

**«ԿԱՆԹԵՂ» ԿՐԹԱՄՇԱԿՈՒԹԱՅԻՆ ՍՈՑԻԱԼ-ԲԱՐԵԳՈՐԾԱԿԱՆ
ՀԱՍԱՐԱԿԱԿԱՆ ԿԱԶՄԱԿԵՐՊՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ**



**ՀԵՐԹԱԿԱՆ ԱՏԵՍԱԿՈՐՄԱՆ ԵՆԹԱԿԱ ՈՒՍՈՒՑԻՉՆԵՐԻ
ՎԵՐԱՊԱՏՐԱՍՏՄԱՆ ԴԱՍԸՆԹԱՑ**

ԱՎԱՐՏԱԿԱՆ ՀԵՏԱԶՈՏԱԿԱՆ ԱՇԽԱՏԱՆՔ

Թեմա` Language learning styles and strategies

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դպրոցի անգլերենի ուսուցիչ` Լուսինե Գրիգորյան

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Introduction

Language learning styles and strategies are among the main factors that help determine how and how well our students learn a second or foreign language.

Our research paper reviews theory in the realm of language learning strategies and provides implications for teaching. Language strategies are ‘operation employed by the learner to aid the storage and use of information taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more effective. People learn in different ways. Some learn through watching, some through listening, others learn through touching or movement.

Understanding EFL/ESL learning styles helps the teacher bring more variety into the classroom. It is always a challenge to make the classroom environment more interesting. It is important for the teacher to be aware of the students’ learning-style preferences, and of his or her own preferred way of instructing. Some researchers state that if the teacher’s instructional style “matches” the student’s learning style, there is usually a productive learning environment. The term “learning styles” speaks to the understanding that every student learns differently. Technically, an individual’s learning style refers to the preferential way in which the student absorbs, processes, comprehends and retains information. This notion of individualized learning styles has gained widespread recognition in education theory and classroom management strategy. For years it has been proposed that the differences among people extend to the way they learn.

Definitions.

Style: “an individual’s natural, habitual and preferred ways of absorbing, processing, and retaining new information and skills” (Reid, 1995)

Strategies: “activities consciously chosen by learners for the purpose of regulating their own language learning” (Griffiths, 2013)

Common features of language learning strategies

All language learning strategies are related to the features of control, goal-directedness, autonomy. Goals are the engine that fires language learning action and provides the direction for the action, examples of goals are to use English fluently and accurately in business, to order meals, to ask directions, etc. Using learning strategies does not instantly propel language learners to attain such goals. They are usually fulfilled by aiming for smaller short-term language goals.

Learning strategies help learners become more autonomous. Autonomy requires conscious control of one’s own learning processes.

Language learning strategies

Learning strategies are operations, steps, plans, thoughts or behaviors that learners use to help themselves to acquire, retain, regain and use information. In other words, learning strategies are characterized as specific actions that learners take to make their language learning "easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective and more transferable to new situations." Among the strategy taxonomies developed by varied researchers, I am particularly interested in the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) which was developed by Oxford in 1990 for its importance as an effective tool to determine the strategies that a learner uses in learning English. Oxford separates language learning strategies into two general classes: **direct strategies** and **indirect strategies**. These two classes are divided into six groups: memory, cognitive, compensation, affective and social strategies.

Memory strategies used for information storage and retention included in four sets: creating mental linkages, applying images and sounds, reviewing well and employing actions. These strategies helps learners remember what they have learned better by putting them together in a logical order, retain and retrieve them by associating them with images and sounds and act them out if it is possible. At the early stage of the language learning or for the learners who are young children, memory strategies are applied most frequently to learn vocabulary.

Cognitive strategies used for analyzing, classifying and combining new information with the learners' prior knowledge comprise of four sets: Practicing, receiving and sending messages

strategies, reasoning and creating structure for input and output. Learners employ these strategies as tools to achieve the target language by repeating verbally or in words to get new information, to complete a complex task needing a lot of thinking like reading comprehension which is closely related to the learners' prior knowledge, to summarize and restructure the target language in useful forms.

Compensation strategies used for reducing the effects of lacking knowledge of the target language included in two sets: guessing intelligently and overcoming limitations in speaking and writing. The learners' insufficiency of vocabulary and grammar can be overcome by guessing, using gestures, adjusting the message.... Indirect Strategies used for general management of learning can be used in combination with Direct Strategies to regulate the learning.

Affective strategies used for controlling learners' emotions, attitudes and motivations. They fall into four sets: lowering your anxiety, encouraging yourself and taking your emotional temperature. The learners have both positive and negative feelings that may slow down or speed up their learning process. The strategies help them to control their negative feelings to overcome difficulty, self-encourage to have themselves engaged fully in learning the language and command themselves by sharing their feelings in different ways.

Social strategies used for co-operating with others in learning. These strategies contain three sets: asking questions, co-operating with others, empathizing with others. Asking question is the most useful way to get information and its meaning. Learning language occurs mostly in communicating with others. So co-operation gives learners the best chance to get involved in the learning environment to learn the language. The strategies help learners enhance cultural understanding and sharing others' feelings and learn the language.

Memory	Cognitive	Compensation
Creating mental linkages	Practicing	Guessing intelligently
Applying images and sounds	Receiving and sending messages	Overcoming limitations in speaking and writing
Reviewing well	Analyzing and reasoning	
Employing action	Creating structure for input and output	

Table 2: Indirect learning strategies. Taken from Oxford (1990).

Metacognitive	Affective	Social
Centering your learning	Lowering your anxiety	Asking questions
Arranging and planning your listening	Encouraging yourself	Cooperating with others
Evaluating your learning	Taking your emotional temperature	Empathizing with others

Classification of the learning style preferences

A person's learning style can be classified as follows:

- **Visual learners**- those who learn primarily with their eyes;
- **Auditory learners**- those who learn best through listening;
- **Kinesthetic learners**- those who learn best through movement.
- **Reading and writing learners**

Visual Learners prefer the use of images, maps and graphic organizers to access and understand new information.

Auditory Learners learn with their ears. When they have to remember something they think about where and how they heard about it. They understand new content through listening and speaking in situations. The following resources should be provided: lectures, discussions, records, CD-s, radio, TV, computer, etc. Auditory learners are good at role plays and discussions.

Kinesthetic/Tactile Learners need to be physically involved in the learning process. They understand better when things are demonstrated, when teachers use actions and gestures. Such students are practical, and they like to be "hands-on". They are good at drama activities, games, role plays. They get bored quickly if they are not actively involved. These type of learners prefer to learn through touching objects or modeling something. They are good at working with tools. For these students teachers should have manipulative and three – dimensional materials that are touchable. The students should be allowed to plan, demonstrate and perform written graphic and/or computer recorded information.

Read and write learners: students with a strong reading/writing preference learn best through words. These students may present themselves as copious note takers and are able to translate abstract concepts into words and essays.

How to identify students' learning styles?

Learning is more productive when teachers take learning styles into account. So how can teachers identify the students' learning styles? There are several methods which help both trainers and trainees get information regarding learners' styles. They are called learning-style inventories.

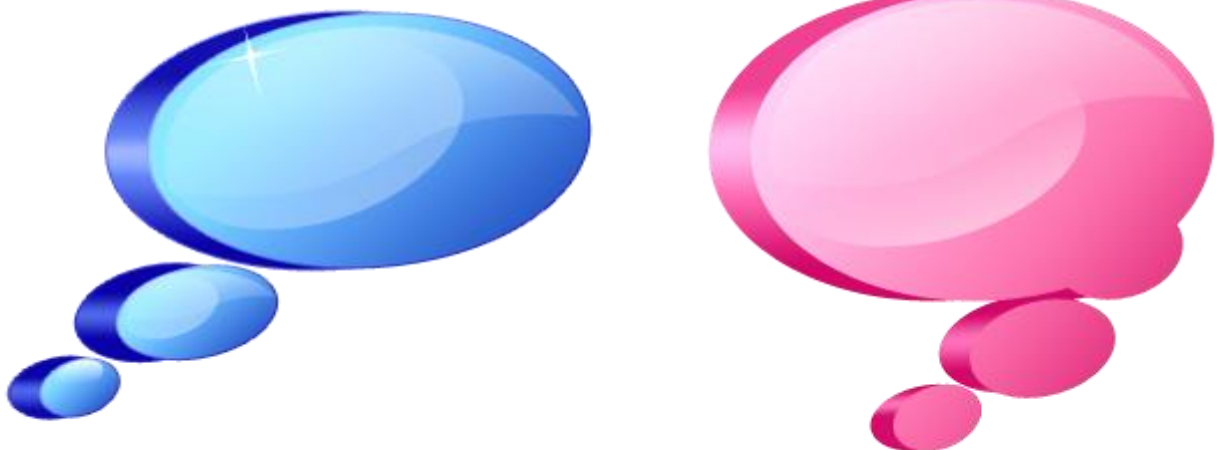
Classroom activities

Now we want to speak about some classroom activities. Here is an example of a classroom activity which will help me and my students find out their learning style preferences. As usual we practice it at the beginning of the new school year. Students are divided into four groups. They are to answer the following questions:

- How do you learn new words?
- How do you remember them?
- Read words aloud and associate the sound with words which have similar sounds.
- Look at the word in context. (vis.)
- Define part of speech and see if this is changeable. (vis.)
- Keep a vocabulary notebook. (vis. / tact.)
- Use dictionaries. (vis.)
- Listen to songs. (aud.)
- Draw illustrations. (vis. / tact.)

Then we ask them to choose answers from the following suggestions. The students can also brainstorm and write their own answers.

BRAINSTORMING: Think about the way you learn new words. Write your ideas into the thought bubbles.



Discussion: After the brainstorming we ask our students to share their answers with the class. They can then be divided into four groups, including auditory, visual, kinesthetic, and combined learning types. Each group discusses learning techniques for their particular style and share preferences with the class.

After determining our student's preference our students and we know that learning needs have to be taken into account to provide maximum effectiveness.

There is no doubt about the importance of having a sense of one's own preferred language learning style when deciding how to learn a language. Whilst there is clearly some truth in the assertion that different people can have different learning styles and we have to pay attention to that in deciding what is the best way to learn (or teach), there is a lot more to this issue than meets the eye and that is what I want to spend a bit of time looking at here. I have decided to do

this as we have seen learning styles sometimes confused with learning strategies and this has created beliefs that are not helpful to improving one's own learning.

Some learners can be heard to say that, "we prefer learning languages through translation or through reading and writing". They may well prefer that way of learning, and you could argue that hence that is their preferred learning style. We would suggest though that these are learning strategies, not learning styles. They are strategies which people have become used to because that is how they were taught in school, for example. Do something often enough and it can become comfortable even though it might not be so effective or even a match for the learning style best suited to you. These habits then start to form the basis of our beliefs. The two, habits and beliefs, can become a powerful cocktail to keep us wedded to what we are used to doing, preventing us exploring other ways that may indeed be more effective.

The habits of learning, where the learner, for example, feels that the only way they can learn a new word is to translate it or look it up in a dictionary, are strategies we have got used to. There are in fact many of these kinds of strategies of learning we have accumulated some of which I have looked at in these pages. Now, I would like to look at another one of them, one that many people these days feel strongly connected to and that is the need that to write or read what is being learned. There is of course no trouble with this medium being used and it *is* something that *can* support our learning. However at times, like anything that is taken to excess it can cause problems.

There are of course the few people who can learn languages just by reading, but don't be confused by that. The vast majority of people can't. The few who can have just made some adjustments to how they learn that have enabled them to do it, but if others tried it, they would be most probably doomed to failure or a long hard road, most probably prompting them to give it away. I am not saying reading can't help, it certainly can help your language learning, of that there is no doubt. This way of learning languages is clearly a preferred learning strategy, which some people use but it has nothing to do with our innate learning styles. The important take away is to *seek to find ways of learning that you enjoy AND produce results for you*, even if they go a little against the grain!

Broadly speaking, learning styles can be defined as general approaches to language learning, while learning strategies are specific ways learners choose to cope with language tasks in particular contexts. Learning strategies are the ways in which students learn, remember information, and study for tests. They refer to the actions and behaviours (The strategies) that depend greatly on their own learning styles. On the other hand, learning styles refer to the general approaches that students use in acquiring a new language or in learning any other subject.

Learning styles are habitual patterns of perceiving, processing, or reacting to information. Learning strategies. Learning strategies are the specific actions one takes and/or techniques one uses in order to learn.

his chapter introduces you to the concepts of learning styles and learning strategies. These are

important concepts that we will refer to throughout this book and have, in fact, made allusion to in chapters 1 and 2. Learning styles and learning strategies affect the nature and quality of learning, whether or not the learner knows anything about these concepts or not. Therefore, it is better to have an understanding of them, so that you can consciously use this information to good advantage. Topics in this chapter include:

1. **Definitions of learning styles and learning strategies.**

- **Learning styles.** Learning styles are habitual patterns of perceiving, processing, or reacting to information.
- **Learning strategies.** Learning strategies are the specific actions one takes and/or techniques one uses in order to learn.

1. **Kinds of learning styles.** This chapter divides learning styles into the following categories:

- **Sensory preferences.** Sensory preferences refer to the channels through which we perceive information which consist of visual, auditory, and motor modalities, as a minimum.
- **Cognitive styles.** Cognitive styles refer to individualized ways of processing of information. Many models of cognitive styles have been proposed. This chapter presents the E&L Construct in detail; this particular model organizes most of the work on cognitive styles into one system of cognitive profiles.
- **Personality types.** These are another kind of learning style. Since they involve affective (emotional) factors, they are discussed in chapter 4, along with other affective variables.

1. **Learning strategies.** In addition to memory strategies, which were discussed in chapter 2, and communication strategies, which will be discussed in chapter 10, there are comprehension strategies and production strategies. This part of the chapter is divided into the following subtopics:

Recent years have seen a change in the trends of medical education from pedagogy to andragogy i.e. from a teacher-centred learning to a student-centred learning. Therefore, it is not only desirable but also essential for educators to recognize that adults have different learning styles and that they should tailor instructions to the characteristic ways in which the adults prefer to learn [1,2]. The term, 'learning style' describes an individual's preferred method of gathering, processing, interpreting, organizing and analyzing information. The VARK model which was developed by Fleming and Mills [3] provides the learners with a profile of their learning styles, based on the sensory modalities which are involved in taking in information. VARK is an acronym for the Visual (V), Auditory (A), Read/Write (R) and the Kinaesthetic (K) sensory modalities. The visual learners process the information best if they can see it. The auditory learners like to hear information. The read-write learners prefer to see the written words. The kinaesthetic learners like to acquire information through experience and practice.

Various instructional methods which are used for teaching the first year medical students include lectures, dissections, practicals, tutorials, etc. The students' preference for different teaching-learning methods had been attributed in the past to a number of reasons such as familiarity with the method, a positive outcome, etc. A less explored but perhaps a more significant factor could be the students' learning styles. Having knowledge on the learners' learning styles is a vastly underutilized approach towards an improvement in the classroom instructions. The learning style information can also benefit the students as it would help them in formulating the appropriate learning strategies for enhancing their learning. Most of the previous studies which have been done in the medical arena on the learning styles have been conducted in other countries and the results have shown variations, may be due to the use of different teaching methodologies at the premedical level [4]. To the best of our knowledge, none of the studies have correlated the preferences of the instructional methods with the learning styles of the medical students. The aim of the present study was therefore, to gain an understanding of the learning style preferences of first semester medical students, to find out the most preferred instructional methods and to correlate these methods with the learning preferences of the students, which could be helpful in formulating teaching —learning strategies for improving the learning experience.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This study was conducted on the first year medical students who were enrolled at the School of Medical Sciences and Research, Sharda University, Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh, India. A total of 100 students voluntarily participated in the study (66 females and 34 males). Two separate questionnaires were used to determine the students' most preferred teaching-learning methods and their learning style preferences. The first questionnaire was used to obtain the general demographic information i.e. names, ages and genders of the students, as well as to assess their preferences of the teaching-learning methodologies (Lectures, Practical/Dissections, Tutorials, Self study) in the descending order of the preference. The second questionnaire, the latest version (7.1) of the VARK questionnaire, which was developed by Fleming [5], was used to determine the learning style preferences of the students. It consisted of 13 questions with four options each and the respondents could choose more than one option if they found them suitable. The VARK model was used in the present study because it a. addressed a part of the learning styles that was open to self-modification, b. it was accompanied by study strategies for each style, c. it could help in formulating teaching strategies and d. it was the most popular model due to its simplicity and reliability.

The purpose of the study was explained to the students and the hard copies of the questionnaires were distributed to the students who volunteered to take the analysis. The completed questionnaires were collected after 15-20 minutes and they were evaluated by using previously validated scoring instructions which were available on the VARK website. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the students' preferences of the various VARK components, as well

as their preferences for the various teaching-learning methods. The Students' t-test was utilized to compare the VARK scores for the male and female students and Pearson's Correlation Co-efficient was employed to analyze the correlation between the learning styles and the most preferred teaching- learning methods.

Understanding VARK

One of the most accepted understandings of learning styles is that student learning styles fall into three categories: Visual Learners, Auditory Learners and Kinesthetic Learners. These learning styles are found within educational theorist Neil Fleming's VARK model of Student Learning. VARK is an acronym that refers to the four types of learning styles: Visual, Auditory, Reading/Writing Preference, and Kinesthetic. (The VARK model is also referred to as the VAK model, eliminating Reading/Writing as a category of preferential learning.) The VARK model acknowledges that students have different approaches to how they process information, referred to as "preferred learning modes." The main ideas of VARK are outlined in Learning Styles Again: VARKing up the right tree! (Fleming & Baume, 2006)

Students' preferred learning modes have significant influence on their behavior and learning.

- Students' preferred learning modes should be matched with appropriate learning strategies.
- Information that is accessed through students' use of their modality preferences shows an increase in their levels of comprehension, motivation, and metacognition.
- Identifying your students as visual, auditory, reading/writing, kinesthetic, learners, and aligning your overall curriculum with these learning styles, will prove to be beneficial for your entire classroom. Keep in mind, sometimes you may find that it's a combination of all three sensory modalities that may be the best option. Allowing students to access information in terms they are comfortable with will increase their academic confidence.
- Visual
- Visual learners prefer the use of images, maps, and graphic organizers to access and understand new information.
- Auditory
- Auditory learners best understand new content through listening and speaking in situations such as lectures and group discussions. Aural learners use repetition as a study technique and benefit from the use of mnemonic devices.

- Read & Write
- Students with a strong reading/writing preference learn best through words. These students may present themselves as copious note takers or avid readers, and are able to translate abstract concepts into words and essays.
- Kinesthetic
- Students who are kinesthetic learners best understand information through tactile representations of information. These students are hands-on learners and learn best through figuring things out by hand (i.e. understanding how a clock works by putting one together).
- By understanding what kind of learner you and/or your students are, you can now gain a better perspective on how to implement these learning styles into your lesson plans and study techniques.
- The term “learning styles” speaks to the understanding that every student learns differently. Technically, an individual’s learning style refers to the preferential way in which the student absorbs, processes, comprehends and retains information. For example, when learning how to build a clock, some students understand the process by following verbal instructions, while others have to physically manipulate the clock themselves. This notion of individualized learning styles has gained widespread recognition in education theory and classroom management strategy. Individual learning styles depend on cognitive, emotional and environmental factors, as well as one’s prior experience. In other words: everyone’s different. It is important for educators to understand the differences in their students’ learning styles, so that they can implement best practice strategies into their daily activities, curriculum and assessments. Many degree programs, specifically higher level ones like a doctorate of education, integrate different learning styles and educational obstacles directly into program curriculum. Students’ preferred learning modes have significant influence on their behavior and learning.
- Students’ preferred learning modes should be matched with appropriate learning strategies.
- Information that is accessed through students’ use of their modality preferences shows an increase in their levels of comprehension, motivation, and metacognition.

Identifying your students as visual, auditory, reading/writing, kinesthetic, learners, and aligning your overall curriculum with these learning styles, will prove to be beneficial for your entire classroom. Keep in mind, sometimes you may find that it’s a combination of all three sensory modalities that may be the best option. Allowing students to access information in terms they are comfortable with will increase their academic confidence.

Conclusion

Most of the studies on language learning styles and strategies in recent decades have stated that learning styles effect the selection of language learning strategies the learners apply to their language learning. In the other hand, research also indicates that the levels of success and proficiency the learners reach and the frequency of learning strategy use of the learners increase accordingly. These findings are vitally important to language teachers who play a very significant role in part of the successes that their students may enjoy or part of the failure that their students' learning may end in. Learning about the difference of language learning strategy use between the successful, high proficiency learners and unsuccessful, low proficiency learners is necessary to teachers so that they can adapt their teaching styles to match their students' learning styles, train their students the language learning strategies that the successful, high proficiency students utilize in their learning to help them to enhance their learning's effectiveness in the ways that the "good language learner" does.

- By recognizing and understanding our students' learning styles, we can use techniques better suited to our learners. This will improve the speed and quality of their learning.
- We realize that we should be sensitive to our students' feelings and needs.
- While planning lessons we take into account our students' learning styles and try to enhance their learning strategies for their successful learning.

It's time for us, teachers to seek a way to teach English so that our students can communicate effectively.

Եզրակացություն

Վերջին տասնամյակների ընթացքում լեզվի ուսուցման ոճերի և ռազմավարությունների ուսումնասիրությունների մեծ մասը հավաստել են, որ դրանք ազդում են լեզվի ուսուցման վրա, մյուս կողմից էլ համապատասխանաբար աճում է վերոնշյալ ռազմավարության կիրառումը: Այս եզրակացությունը հատկապես կարևոր է ուսուցիչների համար՝ որպես հաջողության գրավական կամ ընդհակառակը: Լեզուների ուսուցման ռազմավարությանը տիրապետելը անհրաժեշտ է ուսուցիչներին համապատասխանեցնելու իրենց և իրենց աշակերտների ուսումնառության ոճերը՝ ուսուցանելով աշակերտներին բարձր որակավորում ունեցող ուսանողների օգտագործած ռազմավարությանձևը:

Ուսման որակն ու արագությունը կբարելավվի, երբ աշակերտի ուսումնառության ոճերը համադրվեն հարմար տեխնիկային, դրսևորվի զգուշավորություն աշակերտի զգացմունքների և կարիքների հարցում: Ժամանակն է գտնելու և կիրառելու ճիշտ ուղիներ անզլերեն հաղորդակցման համար :

- Ճանաչելով եւ հասկանալով մեր աշակերտների ուսումնառության ոճերը, մենք կարող ենք օգտագործել մեր սովորողներին ավելի հարմար տեխնիկան: Սա կբարելավի ուսման արագությունն ու որակը:
- Մենք գիտակցում ենք, որ պետք է զգույշ լինենք մեր աշակերտների զգացմունքների եւ կարիքների հարցում:
- Դասավանդելու ժամանակ հաշվի ենք առնում մեր աշակերտների ուսուցման ոճերը եւ փորձում ենք իրենց ուսումնառության ռազմավարությունը բարձրացնել հաջողված ուսուցման համար:

Ժամանակն է, որ ուսուցիչները ուղիներ գտնեն անգլերեն սովորեցնելու, որպեսզի մեր աշակերտները կարողանան արդյունավետ հաղորդակցվել:

Вывод

В последние десятилетия большинство исследований стилей и стратегий изучения языка доказали, что они влияют на преподавание языка, а с другой - на увеличение использования вышеупомянутой стратегии. Этот вывод особенно важен для учителей как залог успеха или наоборот. Изучение стратегии изучения языка необходимо, чтобы учителя адаптировали свои стили обучения к своим ученикам, обучая студентов тому, как они используют учеников высокого качества.

Качество и скорость обучения улучшатся, когда стили обучения учащихся сочетаются с соответствующими методами, чтобы проявлять осторожность в эмоциях и потребностях

ученика. Пришло время найти и применить правильные способы общения на английском.

- Признавая и понимая стили обучения наших студентов, мы можем использовать более удобные методы для наших учеников . Это улучшит скорость и качество обучения.
- Мы понимаем, что мы должны быть осторожными с эмоциями и потребностями наших учеников.
- При обучении мы учитываем стили обучения учеников и стараемся расширить методы их стратегии для успешного обучения.

Настало время учителям найти способы учить английский, чтобы наши ученики могли эффективно общаться.

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