

LEARNING STYLES AND STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

The article aimed to explore learning styles, approaches and differentiated learning strategies in English language teaching process. We include the introduction of new foreign language learning approaches, strategies and styles from other sources, as well as disseminating and gathering strategy ideas from the learner's peers.

Different students are likely to approach the task of learning language in different ways. Some learners may instinctively feel that there is a benefit to studying the rules and patterns of a language, while others may be less inclined to formal study and prefer learning in more experiential manner, where they use the language to achieve tasks and goals. The extent of students' achievement may be influenced by some factors, which one of them is learning style and approach. The experience and studies show that most of the students prefer 'reflective', 'sensing', 'visual', and 'sequential' learning styles, individualised (or personalised), self-directed learning, autonomy approach in English language learning. With an appropriate range of resources, materials and pedagogic support, where students would set their own language learning purposes and would be supported to reach these goals in ways which are effective, which are of real interest to them and which can co-exist with each student's lifestyle, not just their learning style.

Key words: *learning styles, autonomy approach, differentiated learning, individualised learning, self-directed learning.*

INTRODUCTION

Learning process requires an appropriate way or style in learning the lesson. The students will learn in the flow of their learning style consciously or subconsciously. Learning style will facilitate the students to learn language in their best. According to Peirce, learning style is the method that the people prefer it over those other methods in learning. So, learning style can be determined based on students' preference in learning

language. The information of students' learning style will much help the faculty or school to design the learning process which can accommodate the student's learning well (Watkins, 2014).

METHODOLOGY

In the early 1970s, researchers started to look at what learners brought with them to the classroom, and the actions they took in order to make their learning effective. Although the idea of individualized "learning styles" originated in the 1970s, it has gained popularity in recent years and has been the focus of a number of foreign language learning and teaching studies. Therefore, it seems that the most important research effort and educational improvement, in recent years, is the shift from an emphasis on the language teaching methodology to language learners and variables that influence language learning (Boyd & Fales, 1983).

Many researchers have attempted to define different aspects of individual differences in the learning process. These researchers have centered much on such fundamental questions as: 'What makes a "good language learner"?' and 'Why do some students achieve proficiency more efficiently and easily than others?' One of the reasons is that there are considerable individual differences in language learning in terms of gender, age, social status, motivation, attitude, aptitude, and culture. What works for one learner might not work for another. There is the fact that students take in and comprehend information in different manners. The different ways of how a learner takes in and processes information are collectively referred to as learning styles or learning preferences (Barfield & Brown, 2007).

All learners have individual characters regarding to learning processes. For example, some learners may respond to hands-on activities, others may favor visual presentations. All students have their own learning styles and learning strengths and weaknesses. Some learners are visual and prefer to learn by charts, whereas others like to learn by spoken explanations, and are called auditory learners. Mismatch between teaching and learning styles causes learning failure, frustration and demotivation (Kalaja, & Barcelos, 2006).

Oxford (2003) stated that "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" (Borg, 2006).

An enormous numbers of learning style models can be found in the literature on this subject. Some of the most popular models are introduced: The first learning style model was proposed by Reid (1987). She proposed Perceptual learning style preference. According to her, Perceptual learning style preference refers to the perceptual channels through which students like to learn (Morrison, 2011).

Fleming (2001) proposed the VARK model. He defined learning style as "an individual's characteristics and preferred ways of gathering, organizing, and thinking about information. VARK (Visual, Aural, Read/Write, and Kinesthetic) is in the category of instructional preferences because it deals with perceptual modes" (Watkins, 2014).

The challenge for educators is to assist people to reach their full potential, to maximize their opportunities and to accomplish individual goals. However, all this must be achieved withing a social context. Whether at the level of the individual, the group, the community, the society, or humankind generally, learning in its fullest sense is a social activity, and the attainment of full personal autonomy in learning language must recognize this interdependence (Boyd E.M., Fales A.W., 1983).

Activities which fall under the umbrella of learner autonomy have beer given a variety of labels, including 'individualised learning', 'self-directed learning' and 'study skills'. These practices recognise differences amongst learners, and practitioners cater for and encourage this diversity. For example, teaching 'study skills for language learning' is often done to provide learners with the ability to then go on to cope with the target language directly and learn effectively with minimum support from teacher and it is considered by some teachers and publishers – as 'developing learner autonomy'. The Autonomy approach as 'self-directed language learning'. Withing the types of learning are often associated with learner autonomy, both a range of freedom and a range of teacher support possible (Ellis & Sinclair, 1989).

One of the interesting developments in individual differences research is to move from regarding influences, such as aptitude (motivation, learner strategies, learner styles), as invariant and unidirectional in influence and instead seeing how instruction can be adapted to take account of the characteristics of learners and thereby become more efficient.

This is an approach originated in the field of Cognitive Linguistics that recognises the difference in learners' ability in different skills areas. Avast amount of research has been conducted on individuals differences, and it is most commonly associated with terms such as 'learner styles' and 'cognitive style' (Barfield & Brown, 2007).

In practice, the teacher often produces several versions of either a task or a text – a range of levels to cater for the range of proficiencies in the classroom. This is often teacher-led in terms of the materials used, but the classes are both student-*centred* – in the way the tasks are implemented – and student-*led* to a degree, if the students are allowed to choose which level they want to work at on any particular day. The idea of allowing students to choose materials above or below their 'level' is an interesting one – catering for different levels and offering choice are therefore a good fit with self-directed language learning (Boyd & Fales, 1983).

Individualised (or personalised) learning approach focuses on the needs and wants of individual learners. Students are taken through the process of designing, implementing and evaluating an individual learning plan. This particular area of learning allows for a blend of classroom and out-of-class activities – such as online, self-access centre or community interactions.

There is more potential freedom than in differentiated learning, however this is by no means guaranteed. In some schools and universities, individualised learning has been implemented by taking the students en masse to the language lab / computer lab / self-access centre and asking them to choose something to get on with – individually (Ellis & Sinclair, 1989).

While ‘individualised’ learning is something mistakenly considered as ‘individual’ learning, there is no reason for this to be *isolated* learning. Individualised learning often involves learning with others and from others – to share ideas and achieve overlapping individualised goals. Individualised learning maintains that all kind of social interaction, whether in or out of the classroom, play a central role in students’ mental development and growth.

Self-directed English learning approach – a process in which individuals take the initiative without the help of others in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating goals, identifying human and material resources and evaluating learning outcomes (Kalaja & Barcelos, 2006).

Self-directed learning (SDL) occurs when learners learn without recourse to a teacher or learning advisor. It is key area of research, originally rooted in the field of adult education and it has traditionally no direct link to language learning. However, looking back at what was proposed decades ago, much of what was true then remains just as true and relevant today (Morrison, 2011).

Malcolm Knowles puts forward three main reasons for SDL:

- He argues, firstly, that people who take the initiative in learning (pro-active learners) learn more, learn better, than passive learners.
- Second, he proposes that SDL is in tune with our natural psychological development as learners, meaning that a key aspect of the maturation process is the development of the ability to take more responsibility over our lives.
- His third reason deals with contemporary developments in education that put more and more responsibility on learners to take more initiative (Ellis & Sinclair, 1989).

These ideas have been debated throughout the literature in adult education for years, with particular focus on whether ‘self-direction’ should be viewed as a goal or a method of learning. Our own belief reflects these ideas:

- Self-directed learning embraces dimensions of both process and product.
- Becoming self-directed is a desired pedagogical outcome.
- Self-directed learning is an organised system of teachable, learnable skills (Barfield & Brown, 2007).

It is dynamic, reciprocal relationship between the two dimensions.

Self-access English learning approach is the learning that takes place in a self-access centre, often stocked with a range of resources and materials in order to entice learners. Since self-access centres vary to a large extent, in the support offered and pedagogic philosophy behind each centre, it is difficult to generalise about how learners’ needs are met or their language learning is developed. With an appropriate range of resources, materials and pedagogic support, there is the potential for this to be self-directed language learning at its most effective (Morrison, 2011).

The primary aim of such *self-access study* facilities is to enable learning to take place independently of teaching. Although there is still no clear definition of what a self-access centre is, self-access English learning has traditionally been linked with the learner autonomy movement. Other attempts to define self-access English learning by practitioners involved in SAL have been carried out through the description of principles:

- Self-access learning should be truly self-access, it is not a compulsory part of a course.
- Students should have an integral role in the running of the centre.
- Learning should be fun.
- The learning environment is important (Watkins, 2014).

Open-access (or distance) learning has the potential to offer a lot of freedom and choice to the course participants, but in reality (the internet seems to be helping change this reality) many of these courses have the syllabus and course materials planned out with little choice for students other than when and where they work their way through the course. So, within time and space, there is a flexibility which can allow the students to learn in a way that suit their lifestyle, but choice over materials and resources may be very much more controlled (Borg, 2016).

Students may have access to teacher support during this type of course, but much of the teacher-student interaction will be around knowledge acquisition and application, and the informed choices required to make these processes more effective.

CONCLUSION

Raising awareness of language learning styles, approaches and strategies is often the main focus of developing students' self-directed language learning skills. By introducing different ways of making language learning more effective, teachers are essentially setting up the conditions to keep the earners invested in their learning, while supporting proficiency development.

When introducing explicit learning approach and strategy instruction, it is important to bear in mind the following:

- The number of strategies used is less important than the relevance of the approach, style, strategy to the task and the learner.
- Strategy instruction works most effectively when both teachers and learners consider the learners' level, the socio-cultural context and the learner' goal.

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ԱՄՓՈՓՈՒՄ
Ուսումնառութեան ոճերը եւ սովորողների անհատականացումը
Լեւոն Յուրաքման Գործընթացում
Իրինա Կոբիլյանսկա

Հոգվածի նպատակն է ուսումնասիրել անգլերեն լեզվի դասավանդման գործընթացում ուսուցման ոճերը, մոտեցումները և տարբերակված ուսուցման ռազմավարությունները: Հետազոտության մեջ ներառված են օտար լեզուների ուսուցման նոր մոտեցումների, ռազմավարությունների և ոճերի ներդրումը այլ աղբյուրներից, ինչպես նաև գաղափարների տարածումն ու հավաքագրումը սովորողների հասակակիցներից:

Տարբեր ուսանողներ, հավանաբար, տարբեր ձևերով են մոտենում լեզու սովորելու խնդրին: Որոշ ուսանողներ ենթագիտակցորեն են զգում լեզվի կանոններն ու օրինաչափությունները, մինչդեռ մյուսները՝ ավելի քիչ են հակված լեզվի ֆորմալ ուսումնասիրությանը և նախընտրում են առավել գործնական եղանակով սովորելը, որտեղ նրանք օգտագործում են լեզուն առաջադրանքներին և նպատակներին հասնելու համար: Ուսանողների ձեռքբերումների աստիճանի վրա ազդում են որոշ գործոններ, որոնցից մեկը ուսուցման ոճն ու մոտեցումն է: Փորձը և ուսումնասիրությունները ցույց են տալիս, որ ուսանողների մեծ մասը նախընտրում է «ռեֆլեկտիվ», «զգայական», «տեսողական» և «հաջորդական» ուսուցման ոճերը, անհատականացված: Համապատասխան ռեսուրսների, նյութերի և մանկավարժական աջակցության շնորհիվ ուսանողներն իրենք են սահմանում իրենց՝ լեզու սովորելու նպատակները: Հետազոտությունից պարզ է դառնում, որ սովորողների նպատակներին հասնելու ընթացքում հետաքրքիր եղանակների գործադրումն արդյունավետ է, ինչը հետաքրքրություն առաջացնում՝ բխելով յուրաքանչյուր սովորողի ներքին պահանջներից:

Բանալի բառեր՝ ուսուցման ոճեր, ինքնուրույն մոտեցում, տարբերակված ուսուցում, անհատականացված ուսուցում, ինքնուրույն ուսուցում:

РЕЗЮМЕ
СТИЛИ ОБУЧЕНИЯ И УСПЕВАЕМОСТЬ УЧАЩИХСЯ В ИЗУЧЕНИИ ЯЗЫКА
Ирина Кобылянская

Статья направлена на рассмотрение стилей открытия, подсчета индивидуальных стратегий обучения в процессе реализации английского движения. Включено внедрение новых подходов, стратегий и стилей развития иноземных мов из других мест, а также расширение и выбор той или иной стратегии от однолесток. Студенты по-новому идут на встречу в движении. Один из них может инстинктивно

выявлять, что соблюдение правил и законных движений является естественным, то есть они могут быть меньшими по размеру до формального наказания и выявлять перевагу эмпирическому наставлению, де они выберут мову для досягаемости и цели. В равной степени студенты могут учитывать идеи, которые связаны с их стилем и подходом к обучению. До сих пор показано, что большая часть студентов отдает перевагу «рефлексивному», «сенсорному», «визуальному» и «последующему» стилю обучения, индивидуальному (или персонализированному), самостоятельному обучению, автономному подходу к обучению английское кино. Для обеспечения полного набора ресурсов, материалов и педагогических подработок, студенты сами будут определять, почему они могут найти подход к их дополнительным эффективным методам, которые можно использовать Узнайте больше о методах жизни и стиле обучения каждого студента.

Ключевые слова: стиль обучения, автономный подход, дифференцированное обучение, индивидуализированное обучение, самостоятельное обучение.

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