“The Learning Styles’ Influence on the Acquisition of English Vocabulary – Kosovar Learners’ Perspective”

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Abstract

Vocabulary from a foreign language is not acquired the same way by everyone for the reason that some people adopt it faster and easier and some other people find it more difficult to be learnt. Even though learning a language successfully requires hard work, volition and endurance, there are some other factors which have a great influence on acquiring it, such as; learning styles and strategies, age, self-esteem, motivation, the teacher’s role etc. By the combination of these factors, the speed and proficiency of learning a new language is established.

For the reason that English language is every day more important and necessary in Kosovo, the main goal of this thesis is to raise learners’ and teachers’ awareness on the influence of learning styles and strategies on teaching and learning English vocabulary. By being well-informed about the learning styles and strategies, the learners are aware about their own learning style(s) and if it is important to know better themselves. Teachers can also be informed about the ways to identify students’ learning styles and if this has an impact on vocabulary acquisition. The influence of learning styles on teaching English vocabulary is analysed by the research questions through the thesis which detect if knowing one’s learning style effect on learning outcome, if learners reach higher level of vocabulary acquisition if they are conscious about their learning style and the ways that teachers address the students’ learning styles while teaching.

This thesis is a combination of qualitative and quantitative research questions. The following three instruments were used in the study: a self-assessment questionnaire to identify the learners’ learning styles, an experimental activity and an interview with teachers. By completing these three research instruments, each research question is answered.

Based on the self-assessment questionnaire, most of the students belonged to the Kinaesthetic Learning Style, followed by Auditory and Visual Learning Style. Furthermore, through the experimental activity, it was revealed that by knowing one’s learning style can have positive effects on learning outcome. Students think that if activities and lectures are carried out through different learning style(s) and if teachers try to adjust them to students’ preferences’, there would be more students who would understand lectures and activities better.

Keywords: Learning styles and strategies, teaching, learning, vocabulary, acquisition.
Abstract in Albanian

Fjalori nga një gjuhë e huaj nuk përvetësohet në të njëjtën mënyrë nga secili për arsy se disa njerëz e përveltësojnë atë më shpejtë dhe më lehtë dhe disa njerëz të tjerë e kanë më të vështirë që t’a përveltësojnë atë. Edhepse përveltësimi i suksesshëm i një gjuhe të huaj kërkon shumë punë, vullnet dhe durim, janë edhe disa faktorë të tjerë që kanë një ndikim të madh në përveltësimin e një gjuhe të huaj si: stilet dhe strategjite e të mësuarit, mosha, vetëbesimi, motivimi, roli i mësimdhënësit etj. Nga kombinimi i këtyre faktorëve varet shpejtësia dhe rrjedhshmëria e të mësuarit të një gjuhe të re.

Për arsy se gjuha angleze është çdo ditë e më e rëndësishme dhe më e nevojshme në Kosovë, qëllimi kryesor i këtij studimi është që të ngritet vetëdija e nxënësve dhe mësìm dhënësve për ndikimin e stileve dhe strategjitve të të mësuarit të fjalarit të gjuhës angleze. Duke qenë i informuar saktë për stilet dhe strategjite e të mësuarit, nxënësit janë të vetëdijshëm poashtu rrëth stilit ose stileve të tyre të të mësuarit dhe nëse është i rëndësishme që t’a njohin më mire veten e tyre. Mësimdhënësit poashtu mund të informohen për mënryat se si të identifikojnë stilet e të mësuarit të nxënësve të tyre dhe nëse kjo ka rëndësi në përveltësimin e fjalëve të reja nga një gjuhë e huaj. Ndikimi i stileve të të mësuarit në mësimdhënien e gjuhës angleze analizohet nga pyetjet kërkimore gjatë temë të diplomës të cilat zbulojnë se nëse vetëdijshëm rrëth stileve të të mësuarit ka ndikim në rezultatet e të mësuarit, nëse nxënësit arrijnë nivel më të lartë të përveltësimit të fjalarit nëse janë të vetëdijshëm për stilit ose stileve të tyre të të mësuarit dhe mënryat që mësimdhënësit zbatojnë stilet e ndryshme të të mësuarit të nxënësve gjatë mësimdhënies.

Bazuar në pyetësorin vetë-vlerësues, shumica e studentëve i takuan stilit të të mësuarit kinaesthetic, pasuar nga stili i të mësuarit dëgjimor dhe pamor. Për më shumë, përmes aktivitetit eksperimental, u zbulua se duke e ditur stilen e të mësuarit mund të ketë efekte pozitive në rezultatet e të mësuarit. Studentët mendojnë se nëse aktivitetet dhe ligjërata zhvillohen përmes stileve të ndryshme të të mësuarit dhe nëse mësuesit provojnë që të përshtatnë ato me preferencat e studentëve, do të kishte më shumë studentë që do t’i kuptonin ligjërata dhe aktivitetet më mirë.

Fjalët kyçe: Strategjitë dhe stilet e të mësuarit, mësimdhënia, mësimnxënia, fjalori, përveltësimi.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

“If a child can’t learn the way we teach, maybe we should teach the way they learn.”

Ignacio Estrada

Any language learned in addition to a person’s first language is known as a foreign language. A simple fact known by all, who have learned or even taught a foreign language, is that some learners learn a new language and can remember its vocabulary more quickly and easier than others. There are some issues, as well, which have a huge impact on language acquisition. Some of these issues may be the age, motivation, memory, language learning styles and strategies, curriculum, culture and status, access to native speakers etc. By the interaction of these issues, the speed and proficiency of learning a new language and remember its vocabulary is determined. However, memory and individual learning styles and preferences are considered as key variables in determining input processing.

1.1 The Aim of the Research

It is obvious that English language is required every day more, even in Kosovo. While learning a foreign language and its vocabulary, learners learn it at different rates and with obvious different levels of comprehension due to the factors within learners themselves which determine their capacity to learn. Taking into consideration the vital importance of students’ learning styles in foreign language learning, is expected that a detailed attention is given to it. To be aware of one’s style(s) of learning and their effect on language acquisition, a research is carried out.
1.2 Research Questions

The learning styles’ influence on the acquisition of English vocabulary as a foreign language is analysed by the following questions. Bearing in mind the vital importance of students’ learning styles in foreign language learning, an explicit observation is given to it. Therefore, these questions are used in the research paper to see how learning styles affect vocabulary acquisition.

- Does knowing one’s learning style effect on learning outcome?
- Do learners reach higher level of vocabulary acquisition if they are conscious about their learning style?
- How do teachers address the students’ learning styles while teaching?

1.3 Hypotheses

In order to answer the research questions, I will set up the following hypotheses:

**H1**- If teachers do not address the students’ learning styles while teaching, they might not pursue a learner-centered approach which focuses on the meaningful use of the target language.

**H2**- Dealing with each student’s learning style is a demanding approach which requires teacher preparation, planning and considerable resources beyond the textbooks.

**H3**- Using the appropriate learning style improves teaching effectiveness by helping teachers carry out relevant tasks which encourage learners to learn English vocabulary faster and make learning sustainable.

1.4 The importance and impact of the study

From this MA Thesis, the learners are informed about the learning styles and strategies. Furthermore, learners identify their own learning style(s) from the self-assessment questionnaire. They can read about different learning styles and try to find themselves in one of them or more than one. If they already know the best one which fits them, it would be easier to learn a new language and to remember its vocabulary with ease. From the activity related to learning styles, learners can train how to reach higher level of vocabulary acquisition. Moreover, it would be easier for teachers to decide about the methods of teaching if they already know about their students’ learning styles and preferences.
1.5 Outline of the Study

This study is composed of the following chapters:

**Chapter 1. Introduction**

This chapter introduces the thesis, explaining what learning styles are and their influence on the acquisition of English vocabulary. Furthermore, it explains the aims of the thesis, the importance and impact of the study. Research questions are presented in this chapter and it gives a brief description of the thesis organization.

**Chapter 2. Literature Review**

This chapter mainly presents a description of relevant literature which deals with the influence of learning styles on the acquisition of English vocabulary. It elaborates what others found about language learning styles, strategies, language implications, good language learners, diverse needs, the teacher’s role in language learning and other factors, and explains their relation with the study.

**Chapter 3. Methodology**

The general procedure of the investigation and the way of processing the data is discussed in this chapter. It gives details about the procedure, participants and measuring instruments which were applied during the study. The following three instruments are elaborated in this chapter: a self-assessment questionnaire, an experimental activity and an interview to identify the learners’ learning styles.

**Chapter 4. Data, analysis and discussion of findings**

All findings of the study are presented in this chapter. Since the results are reached through three measuring instruments; the questionnaire, the interview and the self-assessment questionnaire, it will contain three different parts in which learners’ responses’ are elaborated and presented through statistical techniques. In addition, the learning styles that work best to learn a foreign language and learners’ experience is analyzed in order to find out facts that affect acquisition of English as a foreign language by Kosovar learners in this chapter.
Chapter 5. Conclusion

This chapter restates the learning styles influence on the acquisition of English vocabulary. A brief summary of the key findings is presented. Besides, the essential conclusions for the study and the reasons for thesis’ importance are shown.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

“Every child has a different learning style and pace. Each child is unique, not only capable of learning but also capable of succeeding.”

Robert John Meehan

Language learning styles and strategies are considered as the main factors that influence the learners to acquire English as a foreign language. Learning styles are the common approaches that learners use in acquiring a new language or in learning any other subject. As mentioned in a lot of materials, learning strategies can be classified into six groups: cognitive, metacognitive, memory-related, compensatory, affective and social. If there is harmony between the learner and the combination of methodology and materials, then the learner is likely to perform well, feel confident and experience low anxiety. Otherwise, if conflicts occur between the learner and the combination of methodology and materials, the learner often performs poorly, feels unconfident and experiences anxiety. These kinds of conflicts often lead to serious failure in teacher-learner interaction. They also may lead to the discouragement of learner who will eventually and in most of the cases refuse the teaching methodology, the teacher and the subject. The more we learn about individual differences and the ways how individuals learn a language, the more we will gain a sense of how many different ways we can figure out the complicated system of language learning and teaching (Ehrman, 2003, cited in Abhakorn, 2008).

2.1 Learning Styles

By knowing one’s learning style can have positive effects on learning outcome. Since everyone has different learning style(s), four aspects that are related to foreign language learning are discussed by Ehrman and Oxford (1990) as cited in Oxford, R., (2003); sensory preferences, desired degree of generality, personality types and biological differences.
2.1.1 **Sensory preferences** are divided into four categories: visual, auditory, kinesthetic and tactile. Visual learners like to read and tend to understand things better by observing them. On the other hand, auditory learners are satisfied and benefit from listening lectures and conversations. What they find beneficial are interactions in role-plays and similar activities. Kinesthetic and tactile learners prefer to move a lot and work with touchy objects, collages and flashcards. Thereby, they prefer to have numerous breaks, constantly move around the room and find it difficult to sit at a place for a long time (Oxford, R., 2003).

2.1.2 **Personality type** is based on the work of psychologist Carl Jung. It is another style aspect which is very important in acquiring a foreign language. It is divided into four parts; extraverted-introverted, intuitive-random vs. sensing-sequential, thinking vs. feeling and closure oriented/judging vs. open/perceiving (Ehrman and Oxford, 1990, cited in Oxford, R., 2003).

2.1.3 **Desired Degree of Generality** is a comparison between the learners who focus on the main idea and the learners who concentrate on details. Global students are those who focus on the main idea, feel comfortable even when they do not have all the information and prefer guessing from the context. On the other hand, analytic learners focus on grammatical minutiae, and do not take the risks to guess from the context if they are not completely sure about their answers. These kinds of learners can learn a lot and benefit from each other to learn a foreign language (Oxford, R., 2003).

2.1.4 **Biological Differences** are related to different learning styles, such as biorhythms, sustenance and location. Biorhythms refer to the time of the day when a learner feels good and performs best. Sustenance stands for the necessity for food and drink while learning. Location refers to the nature of the environment e.g., temperature, lighting, sound, etc. Location is the one that mostly differs from each student. All of these biological differences are really hard to be adjusted to every learner and most of the times are forgotten but teachers should be watchful and compromise when needed (Kaminska, P, 2014).
2.2 Learning strategies

In order to learn or use a language more effectively, learners should constantly look for and use the appropriate learning strategy. The word strategy comes from ancient Greek word *strategia*, which means steps or actions taken for the purpose of winning a war. It also refers to behaviors, actions, techniques, problem solving or study skills taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more self-directed, more effective and more transferable to a new situation (Oxford, 1990, cited in Oxford, 2003).

No one can say that a strategy is neither good nor bad, but it should be positive and beneficial to a learner. In order to be helpful for a learner, the strategy should be related well to the foreign language, it should be adjusted to the learner’s learning style preferences and it should be applied by the learner effectively and linked to the other relevant strategies. In order to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, these conditions should be fulfilled. Learning strategies can help learners become more independent, autonomous and lifelong learners. Through verbalizing the strategies’ application and repeated applications of the strategies with different learning materials, the learners can gradually acquire the learning strategies (Schmeck, 2013).

2.2.1 Direct Impact Strategies

“The strategies that have a direct impact on learning are: cognitive, memory-related and compensatory strategies” (Oxford, 1990, cited in Rebecca, 2003, p.12).

Cognitive strategies make it possible to the learner to control the language material in direct ways. Some of the cognitive strategies are: summarizing, analysis, note-taking, reorganizing information to develop stronger schemas, reasoning, outlining, synthesizing, practice in natural settings and practice structures and sounds formally (Oxford &Ehrman, 1995, cited in Rebecca, 2003). Cognitive theories of learning differ between three functions in memory during the process of learning; long-term memory, which is used to store information from personal experience and education; short-term memory, which is used to remember unimportant information; and working memory, which is used to manipulate the information.

“Memory-related strategies help learners to link ideas in the foreign language rather than having a deep understanding. These strategies include learning and recovering information by acronyms,
rhyming, images, a combination of sounds and images, body movement, flashcards or blackboard” (Oxford, 1990, cited in Rebecca, 2003, p.13). According to Purpura (1999), memory-related strategies do not always have positive effects. Especially in tests, the learners who used memory-related strategies showed negative performance in grammar and vocabulary. The reason might be because these strategies are preferred for memorizing vocabulary and structures in the beginning of learning a foreign language. When learner’s vocabulary and structure have developed, memory-related strategies are less needed.

Compensatory strategies make it easier for the learner to find the missing information. These strategies include guessing from the context in listening and reading, using synonyms to help speaking and writing and using gestures. Even though Cohen (1998) claimed that compensatory strategies are considered only for language use, Oxford (1990, 1990a) asserted that these strategies are of any kind (Rebecca, 2003).

2.2.2 Indirect Impact Strategies

The indirect strategies or those that indirectly support learning include: metacognitive, affective and social strategies.

Metacognitive Strategies are utilized to conduct the learning process. According to Purpura (1999) metacognitive strategies have a significant, positive and direct effect on cognitive strategy use. These strategies include identifying learner’s learning style preferences and needs first, then planning for the task in the foreign language, after that gathering and organizing materials, arranging a study place and a schedule, monitoring mistakes, evaluating task success and the success of any type of learning strategy in the end (Rebecca, 2003).

Affective Strategies include talking about feelings, rewarding students for good performance, using deep breathing or positive self-talk and identify learner’s mood and anxiety level. In contrast, according to Mullins (1992), affective strategies showed negative results in the foreign language proficiency. The reason might be that some learners do not need affective strategies as much as before as they progress through time to higher proficiency (Rebecca, 2003).

Social Strategies help the learners to work with others and understand the foreign culture as well as the language. These kinds of strategies include asking for clarification of a confusing point,
asking for help in doing a language task, asking questions to get verification, talking with a native-speaking conversation partner and exploring cultural and social norms (Rebecca, 2003).

2.3 Different students’ needs and preferences

Three categories of learner styles represent natural orientations of learners. The first category is represented by perceptual preferences which involve whether learners tend to learn by listening (auditory style), seeing (visual style) or doing things (kinesthetic style). The second category is represented by personality preferences which involve the learners’ sincerity to new experiences and their extroversion versus introversion. The third category involves processing preferences which are concerned whether or when learners prefer to process information by focusing on the big picture versus focusing on the details; by understanding the rules from examples in the language versus learning the rules and applying them to examples; or by bringing the parts together to construct new ideas versus breaking information down into components so the relationships can be identified and understood; field-sensitive learners prefer to get information in context, by seeing new words, structures and ideas, while field-insensitive learners prefer to get information in the abstract rather than in concrete situations (Purpura, 1999).

By knowing the information on learner styles, the teachers might be able to better formulate style-based teaching strategies in order to meet the needs of their learners’ learning styles. As an alternative, teachers can alter their teaching styles in order to meet the wants of each learner for some time at least. For instance, teachers can organize the tasks in that way that one of them would require learners to read, the other one to listen and the other one to work first independently and afterwards in pairs or groups. It is also recommended for teachers to know even their own learning style because they need to be aware that their learners can have another preferred learning style and if clashes occur, the learners might come across learning difficulties. However, these clashes can be considered as opportunities to gain experience working outside of learners’ preferred style. This alternative approach is called style stretching and it can be carried out by providing learners with learning-style questionnaire outlined to raise learners’ awareness of their preferred learning styles. As a result, learners could be given tasks to make them use a
style they are not used to, and by having the ability to respond flexibly in different situations, learners are more likely to reach success (Richards, C. J., & Rodgers, S. Th., 2014).

In order to reach success, teachers should know how existing strategy can be applied to language pedagogy by raising learners’ awareness of the strategy use, promoting learners’ strategy awareness by means of classroom activities, and being aware of findings from strategy research. The assessment to raise learners’ awareness of the strategy use can be carried out by questionnaires, interviews or written reports, observations by teachers while students are performing tasks, and students’ verbal reports before, after and while performing tasks (Killen, R., 2006).

2.4 Language Implications

According to Rebecca (2003) there are also implications in teaching a foreign language. These implications include assessing styles and strategies in the classroom, attuning the strategy instructions to learner’s style preferences, remembering that no single instructional methodology fits all students and preparing for and conducting strategy instruction.

Since assessing styles and strategies in the classroom is very important, teachers should learn about them by reading books, magazines, attending professional conferences, courses and workshops.

For the reason that not every learner has the same learning style, some have visual learning style, some auditory and some kinesthetic, the teachers should have the adequate knowledge about each individual style preferences, in order to provide the needed instructional variety.

It is not logical to be said that a single methodology could be fitted to an entire class with a lot of students who have a variety of stylistic and strategic preferences. The teachers should apply a great variety of methodologies in order to meet the needs of all students in the class.

Teachers should take into account that they should look for various ways to be prepared for strategy instruction in their classes. In order to be prepared, they can take development courses; find relevant information in print or on the Internet and make contacts with specialists (Rebecca, 2003).
2.5 Good Language Learners

Being a good language learner requires hard work and determination but and this is the key to acquire a foreign language. According to Rubin’s study of the good language learner (1975), there are seven characteristics that define good language learners. The 1st characteristic is that good language learners are willing and accurate guessers, the 2nd characteristic is that they have a strong energy to communicate, the 3rd one is that they are not reluctant, the 4th characteristic is that they are always ready to practice, the 5th one is that they spend time observing their own speech and that of others, the 6th characteristic is that good language learners are considerate to create new things and the last one, the 7th characteristic is that good language learners are vigilant to understanding.

Fortunately, strategies can be taught and they can help to develop learner’s abilities to learn and use a foreign language. These strategies can be taught by instructions and repeated practice and the learner’s knowledge of strategies can be developed by the process of scaffolding in which the teacher avoids giving direct instruction but helps and makes it easier for learners to choose the strategies in learning and using a foreign language (Abhacorn, 2008). Based on Oxford (1990), teachers can facilitate learners to learn strategies that will make learning more effective and often more fun even in ordinary language classroom. For that reason, the strategies training should provide the learners with a collection of strategies which they can choose based on what they feel most comfortable. Furthermore, the training program should also prepare learners how to choose the most appropriate strategies which attune with their needs, goals and the nature of the task (Abhacorn, 2008).

There have been a variety of strategies training programs; i.e. awareness program, strategy workshop, peer tutoring and strategies-based instruction. The strategy which seems to have an advantage over the others is the strategies-based instruction. In a strategy-based instruction classroom teachers describe, model, and give examples of possible useful strategies. They also bring out extra examples from learners’ learning experiences, direct small-group and whole-class discussions about strategies, motivate learners to try a variety of strategies and consolidate strategies into everyday class materials (Cohen, 2003, cited in Abhacorn, 2008). According to Abhakorn (2008), opportunity and motivation are very important on encouraging learners to participate in language learning and use learning strategies. The more a foreign language
classroom becomes a language experience situation, by including real life events and activities that learners would naturally meet, the more likely the learner is to use to language learning strategies at a high level and progress towards proficiency. By having the feeling of increased proficiency, the learners’ motivation, self-esteem and quality of learning advanced as well.

2.6 The role of the teacher and vocabulary teaching strategies

“*We teach language best when we use it for what it was designed for: communication.*” – *Krashen, 1981*

According to Takac, V., one of the significant factors which influence vocabulary acquisition is the role of the teacher and vocabulary teaching strategies. In the past, vocabulary was mainly taught by incidental vocabulary learning which meant to guess the meaning from context and to use the monolingual dictionaries. Even though, this was considered as extremely important in vocabulary acquisition, according to Sokmen, 1997, as mentioned in Takac p.18, “Incidental learning is considered as slow and inefficient process which does not lead to long-term retention. Instead of that, it needs to be controlled and learned explicitly and implicitly, intending to raise the productivity of teaching and learning the target language vocabulary”.

Based on Hatch and Brown, as cited in Takac, V., while teaching vocabulary, teachers have the possibility to apply lots of strategies and activities in order to help their students learn easily and better. Teachers’ strategies can be planned and unplanned. Unplanned strategies indicate spontaneous reactions by the teacher, where teachers improvise something in order to make students to acquire the vocabulary when it is needed. On the other hand, planned vocabulary teaching is intentional, clear and accurate. First, teachers present the meaning and form of the new words to be learned. Then, they hearten students to review and practice new vocabulary. In the end, they monitor and assess the extent to which students have acquired the new vocabulary.

Different from other areas of L2 teaching, when teaching vocabulary, the teacher constantly observes understanding and production, corrects mistakes, instructs, assesses, motivates and rewards the students endeavor to reach success. Therefore, it is the teacher’s duty to encourage the students and grow their consideration towards learning new vocabulary. This can be reached
if the teachers use a variety of learning strategies, activities and techniques with the intention to take care of different learning styles and to change the classroom habits.

A great importance should be given to the motivation of students related to the active participation and collaboration with friends and the teacher. All in all, students need to be encouraged day in and day out to detect and evolve new vocabulary learning strategies in order to deal with the new vocabulary on their own and out of the classroom settings.

According to Nariswariatmojo (2011), school is a place where learners go to learn but there should also be times where learners have fun. The learners absorb faster when there is attraction in a lesson. That is the reason why teachers should plan ahead because learners can get bored fast, as well. A warm and professional environment should be created by teachers because if the students feel secure in the classroom environment, the results will progress. The respect is also crucial and should be reciprocal between the teacher and the learners. The teachers should always remember that they are teaching different learners from different cultures, traditions and backgrounds. That’s why teachers should accept and understand the way each learner is acting.

There are two groups of activities that Nariswariatmojo (2011) suggests to facilitate development during the teaching experience; the initial activities and the organizational activities.

The initial activities include: follow classroom routines (attendance, dismissal and lunch distribution), manage teacher’s duties (conduct assembly, clubs and other curricular activities), check learners’ written work and keep necessary records, such as progress report assignments and projects), keep students in a healthy environment in order to keep them safe.

The setting-up activities contain: keep a notebook, include minute fill-in ideas (games, songs, stories, sources of information and materials, ideas for learning centers, bulletin boards), make direct observations of classroom activities, design the classroom (pictures, posters), become responsible for the general appearance of the classroom (cleanliness, arrangement of charts), prepare bulletin boards, develop a repertoire of techniques for class management or handling individual behavior problems (punishment, time out) and create an individual behavior management.

In spite of the fact that teachers can feel quite isolated into their classroom, it is important to remember that openness, collaboration and sharing are the keys to enrich teaching and learners’
learning. To summarize, it should be said that it is not easy to acquire proficiently an L2 vocabulary. Nothing can guarantee that all the learners will acquire the vocabulary that is taught, even when the lesson is planned beforehand and the most contemporary techniques are utilized. Therefore, learning vocabulary is considered as a complex process which is influenced by a lot of factors such as: the teacher’s approach to vocabulary teaching strategies, the students’ endeavors to acquire new vocabulary and their willingness to control their own learning. All these factors together would lead to acquiring vocabulary proficiently by every student.

2.7 The Relationship between Learning Styles and Vocabulary Learning

According to different researchers there is a strong relationship between language learning styles and vocabulary learning. Their results showed that more proficient learners utilize more learning strategies in different situations than less proficient learners. They also mentioned that students are not aware of the least successful to the most successful learning strategies and their own learning styles. If students were aware of their learning styles, they would be more prepared for learning and able to think more critically.

Based on Reid (1995) as mentioned in Padidar, H., students would take control of their learning and maximize their potential for learning if they developed an understanding of learning styles and strategies. If the teachers’ instructions are given adequate to students’ learning styles, the results are commonly better. Furthermore, if the teachers instructions’ are adjusted naturally to the students differences’, their motivation and success will be strengthened, as well.

However, the students different preferences’; some students need to listen to the new material, some of them need to read it and some of them need to do something with it and the teacher’s own preferred teaching style often lead to disagreements in a classroom setting which can be harmful related to the acquisition of the new vocabulary in a new material (Padidar, A., H., Tayebi, G., &Shakarami, A., 2015).
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses three research questions, measuring instruments, the general procedure of the investigation and the way of processing the data. The study intends to investigate the learning styles’ influence on the acquisition of English vocabulary as a foreign language and analyze learners’ knowledge and experience related to the issue. Thus, to find out facts influencing successful acquisition of English vocabulary by Kosovar learners, a research is carried out. The following three instruments are used in the study: a self-assessment questionnaire to identify the learners’ learning styles, an experimental activity to find out if learners reach higher level of vocabulary acquisition if they are conscious about their learning style and an interview with teachers to find out the way of implementing the learning styles while teaching.

3.1 Participants

In the self-assessment questionnaire participate 40 students from Prishtina, twenty-eight females and twelve males, where they understood if it is helpful to know better themselves by knowing their learning styles.

The students are 11 to 16 years old. They attend a private school in Prishtina, British School of Kosova, where they learn English as a foreign language. The same 40 students are part of the experimental activity, where they understand if higher level of vocabulary acquisition is reached if they are conscious about their learning style.

The questionnaires and the interview were conducted at almost the end of the school year, in the middle of December. All learners had followed the same syllabus of each relevant level.

40 students aged 11 to 16 who participated in the research were informed in advance related to the research where they took part. Regarding the time of participation, it was fixed preliminarily, in order to be appropriate for the learners.
3.2 Measuring Instruments

3.2.1 The Self-Assessment Questionnaire

The first research instrument was the self-assessment questionnaire (See Appendix 1) where students completed a test to identify their learning styles. The self-assessment questionnaire contained 30 quantitative questions, which were counted in the end and when students identified their learning style(s), they read the learning styles explanations and considered how this might help them to identify learning and development that best meets their preference(s). By understanding if they have a visual, auditory or kinesthetic learning style, they knew if it was helpful to know better themselves.

The self-assessment questionnaire is taken from Chapman (2005), where learners had to circle or tick the answer that most represented how they generally behave. All the learners should have completed the questionnaire before reading the accompanying explanation.

After completing the questionnaire, learners added up how many A’s, B’s and C’s they selected. If they chose mostly A’s, they had a VISUAL learning style. If they chose mostly B’s, they had an AUDITORY learning style. If they chose mostly C’s, they had a KINESTHETIC learning style.

When each learner added up A’s, B’s and C’s, they identified their learning style, read the learning style explanation and considered how this might help them to identify learning that best meets their preferences.

The VAK (Visual, Auditory and Kinesthetic) learning style model suggests that most of the people can be divided into one or three preferred styles of learning. These three styles are described as follows and none of them is right or wrong.

- Someone with a Visual learning style prefers to see and observe things, like films, pictures, diagrams, demonstrations, displays, handouts, etc. The phrases that are mostly used by people with visual learning style are “show me” and “let’s have a look at that”. The visual learning style people prefer to read the instructions first or watch someone else do it first and then they will be best able to perform it.
Someone with an Auditory learning style prefers to listen to the information through the spoken words, sounds and noises. The phrases that are mostly used by people with auditory learning style are “Tell me” and “let’s talk it over”. The auditory learning style people prefer to listen the instructions from an expert first, listen to instructions over the phone and if they listen to a song, they will remember all the words.

Someone with a Kinesthetic learning style prefers physical experience like feeling, touching, doing, holding, practical hands-on experiences. The phrases that are mostly used by people with visual learning style are “let me try” and “how do you feel?”. The kinesthetic learning style people prefer to go ahead and try out the tasks, learning as they go. These people never look at the instruction first because they like to experiment.

When learners know what their preferred learning style is, they will understand the type of learning that best suits them. None of learning styles is right or wrong but it is important that once learners know what their preferred learning style is, there are types of learning that are right for each preferred learning style (Chapman, 2005).

By completing these three research instruments; the questionnaire, the interview and the self-assessment questionnaire, each research question is answered, the factors that affect the language acquisition are known, learners are informed about the problems that they may come across while their studies, the methods that work best while learning a foreign language are detected and learners are helped to acquire the foreign language easier by using the appropriate methods.

3.2.2 The Experimental Activity

The second measuring instrument, (See Appendix 2) the experiment comprised of three activities is the research instrument where students are asked to listen, write or look at the words or actions and to remember them afterwards. The experiment is compiled to answer research questions of the respective study. Each word is read aloud, written or shown and then time is given for the words to be remembered. It is decided to use an experiment, rather than just ask the learners for information, for several reasons. Firstly, to ask the learners individually would be very time consuming. To explain what is required to a whole class and ask them to record their answers on paper might lead to confusion as many learners of this age are not particularly good at following
instructions. Therefore the easiest way of obtaining this information, recorded in a uniform method to simplify the process of double checking, seems to be the experiment. Learners are instructed to recall and write down the words they remember after listening/watching them or touching an object.

3.2.3 The Interview

The third measuring instrument, the interview, (See Appendix 3) which contains 10 open-ended questions, intends to collect data on teachers’ experience/perceptions/understanding and is used to answer qualitative research questions to find out the teachers’ ways of implementing the learning styles while teaching.

The teachers’ answers are written and then they are analyzed. The interview with each teacher lasts approximately 30 minutes, where the interviewer asks each question, explains it, the teacher meantime has some time to think about it and when the interviewed teacher is ready to answer, the interviewer teacher writes it on the paper. Each teacher is interviewed individually and only with the presence of the interviewer teacher, in order to get more transparent answers and to have comfort and time to think about each question.

The data are processed through Excel. Then, tables, charts and graphs are created to show learners and teachers’ answers related to learning styles’ influence on the acquisition of English vocabulary.
CHAPTER IV

Data, analysis and discussion of findings

All findings of the study are presented in this chapter. For the reason that the results are reached through three measuring instruments; the self-assessment questionnaire, the experimental activity and the interview, this chapter contains three different parts in which learners’ responses’ are elaborated and presented through statistical techniques. Discussion of findings, which is the fourth chapter, presents the interpretation, analysing and the evaluation of reached results.

4.1 Self-assessment Questionnaire

The learners’ answers during the self-assessment questionnaire are elaborated in this chapter. The self-assessment questionnaire is the third measuring instrument, which contains 30 quantitative questions and intends to collect data on 40 learners’, twelve males and twenty-eight females. This measuring instrument is used to answer quantitative research questions in order to identify learners’ learning style(s). After the learners completed the self-assessment questionnaire, the answers were counted in the end and when each student’s learning style(s) was identified, the learning styles explanations were read and it was considered how this might help to identify the way of learning that best meets learners’ preference(s). By understanding if learners have a visual, auditory or kinesthetic learning style, it is known if it is beneficial to know better themselves. The following research question is answered and analyzed by the self-assessment questionnaire: Does knowing one’s learning style effect on learning outcome?

4.1.1 Does knowing one’s learning style effect on learning outcome?

The term “learning styles” refers to the acceptance that every student learns differently. In fact, an individual’s learning style refers to the preferred way by which the learner adopts, develops, understands and maintains the information. Nowadays, learning styles are considered as significant factors which have a great impact on learning and teaching theory and on classroom management strategies. For the reason that every learner is different, teachers should find out the
differences in their learners’ learning style(s). By knowing the differences in learners’ learning styles, teachers can apply different strategies into their ordinary activities and syllabus.

The VAK (Visual, Auditory and Kinesthetic) learning style model indicates that most of the people can be divided into one or three preferred styles of learning. These three styles are described as follows and none of them is right or wrong.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VISUAL Learning Style</th>
<th>AUDITORY Learning Style</th>
<th>KINESTHETIC Learning Style</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visual learning style learners prefer to see and observe things, like films, pictures, diagrams, demonstrations, displays, handouts, etc. The phrases that are mostly used by people with visual learning style are “show me” and “let’s have a look at that”. The visual learning style people prefer to read the instructions first or watch someone else do it first and then they will be best able to perform it.</td>
<td>Auditory learning style learners prefer to listen to the information through the spoken words, sounds and noises. The phrases that are mostly used by people with auditory learning style are “Tell me” and “let’s talk it over”. The auditory learning style people prefer to listen the instructions from an expert first, listen to instructions over the phone and if they listen to a song, they will remember all the words.</td>
<td>Kinesthetic learning style learners prefer physical experience like feeling, touching, doing, holding, practical hands-on experiences. The phrases that are mostly used by people with visual learning style are “let me try” and “how do you feel?”. The kinesthetic learning style people prefer to go ahead and try out the tasks, learning as they go. These people never look at the instruction first because they like to experiment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 1: Visual, Auditory and Kinesthetic Learning styles*

Before reading the accompanying explanation for each learning style, learners had to circle the answer that most represented how they generally behave in 30 different situations. After completing the questionnaire, learners added up how many A’s, B’s and C’s they selected. If they had mostly A’s, they had a VISUAL learning style. If they had mostly B’s, they had an AUDITORY learning style. If they had mostly C’s, they had a KINESTHETIC learning style.
“The Learning Styles’ Influence on the Acquisition of English Vocabulary – Kosovar Learners’ Perspective”

When each learner added up A’s, B’s and C’s, they identified their learning style, read the learning style explanation and considered how this might help them to identify learning that best meets their preferences.

Before starting to complete the VAK self-assessment questionnaire, learners were asked if they knew what their learning style is and about the style that they use to acquire and maintain the information. It was surprising because none of the learners knew about their preferred learning style.

After answering all the questions through the self-assessment questionnaire, students added up how many A’s, B’s and C’s they had. Based on the results, there are mostly C’s, then B’s and the last ones are A’s. Respectively, there were mostly Kinesthetic Learning Style Learners, then Auditory Learning Style Learners and the last ones were Visual Learning Style Learners. There was one case which had the same number of answers for each learning style and another case which had the same number of answers for two learning styles.

More specifically, 21 out of 40 were Kinesthetic Learning Style Learners, 10 out of 40 were Auditory Learning Style Learners, 7 out of 40 were Visual Learning Style Learners, 1 out of 40 had a mixture of Visual, Auditory and Kinesthetic Learning styles and 1 out of 40 had a mixture of Auditory and Kinesthetic Learning Styles. This is a chart which shows the exact percentage of the Visual, Auditory and Kinesthetic Learners.

![Chart 1: The exact percentage of the Visual, Auditory and Kinesthetic Learners](chart.jpg)
4.1.2 Kinesthetic Learning Style Answers

Based on the results, 21 out of 40 learners or 53% of them, when operating new equipment, they generally go ahead and try, they can figure it out by using it. When they need new direction, they trust their own instincts or maybe use a compass. When they cook a new dish, they also trust their instincts, testing their cooking skills. If they teach someone something new, they demonstrate first and then let them try it. While teaching somebody, they tend to say “You have a go”. During their free time, they enjoy playing sports and when they go shopping, they try the clothes on and test them out. While choosing a holiday, they imagine what it would be like to be there and if they were buying a car, they test-drive lots of different types before buying it. When they learn a new skill, they try it first themselves and work it out, and when choosing food out of a menu, they imagine what the food will taste like. When they listen to a band, they can’t stay without moving in time with the music and they move around a lot, fiddle with pens and touch things when they concentrate. They choose their household furnishings because they like their textures and what it feels to touch them. They remember things best by doing them and when they are anxious they can’t sit still, they fiddle and move around constantly. How other people make them feel, makes them feel especially connected with them. As for revising for an exam, they generally imagine making the movement or creating the formula and when they explain to someone, they tend to encourage them to try and talk as they do it. The Kinesthetic learners enjoy taking part in sporting activities, eating fine food and wines and dancing. Most of their free time is spent doing physical activity or making things. When they first contact a new person, they usually try to get together while doing something else, such an activity or a meal. They first notice how people stand and move and if they are angry they stamp about, slam doors and physically demonstrate their anger. They find it easiest to remember things they have done and they can tell if somebody is lying because they give them funny vibes. When they meet an old friend, they give them a hug or a handshake and they remember things best by doing and practicing the activity or imagine it being done. If they have to complain about a faulty product, they take it back to the store or post it to the head office. They tend to say “I know how you feel”.
4.1.3 Auditory Learning Style Answers

Based on the results, 10 out of 40 learners or 25% of them, when operating new equipment, they generally listen to an explanation from someone who has used it before. When they need new direction, they ask for spoken directions. When they cook a new dish, they call a friend for an explanation. If they teach someone something new, they give them a verbal explanation. While teaching somebody, they tend to say “Listen to me explain”. During their free time, they enjoy listening to music and talking to their friends and when they go shopping, they discuss them with the shop staff. While choosing a holiday, they listen to recommendations from friends and if they were buying a car, they discuss what they need with their friends. When they learn a new skill, they talk with the teacher exactly what they’re supposed to do, and when choosing food out of a menu, they talk through the options in their head or with their partner. When they listen to a band, they can’t stay without listening to the lyrics and the beats and they discuss the problem and the possible solutions in their head when they concentrate. They choose their household furnishings because of the descriptions the sales-people give them. They remember things best by being spoken to and when they are anxious they talk over in their head what worries them most. What other people say to them, makes them feel especially connected with them. As for revising for an exam, they generally talk over their notes, alone or with other people and when they explain to someone, they tend to explain in different ways until they understand. The Auditory learners enjoy listening to music and most of their free time is spent talking to friends. When they first contact a new person, they usually talk to them on telephone. They first notice how people sound and speak and if they are angry they raise their voice and tell people how they feel. They find it easiest to remember names and they can tell if somebody is lying because their voice changes. When they meet an old friend, they say “It’s great to hear from you!” and they remember things best by saying them aloud or repeating words and key points in their heads. If they have to complain about a faulty product, they take complain over the phone. They tend to say “I hear what you are saying”.

4.1.4 Visual Learning Style Answers

Based on the results, 7 out of 40 learners or 17% of them, when operating new equipment, they read the instructions first. When they need new direction, they look at a map. When they cook a new dish, they follow a written recipe. If they teach someone something new, write instructions
down for them. While teaching somebody, they tend to say “Watch how I do it”. During their free time, they enjoy going to museums and galleries, and when they go shopping, they imagine what they would look like on. While choosing a holiday, they read lots of brochures and if they were buying a car, they read reviews in newspapers and magazines. When they learn a new skill, they watch what their teacher is doing, and when choosing food out of a menu, they imagine what the food will look like. When they listen to a band, they can’t stay without watching the band members and other people in the audience and they focus on the words or the pictures in front of them when they concentrate. They choose their household furnishings because of colors and how they look. They remember things best by looking at them and when they are anxious they visualize the worst-case scenarios. How other people look, makes them feel especially connected with them. As for revising for an exam, they generally write lots of revision notes and diagrams and when they explain to someone, they tend to show them what they mean. The Visual learners enjoy watching films, photography, looking at art or people watching. Most of their free time is spent watching television. When they first contact a new person, they usually arrange a face to face meeting. They first notice how people look and dress and if they are angry they keep replaying in their mind the thing that upset them. They find it easiest to remember faces and they can tell if somebody is lying because they avoid looking at them. When they meet an old friend, they say “It’s great to see you!” and they remember things best by writing notes or keeping printed details. If they have to complain about a faulty product, they write a letter. They tend to say “I see what you mean”.

After completing and realizing each learner’s learning style, they were asked if that was important for them to be known. All their answers were positive and most of them explained that it would be easier for them to understand and maintain information if it is provided in accordance with their preferred learning style. Moreover, they found it surprising since nobody asked or informed them about these learning styles so far.

4.2 The Experimental Activity

After completing the self-assessment questionnaire and identifying students’ learning styles, the same 40 students underwent the experimental activity in which it was found out if higher level of
vocabulary acquisition is reached if the learners are conscious about their learning style. The experiment comprised of three activities is the second research instrument where students are asked to listen, write or look at the words or actions and to remember them afterwards.

4.2.1 The Auditory Activity

During the first activity, 10 words were read aloud. Students were not allowed to write without listening to them carefully. After they listened to the words, they wrote those that they could remember from listening. It resulted that only 1 student could remember all the words followed by 6 students who could remember 9 words. On the average, 7 words were remembered by most of them, respectively 37% or 15 out of 40 students.

![Chart 2: The exact percentage of students who remembered words through the listening activity](image)

4.2.2 The Kinaesthetic Activity

During the second activity, 10 objects were exposed to students and they were allowed to touch, feel and talk about them. Students were not allowed to write without looking at the objects and touching them first. After they had practical hand-on experience with the 10 objects, they wrote the names of those objects they could remember. It resulted that 12 students could remember all the words, followed by 16 students who could remember 9 words. On the average, 9 words were remembered by most of them, respectively 40% or 16 out of 40 students.
Chart 3: The exact percentage of students who remembered words through the kinesthetic activity

4.2.3 The Visual Activity

During the third activity, 10 words were written on the board. Students were not allowed to start writing them in their notebooks without looking at them carefully for a minute. After they looked the written words, the board was erased and they wrote those that they could remember. It resulted that only 1 student could remember all the words followed by 5 students who could remember 9 words. On the average, 7 words were remembered by most of them, respectively 25% or 10 out of 40 students.

Chart 4: The exact percentage of students who remembered words through the visual activity
4.3 The Interview

The teachers’ answers during the interview are elaborated in this chapter. The interview is the third measuring instrument, which contains 10 open-ended questions and intends to collect data on teachers’ experience/perceptions/understanding and is used to answer qualitative research questions to find out the teachers ways’ of addressing the learning styles while teaching. The following research questions are answered by the interview;

a) Does knowing one’s learning style effect on learning outcome?
b) Do learners reach higher level of vocabulary acquisition if they are conscious about their learning style?
c) How do teachers address the students’ learning styles while teaching?

The data are processed through Excel. Then, tables, charts and graphs are created to show learners and teachers’ answers related to learning styles’ influence on the acquisition of English vocabulary.

4.3.1 Does knowing one’s learning style effect on learning outcome?

The research question if knowing the learning style has an effect on learning outcome is answered by these two interview questions and each one is analyzed in details based on teachers’ answers;

1. Why do teachers utilize learning styles in their teaching?

Based on teachers’ answers, there are mainly five reasons that they utilize learning styles in their teaching. First of all, knowing one’s learning style can serve as an encouragement for students to reflect on their preferred ways of learning. This would give them more ownership and control over their own learning. Furthermore, knowing students learning styles can be referred as a reminder that all students are different and learn new material in different ways and rates. Lastly, knowing one’s learning style and adjusting teaching strategies to it, can make teaching more enjoyable and understandable. In this way, teachers’ professional skills are expanded as well.
Chart 5: The reasons that teachers utilize learning styles in their teaching

2. How do you adjust your teaching to account for different learning styles?

According to the teachers’ answers, the first rule to adjust teaching to account for different learning styles is to get to know the students, in the sense that they reveal what their students’ interests and concerns are about. This can be achieved by doing interactive activities by which teachers would know better their students’ preferences, would learn more about their students’ character and reveal what students find comfortable and pleasant to be surrounded with.

The second rule is to create a positive environment for learning. This can be done if students understand that everybody is there to learn and not to compete with each other. Also the atmosphere in the class should be comprehensive where every student has the possibility to take part in every activity. Usually, the activities that teachers use to create an inclusive atmosphere in the classroom settings is by making students work in pairs, groups or projects in which students have to take part anyhow. In this way, the students experience a variety of different roles, helping them to improve their skills.

The third rule is to be flexible and provide options for different activities. Usually, teachers try to adjust activities based on what they know about students, their specific needs and preferences. For example, if a student cannot understand a lesson through listening to it, the teacher can provide another option; by watching a video about it or writing something about it.
Chart 6: The ways teachers adjust their teaching to account for different learning styles

3. How do you know that you have achieved the desired outcome – student learning?

The most beneficial way to find out if the teachers have achieved the desired outcome – student learning, is to do it while the lesson is still going on. According to teachers, they should prevent misunderstandings immediately after they notice uncertainty in students’ faces. This cannot be postponed since it will be completely forgotten by students afterwards. Some ways by which teachers can check students’ understanding are; Try to not make yes/no questions like “Do you understand?” because students’ answer is usually “yes”. It would be more beneficial if teachers asked evident questions in order to make students use their own foregoing knowledge. Another way to check students’ learning is to ask students reflect on the lesson and write down what they have learned from it in a certain time. Students can also summarize or paraphrase the lesson. Short quizzes can also be used at the end of class to check for students’ learning. Students can also show their understanding by using their five fingers to show maximum understanding to one finger to show minimal understanding. Another technique is to make students write an answer for a question by the last five minutes of the class. The teacher collects students written answers when the class is about to finish and in this way, the teacher can check students’ understanding and gain more ideas about a specific topic. At last, based on teachers’ answers, the most effective way to check for understanding is to have one student explain to another student what he/she has
learned. If the student can do that successfully, then the teacher has achieved the desired outcome – student learning.

**Chart 7: The ways teachers know that they have achieved the desired outcome – student learning**

4.3.2 **Do learners reach higher level of vocabulary acquisition if they are conscious about their learning style?**

The research question if learners reach higher level of vocabulary acquisition if they are conscious about their learning style is answered by these interview questions and each one is analyzed according to teachers’ answers;

4. **How does your learning style influence your teaching students with different learning styles?**

Based on teachers’ answers, their own preferred learning style will somehow influence the way they organize and use their teaching methods. Even though teachers try to avoid this occurrence, their own preferred style indirectly affects the teaching strategies and the way of transmitting information to students.
Chart 8: The ways teachers’ own learning style influences students with different learning styles

5. What four words would students use to describe your teaching strategies?

According to teachers’ answers, most of the words to describe their teaching strategies were positive. Since there were more teachers interviewed, the most commonly used words are presented in a scale from the most mentioned ones to the least mentioned ones;

Flexible teaching strategies – meaning that they change the plans if a better idea is suggested;

Collaborative teaching strategies – in the sense that they develop interaction with students while teaching;

Encouraging teaching strategies - meaning that they have a passion for learning and always try to encourage students to learn more;

Student-centered teaching strategies – in the sense that they always try to make students engaged in the process of learning;

Supportive teaching strategies – meaning that they practice an activity many times until successful;

Creative teaching strategies – meaning that they use a variety of teaching strategies to teach the same concepts;

Technological teaching strategies – in the sense that they use technology when possible;
Practical teaching strategies – meaning that they put into practice and make real-world connections for students;

![Teaching Strategies Chart]

*Chart 9: The words that students would use to describe their teachers’ teaching strategies*

### 4.3.3 How do teachers address the students’ learning styles while teaching?

The research question about the way teachers implement the students’ learning styles while teaching is answered by these interview questions and each one is elaborated according to teachers’ answers;

#### 6. What kind of training or exposure to learning styles have you had?

Based on teachers’ answers, there are no trainings related to different learning styles organized in our country. There were some other trainings in which learning styles were mentioned briefly, but not given a detailed attention to them. Teachers said that while their teaching experience, they realized that not all the students learn the same way and each teacher and student have their particular preferred learning style. Since then, teachers started to explore on their own about different learning styles and put different strategies into practice in order to meet all students’ needs and achieve the desired outcome – student learning.
7. How do you identify your students’ learning styles?

According to teachers’ answers, there are some ways to be considered which can determine their students’ learning styles and this can be a very different process for various age groups. Most of the teachers prefer to do a questionnaire at the beginning of the school-year where each student can find out about his/her own learning style. For pupils, teachers prefer to find their learning styles by using any object, which can help identify their primary learning styles. Pupils who are kinesthetic learners are generally the first ones to ask “Can I touch it?” Visual learners are the ones who instead of touching, would want to see it. Auditory learners are the ones who would like to listen about the lesson. For older students, teachers can offer personality tests which are particularly designed to help students identify their own learning styles.
8. How do you adjust your teaching to account for different learning styles?

Based on teachers’ answers, not only students but all of us all have a preferred way in which we learn best. As in most of the cases, not every student in a class has the same preferred learning style, which can make it difficult for the teachers to teach the lesson plan effectively. However, by trying to incorporate various methods into their teaching, teachers are able to reach the desired outcome – student learning. Three ways that were mostly mentioned by teachers are as follows; since visual learning style students have a preference for seen or observed things, teachers tend to include pictures, diagrams, demonstrations or films in their teaching process. Since auditory learning style students have a preference for the transfer of information through listening, teachers tend to include the spoken words, songs, videos, sounds, audiotapes, listen to a podcast for information, take turns listening to one another read, read material aloud to the students and noises in their teaching process. Since kinesthetic learning style students have a preference for physical experience, teachers tend to include bodies when learning, objects to help them understand a lesson, different art supplies to learn and act out what the students have learned.
Chart 12: The ways teachers adjust their teaching to account for different learning styles

9. Describe your teaching style and how you accommodate the different learning styles of the students in your classes.

Based on teachers’ answers, first of all, in order to accommodate the different learning styles, the teacher must know each student’s preferred learning style. This can be done by a questionnaire, where students identify their own learning styles. When the teacher knows if a student has visual, auditory, or kinesthetic learning style, then the teacher can accommodate different learning styles of the students in a classroom.

As it is known, students can have one, two, or three learning styles. It is possible that some students learn best just through visualization, while another can learn best by watching and listening. For the reason that every child learns differently, it requires lots of planning in order to meet the needs of all students’ learning styles. Nevertheless, for the reason that most of the students have more than one learning style, teachers prefer to include each of these learning styles into their activities and lesson plans. They think that the best way is to try and plan out activities that are appropriate for visual, auditory and kinesthetic learners; a balance for all learners. By providing balanced activities that attract all the students to share their skills, then all the students’ different needs are met throughout a lesson.
Chart 13: The ways teachers accommodate the different learning styles of the students in classes

10. Referring back to the title and aim of this survey, are there any other points which you would like to add which have not been included.

Based on teachers’ answers, most of them would like to have more trainings and seminars related to different students’ learning styles since they did not participate in any training so far. If not possible, teachers would like to gather sometimes and share their experiences related to students’ different learning styles and preferences.

Chart 14: The points that teachers would like to add that have not been included
4.4 Discussion of findings

This is the fourth chapter of data, analysis and discussion of findings, in which the obtained results are interpreted, analysed and evaluated through the means of graphs and charts. Furthermore, during this chapter all of the thesis’ research questions discussed and presented through statistical techniques in order to be clear and understandable. Since there are three research questions, this chapter contains three different parts and each one answers and discusses one research question through the obtained results from the questionnaire, interview and the self-assessment questionnaire. The following research questions are presented and discussed through this chapter;

These days, learning styles are considered as significant factors which have a great impact on learning, teaching and classroom management strategies. Since every learner is different, teachers should find out the differences and similarities in their students’ learning style(s). By being aware of the differences in students’ learning styles, teachers can apply different strategies into their everyday activities and syllabus (Schmeck, 2013). Even though, being aware of the learning style(s) that every student has is crucial in learning, it is surprising that none of the students was aware of their learning style(s). Furthermore, it is worrying that even the teachers never mentioned different learning styles or did anything to figure them out based on students’ answers’. Students think that if activities and lectures are carried out through different learning style(s) and if teachers try to adjust them to students’ preferences, there would be more students who would understand lectures and activities better. After students answered questions in 30 different situations and realizing each one’s learning style, they were asked if that was important for them to be known. All their answers were positive and most of them explained that it would be easier for them to understand and maintain information if it is provided in accordance with their preferred learning style. This was also verified through the experimental activity in which was reached higher level of vocabulary acquisition because students were already conscious and exposed to their learning style.

4.4.1 Does knowing one’s learning style effect on learning outcome?

These days, learning styles are considered as significant factors which have a great impact on learning, teaching and classroom management strategies. Since every learner is different,
teachers should find out the differences and similarities in their students’ learning style(s). By being aware of the differences in students’ learning styles, teachers can apply different strategies into their everyday activities and syllabus. Even though, being aware of the learning style(s) that every student has is crucial in learning, it is surprising that none of the students was aware of their learning style(s). Furthermore, it is worrying that even the teachers never mentioned different learning styles or did anything to figure them out based on students’ answers’. Students think that if activities and lectures are carried out through different learning style(s) and if teachers try to adjust them to students’ preferences’, there would be more students who would understand lectures and activities better. After students answered questions in 30 different situations and realizing each one’s learning style, they were asked if that was important for them to be known. All their answers were positive and most of them explained that it would be easier for them to understand and maintain information if it is provided in accordance with their preferred learning style. This is a chart which shows the number of students who are Visual, Auditory and Kinesthetic Learning Style Learners.

![Chart 15: Learning style effects on learning outcome](chart_15.png)
4.4.2 Do learners reach higher level of vocabulary acquisition if they are conscious about their learning style?

As it was found from the self-assessment questionnaire, most of the students belonged to the Kinaesthetic Learning Style, followed by Auditory and Visual Learning Style. Furthermore, through the experimental activity, it was revealed that by knowing one’s learning style can have positive effects on learning outcome. That is because when students underwent through the experimental activities, they were already conscious about their learning style and most of them could also remember the words through the Kinaesthetic Activity. Accordingly, it is verified that higher level of vocabulary acquisition can be reached if students are conscious and exposed to their learning style.

![Chart 16](image)

*Chart 16: The average number of students who remembered the average number of words through the experimental activities*

4.4.3 How do teachers address the students’ learning styles while teaching?

By analyzing these results, it means that the teacher should provide more physical activities like feeling, touching, doing, holding, practical hands-on experiences since this group has more students who belong to Kinesthetic Learning Style. The results are not the same for all groups or classes of students. That means that each teacher should find out and be conscious of their students’ learning style(s) in the beginning of the semester and then try to adjust student’s preferences’ with different styles and strategies in order to be more successful and accessible to students’ needs’. For example, if in a class there are mostly Auditory learners, the teacher should try to find more listening activities through the spoken words, sounds and noises since the
auditory learning style people prefer to listen the instructions from someone first. If in a class there are mostly Visual Learners, the teacher should try to find activities related to observing things, like films, pictures, diagrams, demonstrations, displays, handouts, etc., since the visual learning style people prefer to read the instructions first or watch someone else do it first and then they will be best able to perform it. This does not mean that the teacher should only work on the same learning style if the most of the group belongs to it. It means that the teacher should find more activities to the relevant style, without forgetting that there are some other students who belong to other learning styles and they cannot be segregated.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

The term “learning styles” refers to the acceptance that every student learns differently. In fact, an individual’s learning style refers to the preferred way by which the learner adopts, develops, understands and maintains the information. Nowadays, learning styles are considered as significant factors which have a great impact on learning and teaching theory and on classroom management strategies. For the reason that every learner is different, teachers should find out the differences in their learners’ learning style(s). By knowing the differences in learners’ learning styles, teachers can apply different strategies into their ordinary activities and syllabus. (Cole, R., 2008).

RQ1: Does knowing one’s learning style effect on learning outcome?

Even though, being aware of the learning style(s) that every student has is crucial in learning, it is surprising that none of the students was aware of their learning style(s). Furthermore, it is worrying that even the teachers never mentioned different learning styles or did anything to figure them out based on students’ answers. Students think that if activities and lectures are carried out through different learning style(s) and if teachers try to adjust them to students’ preferences, there would be more students who would understand lectures and activities better. After students answered questions in 30 different situations and realizing each one’s learning style, they were asked if that was important for them to be known. All their answers were positive and most of them explained that it would be easier for them to understand and maintain information if it is provided in accordance with their preferred learning style.

RQ2: Do learners reach higher level of vocabulary acquisition if they are conscious about their learning style?

Since every learner is different, teachers should find out the differences and similarities in their students’ learning style(s). By being aware of the differences in students’ learning styles, teachers can apply different strategies into their everyday activities and syllabus. Through the experimental activity, it was revealed that by knowing one’s learning style can have positive
effects on learning outcome. That is because when students underwent through the experimental activities, they were already conscious about their learning style and most of them could also remember the words through the Kinaesthetic Activity. Accordingly, it is verified that higher level of vocabulary acquisition can be reached if students are conscious and exposed to their learning style.

**RQ3: How do teachers address the students’ learning styles while teaching?**

Based on teachers’ answers, first of all, in order to accommodate the different learning styles, the teacher must know each student’s preferred learning style. This can be done by a questionnaire, where students identify their own learning styles. When the teacher knows if a student has visual, auditory, or kinesthetic learning style, then the teacher can accommodate different learning styles of the students in a classroom.

As it is known, students can have one, two, or three learning styles. It is possible that some students learn best just through visualization, while another can learn best by watching and listening. For the reason that every child learns differently, it requires lots of planning in order to meet the needs of all students’ learning styles. Nevertheless, for the reason that most of the students have more than one learning style, teachers prefer to include each of these learning styles into their activities and lesson plans. They think that the best way is to try and plan out activities that are appropriate for visual, auditory and kinesthetic learners; a balance for all learners. By providing balanced activities that attract all the students to share their skills, then all the students’ different needs are met throughout a lesson.

Based on the results, all the hypotheses which are set for this master thesis are in correlation with the research questions. The 1st hypothesis: “If teachers do not address the students’ learning styles while teaching, they might not pursue a learner-centered approach which focuses on the meaningful use of the target language” is confirmed by the self-assessment questionnaire where students stated that if activities and lectures are carried out through different learning style(s) and if teachers try to adjust them to students’ preferences, there would be more students who would understand lectures and activities better. The 2nd hypothesis: “Dealing with each student’s learning style is a demanding approach which requires teacher preparation, planning and considerable resources beyond the textbooks” is also confirmed by the interview where teachers
stated that for the reason that every child learns differently, it requires lots of planning in order to meet the needs of all students’ learning styles. They think that the best way is to try and plan out activities beforehand that are appropriate for visual, auditory and kinesthetic learners; a balance for all learners. By providing balanced activities that attract all the students to share their skills, then all the students’ different needs are met throughout a lesson.

The third hypothesis: “Using the appropriate learning style improves teaching effectiveness by helping teachers carry out relevant tasks which encourage learners to learn English vocabulary faster and make learning sustainable” is confirmed by the experimental activity because when students underwent through the experimental activities, they were already conscious about their learning style and most of them could also remember the words through the Kinaesthetic Activity. Accordingly, it is verified that higher level of vocabulary acquisition can be reached if students are conscious and exposed to their learning style.

By this thesis, interested people learn about different learning styles that students face while learning English as a foreign language and how to cope with them. By reading this thesis, people are also aware of the ways that teachers address different learning styles to teach English vocabulary and if they are sufficient or not from a learner’s perspective.
5.2 Recommendations

- Teachers should find out and be conscious of their students’ learning style(s) in the beginning of the semester.

- Teachers should try to adjust student’s preferences’ with different styles and strategies in order to be more successful and accessible to students’ needs.

- Teachers should not forget that there are some other students who belong to other learning styles and they cannot be segregated.

- Teachers should find out the differences in their learners’ learning style(s). By knowing the differences in learners’ learning styles, teachers can apply different strategies into their ordinary activities and syllabus.

- Share the experience with other teachers.

Limitations of the study

Just like in any other thesis, this one is bound to have its own limitations as well. There are many important factors to take into account and which led to certain limitations of this study.

During the entire experiment period I had encountered some difficulties with students and the teachers. I noticed that some teachers were used to teach only by traditional methods and they did not know how to answer about different learning styles. When they were asked if they take into consideration their students’ different learning styles and preferences, they said that they teach the same way for all the class.

During the self-assessment questionnaire the students were confused, as well. Some of them stated that they have never heard about different learning styles and that it was the first time that they were going through a self-assessment questionnaire.

As a closing remark for this master thesis, what I propose to make is that teachers should adapt the modern activities and methods to their age and interests, to use both traditional and modern methods with all classes, and definitely to take into account their preferences, hobbies and interests.
References


“The Learning Styles’ Influence on the Acquisition of English Vocabulary – Kosovar Learners’ Perspective”


Appendix I

VAK Learning Styles Self-Assessment Questionnaire

Circle or tick the answer that most represents how you generally behave.
(It’s best to complete the questionnaire before reading the accompanying explanation.)

1. When I operate new equipment I generally:
   a) read the instructions first
   b) listen to an explanation from someone who has used it before
   c) go ahead and have a go, I can figure it out as I use it

2. When I need directions for travelling I usually:
   a) look at a map
   b) ask for spoken directions
   c) follow my nose and maybe use a compass

3. When I cook a new dish, I like to:
   a) follow a written recipe
   b) call a friend for an explanation
   c) follow my instincts, testing as I cook

4. If I am teaching someone something new, I tend to:
   a) write instructions down for them
   b) give them a verbal explanation
   c) demonstrate first and then let them have a go

5. I tend to say:
   a) watch how I do it
   b) listen to me explain
   c) you have a go

6. During my free time I most enjoy:
   a) going to museums and galleries
   b) listening to music and talking to my friends
   c) playing sport or doing DIY

7. When I go shopping for clothes, I tend to:
   a) imagine what they would look like on
   b) discuss them with the shop staff
   c) try them on and test them out

8. When I am choosing a holiday I usually:
a) read lots of brochures
b) listen to recommendations from friends
c) imagine what it would be like to be there

9. If I was buying a new car, I would:
   a) read reviews in newspapers and magazines
   b) discuss what I need with my friends
   c) test-drive lots of different types

10. When I am learning a new skill, I am most comfortable:
    a) watching what the teacher is doing
    b) talking through with the teacher exactly what I’m supposed to do
    c) giving it a try myself and work it out as I go

11. If I am choosing food off a menu, I tend to:
    a) imagine what the food will look like
    b) talk through the options in my head or with my partner
    c) imagine what the food will taste like

12. When I listen to a band, I can’t help:
    a) watching the band members and other people in the audience
    b) listening to the lyrics and the beats
    c) moving in time with the music

13. When I concentrate, I most often:
    a) focus on the words or the pictures in front of me
    b) discuss the problem and the possible solutions in my head
    c) move around a lot, fiddle with pens and pencils and touch things

14. I choose household furnishings because I like:
    a) their colours and how they look
    b) the descriptions the sales-people give me
    c) their textures and what it feels like to touch them

15. My first memory is of:
    a) looking at something
    b) being spoken to
    c) doing something

16. When I am anxious, I:
a) visualise the worst-case scenarios
b) talk over in my head what worries me most
c) can’t sit still, fiddle and move around constantly
17. I feel especially connected to other people because of:
a) how they look
b) what they say to me
c) how they make me feel
18. When I have to revise for an exam, I generally:
a) write lots of revision notes and diagrams
b) talk over my notes, alone or with other people
c) imagine making the movement or creating the formula
19. If I am explaining to someone I tend to:
a) show them what I mean
b) explain to them in different ways until they understand
c) encourage them to try and talk them through my idea as they do it
20. I really love:
a) watching films, photography, looking at art or people watching
b) listening to music, the radio or talking to friends
c) taking part in sporting activities, eating fine foods and wines or dancing
21. Most of my free time is spent:
a) watching television
b) talking to friends
c) doing physical activity or making things
22. When I first contact a new person, I usually:
a) arrange a face to face meeting
b) talk to them on the telephone
c) try to get together whilst doing something else, such as an activity or a meal
23. I first notice how people:
a) look and dress
b) sound and speak
c) stand and move
24. If I am angry, I tend to:
a) keep replaying in my mind what it is that has upset me
b) raise my voice and tell people how I feel
c) stamp about, slam doors and physically demonstrate my anger
25. I find it easiest to remember:
   a) faces
   b) names
   c) things I have done
26. I think that you can tell if someone is lying if:
   a) they avoid looking at you
   b) their voices changes
   c) they give me funny vibes
27. When I meet an old friend:
   a) I say “it’s great to see you!”
   b) I say “it’s great to hear from you!”
   c) I give them a hug or a handshake
28. I remember things best by:
   a) writing notes or keeping printed details
   b) saying them aloud or repeating words and key points in my head
   c) doing and practising the activity or imagining it being done
29. If I have to complain about faulty goods, I am most comfortable:
   a) writing a letter
   b) complaining over the phone
   c) taking the item back to the store or posting it to head office
30. I tend to say:
   a) I see what you mean
   b) I hear what you are saying
   c) I know how you feel

Now add up how many A’s, B’s and C’s you selected.

A’s =  
B’s =  
C’s =  

If you chose mostly A’s you have a VISUAL learning style. If you chose mostly B’s you have an AUDITORY learning style. If you chose mostly C’s you have a KINÄSTHETIC learning style. Some people find that their learning style may be a blend of two or three styles, in this case read about the styles that apply to
“The Learning Styles’ Influence on the Acquisition of English Vocabulary – Kosovar Learners’ Perspective”

you in the explanation below. When you have identified your learning style(s), read the learning styles explanations and consider how this might help you to identify learning and development that best meets your preference(s).

Now see the VAK Learning Styles Explanation.

Learning Styles Explanation The VAK learning styles model suggests that most people can be divided into one of three preferred styles of learning. These three styles are as follows, (and there is no right or wrong learning style):

- Someone with a Visual learning style has a preference for seen or observed things, including pictures, diagrams, demonstrations, displays, handouts, films, flip-chart, etc. These people will use phrases such as ‘show me’, ‘let’s have a look at that’ and will be best able to perform a new task after reading the instructions or watching someone else do it first. These are the people who will work from lists and written directions and instructions.

- Someone with an Auditory learning style has a preference for the transfer of information through listening: to the spoken word, of self or others, of sounds and noises. These people will use phrases such as ‘tell me’, ‘let’s talk it over’ and will be best able to perform a new task after listening to instructions from an expert. These are the people who are happy being given spoken instructions over the telephone, and can remember all the words to songs that they hear!

- Someone with a Kinaesthetic learning style has a preference for physical experience - touching, feeling, holding, doing, practical hands-on experiences. These people will use phrases such as ‘let me try’, ‘how do you feel?’ and will be best able to perform a new task by going ahead and trying it out, learning as they go. These are the people who like to experiment, hands-on, and never look at the instructions first!

People commonly have a main preferred learning style, but this will be part of a blend of all three. Some people have a very strong preference; other people have a more even mixture of two or less commonly, three styles. When you know your preferred learning style(s) you understand the type of learning that best suits you. This enables you to choose the types of learning that work best for you. There is no right or wrong learning style. The point is that there are types of learning that are right for your own preferred learning style. Please note that this is not a scientifically validated testing instrument – it is a free assessment tool designed to give a broad indication of preferred learning style(s).
Appendix II

The overall performance of students during the Experimental Activity is shown in these tables.

**The Auditory Activity**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of remembered words</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
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**The Kinesthetic Activity**

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<th>8</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Students who remembered the words</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
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</table>

**The Visual Activity**

<table>
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<th>9</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Students who remembered the words</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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Appendix III

The interview with teachers

“The Learning Styles’ Influence on the Acquisition of English Vocabulary – Kosovar Learners’ Perspective”

The aim of this interview is to find out the way of implementing the learning styles while teaching

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Years teaching English</td>
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</table>
### The Learning Styles’ Influence on the Acquisition of English Vocabulary – Kosovar Learners’ Perspective

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.</strong> What kind of training or exposure to learning styles have you had?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2.</strong> Why do teachers utilize learning styles in their teaching?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.</strong> Does the place where you work offer enough opportunities to put into practice different activities related to learning styles?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>4.</strong> How does your learning style influence your teaching students with different learning styles?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. How do you identify your students learning styles’?

6. What four words would students use to describe your teaching strategies?

7. How do you adjust your teaching to account for different learning styles?

8. Describe your teaching style and how you accommodate the different learning styles of the students in your classes.
9. How do you know that you have achieved the desired outcome – student learning?

10. Referring back to the title and aim of this survey, are there any other points which you would like to add which have not been included