

The effects of Auditory Learning Strategy on Learning Skills of Language Learners (Students' Views)

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Abstract: Auditory learning style enables auditory learners to learn best by hearing or through verbal communication. Auditory learners are good at remembering what they hear as they learn information through auditory representation. Auditory components such as tone, pitch, and loudness are all important to these learners. The purpose of this paper is to evaluate the views of students over Auditory Teaching and Learning Strategy for an interactive and communicative classroom environment. To obtain necessary data from participants, we asked two open ended questions to the participant students: How can you learn foreign language best in the classroom environment? and What kind of teaching or learning strategies does your foreign language teacher use and implement in the classroom?. A qualitative research method was used to evaluate and compare the views of the students on Auditory Learning and Teaching Strategy in the classroom. The research was carried out with the participation of fifteen university students in the cities of Tekirdağ and Erzincan. The views of the students obtained through interviews suggest that their skills, attitudes and predispositions to Auditory Learning Style are significant and determinative factors for learning effectively. The features of learners with Auditory Learning style include building up more comprehensive sentences, being talkative, sensitive to sound and music, memorizing the songs fast and easily, being inclined to learn foreign languages, learning by talking, having difficulty in reading and writing skills, participating in group discussions, using audiotapes for language practices. This paper draws attention to the views and practices of language learners as a means of increasing teachers' awareness of Auditory Learning and Teaching in classroom environment.

Keywords: Auditory Learning, Auditory Teaching, Learning Style, Classroom Management, Effective Learning

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I. INTRODUCTION

Almost all learners have different learning strengths that enable them to begin to concentrate, remain focused and understand and remember important information and ideas. They become much more efficient, productive and successful, and it is more probable that they will produce their best work if they manage to apply their strengths. Auditory Learning is one of the three different learning styles, visual, kinaesthetic and auditory.

Non-specific to an educational system, learning begins long before the school and continues for a much longer period after school, then in parallel with school, it takes place in a wide variety of shapes and environments.

Teachers are skilful at creating and planning suitable opportunities for school children to progress in learning. Teachers try to encourage learning in their courses, which is good and appropriate for their students and this is a profound approach at a particular time with a particular child or group of children. With comprehension of what is already known about the learning process and individual learning preferences, teachers can provide much better learning situations which are more likely to contribute to effective learning (Pritchard, 2009).

Discovering one's own learning style is quite important for academic achievements, and there are many benefits for learners (Table 1). The benefits of discovering learning style, from academic point of view, include giving learners a head start and maximizes their learning potentials, enabling learning to succeed in school, college, university, giving learner customized techniques to score better on tests and exams, allowing learners to learn "their way" – through their own best strategies, showing them how to overcome the limitations of poor instructors, reducing the stress and frustration of learning experiences and expanding their existing learning and studying strategies.

Table 1: Benefits of Discovering Learning Style from Academic Point of View

• giving learners a head start and maximizes their learning potentials,
• enabling learning to succeed in school, college, university,
• giving learner customized techniques to score better on tests and exams,
• allowing learners to learn “their way”
• showing them how to overcome the limitations of poor instructors,
• reducing the stress and frustration of learning experiences,
• expanding their existing learning and studying strategies,

The benefits of discovering learning style, from personal point of view (Table 2), include increasing learners' self-confidence, improving their self-image, teaching them how to use their brain best, giving them insight into their strengths, weaknesses, and habits, enabling them to enjoy any learning process, inspiring greater curiosity and motivation for lifelong learning, showing them how to take advantage of their natural skills and inclinations.

Table 2: Benefits of Discovering Learning Style from Personal Point of View

• increasing learners' self-confidence
• improving their self-image
• teaching them how to use their brain best
• giving them insight into their strengths, weaknesses, and habits
• enabling them to enjoy any learning process
• inspiring greater curiosity and motivation for lifelong learning,
• showing them how to take advantage of their natural skills and inclinations.

From professional point, the benefits of discovering learners' learning styles include enabling teachers to stay up to date professionally, giving them an edge over their competitors, allowing them to manage teams more effectively, guiding them in delivering effective presentations to diverse audiences, improving their persuasive skills, helping them improve cooperation with other teachers, and translating learning power into self-power.

Table 3: Benefits of Discovering Learning Style from Professional Point of View

• enabling teachers to stay up to date professionally,
• giving them an edge over their competitors,
• allowing them to manage teams more effectively,
• guiding them in delivering effective presentations to diverse audiences,
• improving their persuasive skills,
• helping them improve cooperation with other teachers,
• translating learning power into self-power

Each learning style has its own advantages and benefits on learners. Auditory learning style has more benefits on the learners in the fields of language, music, literature than those in the other fields.

1.1. Auditory Learning

Listening skills are important for academic achievement of students at school years and career readiness of college students. Although not all people listen well, language learners can develop listening skill in classroom environment and acquire targeted instruction. The new emphasis on the importance of speaking and listening in the Common Core of language courses requires teachers to use and implement necessary strategies and tools that focus on Auditory Learning and Teaching Strategy.

Language learners spend a significant portion of their course period engaged in auditory learning, which depends on the capability of their brains to effectively receive and process auditory signals from teachers and peers. Young learners do not have the ability to process auditory information as adults do as their auditory skills are not developed well until adult age. Some learners are sensitive to poor acoustical conditions in classrooms and this can interfere with learners' development of spoken language, reading, and writing skills, thus affecting academic performance. In order to promote the effectiveness in language classroom, the sound enhancement technology is provided for every student in the classroom to get greater acoustic accessibility.

Auditory learners are reported to be excellent listeners. The characteristics of auditory learners include getting information by listening, preferring listening to reading or writing, having difficulty in communicating through body language and facial expressions, having the ability to reproduce symbols, letters or words by hearing them, finding written directions more difficult to follow than spoken ones, enjoying dialogues, plays, dictation, and to favour music. They need to hear something or to speak to know it. They are good at learning concepts by listening to players and repeating or fulfilling verbal instructions, tending to listen first to lecture

and then taking notes or relying on printed notes. They like class discussions but noise can easily distract their attention and concentration. They can often solve problems by talking about them, clarifying incoming information through listening and repeating aloud. They are good at telling jokes and stories.

Kanar (1995) argued that auditory learners like listening and speaking, have compatible personalities, and have difficulty in following written instructions. They have to listen to an explanation and hear it to understand and learn. These people do not necessarily paint in their minds as visual learners do; on the contrary, they filter through the ability to listen and replicate incoming information. They are good at telling stories and solving problems in a "talk" way. Further, they prepare grade notes and then listen to them, remembering details by "listening" to previous discussions, asking questions and volunteering to the class, and whispering new information on their own.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Kolb (1984), one's own learning style indicates his or her individual differences in learning. Shaughnessy (1998) argues in his work, an individual's learning style is a way to concentrate on new and difficult academic knowledge or skills, internalize and remember processes. Individuals have different attitudes to learning because of differences in learning styles. Sims (1995) found that a person's learning approach is a relatively stable indication of how they perceive, interact and respond to the learning environment.

One of the most important components in effective teaching is to understand and find out learning styles and the role of learning styles in the teaching/learning process. According to Sarasin (1999), "... *teaching cannot be successful without knowledge of learning styles and a commitment to matching them with teaching styles and strategies*". There is a relationship between occupational preferences and learning style type Utilizing learning style theory in the classroom is claimed to be extremely beneficial at all educational levels for a variety of reasons.

In a research carried out by Cheng and Banya (1998) with 140 male young learners at the Chinese Military academy and Taiwanese teachers teaching at Taiwanese universities seven questionnaires were completed. With the results of the surveys, it was determined that the Taiwanese military students did not have significantly different preferences for any single learning style, whereas the teachers were found to be significantly less visual and more auditory than the learners.

Tabanlıoğlu(2003) argues that auditory learners are good at arranging words in order, making associations and reviewing them in order to facilitate their retrieval in terms of vocabulary learning. The results in his study show that auditory learners know how to manipulate and achieve the target language efficiently.

Dunn and Dunn (1993) also believe that the individuals with low achievement tend to have poor auditory memory. No matter how well they want to do in school, their inability to remember information through lecture, discussion, or reading results in academic failure especially in traditional classroom environment in which students mostly listen or read and teachers dominate.

In a study by Cohen and Wolvin (2011), story-listening is argued to be very important for auditory learning. They emphasized the importance of stories for auditory learners and reported that the stories both provide much more than entertainment and help us understand ourselves and the world around us. The study states that stories are central to communication and trained story listeners are more cognitively focused. Storytelling is important, but Cohen and Wolvin emphasize the need to refocus on story listening. Accordingly, great potential for creating classroom education around the stories can be provided to improve the listening skills of students and their general understanding skills.

Gardner (1999) argued in his study that auditory learning is particularly effective for auditory learners, and school children have their own ways that are quite different. As long as disciplines can be presented to students in various forms and learning can be achieved in various ways, they will be better served in educational environment.

The individuals who learn by listening can learn this skill through life as a learning tool. Children begin to listen to the voices in the womb of the mother and they listen to the voices in their surroundings after birth so as to speak (Tompkins, 1998: 260. Fw. Akyol, 2010).

Karakuş (2002) found that one of the ways of making use of experience, acquiring and enhancing knowledge is listening.

Mackay (1997: 9) notes that listening has opened up new horizons to human beings. Research shows that one of the most important reasons for student failure is the lack of listening (Conaway, 1982, Fw. Yıldırım, Doğanay and Türkoğlu, 2009: 99). Student-centred listening activities should be included in the schools, and listening skills should be improved at an early age.

III. MATERIAL AND METHOD

3.1. Problem Statement and Purpose

The purpose of the study into the effects of Auditory Learning Strategy on Learning Skills of Language Learners is to determine and evaluate the views of language learners in higher education in the cities of Tekirdağ and Erzincan. In order to determine and compare the views of language learners over auditory learning, we asked them two open ended questions “How can you learn foreign language best in the classroom environment?, and What kind of teaching or learning strategies does your foreign language teacher use and implement in the classroom?”

3.2. Methods and Research Design

A qualitative research method was used to determine and interpret language learners' views on Auditory Learning Strategy used in their courses. The reason why we prefer this method is that qualitative research method is the best for researchers to interpret and make judgement about immeasurable data. We carried out this research with the participation of fifteen language learners in Namık Kemal University in Tekirdağ and Erzincan University in Erzincan. For this reason we relied on case study design for the purpose of our enquiry.

3.3. Participants

We included eight students from Namık Kemal University and seven students from Erzincan University in our study, who learn English, French and German as foreign language. We preferred an easy accessible sample technique in the research. We obtained the data from fifteen language learners who admitted to participate in the interview for the research. The participants were asked whether they were contented to answer to the questions, and then we applied the tool. We coded the names of the learners with letters and numbers.

3.4. Research Instrument

In our study, we used the tool with semi structured interview form to gather data from University students. We asked two open ended questions to the participants. The questions were designed in accordance with the Auditory Learning approach experienced by language learners in classroom environment.

3.5. Data analysis

Having obtained the data through the interview with the participants, we transferred and digitalized the data into computer so as to create digital data. We used content analysis with the percentage and frequency values.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

(G. K. German Learner in N.K University) “... *I find videos and sound presentations very useful learning tools for me in classes. I like studying in groups and discuss the topic orally; I prefer taking oral examinations to written ones... Our teacher often use player in the courses and I am always engaged in the lecture in pleasure, as I am aware that I learn much in this way*”

(M. M. T. and T.A, English Learners in Erzincan University) “... *I prefer to learn information by listening rather than writing. I always try to hear the things that I should learn. Reading and writing never contribute to my learning because I don't like to learn in this way... some of my teachers prefer to make us write the text but I hate doing so.*

From the statement of the students, the learning style of the learner is much more important than the teaching style of the teacher. The target of the course is to teach the learners effectively, so it is important for the teachers to find out the learning styles of the learners and to give the lectures in relevant to the learning styles of the the learners. This is very significant in language courses.

(T.N. French Learner in N.K University) “... *I like listening stories and plays in foreign language. I find Learning with Drama to be very useful for me to learn vocabulary and their pronunciation efficiently. I try to keep the statements of the songs because I like music and it promotes my vocabulary capacity. In this way I can learn many words in foreign language...*”.

From the statements of the students, we determine that the learners have learnt language effectively with stories and auditory style. A lot of authors argue that drama and story-listening enhance the rate of learning language. In the study by Mazi (2008), it was found that the difference between the pretest-post test scores was significant in terms of listening and reading comprehension skills of the students in experimental group in which thinking activities through stories were used.

It is inevitable to exercise through the most common and familiar words because the words that are common in any language are the ones that are used continuously (İlhan and Tutkun, 2016). Almost every language has a verb in every sentence. Initially, the most commonly used verbs should be learnt. As these verbs are often used in almost all the stories of Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling (TPRS), this method can easily be used to practice in language classes (Ray and Seely, 2012:33).

Oral communication involves two basic skills which are speaking and listening. Both are inseparable part of each other. Speaking cannot exist without listening, which means that it is not possible for the

individuals with poor listening skill to speak well (Yalçın, 2006: 123). According to Çifçi (2001), it is impossible to think training of listening separate from that of speaking both in formal education and in traditional education.

According to cognitive theories, it is necessary for an individual to be mentally active in order for the learning to occur, to select the stimuli presented to him and to make it meaningful and give the appropriate response to it. This is applied through "information processing theory" and "processing level theory" (Cüceloğlu, 1994, Arı et al., 1999, Fidan and Erden, 2001, Tosun, 2002, Selçuk, 2004, Erden and Akman, 2005). Information processing theory and processing level theory are the concepts of brain-based learning (Kayalar and Güler Arı, 2016). Using stories and drama in teaching language is of great importance in terms of brain-based learning. In order to improve students' listening skills and overall comprehension, classroom instruction is always built around stories.

(C.K. English Learner in Erzincan University) *"... I feel comfortable in quiet environment for studying. I can learn easily if subjects are read and dictated aloud, so I like participate in seminars and panels. I enjoy reading with my sound in such a way that I can hear myself. I always listen to music while studying... my language teacher does her best to create an classroom environment for the ones like me , she uses auditory devices such as projection, computer, mp3 and video so that we can listen the instructions and learn what she tries to.. "*

From the statements above, we can conclude that the teacher should provide quiet environment for auditory learners in the classroom for teaching to be a success. The learners can easily learn the subjects that are read aloud while being repeated. Participation in panels and seminars should be provided because they are presented aloud, which is a good chance for them to learn. As they like studying with their sound, they should be allowed to read with a sound that their own ear can hear. Workgroups can be created to facilitate learning or a co-worker can be found, as they can find a good ambiance with their school-mates through collaborative learning. The material to be learned can be transformed into singing and loud using a CD-MP3 player-like device. They can record their readings with a device to create their own voice recordings, in this way they can listen to them later with their sounds.

(M.A.K. German learner in N.K. University) *"....I have a very talkative personality, so I like speaking more than writing and reading in my language courses. I can comprehend the texts better if the teacher reads it aloud or it is read by a player. I hate reading or studying in a quiet way. I can keep things in my mind if I have learnt them hearing with my ears. I always think aloud. I want no voice in the study-environment to be able to concentrate on what to learn... We get language courses in a crowded classroom and there are students with different learning styles, for this reason, our language teachers teach language with their own teaching styles. I find some courses to be suitable for my learning style, and I can learn all the instructions in those courses, but the other courses are not so beneficial to me...."*

As the most important feature of auditory learners is their early speech skill and vocabulary capacity, they are very talkative in all environments. Compared to their age, they can make more comprehensive sentences and usually speak better than those with other learning styles. From the statements, we can infer that they are sensitive to sound and music and they memorize the songs fast and easily are the auditory children. As they are good at memorizing songs, they can easily build up long statements in language. They want no voice to be able to concentrate on instructions. The noise makes them uncomfortable in classroom environment, so they like quiet environment, but they shouldn't be forced to read quietly at classroom; on the contrary they should be able to read the texts in a loud voice. For their learning, it is important that they hear what they learn, as they have difficulty in recognizing what their ears have not heard. As they like chatting, they are pleased to work in group. Collaborative learning in groups develops oral communication skills of the language learners, thus creating an environment of active, involved and exploratory learning (Güler Arı, 2016). They can learn well as there are a lot of speaking and listening opportunities in group works.

V. CONCLUSIONS

From the statements of the language learners we can conclude that they should study in groups and talk things out, get a small tape recorder or smartphone in the classroom to record lectures and study groups. They should reduce lecture and course notes and put them on tape to keep them in mind later. Rather than writing down the texts, they should read the texts out loud or get them into recorder.

Auditory learners enjoy listening, for this reason, they should listen to text tapes while driving, resting or entertaining. So as to keep in mind and fast analyse, they should read questions and work out problems aloud.

The learners should learn a sequence of steps, write them out in sentences, and then read them aloud. They explain ideas to other people, and recite them at times. They should discuss their ideas verbally whenever possible

The teachers should make them sit in the front desks of the classroom, as the students in front seats are active during course and they like participating in class discussions and debates. The teachers allow them to

make speeches and presentations, to use verbal analogies and storytelling to demonstrate their point, to read explanations out loud. The teachers should create chances of musical pieces to aid memorization.

Teachers of pupils who learn best using auditory techniques should give oral feedback to their students, rather than a written report. Of course, they may also want the information to be documented as proof of what was said, but the student in question is likely to take more information on board if it is said to them directly in addition to this.

It is vital that the diversity of the learning style of the students be determined in teaching process. Language teachers must appreciate the differences in learning style in their teaching practice. Students need to be taught in a balanced way in relevant to their range of learning style. A particular teaching approach cannot be applied to everyone in a class. Various tasks or activities and teaching approaches should be integrated and implemented to satisfy all students in the class and produce better teaching results.

Debates and discussions are another effective way of retaining information about a topic, and prove to be particularly useful when an exam or essay demands learners to state their own views on a matter. Videos and flashcards are also handy, as is participating in a role play. So these tools should be made ready in classroom environment.

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