LEARNING STYLES IN POST-INTERMEDIATE SPEAKING CLASS: A PHENOMENOLOGY CASE STUDY

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Abstract. The objectives of this research are to describe how the students use their preferred learning styles and investigate the students' reasons for using their preferred learning styles in Post-Intermediate Speaking class. The first finding showed that the communicative and concrete learning style was used by 17 students, the concrete learning style was used by 9 students, the analytical learning style was used by 3 students, communicative and analytical learning style was used by 1 student. The second finding showed that the students who applied communicative and concrete learning style felt convenient being active-independent persons, matched with the way they learn, liked to learn speaking by using social learning approach, enjoyed of using concrete learning style because they belonged to active-dependent persons, liked reading and answering comprehension questions; the students who applied concrete learning style felt enjoy being active-dependent persons, liked to watch English program on TV, liked to learn English by playing games, liked learning new words by putting them into sentences, liked reading and answering comprehension questions, liked trying to say things in different ways when they do not understand the first time, liked reading books with pictures; the students who applied analytical learning style liked correcting their own mistakes, liked thinking of better ways to learn English, liked copying words and sentences from a book, liked working on problems given by the lecturer, liked learning the function of different expressions, liked reading the English newspaper; the students who applied communicative and analytical learning style liked to learn speaking in real life situation and condition, liked working in groups in the classroom, liked correcting their own mistakes and liked working on problems given by the lecturer.

Keywords: analytical, communicative, concrete, learning styles, post-intermediate speaking class

INTRODUCTION

Learning is a process of a theoretical framework that allows learners to empirically discover a specific case (Cobb, 2007). Learning is a humanistic process. It looks at issues from various perspectives and develops the ability to find the truth about something. What differentiates human beings from any other species is their ability to learn. Learning is a

complex and dynamic process that is shaped by the learner's background, experiences, and motivation. Nowadays, people are able to acquire new knowledge, advance their existing knowledge and learn new skills. One important aspect of human learning is that it occurs consciously in some situations at certain times and unconsciously at many other times (Schmidt, 1990). However, how can we learn better? Learning is a continuous process that leads the students to the results of their learning. Every student has a learning style and learning preferences that are useful and helpful for him or her. Some students find their dominant learning styles but others use different learning styles in other situations (Cabual, 2021). Learning styles are the general approaches that learners use to acquire a new language or learn other subjects (Oxford, 2003).

Some people say that understanding our learning style can help us learn more effectively. Differences in learning styles can often be difficult to change, as Ford, N., & Chen, S. Y. (2001) found when they investigated students' preferences for learning. Learning styles and preferences vary for each student in different situations. Some students prefer to learn by reading textbooks, while others prefer verbal explanations (A. , Riazi & Riasati, 2007). Learning styles is characteristic cognitive, effective, and psychosocial behaviors that serve as relatively stable indicators of how learners perceive, interact with, and respond to the learning environment (Curry, 1983). Many students have different ways of processing information, which means they may not be able to learn the same way as their classmates. Consequently, lecturers should be aware of the student's individual learning styles in order to better cater to them. In recent years, learning styles research has become an increasingly popular topic of discussion among lecturers, some research has been conducted by applying questionnaires to measure the differences and their effects on learning and teaching. The research which was done by Robert Lewis (1997) was the setting of the research that divided into several regions in Indonesia and paid attention to students' socioeconomic background, previous education, and sociocultural orientation. (A. Riazi & Riasati, 2007) conducted a study on 219 Iranian learners of English in Shiraz to identify their learning styles. Research done by (A. Riazi & Mansoorian, 2008) was conducted to identify learning style preferences among Iranian male and female EFL students. Research which was done by Wong & Nunan (2011) at the University of Hong Kong was that the researcher did not apply effective and ineffective language learners. Other research which conducted (Gilakjani, 2012) at Islamic Azad University, Lahijan, Iran. The title of the research is A Match or Mismatch Between Learning Styles of the Learners and Teaching Styles of the Teachers. This study showed the results that a match between teaching and learning styles helps to motivate students' process of learning. That is why teachers should identify their own teaching styles as well as students' learning styles to obtain better results in the classroom.

It is important to note that not all students will fall into one specific learning style and that there is no single best way to learn. In the teaching and learning process, it is important for lecturers to be aware of their student's learning styles. This is because students' learning styles can have a significant impact on their learning outcomes. It is believed that students' motivation and engagement increase when their lecturers take their

learning style preferences into account. Consequently, by paying attention to students' learning styles, lecturers can play a role in enhancing their students' learning experiences and outcomes.

There has been growing interest in conducting research on students' learning styles. It means that research on students' learning styles is always interesting and important for educators, especially for English Language Teaching (ELT) lecturers. A significant amount of learning style researches on English Language Teaching (ELT) indicates that students learn, progress, and achieve much better when their lectures are designed to meet their learning style preferences.

This research will deal with learning styles in Post-Intermediate Speaking class by applying Willing's learning style types (1988). The reason for applying Willing's learning style types in this research is because this type is very practical and not difficult to be applied comparing to other learning style types which are proposed by Boston et al. (2005) and Curry (1983). Since speaking is a productive skill and it has a very important role in communication at many international events to face the globalization era, students should have their own learning styles in order to make their speaking ability good or at least much better than before. In addition, they can find the easiest way of learning to speak through their preferred learning style. Speaking is the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal in a variety of contexts (Kayi, 2006). In fact, some of the students have difficulties to speak up because they are afraid of making mistakes. Furthermore, some of them have speaking disfluency and anxiety, therefore it is difficult for them to express what they have in their mind such as stating ideas, giving opinions, telling stories, moreover delivering impromptu speeches. Consequently, this research needs to be conducted to know how the fourth-semester students of English Department at Universitas PGRI Adi Buana Surabaya use their preferred learning styles and to investigate why they use their preferred learning styles in Post-Intermediate Speaking class. This research belongs to a phenomenology case study. A phenomenological case study relates to describing a case and the study results from exploring the experiences of individuals about a phenomenon (Creswell, John W. & Poth, Cheryl N, 2016). A case study is focusing on the phenomenon in its natural setting intensively. A case study is the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case or multiple cases which aim to understand social phenomena within a single or small number of naturally occurring settings (Tavakoli, 2012).

METHOD

The central issue of this research is the student's preferred learning styles in Post-Intermediate Speaking class. The objectives of this research are to describe how the students use their preferred learning styles and why the students use their preferred learning styles in Post-Intermediate Speaking class. The data collection method was done by doing observations and interviews. Purposive random sampling was applied in this research. Purposive random sampling could be applied in a case study analysis of why particular people or groups feel particular ways the processes by which these attitudes are

constructed and the role they play in the dynamic processes (Given, 2008). The subject of this research was 30 students from the fourth-semester students of the English Education Department at Universitas PGRI Adi Buana Surabaya.

This research employed a descriptive qualitative method. A study that investigates the quality of relationships, activities, or materials is frequently refers to qualitative research (Fraenkel et al., 2012). Qualitative research is a study strategy that implies relationship between theory and research which usually emphasizes how theories were made (Bell, 2007). The qualitative research objective is to examine individuals and events in their natural settings, i.e., rather than attempting to control and manipulate contextual factors, and to present a natural and holistic picture of the phenomena being studied (Tavakoli, 2012). There were 4 stages that had done in this research. The first stage was preliminary research through determining and organizing research instrument. Then, the second stage was the implementation of research instrument. This stage was done by doing observation and interview for obtaining the authentic data. According to Bogdan, R.C., & Biklen, S. K. (2007), data are the rough materials which are collected by the researchers from the world they are learning. It follows theory of Fraenkel et al (2012) who defined that data has relation with the information that is gained by researcher from the subject of the research. The third stage of this research dealt with data analysis process. All the data from observation and interview analyzed through written description. The fourth stage was done by stating the findings and discussion then sum up with the conclusions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

There are four major types of learning styles for foreign language learners in English Language Teaching (ELT) class. Those types of learning styles are communicative, analytical, authority-oriented and concrete (Willing, K. (1988). Willing's construct draws upon (Witkin et al., 1981) conceptualization with the field independent–dependent cognitive style as the pervasive dimension of individual functioning four principal 'factors', labelled as 'analytical', 'authority-oriented', 'communicative' and 'concrete' learning styles using factor analysis. Willing describes the 'Communicative' and the 'Authority-oriented' groups as being 'crossed' types, whereas his 'communicative' group, as people who have a field independent (FI) tendency, but who indicate a desire for a communicative and social learning approach. His 'authority-oriented' type is described as having the tendency by nature to be field dependent (FD) probably because they perceive that they need the teacher's direction in the provision of explanations. The 'analytical' type is FD and is inclined to be interested in learning language through a study of language rules and meanings alone at home. His 'concrete learning style' is FD and is characterised as being spontaneous, unpremeditated, people-oriented and is interested in learning through games, excursions or close and real interactions. The division of learners in the current study will be guided by the groupings of Willing but would finally be determined by the patterns identified by analysis of the data using factor analysis.
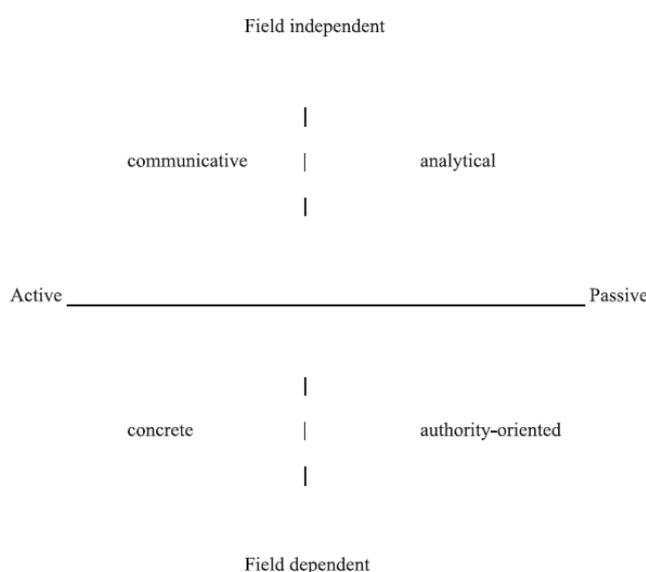
Field independent

communicative | analytical

Active ——————————————————— Passive

concrete | authority-oriented

Field dependent

Figure 1 Willing's Types of Learning Styles (Willing, 1988)

A. Results of Students' Preferred Learning Styles in Post-Intermediate Speaking Class

The profile of the fourth-semester students of the English Education Department at Universitas PGRI Adi Buana Surabaya that emerged from these results was that of individuals who were familiar with a range of instructional tasks and learning strategies in Post-Intermediate Speaking class but more importantly, individuals whose preferred learning styles had changed or were in transition. There were total of 30 students as the subject of this research. The strength of this research is that this research provides a detailed description of how students apply their preferred learning styles in Post-Intermediate Speaking classes.

A.1. Describing How the Students' Preferred Learning Styles in Post-Intermediate Speaking Class

The first result of this research which described how the students used their preferred learning styles in Post-Intermediate Speaking class was obtained by observing the students as follows:

A.1.1. Communicative and Concrete Learning Style

The communicative and concrete learning style was the preferred learning style used by 17 students in the fourth semester of the English Education Department at Universitas PGRI Adi Buana Surabaya. The students had their own patterns of their preferred learning styles in the Post-Intermediate Speaking class. They used their learning styles in Post-Intermediate Speaking class by speaking English in class in pairs and groups, trying to speak English with native speakers, asking and answering questions in class, watching English programs on TV, and trying to say things in different ways when they do not understand the first time.

A.1.2. Concrete Learning Style

Concrete learning style was used by 9 students of the fourth semester of English Education Department at Universitas PGRI Adi Buana Surabaya. The students used their concrete learning style in Post-Intermediate Speaking class by reading books with pictures, watching English programs on TV, trying to say things in different ways when they do not understand the first time, reading and answering comprehension questions, learning English by playing games and learning new words by putting them into sentences.

A.1.3. Analytical Learning Style

Analytical learning style pattern which was used by 3 students of the fourth semester of the English Education Department at Universitas PGRI Adi Buana Surabaya in Post-Intermediate Speaking class through correcting their own mistakes, thinking of better ways to learn English, copying words and sentences from a book, working on problems given by the teacher, learning the function of different expressions and reading the English newspaper.

A.1.4. Communicative and Analytical Learning Style

Communicative and analytical learning style patterns which were used by 1 student in the fourth semester of the English Education Department at Universitas PGRI Adi Buana Surabaya in Post-Intermediate Speaking class by guessing the meaning that they do not understand, learning new words by putting them into the conversation, correcting their own mistakes, thinking of better ways to learn English, learning the function of different expressions and reading the English newspaper.

Table 1 The Research Results Table

No	Students' Preferred Learning Styles	The number of Students who Use Their Preferred Learning Styles
1	Communicative and Concrete	17
2	Concrete	9
3	Analytical	3
4	Communicative and Analytical	1
Total		30

A.2. Investigating the Students' Reasons for Preferred Learning Styles in Post-Intermediate Speaking Class

The second result of this research which investigated the students' reasons of using their preferred learning styles in Post-Intermediate Speaking class was obtained by interviewing the students as follows:

A.2.1. Communicative and Concrete Learning Style

Communicative and concrete learning style was the preferred learning style used by the fourth-semester students of the English Education Department at Universitas PGRI Adi Buana Surabaya. The students had their own reasons for their preferred learning styles in the Post-Intermediate Speaking class. They felt convenient using the communicative learning style because they said that they belonged to active-independent persons, felt that the communicative learning style matched the way they learn, liked to learn speaking by using the social learning approach, felt enjoyed using the concrete learning style because they said that they belonged to active-dependent persons and liked reading and answering comprehension questions because it is a proper way to learn speaking.

A.2.2. Concrete Learning Style

A concrete learning style was used by the fourth-semester students of the English Education Department at Universitas PGRI Adi Buana Surabaya. The students had their own reasons for their preferred learning styles in the Post-Intermediate Speaking class. They felt enjoyed using the concrete learning style because they said that they belonged to active-dependent persons, liked to watch English program on TV because it is very easy to do and okay, liked to learn English by playing games because it is very interesting, like learning new words by putting them into sentences because it is a proper way to learn to speak, like reading and answering comprehension questions because it is a proper way to learn to speak, liked trying to say things in different ways when they do not understand the first time because it is the right way to learn to speak and liked reading books with pictures because it the best way to learn speaking.

A.2.3. Analytical Learning Style

Analytical learning style patterns were used by the fourth-semester students of the English Education Department at Universitas PGRI Adi Buana Surabaya in the Post-Intermediate Speaking class. They liked correcting their own mistakes because it is a proper way to learn to speak, liked thinking of better ways to learn English because it is the better way to learn English, and liked copying words and sentences from a book because it is a proper way to learn to speak, like working on problems given by the teacher because it is the best way to learn to speak, liked learning the function of different expressions because it is very easy to do and okay and liked reading the English newspaper because it is very easy to do and okay.

A.2.4. Communicative and Analytical Learning Style

Communicative and analytical learning style patterns were used by the fourth-semester students of the English Education Department at Universitas PGRI Adi Buana Surabaya in the Post-Intermediate Speaking class. They liked to learn to speak in real-life situations because it is the right way of learning to speak, liked to learn to speak in real conditions and situations because it is the proper way of learning to speak, liked working

in groups in the classroom because it is very easy to do, liked correcting their own mistakes because it is a proper way to learn to speak and liked working on problems given by the teacher because it is the best way to learn speaking.

B. Discussion of Students' Preferred Learning Styles in Post-Intermediate Speaking Class

B.1. Communicative and Concrete Learning Style

The students who use communicative and concrete learning styles as their preferred learning styles tend to use their logical ways of thinking in solving problems, giving reasons, asking and giving opinions, asking and giving suggestions, interrupting someone's statements in group discussion as well as in real life situation and condition. These students would learn best with hands-on methods and show the most success when applying those methods by themselves in their learning process. They belong to active-field independent and active-field dependent learners.

B.2. Concrete Learning Style

Concrete learning style is a type of learning style that suggests a predisposition for practical and contextualized ways of learning for direct means of receiving and processing information, presented with contextual support. They belong to active-field dependent learners. These students would learn best with hands-on methods and show the most success when applying those methods by themselves in their learning process. They like using realia in Post-Intermediate Speaking class.

B.3. Analytical Learning Style

Analytical learning style is a type of learning style that deals with independent learning. The students who belong to the analytical learning style tend to be more autonomous and field-independent persons. They prefer to develop their own concept in understanding a certain term. They usually to be called passive field-independent learners.

B.4. Communicative and Analytical Learning Style

Student who uses communicative and analytical learning styles as their preferred learning styles tends to use both logical and natural in terms of a progression on the learning style continuum. He or she prefers to develop his or her own concept in understanding a certain term. He or she would not set himself or herself apart from his or her group unless he or she was speaking on behalf of his or her group. He or she like speaking English in pairs and groups in the classroom.

The first finding of this research shows that the fourth-semester students in the Post-Intermediate Speaking class at Universitas PGRI Adi Buana Surabaya have different preferred learning styles among other students. They feel free to choose their preferred learning styles without any interference from someone else or their friends, even their close friends. The second finding of this research proves that the students need to have

their preferred learning styles in Post-Intermediate Speaking class because they think by using their preferred learning styles it will be proper, easy, and comfortable to learn to speak. Furthermore, their understanding and comprehension in Post-Intermediate Speaking class become better than before.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion of this research, the researcher concludes that the most preferred learning styles used by the fourth-semester students of the English Education Department at Universitas PGRI Adi Buana Surabaya are communicative and concrete learning styles. 17 students have communicative and concrete learning styles. They tend to use their logical ways of thinking in solving problems, giving reasons, asking and giving opinions, asking and giving suggestions, and interrupting someone's statements in group discussions as well as in real-life situations and conditions. These students would learn best with hands-on methods and show the most success when applying those methods by themselves in their learning process. 9 students have concrete learning styles. They like learning as direct means of receiving and processing information, presented with contextual support. These students would learn best with hands-on methods and show the most success when applying those methods by themselves in their learning process. They like using realia in Post-Intermediate Speaking class. 3 students have an analytical learning style. They tend to be more autonomous and field-independent persons. They prefer to develop their own concept in understanding a certain term. Only 1 student has communicative and analytical learning styles. He or she tends to use both logic and natural in terms of a progression on the learning style continuum. He or she prefers to develop his or her own concept in understanding a certain term. He or she would not set himself or herself apart from his or her group unless he or she was speaking on behalf of his or her group. He or she like speaking English in pairs and groups in the classroom.

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