrect answers. It is only evaluated in the form (Never applies-1, Sometimes applies-2, Often applies-3). Results are counted according to participants' answers to the questionnaire and the highest score shows the preference of the participant's learning style. According to the results of preferred learning channel questionnaire, it is a clear that each of participants has significantly different results in two sections. As it is mentioned above, the first section statements are related to preference of visual learning style, when the statements, which analyze preference of auditory learning style, is given in section two.

Table 1. Results of the Preferred Learning Style Questionnaire

No	PARTICIPANT	SECTION ONE TOTAL:30	SECTION TWO TOTAL:30
1	(Participant 1)	27	15
2	(Participant 2)	15	26

According to Table 1, it is clear that the male participant gathered 27 point in section one that indicate the first participant is a visual learner, which prefer to learn by seeing and watching. In contrast, the second participant showed the higher score than the first participant in section two, which means that she prefers to learn by hearing.

In order to clarify participants' English language proficiency, I took a test, which consist of 50 items. The results of the proficiency test showed that the first participant has scored better than the second participant (Table 2).

Table 2. The Proficiency Test

No	Participant	Test assessment Total: 50	100%
1	Participant 1	40	80%
2	Participant 2	28	56%

In order to identify which learning style is more effective in second language acquisition, the results of questionnaire with the proficiency test results are correlated. Depending on comparison of the results, it is clear that visual learner is the more successful learner than auditory one. Accordingly, it shows that visual learning style is more effective one than auditory learning style in second language acquisition (Table 3). It is proved that visual learning style is the most suitable style for learner who want to achieve success in second language acquisition.

Table 3. Comparison of test and questionnaire results.

No	Participant	Learning Style	Test Assessment Total:50
1	Participant 1	Visual	40
2	Participant 2	Auditory	28

Discussion

Overall, this small scale helped me to analyze learning styles in second language acquisition. The first finding of this study is that all learners have their own learning style in second language acquisition. If the learner does not have any dominant learning style, they can be considered as a multi-sensory learner. Additionally, the study allowed me to compare two learning style in terms of effectiveness in

learning process. The main finding of the case study is that visual learning style is more effective than auditory learning style in second language acquisition.

As Reid (1995) stated, "I learn more by seeing and reading than listening to others" (p. 98). Furthermore, visual learning style can be seen one of the most effective learning style among others, because visual learners are able to remember and convey complex information visually. In order to take more reliable data, the further researches are expected to be done. It is recommended that it would be better, if you involve more respondents in your future researches. Additionally, it is recommend doing a research on benefits of being a multi-sensory learner.

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