E-ISSN : 2181-4341
https://wordlyknowledge.uz
IMPACT FACTOR(SJIF) : 3,934

TITLE: **Individual differences: an observation upon Concrete Learning style, and presumable learning strategies the learners tend to use**

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Annotation: In majority language teaching classrooms, L2 teachers tend to suffer from mixed individual differences among learners, which make it complicated for choosing both related materials and methods to conduct an effective lesson. The main objective of this paper is to compare and summarize the outcomes of the observation, which was organized to determine which learning strategies are particularly typical for learners with ***concrete*** learning style. First and foremost, it would be sensible to identify the difference between the notions; *learning styles* and *learning strategies*…
Keywords: Individual differences, concrete learning style, cognitive strategies, analytical, communicative, authority-oriented

Apparently, "language learning styles are associated with quite permanent and prevailing peculiarities, dispositions or inclinations that make you distinctive from others, whereas learning strategies refer to specific methods of accessing a problem or an assignment, forms of operation to achieve an anticipated end and utilizing certain information (Lombaard, 2006)." One can find a significant number of scientific works on individual learner differences, all of which mostly go over classifying learners to different style learner-groups based on their psychological characteristics, however, there seems to be little work done how particular style learners have a tendency to use commonly known learning strategies during their SLA process. Therefore, this case study is devoted to the observation of learners with ***concrete*** learning style, out of four; *concrete*, *analytical*, *communicative* and *authority-oriented* learning styles, identified by Knowles (1972), and aimed to explore which learning strategies are preferable for this group of learners.

Learners' Profile

Out of the 1st-year students from WLU, Group 118 was chosen for the case study, by initially being tested for learning style identification by using online Learning Styles Quiz: https://www.aheadstart.co.nz/Learning-Styles-Quiz-xidc117579.html . After analyzing the results, it became clear that among 15 students in the group, who shared different learning styles identified by Knowles (1972); *concrete*, *analytical*, *communicative* and *authority-oriented* learning styles, Ansarova Nazira belonged *Concrete learning* style. Her learning style was observed and identified in the following process:

The group were observed for their preferred learning strategies during their IS lessons through organizing different activities, which comprised of *individual*, *pair* and *group* working. For instance, in a listening class, they were assigned a task, which involved listening a podcast by British Council with related vocabulary, and they were given the following instructions;

- Reading and learning the glossary first, using the definitions given
- Following this, they had to listen for the recording and take notes of the main ideas and events
- Subsequently they were invited to retell the story by using the current vocabulary

Here are the strategies used by the participant, under observation for the study while doing the assignment:

Ansarova Nazira:

1.Looked through the definitions and underlined the key (synonyms)

2.Started listening to the recording, afterward;

3.Took some notes, and underlined some challenging words in her notes to guess their meaning (she said that later)

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4.Finally, looked at her notes, numbered them in the order they occurred, and immediately started retelling the story.

Data collection

The commencement of data gathering, at the starting point, was to collect the topic-related articles so that we could compare varying ideas on "Individual Learner Differences", specifically dealing with cognitive learning styles. For this purpose, we have had to apply to the authors, such as Shahila Zafar & K. Meenakshi (2012), Lightbrown & Spada (2013), Vivian Cook (2015) and other internet resources. With respect to ready-made Learner Style Tests, again the internet automatic reply tests from https://www.aheadstart.co.nz/Learning-Styles-Quiz-xidc117579. html, was chosen to identify the learning styles. The first observation was conduct at World Languages University, Faculty 3, among Group 118, first-year students, and out of 15 students, a girl-student - Nazira Ansarova's results matched with the concrete learning style. Her test findings included higher scores on *solitary (18)*, *logical (13)* and *social (17)* out of 20-score criteria, which were the anticipated characteristics of this learning style, and the script, is attached in the Appendix I. Thus, she was chosen a targeted student for the further observations to come.

In the second phase, Integrated Skills (IS) lesson was decided for research purposes, and the students were assigned a listening test, which involved doing a speaking task simultaneously. The content of the task was to read and learn the glossary first, using the definitions given. Then, they had to listen for the recording and take notes of the main ideas and events, after which the participants were to retell the story by using the current vocabulary.

Having carefully analyzed the actions Nazira took while doing the task, it was summarized that she used the *cognitive*_strategies, such as *note-taking, key word, inferencing contextualization* and *imagery strategies*, suggested by O'Malley and Chamot (1990).

Possible methods

Method № 1: Direct method

The main focus of the direct method is that all the teaching is done in the English language, without allowing translations for the daily vocabulary, and heavily involves speaking instead of doing written grammar exercises. Therefore, this method has gained huge popularity among L2 teachers since it is a very student-centered strategy, which responds to needs of *concrete* learners**.** The students are encouraged to make self-correction as they happen to make mistakes in class, and teachers motivate the correct usage of the language with praise.

Method № 2: Communicative language teaching (CLT)

Communicative language teaching is definitely the most effective approach among the methods of teaching ESL today. The students' ability to communicate in real-life contexts, including making requests, accepting offers, explaining things, and expressing their feelings and preferences are emphasized by the method of CLT. It also focuses on fluency and it's less concerned with grammar accuracy, which provides teaching language through real-world assignments and problem-solving. The best way to combine or develop teaching methods is to frequently adjust your teaching style to your audience's needs, by using a journal where you write down comments, students' preferred activities and brainstorm how you can change certain methods or procedures if necessary.

Conclusion

From the findings of the observations above, one can conclude that identifying individual learner differences in L2 teaching classrooms and responding to the expectations of learners with different learning styles should be the first issue on the agenda in order to successfully deliver the knowledge. The observations above revealed that each individual is

E-ISSN : 2181-4341
https://wordlyknowledge.uz
IMPACT FACTOR(SJIF) : 3,934

unique in their interests and learning styles, which requires a language teacher to use higher order thinking, in terms of being sensitive to their learners' fossilized learning strategies and use appropriate methods accordingly. We are not on the pointing of claiming that there are fixed strategies that are typical for specific learning styles. However, I believe that organizing learner difference identification tests in a timely manner would benefit both teachers and learners equally, providing balanced acquisition of L2 among all participants of the lessons.

Further implications

In this case study, we observed only one of the four learning styles, namely *concrete* learners, identified by Knowles (1972); *concrete*, *analytical*, *communicative* and *authority-oriented* learning styles**.** Through the above-mentioned tests and activities, some possible learning strategies were assumed towards this sort of learners. Therefore, exploring the other learner differences and matching them with related cognitive strategies would be both intriguing and disputable topic of research for the potential-observers. While conducting research on the other learning styles, researchers might consider relevant methods of teaching L2, in accordance with their learning strategies. This will certainly help the potential L2 teachers to make selection of relevant materials and group of methods in order to successfully lead the teaching process. We hope the analysis of the other cognitive styles will grab linguistic scientists' attention soon.

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KNOWLEDGE