

PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA
MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY OF 8 MAI 1945 – GUELMA –
FACULTY OF LETTERS AND LANGUAGES
DEPARTMENT OF LETTERS AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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**INVESTIGATING THE EFFECT OF LEARNING STYLES ON EFL
LEARNERS' ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN THE ORAL EXPRESSION
COURSE.**

**The case of first year LMD students, department of English, University of
Guelma**

**A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Letters and English Language in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Master's Degree in Anglophone Language,
Literature, and Civilizations.**

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June 2017

DEDICATION

It is my genuine gratefulness and warmest regards to dedicate this work to my mother "May she rest in peace". Even if she left me at a younger age, she taught me that the best kind of knowledge to have is the one learned for its own sake. To the man of my life "My Father" who taught me that even the largest task can be accomplished if it is done one step at a time.

To my one and only brother "Youcef" who breaks all bad days with his beautiful laughter. I dedicate this modest work to my Second mothers my grandmother "Zouina", may she rest in peace, "Mounira and Zahia" for being present all the way long providing me with the needed support. To my cousins who are like sisters to me: Sara, Serine, Roumaissa and Aridj

To my best friends: "Racha and Asma"

To all of my aunts, uncles, cousins and the rest of my large family.

SAIDI Nedjla

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, thanks to ‘Almighty Allah’ who guided, helped and gave me the capacity to start and finish this work.

I am highly indebted to my supervisor Mrs. ABDAOUI Fatima for her constant supervision and guidance. I would take advantage of this chance to express my appreciation for the patience she had despite all the obstacles we faced. I thank her for being such an inspiring instructor and a steady support

I wish to thank members of the board of examiners, Mrs. HARIDI Samiya and Mrs. LESSOUAD Sabrina, who accepted to examine this dissertation.

My thanks and appreciations also are attributed to students who co-operated effectively in carrying out this research by answering the questionnaire appropriately.

Finally, the accomplishment of this work would not have been possible without the kind support and help of many individuals and organizations. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to them all.

ABSTRACT

This study attempts to discover the learning preferences attributed to the first year learners of English as a Foreign Language, and to figure out the effect of these learners' learning styles on their academic achievement in the oral expression course. To certify the research hypothesis, the VARK questionnaire designed by Neil Fleming was employed. This questionnaire aims at identifying respondents' learning preferences. Moreover, the quantitative descriptive method is used, as a way to link between learners' learning preferences and their annual achieved averages in the oral expression course. The results obtained at the end of this work identify the learning preferences of EFL first year learners, and validate the effect of first year students' learning styles on their academic achievement in the oral expression course.

Key Words: Learning Styles, Academic Achievement, Oral Expression course, VARK Questionnaire.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AC: Abstract Conceptualization.

AE: Active Experimentation.

CE: Concrete Experience.

CEF: Common European Framework.

EFL: English as a Foreign Language.

ELM: Experiential Learning Model.

GPA: Grade Point Average.

ILS: Index of Learning Styles.

LMD: License/ Master/ Doctorate.

LSI: Learning Styles Inventory.

MBTI: Myers-Briggs Type Indicator.

NNS: Non Native Speakers.

RO: Reflective Observation.

VARC: Visual, Aural, Read/Write, Kinesthetic.

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French Summary

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General Introduction

While learning, each individual receives the information differently, and understands it in a unique way. Thus, learning outcomes are more likely to vary from one to another. That is due to learning styles which are recognized among the essential factors that determine the quality of learning. Likewise, learning styles are delineated as the individuals' preferred methods of acquiring new information.

Consequently, learners' academic achievement manifests the realization of learning goals. Therefore, when learners are able to reflect their own learning styles, they would be able to develop their skill to use such styles in order to achieve the learning objectives and gain new knowledge. Also, by understanding their styles, they will be able to improve the speed and quality of their learning, thus improve their academic achievement.

Hence, the identification of EFL learners' preferences is considered as crucial and undeniable. As it permits learners to familiarize themselves with the ways and tools they may use in order learn effectively. Also, it may be beneficial for teachers to integrate their learners' learning styles in the process of selecting the teaching contents and methods in order to provide each learner with a chance to achieve better results and accomplish the learning objectives.

1. Statement of the Problem

Many students at the department of English at the University of Guelma seem to have low academic achievement. This is due to several factors; among them is students' lack of awareness of their learning styles preferences. Even though learning styles gained importance in the fields of research especially that of language learning, some Algerian

learners at the University of Guelma are still unable to identify their own styles. Hence, their academic achievement may be affected negatively. It is necessary that students should foster their awareness of learning styles and comprehend how they operate in order to realize better processing of the information. Consequently, this may assist them to attain the learning objectives and progress their academic achievement in the oral expression course. Therefore, this research tackles the effect of learning styles on EFL learners' academic achievement at the University of Guelma.

2. Aims of the Study

Learning styles are very crucial particularly in the field of language learning. They determine how learners acquire new information and internalize experiences. Thus this study aims at identifying EFL first year students' learning preference. In addition, it attempts to examine the effect of these learning styles on their academic achievement in the oral expression course. Thus, this study is of two folds:

- 1- To identify EFL first year students' learning preferences.
- 2- To examine the effect of EFL first year students' on their academic achievement in the oral expression course.

3. Research Questions

Learners 'academic achievement in the oral expression course, can be considered as one indicator of the progress of the language learning process. It is assumed that among the factors that affect it are the learning styles. Thus, this study seeks to answer the following two questions:

1- What are the learning styles' preferences of first year EFL learners at the University of Guelma?

2-Does EFL learners' learning styles affect their academic achievement in the oral expression course?

4. Research Hypotheses

It is hypothesized that:

(H1) First year EFL learners learning preferences would affect their academic achievement in the oral expression course.

5. Research Methodology and Design

5. 1. Research Method

In order to validate the research hypothesis, this study is conducted through the quantitative descriptive method. The choice of this method is caused by the fact that it serves the aim of the present inquiry, as it targets the relationship that occurs between the two variables. Also, the quantitative descriptive method verifies the effect of the first variable (learning styles) on the other (academic achievement in the oral expression course). It makes use of the VARK questionnaire to detect the learning styles of first year EFL learning, and relate them to their exam and TD marks in order to determine the effect of learning styles on their academic achievement in the oral expression course.

5. 2. Population and Instrument

The present study targets the population of first year LMD students at the department of English, University of 8 Mai Guelma. First year students are chosen because they are less familiar with their ways of learning, thus they can give genuine answers that will help in identifying their learning preferences. In addition, they spent a short time at the university, which can purely reflect the effect of their learning styles on their academic achievement despite other intervening factors. Concerning the sample of this research, it is chosen randomly; it consists of forty six students, because it may not be possible to deal with all first year learners. Since they have different oral expression teachers, this will create obstacles regarding measuring learners' academic achievement as not all teachers employ the same evaluation methods.

To answer the first research question, a questionnaire is delivered to the participants to examine their learning styles' preferences. As for the second question, testing learners' annual averages is used to inspect the effect of learning styles preferences on their academic performance in the oral expression course.

6. Structure of the Dissertation

This research consists of three chapters, in addition to the general introduction and the general conclusion. The first two chapters provide a theoretical framework, whereas the third chapter is purely analytical. The first chapter accounts for learning styles, their historical background, definitions, descriptions, and different models that are established by researchers, their types and how each learning style operates. The second chapter is devoted to learners' academic achievement, the nature of the oral expression course and

the assessment of learners' academic achievement in the oral expression course. It introduces briefly the Algerian educational system in relation to EFL learning. The third chapter is a field of investigation that includes a description of the research method, population, sample and data collection tools considered in this study. This chapter also presents data analysis, summary, and interpretation of findings. It concludes with a set of proposed recommendations and pedagogical implications, in addition to some research limitations.

CHAPTER ONE: LEARNING STYLES

Introduction

Learning styles were and still are an interesting topic for investigation, especially in the field of EFL learning. Hence, learning styles were introduced and attracted the attention of scholars and researchers. Attempts to achieve a full comprehension of the nature of learning styles, and the way they operate were non-stop. Learning styles were linked to several elements and they proved that they serve as valuable indicators of how individuals' attempt to learn effectively, how they seek to communicate knowledge and how they deal with the context that frames the learning process. This chapter introduces the most common definitions of learning styles, and the famous classifications that broke these styles into subcategories. Also, it reviews the pedagogical implications of learning styles in foreign language teaching and learning, the importance of learners' awareness of their learning styles and how matching learning styles and teaching styles could be advantageous for the accomplishment of course objectives.

1. 1. Definition of Learning Styles

Numerous scholars such as Oxford (2001), Reid (1998) and Kolb (1984) shed light on learning styles as a major issue that has been discussed from different perspectives. They defined these styles as the set of preferred ways, methods, or even behaviors by which learners approach the process of learning (Oxford 2001 and Reid 1998). These styles explain how learners perceive, store, and retain the newly acquired knowledge (Kolb, 1984). Thus, learning styles can even delineate the range of biological and developmental

characteristics that may shape the nature of one teaching method as inspiring for some learners and unpleasant for others.

Consequently, scholars like Oxford (2001), Reid (1998) and Kolb (1984) have agreed upon the remarkable influence that a learning style has over the process of learning a foreign language. Similarly, a learning style is recognized by Stewart and Felicetti (1992) as the set of academic surroundings that encourages the learner to achieve a better learning. The frame definition for this study is that of Dun and Dunn (1979) whom they explained learning styles as a term that defines the varieties existing among individuals in using certain senses to comprehend, arrange, and maintain experience.

Therefore, each one is born with particular preferences to specific styles. Researchers categorized these styles on the basis of different methods that are employed during the learning process. There are several models of learning style; each one is built upon the learners' perceptual attitudes towards the learning environment (Felder and Henriques, 1995). Learning styles affect not only the understanding of the new information but rather their performances as well as.

1. 1. 1. Learning styles and Learning strategies

Studies in the field of learning marked that there is a clear misconception between learning styles and strategies. Thus there should be a distinction between the two. According to Sternberg and Grigorenko (2001), learning styles and strategies differ at the level of consciousness. A learners' learning style functions unconsciously without the learner being aware, while their strategies are consciously decided by them. Also, learning

strategies are dependent upon the case or context of learning, however learning styles are more stable and they are classified in-between ability and strategy.

Concurrently, Oxford (1990) stated that learning strategies are more specific than learning styles in the sense that learners select the appropriate strategies to better acquire, store, save and retrieve the new information. Although learning styles are believed to be flexible, they cannot be taught as it is the case for learning strategies. The majority of students are able to reflect on their learning styles preferences by observing their learning strategies. Additionally, learning styles are responsible for developing work habits, whilst learning strategies result in designing maps for the learning process. If learning strategies are derived from the learning styles and work plans and habits, they would be more effective if they resulted directly from the learning styles and work habits without including the step of mapping. Despite the stated differences, the relationship between learning styles and strategies is still doubted, because it is not obvious which one stems from the other (Kamińska, 2014)

1. 1. 2. Learning styles and cognitive styles

The terms learning style and cognitive style were used as two exchangeable terms. However, many differences have been highlighted among them. Triantafillou et al (2003) referred to cognitive styles as one of the personality dimensions that are constructed of the individual's tendencies towards thinking, perceiving and retrieving. These styles affect the person's attitudes, values and social interaction. The most notable difference between the two is the number of elements that constitute each one. On one hand, a cognitive style is composed of two dimensions, but on the other hand a set of elements constitute a learning

style. Nonetheless, in 1970's scholars shifted to use the term "learning styles" as an alternative of "cognitive style".

This shift reflects their focus on the practicality of research findings rather than the theoretical peculiarity. The cognitive styles' bipolar dimension points out that when a one element of the two which constitute the cognitive style is present it necessitates the absence of the other. However, an individual with a specific learning style preference may or may not own the set of elements which correspond to their style (Kamińska, 2014). Generally, scholars like Willing (1988) admit the visibility of learning styles; in contradiction with cognitive styles which are invisible; along with their complexity and wideness to the extent that they include each of cognitive, psychological, and affective styles.

1. 1. 3. Murrell and Claxton Approaches to learning Styles

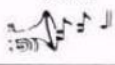






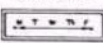






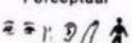
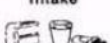

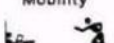
Equivalently, learning styles have been examined by Murrell and Claxton through four distinct approaches. The first approach; personality, manages to conduct research upon the personality types and some characteristic manners. According to Murrell and Claxton (1987), Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) is one of the most populous analyses of personality that evaluates the individual's interaction with the world and the process of making decisions. The second approach; information processing, aims at analyzing the process via which the learner perceives stores and retains the newly gained information. The most remarkable theory that is connected to this approach is David Kolb's experiential learning model (1984) and learning styles inventory (LSI). As claimed by Kolb (1984), it comprises of four stages which the learner is supposed to go through all of them for the favor of a successful learning experience. However, the third approach; social interaction

sheds light on the learner's behavior within the classroom environment. Moreover, the fourth approach; instructional preference that focuses on the methods used in teaching and the learning environment. The VARK model provided by Neil Fleming that deals with perceptual modes engaged in processing the learning material. (Murrell and Claxton, 1987)

1. 2. Dunn and Dunn's Constituents of a Learning Style

According to Dunn and Dunn (1979), the studies conducted to investigate the ways of learning revealed that not only individuals learn differently, but rather, some learning styles may be successful for individuals and fail with others. Scholars like Dunn and Dunn (1979) presented distinct classifications and terms when referring to learning styles but most of them agreed that each learning style is composed of many elements. As figure 1 the prior are categorized into:

Figure 1. Dunn and Dunn's Diagnosing Learning Style Elements table (1987, p:241)

Stimuli		Elements					
Environmental	Sound 	Light 	Temperature 	Design 			
Emotional	Motivation 	Persistence 	Responsibility 	Structure 			
Sociological	Peers 	Self 	Pair 	Team 	Adult 	Varied 	
Physical	Perceptual 	Intake 	Time 	Mobility 			

Designed by Dr. Rita S. Dunn, Dr. Kenneth J. Dunn

According to Dunn and Dunn (1987), the environmental elements like sound, light, temperature, and design explain how students act and react within and towards different surroundings. Some students cannot retrieve information in a classroom full of noises

whereas others can block the external sounds and accomplish their learning normally. Moreover, a student may find cold temperature as an obstacle to concentrate while gaining new knowledge while another may consider it as the perfect climate for an efficacious learning experience. Similarly, light and design within the classroom or the learning environment in general affects how a student approaches learning. One can think best in a soft lightening though the other may feel sleepier and less active in low lightening areas. As it is the case for the design, one student will tend to prefer a modern and informally designed lecture room (couches, lounge chairs, or even bed) but another will opt for a classical and formal setting (chairs, desks, and library tables) to learn easily.

The emotional elements: Motivation, persistence, responsibility, and a need for structure: Learners who are well motivated, persistent, and responsible shall be treated differently from those who are unmotivated, not persistent and/or less responsible. Teachers should direct these unmotivated learners with what to learn and provide them with the objectives and tasks to be accomplished. Also, teachers should instruct them on how to develop their knowledge or skills, and to obtain help in case it is needed. Such students appreciate complements and feedback once the assignment is finished. However, the other type of students –The unmotivated, not persistent and/or less responsible- depend upon less tasks and objectives to be performed, with a high rate of supervision and continual credible feedback during work. Likewise, need for structure is an integral factor that shapes the learning experience.

The sociological elements: Working alone, with peers, with an adult, or some combination: Studies proved that certain people tend to acquire more knowledge when they are alone; they get distracted by others' presence and sounds. However, others learn

more effectively when joining their peers in study-circles, small-groupings, and brainstorming activities. In Contradiction, some students prefer to learn in a teacher-centered classroom; being supervised by an adult, taking part in a teacher-student discussions and activities. Since students respond differently to sociological surroundings some learners tend to learn successfully without paying attention to the surrounding environment, but other learners may be distracted by what is going around them.

The physical elements: Perceptual strengths, intake, time of day, and for mobility: studies in the few previous years stated that, while twenty to thirty percent of school age people are categorized to be auditory; they acquire knowledge much effectively when they hear; and about forty percent are visual learners; they tend to store and remember what they see. Yet, the remaining tends to have a mixture between the two or more of the major perception modes. Another component of how people learn is that some may feel the need to eat, to drink or to even smoke, as to be in that time of day when their energy reaches its highest, in order to maintain concentration and grasp the needed information. Moreover, another element that empowers or breaks the learning process is student's ability to remain stagnant or to feel the demand of moving around while accomplishing the task at hand.

1. 3. Models of Learning Styles

There were a multiplicity of learning styles' classifications developed by scholars such as Rebecca Oxford, Holzman and Klein, David Kolb and Neil Fleming. In which they based their models upon elements that constitute learning styles or the way they approached learning styles. This study reviews only three of them that are Holzman and Klein's leveler-sharpener styles (1954), Kolb's experiential learning model (ELM) and

learning styles inventory (LSI) (1971) and Neil D. Fleming's VARK model (1987); which is the frame model of this research.

1. 3.1. Holzman and Klein's Leveler-Sharpener Styles (1954)

This model is built upon assimilation, and the difficulty's intensity by which the learner perceives the new knowledge. Therefore, Holzman and Klein identified two prominent styles: Leveler and sharpener. A leveler type of learner attempts to "oversimplify their perceptions of the task, assimilating detail and reducing complexity. In contrast, the sharpener fails to assimilate effectively but instead introduces complexity, treating each piece of detail or event as novel" (Cassidy, 2004, p: 427).

The tool of measurement used in this model is the Schematizing Test which demonstrates the "fail to assimilate" characteristic. It was developed by Holzman and Klein (1950) and it seeks to examine how individuals treat the changes that occur when approaching an ongoing process of stimulation. This test necessitates the learners or the respondents to evaluate a set of light squares that get bigger deliberately. The aim is to miscalculate the size of light squares, previously and currently. While levelers are more likely to ignore any changes in stimulation, sharpeners are more careful about the smallest changes and they are able to differentiate between each experience from the next (Suzuki, 1979).

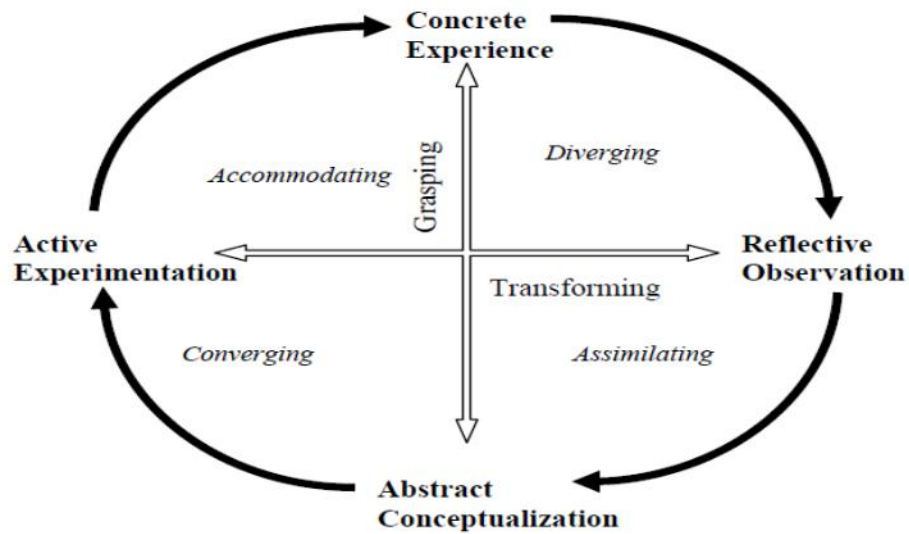
Morgan (1997) states that sharpeners are highly expected to better achieve academically, as they authentically recognize the newly perceived knowledge. In addition to their ability to carefully link between past and current learning experiences, by virtue of managing to organize, store, and differently associate previous memories. Whereas,

levelers tend to mix between diverse past learning experiences, thus they either fail to classify new knowledge or to oversimplify it. They end up facing ambiguous information storage, due to their failure in picking out the different aspects that two similar, but not identical, materials may carry.

1. 3.2. Kolb's Experiential Learning Model (ELM) and Learning Styles Inventory (LSI) (1971)

Kolb designed this model based on the prominent works of the 20th century produced by scholars such as John Dewey, Kurt Lewin, Jean Piaget, William James, Carl Jung, Paulo Freire, Carl Rogers and others, whom focused on explaining human's learning and development depending on the notion of experience. According to Kolb (1984), experiential learning modal is a progressive approach to learning built upon a cycle of learning that is composed of 'dual dialectics' of action/reflection and experience/abstraction. Such theory sees learning from experience as usual and it applies to all sorts of people. Thus, Kolb's theory was defended to be applicable even outside of the educational context.

Figure 2. Kolb's Experiential Learning Circle (1984, p: 51)



As showed in figure 2, the experiential learning theory characterizes the process of learning by its continuity and interactivity. Based on this theory, learning is assimilated to a hypothetical cycle comprised of four different stages, from which individuals select the ones that best conform to their preferences. These four stages are described as two modes of grasping experience which are dialectically related: Concrete Experience (CE); experiencing, and Abstract Conceptualization (AC); thinking, and other two modes of transforming experience which are dialectically related: Reflective Observation (RO); doing; and Active Experimentation (AE); reflecting. (Kolb and Kolb, 1984)

Kolb's LSI developed four basic learning styles; each learning style is defined by the individual's tendency towards the previously mentioned dimensions. As stated by Lynch et al (1998):

The individual who adopts a convergent approach uses abstract conceptualization to drive active experimentation. Action is based on abstract understanding of the task and projected strategies for successful completion of the task. Divergers combine reflective observation with concrete experience to devise an often creative solution. Divergers are often described as creative learners because of their propensity to consider multiple potential strategies for learning and problem solving. Assimilators, concerned primarily with the explanation of their observations, favor abstract conceptualization and reflective abstract observation...Lastly, Kolb defines the accommodator. Using active experimentation and concrete experience, these learners have a clear preference for hands-on learning (Cited in Cassidy, 2004, p: 431).

1. 3.3. Neil D. Fleming's VARK Model (1987)

The VARK modality was originally developed in 1987 by Neil D. Fleming, as a sub categorization of instructional preferences that classify learning styles upon how learners perceive new knowledge. Fleming refers to these learning styles as learning modalities, modes, styles and preferences. Each individual own a certain style of how to process information; to intake it and output it. The VARK acronym stands for the sensory modalities that individuals use while learning and grasping new information; Visual, Aural, Read/Write and Kinesthetic. Within the classroom or educational context in general, each learner uses whether sight, hearing or speech for the sake of perceiving and communicating the learning material, depending on individual tendencies of approaching learning.

However, some learners are to have a multi-style tendency. For example, they are kinesthetic learners whom are not restricted to one sensory mode; rather they can have a mixture of diverse modes like joining Visual, Aural and Kinesthetic learning styles or even a mixture of all four learning modalities. Similarly, others may seem to highly opt for a specific style, and show complete refusal for another one (Fleming, 2012).

1. 3. 3. 1. The Four Modalities

According to Neil Fleming (2012):

Visual: The Learners categorized under this mode show a respectful amount of awareness of their environment and where they belong. They learn more successfully through the presentation of information in the form of charts, graphs, flow charts, and all the symbolic arrows, circles, hierarchies. Also, they employ other non mentioned means used by the teacher to transfer different sorts of the learning material instead of using the typical explanation; through words. Again, in respect of transmitting meaning, layout, whitespace, headings, patterns, designs and color are of a great value.

Aural: such individuals opt for the type of knowledge that is spoken or heard. They learn best through interaction with others, and tasks that permit them to communicate the information through hearing and speaking it. The activities that match this mode of learning are discussions, oral feedback, phone chats, discussion boards, oral presentations, tutorials, lecturers' voices, verbal explanations, tape recordings, stories and jokes, recall to other people.

Read/Write: This mode includes learners who are typically interested in words i.e. they tend to prefer learning via written or read information that is why most students and

teacher tend to lean for this modality. Such learners admire the use of words and are so careful for the language precision and they achieve better learning outcomes when taught through quotes, lists, texts, books, manuals, headings, dictionaries, glossaries, textbooks, and lecture notes.

Kinesthetic: Learners who are categorized under this style are expected to perform better via “learning by doing”, which implements interacting with the environment using many of the individuals’ senses in order to experience and learn new things. Kinesthetic learners opt for the use of real experiences, concrete examples, case studies, field trips and laboratory experiments.

Despite of the main VARK learning styles, Fleming (2012) subcategorized learners’ preferences into single and multimodal preferences. Which means that learners are not simply visuals, aural, read/write or kinesthetic, but they tend to vary between learners who favor one learning style and others who opt for more than one style. At one hand, learners’ with single preferences are those who own one dominant learning style that controls the learning process. The strength of their single preference ranks from very strong to mild preference. If the single preference is very strong or strong, it signifies that they are clear about the type of information via which they learn best and it usually leads to successful learning. However, if the preference is mild, they are more likely to show a small amount of stability towards their tendency to specific learning ways and methods. And learning through materials that go hand in hand with their learning styles does not always end with a successful learning style. At the other hand, learners with multimodal preferences are either bimodal, trimodal or all four preferences. Bimodal learners are identified with two learning styles through which they learn best. For example they mix between aural and

visual learning materials to achieve better learning results. Trimodal learners tend to prefer three learning styles and adapt to different information types that match with their three learning styles. For example a learner with a trimodal preference combines between visual aural and read/write learning materials to improve their learning process. A learner with all four preferences is the one that have a tendency towards all VARK learning styles. This category of learners is able to process any sort of information they exposed to, and to achieve the best of the learning process. For example a learner classified under this category is capable of learning through visual materials such as diagrams, drawings and video tapes and at the same time s/he can successfully operate with aural information like recordings, read/write information that highly employs the use of words and/or learning by performing and getting involved in authentic experiences.

1. 4. The Implication of Learning Styles in Foreign Language Learning and Teaching

1. 4.1. EFL Learners' Learning Style

Learning styles are of a great importance for the ongoing process of learning. Hence, both learners and teachers must be aware of how to successfully make use of these styles for the benefit of achieving the learning objectives. Relatively, educational studies revealed that EFL learners have different learning preferences than those of native speakers. Reid (1987) claimed that individuals from different cultural backgrounds varied in their sensory learning modalities. For instance, according to the same study done by Reid (1987), Asians were visuals and Koreans were the most visuals, while Hispanic learners were frequently auditory and the Japanese were non-auditory. Moreover, a different study (Almasa & Parilah, 2009) discovered that ESL learners tend to have a Kinesthetic learning style, and

they demonstrated no propensity for visual, auditory or group learning. For this reason “identifying the learning style preferences of nonnative speakers (NNSs) may have wide-ranging implications in the areas of curriculum design, materials development, student orientation, and teacher training” (Reid, 1987, p. 88).

1. 4.2. Learners’ awareness of their Learning Styles

The learners’ awareness of their learning styles preferences is defined as their knowledge of how they process, store and retrieve new information packages, and how they communicate with the learning environment. Thus, the importance of learners’ knowledge of their learning tendencies is more or less undeniable. It offers them the opportunity to be familiar with the learning process and how it operates, and to justify why they tend to prefer or dislike learning specific items. Learning styles awareness permits the learners to rationalize the reasons framing their good performance in some subject matters, and bad performance in others (Xu, 2011).

Hence, it promotes the adjustment of the learning behavior in accordance to the learning context, the subject matter and the teaching methods, to enhance the learning outcomes, and to push learners to achieve better academically. Learners can base their learning strategies choices on their learning styles, and their consciousness of their strengths and weaknesses. Besides, it pushes them to be more responsible and autonomous of their own learning and to be more self-dependent when it comes to paying more efforts to decide on their learning objectives, and working sufficiently and effectively to accomplish all needed tasks to attain the pre-set goals. Finally, and most importantly, it advertises for a learner-centered classroom, in which the teacher will obtain new roles (Jaouen, 1990).

1. 5. Matching Learning Styles and Teaching Styles

Several studies showed that matching learning styles with teaching styles is so beneficial to foster the learners' academic achievement, attitudes and behaviors at the school level (Griggs & Dunn 1984), at the college level (Brown 1978; Charkins et al. 1985), and particularly in foreign language instruction (Wallace & Oxford 1992). Concurrently, when teachers know best about their learners' individual preferences, they will be able to correlate the instructional methods and the learning material to these preferences (Oxford, 2003). Thus, it is the teachers' responsibility to consider all sorts of differences, and to design a teaching approach that conforms to all existing learning modalities. Such teaching approach is required to make the balance between the instructional strategies and the learners' preferences "so that all learning styles are simultaneously or at least sequentially accommodated" (Oxford 1990, cited in Felder and Henriques, 1995, p. 28).

As claimed by Felder and Henriques (1995) teachers are supposed to motivate learning because it is a necessity for teachers to diversify the material taught, to maintain learners' interest towards the subject matter. They should provide them with materials dynamically related to their daily life, personal experiences and memories, rather than introducing redundant information to be learned by heart. Secondly, to balance concrete information with conceptual information: Teachers should make a balance between the two in every course, and at any level. There should be a fair teaching method that equates the concrete aspects (word definitions, rules for verb conjugation and adjective-noun agreement) and the conceptual ones (syntactical and semantic patterns, comparisons and contrasts with the students' native language). Interest towards one side over the other may arise, such as in

the case of the elementary schools. The emphasis would be directed towards the sensory learners, and still, there should be something that appeals to intuitors.

Thirdly, they ought to balance structured teaching approaches with open-ended unstructured activities: there should be a combination between teaching methods that apply strict training (deductive, sequential) with the ones that focus on conversation and cultural contexts of the target language (Inductive, global). Fourthly, they have to make liberal use of visuals: One of the most interesting methods that should be adopted by teachers is the integration of photographs, drawings, sketches, and cartoons to present and transmit the meaning of new vocabulary items. Also, make use of show films, videotapes, and live dramatizations to demonstrate lessons presented within texts.

Conclusion

As a field of investigation, learning styles gained major importance and recognition in the few past decades. Innumerable studies have tackled this issue and most, if not all, of them concluded by introducing a learning style as the individual differences in approaching the process of learning. Learning styles have been categorized and classified differently by many scholars, in which each of them provided a unique model based on how learners perceive the new knowledge, and maintain it successfully. Likewise, learning styles have been subject to distinctions with many other concepts which were often intermingled with. Nonetheless, learning styles' awareness proved effectiveness in the educational context. It is considered to be among the very influential elements that may decide the degree of the learning process' success. For this reason, matching learning and teaching styles and considering all individual differences is an important element in achieving better learning

outcomes. However, it is also the learners' responsibility to be familiar with their learning styles because this would help them identify their learning and select the suitable strategies to achieve them. Finally, the application of learning styles extended in many fields and provided evidence that the promotion and rationalization of such concept must be taken into account and put into practice to achieve all possible advantages.

CHAPTER TWO: ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN THE ORAL EXPRESSION COURSE

Introduction

The issue of learning has been spotlighted by several researchers for they had put so much effort to determine the set of factors that may affect it in a positive or a negative way. Thus, field investigators inquired the learning outcomes and attempted to understand what could lead to a successful or a poor academic achievement. Since this chapter tries to cover the section about academic achievement in the oral expression course, it reviews academic achievement and the course of oral expression, in terms of proficiencies that are targeted in this course. As our study is conducted within the Algerian educational system, this chapter highlights the most important notions of the English language integration within the Algerian educational system. Because academic achievement was related to learning styles, a set of case studies that dealt with this subject matter were summarized and reviewed as well.

2. 1. Defining Academic Achievement

Academic achievement and academic performance are commonly used interchangeably. It was defined as the overall result of the learning process. It identified the extent to which the learning objectives are accomplished (Ward, Stoker, & Murray-Ward, 1996). Academic performance was known to reflect the individuals' ability, and then became as the indicator of excellence in intelligence tests (Chamorro-Premuzic&Furnham,2006).

Academic performance has been strongly linked with intelligence rather than personality factors (Sternberg & Kaufman, 1998). However, empirical proofs revealed that both of

intelligence and personality can serve as predictors of the learning outcomes acquired at the end of the course. Such relationship applies to secondary and college levels of education (Busato, 1999).

Academic performance is also introduced as the students' records of past semester Grade Point Average (GPA) and their expected one for the current semester. The grade point average or GPA is now used by most institutions as a suitable measurement tool of the overall academic performance of their students (Russel et al, 2014). However, there is no generally agreed method of measuring academic achievement or the aspects that should be considered. It is often evaluated through examinations and/ or constant assessment (Ward et al, 1996).

2. 2. The Oral Expression course in the EFL Classrooms

The oral expression course is a module designed for EFL learners to actually practice the target language. In the context of our study, the oral expression course sheds light on learners' speaking and listening skills, in addition to the overall English language use. It evaluates how well they perform in this course by assessing their performance listening and speaking based tasks. In addition to how they manage to use the English language appropriately and correctly. Hence, learners' annual averages will represent the rate of their academic achievement throughout the year in the oral expression course. Their academic achievement is regarded as the development of their speaking and listening skills, and the language use.

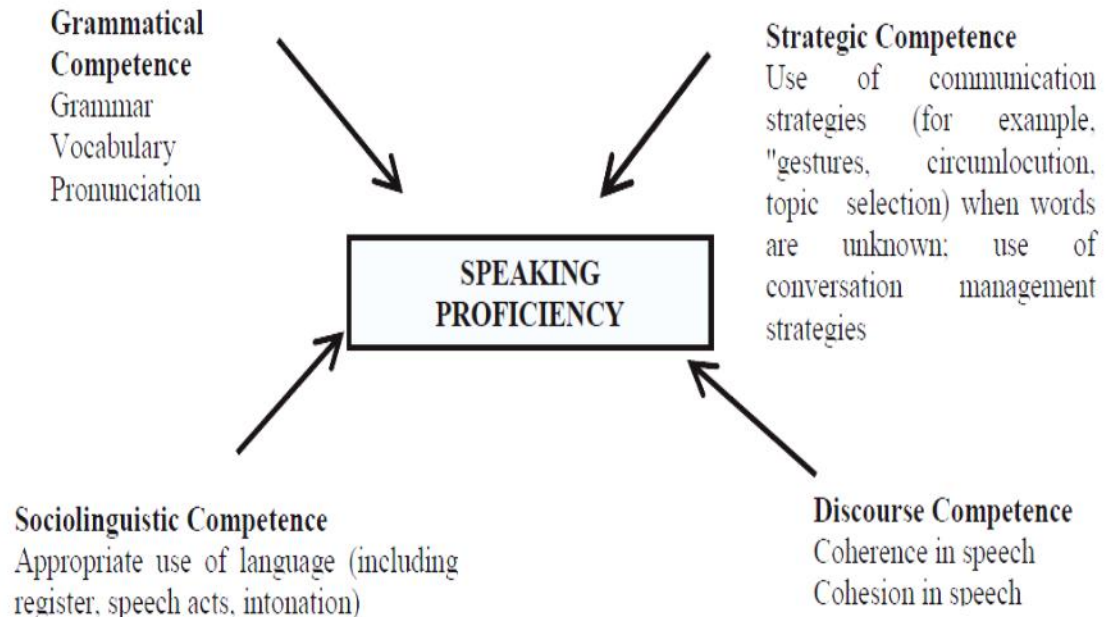
2. 2. 1. The Speaking Skill

The speaking skill was described by Burns & Joyce (1997) as the process of interaction that involves all of receiving, processing and storing the information derived from the meaning that is constructed. The form and the meaning presented in such process are controlled by the context in which it occurs, participants taking part in it and the purpose behind starting the interaction. From another view, speaking is defined as creating verbal reactions by the listener through creating different auditory alerts by the speaker. It involves the logical combination between sounds from the target language's system to create meaningful words, expressions and sentences (Cornbleet and Carter, 2001).

Moreover speaking was introduced as the learners' ability to produce a coherent, fluent and appropriate communication in which they express themselves orally within a significant context. This communication must accomplish both transactional (delivering necessary information) and interactional (casual conversations where a group of people sit and chat together) purposes, respecting the correctness of the language's grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation as well as the pragmatic and discourse rules of the target language (Torkey, 2006)

Figure 3. Skills Underlying Speaking Proficiency

Scarcella & Oxford (1992, p: 154)



As it is shown in figure 1, the speaking proficiency is divided into four main competencies. Speakers must master the following sub aspects of speaking skill in the target language in order to achieve an effective interactive process. The linguistic Competence involves the next sub skills: Employing comprehensible pronunciation, respecting the grammatical correctness and following vocabulary adequacy, appropriateness and relevance. Discourse Competence includes these sub skills: Respecting coherence and cohesiveness of discourse structure, keeping the continuity of conversation by managing the interaction and maintaining its effectiveness. Pragmatic Competence encompasses the next sub skills: Using the appropriate and accurate set of speech functions depending on the conversation's context and the register used. Strategic Competence comprises of next sub skills: Using compensatory and achievement strategies

to convey the needed meaning when the speaker lacks knowledge about some words e.g. gestures.

2. 2. 2. Purposes of Speaking

According to Nunan (1989), speaking a language has two main goals, transactional and interactional. Both purposes differ from each other. Transactional discourse implements the communication of information between the speaker and the listener, in which the language is message oriented rather than listener oriented (Nunan, 1989). The focus in such discourse is directed towards the accuracy of communicating the information or the message and the effectiveness of understanding it by the listener. The transactional discourse is employed in news' broadcasts, descriptions, narrations and instructions (Richards, 1990).

The speaking skill here tends to be more organized and preplanned in terms of the content to be expressed (Basturkmen, 2002). However, according to Torkey (2006), the interactional purpose of speaking the language is much often called the interpersonal use of language for it aims at preserving some relationships or even starting new ones. The interactional language use is listener oriented and it is demonstrated through greetings, short talks and complements. It is true that the two language uses have some differences but mostly they are combined together to make the transactional purpose of language use smoother, and to maintain good social relationships (Brazil, 1995).

2. 2. 3. The Notion of Communicative Competence

Since the oral expression course includes the evaluation of learners' language use, it may be linked to the notion of communicative competence that was first coined by Hymes

(1972). As he reported that the communicatively competent language learners are able to effectively transmit and understand the exchanged information within a given context. They are also able of relating what has been learned in the classroom context to the outside environment, in addition to their knowledge of how to use the language appropriately depending on when and where it is used, rather than mere formulation of grammatically correct utterances. So, good language users in the oral expression course are determined as communicatively competent.

2. 3. Listening Skill

Many scholars aimed at providing a clear definition of the listening skill, among them Nyikos and Oxford (1993). They agreed that the listening skill is an essential language skill that is so disregarded by foreign and second language teachers. In a differentiation between hearing and listening, Stephen Lucas (1998) reported that hearing is physiological process that evolves the transfer of sound impulses from the outer ear to the central auditory system in the brain, whereas listening is about paying careful attention to what we hear so that we can make sense out of it. Hence, listening exceeds the limits of hearing voices and noises, to implement the decoding, comprehending and deducing the language in use (Harrowth, 1966).

Effective learners can be categorized under specific types of learners. They tend to learn better than others and achieve higher scores. This is why a set of listening types have been acknowledged by Chariffian (2009). The first one is active listening in which listeners under this category tend to learn better and faster. They assess what is being heard, and they concentrate on focal information rather than details. Also, they note down the major

points in complete sentences, and absorb the general meaning. The second type is partial Listening which describes listeners who tend to think of what to reply to what they listen to more than thinking and focusing on what is being said. The third one is intermittent listening that implement to listeners with deaf ears , whose ears are clogged due to their lack of interest. But, they shake their heads out of agreement while they do not even know what is being said. Those listeners who tend to let the way open to their emotions to interfere while their listening, which results in breaking up their concentration, making it difficult to recapitulate what has been said. The fourth type is appreciate listening which applies to listeners who are able to absorb the whole meaning by focusing on the words said as well as comprehending the speaker's voice tone, body gestures and facial expressions. This type of listening includes even the awareness of sincerity, confidence and depth of certainty and other features other than the words themselves.

2. 3. 1. Purposes of Listening

While listening, individuals' purposes seem to vary depending on the target situation. Lindsay and Knight (2006) stated that these purposes are of four types. A listener can be looking for precise details, for the general meaning or listening to identify the general idea. Listening differs also between listening to gain information, to enjoy or to preserve some social relations, or even to learn a new language. Nonetheless, Anderson and Lynch (1988) claimed that listening purposes vary between transactional and interactional intentions. The first is when the language is used to establish a successful exchange of information. Conversely, the second purpose is when the language is used as means of starting or maintaining social relations.

2. 3. Assessing Learners' Academic Performance in the Oral Expression Course

As the target course of oral expression focuses on learners' speaking and listening skills along with their overall English language use. The present study provides the aspects integrated in the assessment of learners' performance in speaking/ listening tasks and the overall target spoken language use. Based on the "Common European Framework of Reference for languages: learning, teaching, assessment" (2001), learners levels are identified through relating criteria of what they are able to do in a specific skill, to certain levels (C2, C1, B2, B1, A2, A1) that reflect their current levels. Such Reference levels are designed to serve as checklists to help teachers' profile their learners' skills and deficiencies in speaking, listening and even in the overall language proficiency.

2. 3. 1. Aspects of Spoken language Use

According to (CEF, 2001), the students are divided into eight levels based on the evaluation of strengths and weaknesses in their spoken target language use. The five basic elements that the assessment process should consider are: Range, accuracy; fluency, interaction and coherence. For instance, a very competent language user is evaluated to have a C₂ level which shows a great amount of flexibility in reformulating the same ideas into a diversity of linguistic forms, in respect of the range criteria. In terms of accuracy, that user must demonstrate a good rate of grammatical control while using a complex language. In regards of the fluency, a language user must be able to express him/her self in a spontaneous and a smooth way with great extent of natural flow.

In relation to interaction, s/he is expected to exceed the verbal use of language to the employment of non-verbal aspects such as intonation and stress. Respectively, that

competent language user must be coherent and cohesive in using different organizational patterns and connectors. However, a poor language user is said to have a very basic range of words and simple structures that are related to specific events or situations. These language users are evaluated as A₁ language users, whom show a very small extent of language control over some memorized grammatical patterns. In terms of fluency and interaction, this student manages only short previously prepared utterances, and can engage in a communication that is very basic and dependent on pausing to search for needed expressions.

2. 3. 2. Overall oral production (Speaking)

Learners, who are competent at the level of the overall production, are those who are able to provide a clear speech that is well organized and represents a great amount of flow and smoothness. According to CEF (2001), the competent language speakers in terms of oral production, are evaluated as C₂ speakers. These speakers' speech is well structured and logical that force the listener to remember many important notes out of the speech. Another level provided by the CEF (2001) is C₁ speakers whom are considered as very competent too, and who are able to provide systematic and well organized presentations about complex subject matters, concluding what is presented by a clear and appropriate conclusion. Learners who show a little less proficiency are regarded as B₁/B₂ speakers, while the very basic language producers are assessed as A₁/A₂. These speakers are regarded as very simple language users, in which they are able to provide simple descriptions about really limited topics and with the use of a limited range of words and structures, mainly in an isolated manner.

2. 3. 3. The Overall Listening Comprehension (Listening)

As categorized in the previous sections, the CEF (2001) defines a very proficient listener as the one, who faces no sort of difficulty while understanding any kind of language that is spoken, live or on a broadcast, with a high rate of native speed. Such learners are evaluated as C₂ listeners. Generally, listeners who fall under the category of C are those who have a strong capacity of listening to and comprehending any topic regardless of its difficulty and complexity. They are able to absorb the meaning of any spoken language passages even when they are faced with strange idioms and expressions, or the speech is not very clearly organized. In contrast, poor listeners are able to comprehend speeches that are short, very basic and related to commonly familiar topics such as family, employment or shopping. They tend to need a great amount of in-between pauses and careful articulation of words.

2. 4. EFL in the Algerian Education Context

There were undeniable efforts made by the Algerian government since 1962, to establish a well-organized educational system that suits the needs of the Algerian population, and servers the enhancement of the Algerian intellectual level. As a consequence of the Algerian-French historical background, French language was a cultural necessity within the Algerian context until the 70's. However, after the Arabization policy in 1971; the efforts dedicated by the Algerian government after its independence in 1962 to adopt the Arab language as its official language (Dekhir, 2013) and the all-inclusive socioeconomic changes, the English language gained a new position in Algeria as a communicative tool.

The higher education has obtained a new path with the License-Master-Doctorate (LMD) system organized by the Ministry of Higher Educational Scientific Research implemented in the 2004/2005 academic year (Rezig, 2011). The adoption of such system aimed at enhancing the Algerian Higher Education in terms of compatibility, comparison and competitiveness at worldwide level. Also, it sought to attract the attention of Algerian Students as well as non-Algerian scholars and researchers (Benouar, 2013).

The Algerian educational system has gone through a series of reforms since the Algerian independence. After one hundred thirty years of French colonization, Algerian government decided to erase all French traces including their language. To do so, Algeria adopt employed the Arabization policy in order to avoid any inconsistency with its ideology (Rezig, 2011). According to (Gill, 1999), Arabization process was of two perspectives. On one hand, the first perspective was dedicated for the sake of modernization and achieving development at the level of administrations and school systems.

On the other hand, the second perspective was devoted for accomplishing the decolonization process and preserving the Algerian tradition (Mouhleb, 2005). In 1979, primary and middle school were fused together as a one stage of nine years, in which Arabic was the tool of instruction in all subjects except for foreign languages. But as soon as Minister Mostafa Lachraf came back to office, French was reintegrated in teachers' training and in teaching modules as Math's and biology (Benrabah, 2004). English in such system was not taught until the age of thirteen years old in middle school, which is not really effective nor advantageous for students, as it was stated by Oyama (1976).

As a step towards developing the teaching of foreign languages to students at a younger age, school pupils in 1993 were given the chance to choose among English and French to be taught for them as an obligatory foreign language. However, ninety percent of the pupils' parents preferred French over English. Originally, Algerian higher educational system followed the French model in which faculties were independent even programming and designing the set of courses to be taught. In 1971, some modifications were planned to renovate the university' system, but key reforms took place during 1988. However, Algerian universities were still affected by the French model. Though the number of French teachers has decreased, French was generally the language of instruction. In 1980, the number of Algerian teachers has enlarged, once a decree was passed to arabize the first year at university for law, economics and political sciences. As a result, French declined to be the used tool in instruction only for French as a subject matter (Rezig, 2011).

Furthermore, Algeria introduced a set of changes, in the mid of 2000, in order to develop the educational system. English gained a great significance in the education curriculum and became so demanded at all levels. Relatively, there were many establishments of different TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) schools all around the country. The current view of English language holds some political aspects, in relation to the French language, in which one of the both is threatened? Once French language was in decline, learning the English language was a compulsory need.

As explained by Miliani (2000), since the French language is in a situation where its significance in socio-cultural and educational spheres is weakening, learning the English language is the perfect alternative to solve the probably occurring problems in terms of education, technology and economics. Effectively, English language was decided to be the

second foreign language in the beginning of the 90's, but later in 2000 it gained the position of the first foreign language; the language of science and technology.

2. 5. Academic Achievement and Learning Styles

Nzesei (2013) investigated the relationship between learning styles and academic achievement among secondary school students in Kenya. This study employed the Barsch Learning Style Inventory (BLSI) to identify the learning style preference among the students based on visual, auditory and kinesthetic modalities. It demonstrates that the majority of students at the secondary school level are multimodal learners. The results obtained validated the strong relationship between learning styles and academic achievement especially the one that exists among multimodal learners, among males and females.

A study carried out by Jahanbakhsh (2012) sought to examine the relationship between high school girls' learning style and their academic based on the major courses of their major course of study in high school). To investigate this issue, Jahanbakhsh (2012) employed the descriptive-survey research method and the Felder and Solomon Learning Style Index (FLSI) questionnaire. The findings of this study confirmed the relationship that occurs between certain learners' learning styles and their academic achievement in certain major courses.

In a paper handled by Warn (2009), he determined to affirm the connection between learning styles and academic achievement in two final year subjects. This paper makes use of Kolb's Learning Style Inventory (LSI)(1976) to identify the learners' learning styles at the end of the courses. In addition to a comparative study between the students' academic

achievement in both courses, relating each of them to the dominant style that takes control over learning the subject. The results derived at the end of this study disconfirm the relationship between learning styles and academic achievement.

Most students have a variety of learning styles. Thus, learners with multiple learning styles perform better than those who have one learning style. Similarly, it has been assumed that learning styles have an impact on learners' academic achievement. Relatively, therefore, teachers should recognize their learners' learning styles and focus on their usefulness in attaining the learning objectives (Abidin et al., 2011).

Researchers must establish a vision about the learning styles that are more preferred in the educational system. When students are aware about the styles in which they may perform better, they will be motivated to establish more efficient and flexible styles. Additionally, there have been two methods of developing learners' academic achievement; the first is by duplicating learners' learning styles and the learning environment. The second is by making a balanced use of learning styles during teaching (JilardiDamavandi, et al., 2011).

Learning styles can be used as a focal predictor of learners' academic achievement, and must be engaged in the process of evolving their academic performance especially in the field of foreign language learning. However, some factors may occur when learners are exposed to teaching styles that collapse with their learning styles. Resultantly, it is teachers' responsibility to balance between the instructional method and learners' learning styles in the classroom (AkbariChermahini, Ghanbari & GhanbarriTalab 2013).

Research by Goklap (2013) shows that students should be well directed and provided with help to select the most convenient learning styles that suits the learning environment to enhance their academic achievement. In addition, students should obtain the learning styles that are gainful for them.

The association between learning styles and academic achievement was also discussed by Vaishnav (2013), in which the study's population was secondary school learners. This paper tends to analyze students' learning styles, and to study the relation and effect of learning styles on academic achievement of students. The outcomes of this investigation show a clear and positive relationship between the learning styles considered in this study and the students' academic achievement.

An association of academic performance with learning style preference of medical students was examined by Chaudhary et al (2015). The purpose of this study was to assess preferred learning styles and find out their relationship with the academic performance of undergraduate medical students in various medical colleges in Pakistan. A cross-sectional study was performed among five hundred ninety seven medical students. As a tool of diagnosing the students' learning styles, the validated version of the VARK questionnaire was handed to the entire sample. This study concludes that majority of students were found to be multimodal, and learning style preference was not connected with academic performance in medical students across Pakistan.

Narayani (2014) carried out an inquiry that aims to inspect the correlation between learning styles of higher secondary students and their academic performance. The study's objective was to determine the impact of learning styles on learners' academic

performance. It used the Index of Learning Styles (LSI) designed by Felder and Soloman, to identify the learners' learning styles (1990). Results deduced from this study show that there is no significant relationship between the frame learning styles of the study and the learners' academic achievement.

Despite the multiplicity of influential studies that tackled the issue of the association learning styles and academic achievement, our study is still significant and unique. It attempts to cover the probable effect of learning preferences on EFL learners' academic achievement specifically in the oral expression course. By its choice of considering the population of first year EFL learners at the context of university of 08 Mai 1945 , this investigations differs from all other previously held inquiries. Moreover, this study employs the validated version of Neil Fleming's VARK questionnaire as a tool of data collection, along with a quantitative descriptive method that seeks to analyze and relate the data obtained from the questionnaire to learners academic achievement in the course of oral expression course. This will help us validate or deny the research hypotheses.

Conclusion

The academic achievement of EFL learners has always been a good topic to be investigated by researchers all over the world. It attracted scholars' attention to understand how it is measured and which factors could affect it. Relatively, academic achievement of EFL learners in the Algerian higher educational system raises so many questions to be understood. Questions as how such system is constructed and how it considers elements that involve in affecting the students' academic achievement. Hence, EFL learners'

academic performance in the oral expression course specifically, at the Algerian university represents an interesting area of research.

CHAPTER THREE: FIELD INVESTIGATION

Introduction

The current study attempts to identify the learning styles of EFL first year learners. Alike, it aims to investigate the effect of the students' learning preferences on their academic achievement in the oral expression course. As a means of data collection for this inquiry, the seventh version of the VARK questionnaire designed by Neil Fleming is administered. In addition, the students' exam and evaluation scores are used to test their academic achievement in the oral expression course. Thus, this chapter introduces the population and the sample considered in this study. It describes and explains the quantitative descriptive research method employed throughout the research. Also, it represents the data collection tools, interprets, analyzes and discusses the results obtained from the previous tools. It ends with introducing some pedagogical implications and study limitations that may benefit students, teachers or future researchers.

3. 1. The Quantitative Descriptive method

This inquiry falls under the quantitative descriptive method of research that seeks to determine the effect of first year learners' learning styles on their academic achievement in the oral expression course. This type of research is based on descriptive statistics that aim at providing a detailed description of the two research variables and establishing the effect of one variable (learning styles) on the other (learners' academic achievement in the oral expression course).

In order to collect data required carrying out this research, a questionnaire in addition to students' exam and evaluation scores are used. The reason behind this choice of data

collection tools is to build a numerical background that serves investigating the relationship between learners learning preferences and their annual averages; which represent their academic achievement in the oral expression course.

The results of data collection tools are represented in the form of percentages, and are organized in tables. The percentages are counted through this rule:

$$X (\%) = n \times 100 / N$$

The percentage (X) stands for a particular learning preference that is calculated by multiplying the number of students who are identified with this learning style (n) by 100, than; the sum is divided by the total number of informants (N)

3.2. The Population and Sampling of the Study

In order to meet the purposes of this study, a population of two hundred forty five first year EFL students enrolled in the department of English, at the University of Guelma is selected. First year students are supposed to be less familiar with their learning styles, and own little knowledge about how their learning preferences may relate to their academic performance in different subject matters. Thus, results derived from this investigation will reveal the learning styles of EFL students in the beginning of their specialization in the field of English language learning. The sample considered in this research, it is randomly chosen. However, only two out of six groups are considered, since these two groups have the same teacher of the oral expression course. The aim for such selection is that students are assessed the same way, which will be more relevant as well as helpful when the learners' learning preferences are compared to their academic preferences.

3. 3. The Questionnaire

3. 3. 1. Description of the VARK Questionnaire

The VARK questionnaire was designed by Neil D. Fleming (1987), to assess the learners' ways of learning. The original version was designed for different groups of people. The seventh version of the VARK questionnaire is used in this study and it includes sixteen questions that help respondents to find out their learning styles. This version was released in 2006. It was enhanced by Dr. Charles Bonwell, Abby Hassler, Heather Lander, Faye Fleming, and Carol Cadigan. Each question is followed by four choices. There are other versions of this questionnaire, and many translated versions of it as well.

Moreover, the VARK questionnaire analyses the respondents' answers and the way they deal with each question to identify their learning modalities. Some learners find that the results obtained for them do not conform to who they really are. This is due to the fact that they select the ones that they think they should opt for, rather than opting for the options that express their ways of thinking. Among the most important instructions of the questionnaire is that VARK respondents are required to select more than one option in case they face several ones appealing to the way they think, instead of restricting themselves to only one option. Similarly, they can pass any question that is not relevant to their cases.

3. 3. 2. Administration of the Questionnaire

As a part of this research, forty eight copies of the VARK questionnaire are delivered for first year EFL learners, at the department of English in the University of 8 Mai 1945, Guelma. The questionnaires are answered in the 21st March 2017, to the informants from

two groups at the session of oral expression course. Due to some absences, we were obliged to deliver the rest of the questionnaires at another session for those who did not answer it in the first session.

Since the answers are anonymous, two students who did not mention their names in their copies, so we were required to eliminate them from our sample. The questionnaires are distributed after providing the learners with a brief introduction of the VARK questionnaire and its role in serving the aims of this research. Besides, clarified that their answers are not to be anonymous in order to compare between their learning styles and averages and that they will not be revealed under any circumstances. The learners did not face any problems with the questions included within the questionnaire, except with one word which is “itinerary”. The word was further explained along with the rest of the options under the same question. All in all, the procedure of delivering, answering and handing back the questionnaires went smoothly and successfully.

3. 3. 3. Data Analysis and Interpretation

After collecting the distributed copies of the VARK questionnaire, the answers of each informant are scored, and analyzed according to Fleming’s (2012) scoring method. The total number of the informant’s answers determines the stepping distance. The stepping distance is the difference between the total scores of each choice (A, B, C and D), and it determines the respondent’s learning preference. The stepping distance of students whose score of answers ranges from fourteen to twenty one is one. The stepping distance of those whose score of answers ranges from twenty two to twenty seven is two. The stepping distance of students whose answers range from twenty eight to thirty two is three.

Moreover, the stepping distance of students whose score of answers exceeds thirty two is four.

Each option represents a specific learning style. The options A, B, C and D reflect visual, aural, read/write and kinesthetic learning styles; respectively. The process of scoring is accomplished through four successive steps. Before starting with the steps, the respondent's scores must be ordered from the highest score to the lowest score. Then, the first is that the choice with the highest score is always the respondent's first preference. The second step is that if the difference between the first and the second option is larger than his/her stepping distance, it implements that the respondent has a single preference. If the difference between the two options is the same as the stepping distance, s/he proceeds with the next step.

The third step is to subtract the respondent's second high from his/her first highest score. If the difference between the two is larger than his/her stepping distance, s/he has a bimodal preference. If the value does not exceed the stepping distance, the respondent continues with the fourth step which is the last one. This step is to subtract the respondent's third highest score from his second highest score. Similar to the previous steps, if the difference between the two scores is larger than the stepping distance, the respondent has a trimodal preference, but if it equals the stepping distance, it means that four styles are preferences.

Type of preference	Number	Percentage (%)
Single	21	45.65
Multiple	25	54.34
Total	46	100

Table 3. 3. 1. Students' type of Preference

The types of learning preferences vary between two major classifications; single and multiple preferences (unimodal and multimodal, respectively). According to the results, the majority of students (54.34%) are multimodal learners. This implies that they join between more than one learning style to obtain new information, rather than using one learning preference for each learning context. However, (45.65%) had single preferences. This indicates that they own a sole learning style that dominates their learning processes. Such learners are restricted to a specific way of learning in which they learn best only when the learning material matches with their learning preference.

Multiple preferences	Number	Percentage (%)
Bimodal	7	28
Trimodal	7	28
All Four	11	44
Total	25	100

Table 3. 3. 2. Sub-types of multiple Preferences

According to the results obtained from the questionnaire, (44%) of the respondents join between all four learning styles to grasp process and store learning materials. However, (28%) have bi-modal preference. This designates that they link between two different

learning styles which co-operate together to process new experiences. Similarly, (28%) of the participants are identified to have a tri-modal preference which implements that their learning experiences are under the control of three different learning modes.

Single Preference	Number	Percentage (%)
Visual	2	9.52
Aural	12	57.14
Read/Write	6	28.57
Kinesthetic	1	4.76
Total	21	100

Table 3. 3. 3. Single Learning Preferences

As showed in the previous table, the majority of the informants (57.14%) are visual learners. This signifies that they learn best through the use of visual tools such as charts, diagrams, circles...etc. However, (28.57%) are diagnosed to have an aural learning preference, which implies that they opt for the type of knowledge that is heard or spoken. Contrastively, (9.52%) are categorized under the read/write preference. This entails that they prefer learning packages presented in from of written or read words. Only one student had a kinesthetic preference. This indicates that they perform better through interaction with the environment involving different senses. Thus such learners are more likely to learn through real and concrete experiences.

Strength of Preference	Number	Percentage
Very Strong	3	14.28
Strong	4	19.04
Mild	14	66.66
Total	21	100

Table 3. 3. 4. Strength of Single Preferences

Concerning the strength of students' single preferences, the majority of informants were found to have mild single preferences. This signifies that their single preference is moderate in terms of strength. (19.04%) are identified with strong single preferences, which imply that the learning style they tend to learn better with is more remarkable than those with mild preferences. Only (14.28%) are accounted to have a very strong single preference. This signifies that their single learning style is very dominant over their learning processes.

Mild Preferences	Number	Percentage (%)
Visual	0	00
Aural	8	57.14
Read/Write	6	42.58
Kinesthetic	0	00
Total	14	100

3. 3. 5. Mild Single Preferences

Concerning students with mild single preferences, (57.14 %) own a mild aural learning preference. It implements that they are aural learners but their preference is not really

strong. (42.52%) of informants have mild single read/write preferences. This signifies that they likely prefer to learn via written or read materials, but their preference is not very remarkable. However, there are no informants who are accounted to have neither mild kinesthetic preferences nor visual ones. This implies that there are no students whom are categorized with mild single read/write and kinesthetic preferences.

Strong single Preference	Number	Percentage (%)
Visual	1	33.33
Aural	2	66.66
Read/Write	0	00
Kinesthetic	0	00
Total	3	100

Table 3. 3. 6. Strong Single Preferences

As the previous table presents, only three students were identified to have strong single preferences, (66.66%) possess aural preferences. This entails that these learners' preference to aural learning materials is powerful in which they make use of their speaking and listening skills to better absorb the information. Only one student has owned a strong visual preference. This indicates that s/he is strongly attracted by visual types of learning and that her/his preference really impacts the way s/he tends to learn better. That student tends to use visual materials like videos, charts and colors in order to process the new information.

Very Strong Preference	Number	Percentage (%)
Visual	1	25
Aural	2	50
Read/Write	00	00
Kinesthetic	1	25
Total	4	100

Table 3. 3. 7. Very Strong Learning Preferences

As far as the students with very strong single preferences are concerned, the table above shows that half students (50%) were revealed to own very strong aural learning preferences. This points out that their aural preference is very powerful, and that their learning process is hugely controlled by their aural learning styles. Moreover, only (25%) are categorized with very strong visual learning preference, which means that this student's learning process is dependent on the exposure to aural learning packages. Similarly, (25%) are characterized to have a kinesthetic learning preference. This signifies that this student is so attracted by learning that is manifested in form of authentic experiences and interaction with the environment. However, there were no students that had very strong read/write learning preferences.

Bimodal Preference	Number	Percentage (%)
Kinesthetic/Read/Write	1	14.28
Aural/Kinesthetic	3	42.58
Aural/Visual	2	28.57
Visual/Kinesthetic	1	14.28
Total	7	100

Table 3. 3. 8. Bi-modal Learning Preferences

As it is mentioned above, seven informants were distinguished to have bi-modal learning preferences, i.e. they mix between two different learning modes. Three (42.85%) have an aural-kinesthetic learning preference. This signifies that this category of students opt for genuine learning experiences in which they will be able to interact with their environment and people around them in order to communicate information. Such learners make use of aural materials to boost their learning. Conversely, (28.57%) were aural-read/write learners.

This indicates that they tend to go for an aural type of information as well as the read or written one, in which they are likely to learn best through the combination of both. Only one student was typified with a kinesthetic-read/write learning preference. This explains that though s/he learns best through real experience and concrete examples, s/he is also typically interested in information presented in words. Another one student had a visual-kinesthetic preference, which signifies that this student's learning is conducted through the exposure to visual information as well as the engagement in authentic experiences.

Trimodal Preference	Number	Percentage (%)
A K R	3	42.85
V A K	3	42.85
A R V	1	14.28
Total	7	100

Table 3. 3. 9. Trimodal preferences

As it is previously showed in the table, three different combinations of learning preferences were found. (42.85%) have an aural-kinesthetic-read/write preference. This indicates that these learners learn through interaction with others and communication of information, authentic and concrete examples in addition to words. (42.85%) had a visual-aural-kinesthetic preference. This signifies that they prefer knowledge that is visually presented, aurally communicated and concretely manifested. Only one student owned an aural-read/write-kinesthetic preference, which designates that s/he favors learning through the use charts, diagrams, drawings, schemes...etc, listening and/or speaking the information, as well as learning by doing or learning through authentic experiences and real examples.

All Type of preferences	Number	Percentage
Visual	7	15.25
Aural	22	47.82
Read/Write	9	19.56
Kinesthetic	8	17.39
Total	46	100

Table 3. 3. 10. The main four learning preferences

Regardless of whether the informants have a single or a multimodal preference, they tend to have common learning styles. Thus, as it shows in the previous table, (47.82%) had an aural preference. This signifies that these learners are more likely to learn best through information that is heard or spoken. However, nine students had read/write preference, which implies that they typically favor learning through words. Eight students had a kinesthetic learning style, which clarifies that they opt for concrete and authentic type of learning that involves interaction with the learning environment. Only seven students had a visual preference. This signifies that such learners would learn best when they are exposed to data that is presented in form of charts, tables and diagrams...etc.

3. 4. Learners Learning Preferences and their Academic Performance in the Oral Expression Course

In the oral expression course of first year students, they were evaluated based on their speaking and listening skills as well as the language use. To test learners' academic performance in the oral expression course, exam and evaluation scores of the first and second semesters were calculated to sum the students' annual averages in the oral expression course. Upon these averages we tried to link their averages which represent their academic achievement in the course throughout the year, to their learning styles. Thus, we were able to find out if learners with certain learning styles had achieved better results, or there was no link at all between their learning preferences and their academic performance.

3. 4. 1. Data Collection and interpretation

(A= Average)

(A) Stands for the averages of learners. It was calculated by combining the learners' first and second semesters' averages in the oral expression course, and divided on two. As a result of the equation, we have the learners' annual averages that includes the evaluation of their speaking, listening skills and language use. High achievers are those who achieved an average of more than ten, while low achievers are those who achieved below the average of ten.

Type of preference	Number	Percentage (%)
Multimodal	14	73.68
Unimodal	5	26.31
Total	19	100

Table 3. 4. 1. Learning preference of high achievers A> 10

After setting apart the students who had an average of ten out of twenty or more, we looked for their learning styles. Hence, the majority of these high achievers (50%) have multimodal preferences (bimodal, trimodal or a combination of all four leaning styles). Though, the rest of these learners have a uni-modal preference. This implies that learners who have multimodal preferences are the ones who achieve better academically, due to their flexibility towards different learning materials and methods of instruction.

Type of preference	Number	Percentage (%)
Multimodal	11	40.74
Unimodal	16	39.25
Total	27	100

Table 3. 4. 2. Multimodal learning preferences of low achievers A< 10

However, students who were estimated to have an average which is below ten out of twenty, the majority of them (59.25%) own a uni-modal learning preference. This indicated that they are not able to adapt to different learning environments, and if the learning package does not match with their learning style, they will not be able to learn successfully. Conversely, there were some exceptions that their averages were quite high. This may be due to some other factors as those of personality and intelligence. (40.74%) are multimodal learners. This pinpoints that even though these multimodal learners had the ability to join different learning styles together; their academic achievement was very low. So, they may have other factors that intervened in the way they performed in the oral expression course, or they were not too competent in terms of making use of their preferences appropriately.

Multimodal Preference	Number	Percentage (%)
Bimodal	4	28.57
Trimodal	3	21.42
All four	7	50
Total	14	100

Table 3. 4. 3. Sub-preferences of multimodal high achievers

Regarding the multimodal preferences of high achievers, the majority of them (50%) own a mixture of all four learning styles. This demonstrates the great impact of managing to have all four learning styles on students' averages in the oral expression course. In such a way, learners with multimodal preferences towards all four learning styles are the ones who represent the majority of high achievers among our sample. Yet, (28.57%) are bi-modal students who join between two different learning styles, while the remaining three were to have a tri-modal preference. These learners are assessed to perform well in the target course, which may be linked to their capacity of switching between the different learning styles they own.

Multimodal Preference	Number	Percentage (%)
Bimodal	3	27.27
Trimodal	3	27.27
All Four	5	50
Total	11	100

Table 3. 4. 4. Sub-preferences of multimodal low achievers

Unexpectedly, almost half of low achievers (45%) had a multimodal preference of all four learning styles. This may be explained as that despite the fact they have a tendency towards all learning styles, they are incapable of achieving remarkable averages. This can be attributed to their lack of proficiency in taking advantage out of their learning styles in order to perform well in the oral expression course. The rest of the students were divided equally to have tri-modal or bi-modal preferences. Similarly, these multimodal students low academic achievement regarding the concerned course may be linked to other factors such incompetency of benefiting from their various learning styles.

Single Preference	Number	Percentage (%)
Visual	1	20
Aural	2	40
Read/Write	2	40
Kinesthetic	0	00
Total	5	100

Table 3. 4. 5. Unimodal preferences of high achievers

With respect to the uni-modal high achievers at the oral expression course, (40%) have an aural learning preference. This may be interpreted by the balance that exists between the aural material taught in the oral expression course, and the fact that aural learners tend to prefer spoken or heard information. Since the oral expression course focuses on speaking and listening skills, it may help these students to perform well. Other two students were read/write high achievers. This illustrates that despite the nature of their uni-modal learning styles, these read/write learners are still able to do well in the oral expression course. Only (20%) of these high achievers have visual tendencies. This manifests that their learning style is put into practice, and helped them to perform successfully in the course.

Single Preference	Number	Percentage (%)
Visual	1	6.25
Aural	10	62.5
Read/Write	4	25
Kinesthetic	1	6.25
Total	16	100

Table 3. 4. 6. Unimodal preferences of low achievers

From the other part, uni-modal preference among low achievers was very significant. The majority of them (62.5%) have an aural learning preference. However, this did not serve them to perform well in the oral expression course though they are supposed to be the best since their aural style goes hand in hand with aim and nature of the course. (25%) of low achievers had a read/write preference which implies that they are not able to match between the course 'content the way they tend to learn best. (6.25%) are kinesthetic learners. This shows that are too limited in the oral expression since they to learn successfully via authentic and concrete experiences.

Strength of Preference	Number	Percentage (%)
Very Strong	0	00
Strong	4	80
Mild	1	20
Total	5	100

Table 3. 4. 7. Strength of high achievers' unimodal preferences

An important element was necessary to be mentioned is the strength of uni-modal preferences among high and low achievers. Nearly all high achievers (80%) have unimodal learning styles, their preferences were strong, which signifies their forceful tendency towards their learning styles, and how that this is reflected through their averages. Only (20%) have mild preference. This entails that their tendency towards this style is neither remarkable nor influential.

Strength of Preference	Number	Percentage (%)
Very Strong	3	18.75
Strong	1	6.25
Mild	12	75
Total	16	100

Table 3. 4. 8. Strength of low achievers unimodal preferences

Contrastively, the majority of low achievers (75%) have mild single preferences. This entails that they are not able to achieve good averages in the course because they do not have a clear preference that will help them achieve better in learning. The left (18.57%) have a very strong preference but their averages or the way they performed was not really significant. Only (6.25%) have strong learning preferences. This signifies that despite of their learning preference strength, they were not able to adapt to the learning materials of which were provided in the oral expression course.

5. Summary of Results and Findings

5. 1. Results and Findings of the VARK questionnaire

Firstly, results obtained from the questionnaire represented that the majority of first year EFL students have a multimodal preference. Yet, the rest of them hold a unimodal preference that is to have only one learning preference. Multimodal learners were divided into three subcategories that are bimodals who join between two learning styles, trimodals who own three learning styles and all four students who opt for all four learning styles. This entails the variety of learning styles that first year students tend to enjoy, and that they are flexible in terms of switching between different learning modes in distinct learning

contexts. This helps them to adapt to a multiplicity of learning situations and permits them to achieve better. The most common combination that existed among bimodal and trimodal learners is between aural and kinesthetic learning styles, which signifies that multimodal first year students are into communication and real experience to learn better.

However, the rest of students who are unimodals were divided into three groups based on the strength of their learning preference. While the majority of them have a mild preference, the other students own a strong to very strong preference. We can abstract that unimodal first year students do not have very remarkable and outstanding learning preferences that take control over their learning process. Instead, their learning preferences are more smooth and moderate unlike those who have strong to very strong preferences. Students who have mild single preference are mainly aural and kinesthetic, while those with strong to very strong preferences are aural, visual and kinesthetic respectively.

Regardless if they are multimodal or unimodal, almost the majority of first year students are aural. They tend to prefer aurally presented information, and they learn best through speaking or listening i.e. communication of the learning package. The rest of students carry a tendency towards visual, read/write and kinesthetic modes of learning, which demonstrates the diversity of learning modes among first year students. While visual learners learn best when they are exposed to information displayed in charts, diagrams and drawings that attracts them visually, read/write learners seem to be very typical and pay much attention to words. At the other hand, kinesthetic learners are very outgoing and they view learning as involving into action. This type of learners learns successfully by actually doing.

5. 2. Results and Findings of the Quantitative Descriptive Method

The current study obtained the needed results from the questionnaire, and testing the learners' academic performance in the oral expression course through measuring their annual averages in the course. Based on these statistics a relationship is established between the two variables and it concludes with the fact that multimodal first year students are high achievers while unimodal learners are low achievers, in respect of the oral expression course. This shows that the majority of high achievers in the target course are regarded as multimodal learners who show a great amount of flexibility to different learning materials and sorts of information. This aids them to perform well and achieve higher scores than unimodal learners whom their averages are viewed as very low.

The majority of multimodal high achievers are learners, who have a preference of all four learning styles. This means that not only these high achievers are multimodal (bimodal, trimodal and all four preferences) but rather they manage to make use of all learning styles. They show a remarkable amount of proficiency in adapting to different learning environments taking advantage of their learning preferences. In comparison, most of multimodal low achievers seem to have a tendency towards all four learning styles but this does not reflect on their learning achievement. This may be interpreted as a result of other factors such as personality or intelligence factors that hindered their good performance in this module.

Nonetheless, there are some exceptions with high achievers whom are unimodal. Their learning preferences are strong to very strong preferences that are they are very clear towards the type of learning materials they prefer. In contrast, the majority of low

achievers are unimodal, with mild single preferences which may signify their lack of assuredness about which ways they tend to achieve best. In both groups, the majority had aural learning preference, which should help them out in the oral expression course. Since they opt for spoken or heard types of information, the oral expression course should be their area of excellence as it focuses on speaking and listening skills.

6. Conclusion

After analyzing the results of the VARK questionnaire, and going through a deep quantitative description of the relationship between first year students' learning preferences and their academic achievement in the oral expression course. It concludes that the first question of this investigation is answered and the learning styles preferences of first year students are highlighted. Similarly, the research hypothesis is confirmed and it proves that there is an effect of first year students' learning preferences and their academic achievement. Relatively, the present study reveals how learners learning preferences can be held as an indicator of their academic achievement. And how certain learning preferences are strongly linked to high or low academic achievement. Thus, the tools and methods employed throughout this inquiry helped us to answer the research questions and confirm the preset research hypothesis.

Pedagogical Implications

In the field of teaching and learning English as a foreign language, learners' learning styles may introduce an important factor in determining the ways they may achieve better. As it is investigated in this study, learners' academic achievement in the oral expression course was highly affected by their learning preferences. Thus, learners must be aware of their learning preferences and learn profoundly about them, in order to point out their weaknesses and strengths so that they create a set of ways and materials via which they learn best. This will boost their overall learning process and aid them to achieve better. Moreover, teachers as well must be aware of their learners' learning preferences and try to provide a learning environment that matches all learning preferences that may occur.

In addition, learners are required to develop a sense of adaptive flexibility that is to discover more about their learning styles and why not manage to develop new preference towards learning styles other than the ones they have. This will contribute in enhancing their ability to switch between different learning styles and to select the appropriate learning style according to the learning environment they are involved in. Hence, they can develop different ways to operate effectively in the oral expression course or even in other courses, instead of depending completely on one learning style or preference. At the other hand, teachers must learn how to include learners' learning preferences in the process of teaching and learning. I.e. they will include them in setting the course' objectives, selecting the course's content and materials and choosing the teaching methods to implied. This way, there will be a balance of the target course and the learners' ways of learning, which will end up by high rates of academic achievement.

Since the oral expression course may be entitled as the cornerstone of the EFL classrooms, as it spotlights both speaking, listening and language use. One may induce that is manifests the perfect course where learners' can really practice the English language and make use of their own learning preferences. As a result, the teacher of this course may make a combination of all common features between the four learning preferences, in order to create an atmosphere that pleases all learners. For instance, the teacher may involve the use of concrete examples and authentic experiences that requires the interaction of information with others, integrating the use of written or read words with employment interesting visual items such as diagrams. Likewise, the teacher also can engage audios, videos, drawings, study circles, trips, articles, printed documents...etc which will address all learners, and help in a way or another accomplish the learning objectives

Limitations of the Study

While working on this dissertation, some obstacles and constraints came in the way of accomplishing the preset objectives and goals of the study. First things first, are the size of the sample that is small in comparison to the total number of the population, though it was done for a reason. This sample consists of students whom are taught by the same teacher so that they will all be identical in terms of evaluation (TD marks). Secondly, as the VARK questionnaire necessitates on the informants to provide their full names and group, two of the respondents refused to mention their names, even though it was made clear that their names will not be revealed under any circumstances. Thirdly, due to some factors like: lack of interest or lack of collaboration shown by some informants, they did not consider the fact they can opt for more than one option in each question. Thus, their answers may not infer to their real learning styles. Finally, as far as the scope of this inquiry is concerned, results obtained from this study cannot be generalized on other modules, since it considered the effect of EFL learning styles on their academic achievement in the oral expression.

General Conclusion

The current study seeks to examine the effect of EFL learners' learning styles on their academic achievement in the oral expression course. It investigates the learning preferences of first year EFL learners' learning preferences, and how these preferences may affect their academic performance. This research is composed of three chapters that introduce the crucial elements of this study. The first and the second chapters are dedicated to provide a theoretical background about the two variables of this inquiry. It discusses learning styles and academic achievement in the oral expression course. However, the third chapter represents the data and results obtained to validate the research hypotheses, and to answer the research questions.

In order to collect information necessary to conduct this research, a questionnaire is administered to identify first year students' learning preferences. In addition, this research employs testing first year EFL learners' academic performance in the oral expression course through their annual exam and evaluation scores in the subject matter. The target population of this study is first year learners from the English department, university of 8 Mai 1945, Due to academic constraints, a sample is chosen randomly, representing less than one third of the whole population.

As previously concluded in this study, the findings of this research prove that most of first year students are multimodal learners who tend to own a combination of two or more learning styles. Moreover, the rest of them are unimodal learners that have a tendency towards one main learning style. The strength of their preferences varies from each student to the other. When linking learners' learning styles with their academic achievement, it is

affirmed that a multimodal learner is more likely to achieve better than a unimodal learner. Low achievement is attributed to learners with specifically mild single preferences. This is explained as their deficiency to adjust their learning styles to the nature of the learning context or the type of information they are exposed to.

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APPENDIX

THE VARK QUESTIONNAIRE (7th version)

This questionnaire is a part of a research study conducted in the department of English at the University of 8 Mai 1945, Guelma. It seeks to investigate the impact of learning styles on EFL learners' academic achievement in the oral expression course. I would like to highlight that your name and group are taken only for academic research purposes and they will not be shown under any conditions. I would be grateful for your collaboration and careful answers that will help us validate this inquiry.

Ms. Nedjla Saidi.

Full Name:.....

Group:

Choose the answer which best explains your preference and circle the letter(s) next to it. Feel free to circle more than one answer when necessary. Please, leave blank any question that its options do not apply to you.

1. You are helping someone who wants to go to your airport town center or railway station. You would:

- a) Draw, or give her a map.
- b) Tell her the directions.
- c) Write down the directions (without a map).
- d) Go with her.

2. You are not sure whether a word should be spelled 'dependent' or 'dependant'.

You would:

- a) See the word in your mind and choose by the way they look.
- b) Think about how each word sounds and choose one.
- c) Find it online or in a dictionary.
- d) Write both words on paper and choose one.

3. You are planning a holiday for a group. You want some feedback from them about the plan. You would:

- a) Use a map or website to show them the places.
- b) Phone, text or email them.
- c) Give them a copy of the printed itinerary.
- d) Describe some of the highlights.

4. You are going to cook something as a special treat for your family. You would:

- a) Look through the cookbook for ideas from the pictures.
- b) Ask friends for suggestions.
- c) Use a cookbook where you know there is a good recipe.
- d) Cook something you know without the need for instructions.

5. A group of tourists want to learn about the parks or wildlife reserves in your area. You would:

- a) Show them internet pictures, photographs or picture books.
- b) Talk about, or arrange a talk for them about parks or wildlife reserves.
- c) Give them a book or pamphlets about the parks or wildlife reserves.
- d) Take them to a park or wildlife reserve and walk with them.

6. You are about to purchase a digital camera or mobile phone. Other than price, what would most influence your decision?

- a) It is a modern design and looks good.
- b) The salesperson telling me about its features.

- c) Reading the details about its features.
- d) Trying or testing it.

7. Remember a time when you learned how to do something new. Try to avoid choosing a physical skill, e.g. riding a bike. You learned best by:

- a) Diagrams and charts - visual clues.
- b) Listening to somebody explaining it and asking questions.
- c) Written instructions – e.g. a manual or textbook.
- d) Watching a demonstration.

8. You have a problem with your knee. You would prefer that the doctor:

- a) Showed you a diagram of what was wrong.
- b) Described what was wrong.
- c) Gave you a web address or something to read about it.
- d) Used a plastic model of a knee to show what was wrong.

9. You want to learn a new program, skill or game on a computer. You would:

- a) Follow the diagrams in the book that came with it.
- b) Talk with people who know about the program.
- c) Read the written instructions that came with the program.
- d) Use the controls or keyboard.

10. I like websites that have:

- a) Interesting design and visual features.
- b) Audio channels where I can hear music, radio programs or interviews.
- c) Interesting written descriptions, lists and explanations.
- d) Things I can click on, shift or try.

11. Other than price, what would most influence your decision to buy a new non-fiction book?

- a) The way it looks is appealing.
- b) A friend talks about it and recommends it.
- c) Quickly reading parts of it.
- d) It has real-life stories, experiences and examples.

12. You are using a book, CD or website to learn how to take photos with your new digital camera. You would like to have:

- a) Diagrams showing the camera and what each part does.
- b) A chance to ask questions and talk about the camera and its features.
- c) Clear written instructions with lists and bullet points about what to do.
- d) Many examples of good and poor photos and how to improve them.

13. Do you prefer a teacher or a presenter who uses:

- a) Diagrams, charts or graphs.
- b) Question and answer, talk, group discussion, or guest speakers.
- c) Handouts, books, or readings.
- d) Demonstrations, models or practical sessions.

14. You have finished a competition or test and would like some feedback. You would like to have feedback:

- a) Using graphs showing what you had achieved.
- b) From somebody who talks it through with you.
- c) Using a written description of your results.
- d) Using examples from what you have done.

15. You are going to choose food at a restaurant or cafe. You would:

- a) Look at what others are eating or look at pictures of each dish.
- b) Ask the waiter or friends to recommend choices.
- c) Choose from the descriptions in the menu.

d) Choose something that you have had there before.

16. You have to make an important speech at a conference or special occasion.

You would:

a) Make diagrams or get graphs to help explain things.

b) Write a few key words and practice saying your speech over and over.

c) Write out your speech and learn from reading it over several times.

d) Gather many examples and stories to make the talk real and practical.

Thank you

RESUME

Le but de cette étude est d'analyser l'influence des méthodes d'apprentissage propres aux apprenants de la première année d'Anglais comme une langue étrangère sur leur performance académique dans la séance d'expression orale. Pour confirmer les hypothèses de cette recherche, la septième version du questionnaire VARK réalisé par Neil Fleming a été employée dans le but de préciser les méthodes d'apprentissage propre aux répondants, ainsi qu'on a choisi la méthodologie descriptive comme un moyen de liaison entre les méthodes préférées des apprenants et leurs performances académiques dans la séance d'expression orale. Les résultats finals de ce travail identifient les méthodes d'apprentissage préférées chez les apprenants de la première année d'Anglais comme une langue étrangère et confirment la deuxième hypothèse qui indique l'existence de l'influence des méthodes d'apprentissage sur leurs performances académiques dans le module d'expression orale.

Les Mots Clés : Les Méthodes d'Apprentissage, La performance Académique, Le Module d'Expression Orale, VARK.

ملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة لفحص أساليب التعلم المنسوبة إلى متعلمي الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية سنة أولى ومعرفة تأثير أساليب تعلمهم على أدائهم الأكاديمي في حصة التعبير الشفهي. لذلك تم استخدام النسخة السابعة من استطلاع نايل فلامينغ بهدف تحديد أساليب التعلم الخاصة بالمشاركين. كذلك تم اختيار المنهجية الوصفية كطريقة للربط بين أساليب التعلم المفضلة لديهم و أدائهم الأكاديمي في حصة التعبير الشفهي. النتائج المتحصل عليها في نهاية هذا العمل ساعدت في تعيين أساليب التعليم المفضلة لدى متعلمي الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية أولى و تؤكد صحة الفرضية التي تفيد بوجود تأثير لأساليب التعليم المفضلة الخاصة بمتعلمي اللغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية على أدائهم الأكاديمي في حصة التعبير الشفهي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: أساليب التعلم، الأداء الأكاديمي، مقياس التعبير الشفهي، استطلاع نايل فلامينغ.