

# The Research Dialogue

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## “Learning style in English language Teaching”

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### ABSTRACT:

*There's more to learning a language than just reading, watching videos, or attending English language courses. In order to make the most out of your attempts at learning English, you could first try to determine what type of language learner you are.*

*Why is this important? Because not every language learning activity is perfectly suited for every learning style. Some are more suitable for one learning style, while others are more suitable for a different learning style.*

*That is why determining your style of learning should be the first thing on your list. In general, there are eight learning styles that are most common among people – four perceptual, two cognitive, and two that have to do with the learner's personality.*

**Key words:** - Language, Visual, Auditory, Tactile, Kinesthetic etc.

Gaining momentum in the 1960s through tests like the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, the learning style theory posits that different students learn best when information is presented to them in a particular way. The learning style theory was popularized in 1992 when Fleming and Mills suggested a new model of learning. The [VARK Model](#) is used to explain the different ways that students learn. For example, if a student is a “visual learner,” a verbal lecture alone might leave them feeling unengaged, confused, and frustrated.

While some critics doubt the efficacy of the learning style theory, its popularity in schools today makes it a topic well-worth paying attention to — specifically if some of your students are having a tough go at retaining information while learning remotely.

David Kolb defines 'Learning Style' as: "a result of hereditary equipment, past experience, and the demands of the present environment combining to produce individual orientations that give differential emphasis to the four basic learning modes postulated in experiential learning theory" (Kolb, 1984).

Learners' different learning styles will affect the way they learn all subjects, including languages. Some learners like listening and talking, others prefer to analyse text, or study with the help of visual support. Most learners, however, have a mixed learning style.

Some of the interesting areas in which style differences have been identified as follows:

**(1) Sensory preference:** Sensory preference refers to the type of brain an Individual possesses in relation to sensory stimuli including the type of sensory data that registers most quickly.

The possibilities or options are:

**(i) Visual Preference:** Visual learners prefer to read silently and appreciate illustrations that go with the text. They will generally learn better with written instructions. Students who have a visual strength or preference:

- ❖ want the teacher to provide demonstrations
- ❖ find it easy to learn through descriptions
- ❖ often use lists to keep up and organize thoughts
- ❖ often recognize words by sight
- ❖ often remember faces but forget names
- ❖ often have well developed imaginations

**(ii) Auditory Preference:** Auditory learners rely primarily on music and sound for their learning. Information is often best acquired through verbal lectures, discussions and mini-presentations. Sing vocabulary words, memorize songs, or make rhymes to remember grammar rules

- ❖ Read out loud as much as possible
- ❖ Record yourself speaking English and play back the tapes for review

- ❖ want the teacher to provide verbal instructions.
- ❖ find it easy to learn by listening.
- ❖ enjoy dialogues, discussions, and plays.
- ❖ often remember names but forget faces.
- ❖ often do well working out solutions or problems by talking them out.
- ❖ are easily distracted by noise and often need to work where it is relatively quiet.
- ❖ often do best using recorded books.

### (iii) Reading & Writing –

Focusing on the written word, reading and writing learners succeed with written information on worksheets, presentations, and other text-heavy resources. These learners are note-takers and perform strongly when they can reference written text.

(iv) **Kinesthetic Preference:** Students who have a kinesthetic strength or preference:

- ❖ songs with gestures
- ❖ playing games in which they need to use their whole body (e.g. Charades)
- ❖ doing exercise type activities which require running and jumping
- ❖ movement activities
- ❖ making models (e.g. with play doh or lego)
- ❖ craft activities
- ❖ following instructions to make something
- ❖ setting up experiments

- ❖ have problems concentrating when asked to sit and read.
- ❖ prefer to do rather than watch or listen.
- ❖ most children are kinesthetic and become more tactile in the first grade.

**(2) Whole or part focused learning:** Some learners pay much more attention to the small details while other students tend to focus more general ideas or the big picture'. This has also been described as the global versus sequential style of processing information. Some students learn better when the teacher presents and discusses general ideas and assigns related tasks; they may have a tendency to 'switch off when a lot of time is spent on small details. But others may respond well to specifics and details, and feel somewhat lost when the focus is on abstract ideas. This orientation is related to a broader factor called field dependence-field independence. Field dependent individuals are influenced by the context. For example, in a group where most people favour one opinion in a set of possibilities they are more likely to agree with others. Those who are more field independent are better able to see basic facts or arguments by themselves. But they are not independent thinkers or misfits.

**(3) Inductive VS. deductive learning:** Inductive learners enjoy presentations that move from specific to general. Thus, inductive learning occurs when a body of specific facts or data is given and effort is directed to finding pattern(s) or inferring a general principle. While deductive learners prefer presentation that proceed from general to specific. Deductive learners learn best when they can first see the big picture'. Grammar is often

taught inductively in deductive learning, usually a rule or principle is given to begin with, and the discussion is on its implications and applications. Many problems in mathematics and science involve sets of deductions.

**(4) Convergent thinking vs. divergent thinking:** Divergent thinking is the process of generating and creating new and imaginative ideas. When learners 'diverge' from the usual pathways of thinking and attempt to find more than one right answer, they are using divergent thinking. Convergent thinking is thinking through a set of logical steps to come up with one right answer. Convergent thinking is not necessarily in opposition to divergent thinking. Whereas divergent thinking seeks multiple answers, learners will eventually need to settle on the one answer that will solve the problem (convergent thinking).

**Conclusion:**

You may have read the above and thought “How on earth do I include all of these different learning styles in all of my teaching points and activities?”. Yes, there are a lot of different styles and many contradict each other – Analytic and Global learners, for instance, are at opposite ends of the spectrum. The key is to include different styles at different points of the lesson.

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