



IRAQI  
Academic Scientific Journals



العراقية  
المجلات الأكاديمية العلمية



ISSN: 2663-9033 (Online) | ISSN: 2616-6224 (Print)

Journal of Language Studies

Contents available at: <http://jls.tu.edu.iq>

## A Correlation Study between EFL Students' Learning Styles and their Academic Performance

Inst. Ibraheem Khalaf Salih Hilo\*

College of Education for Humanities, Tikrit University, English department

E.mail: [ibraheemkhalaf540@gmail.com](mailto:ibraheemkhalaf540@gmail.com)

### Keywords:

- learning styles
- academic
- performance
- EFL

### Article Info

#### Article history:

Received: 30-1-2022

Accepted: 25-2-2022

Available online

**Abstract** Learning style is an effective and a natural process in which learners begin with what they already know or feel or read. Real learning cannot take place randomly. It is based on effective steps to learn something new. This will lead to use the new content and participate in how it might work in real life. Learners are also required to creatively take what they have learned beyond the classroom. This final step moves students out of the class into their real performance. According to the learning process, each student will have a place in the learning cycle where he or she is most comfortable and can contribute the most excellent work. Even though different students prefer different places in the cycle, it is important for all students to go through each of the steps in the cycle. Learning styles approach works best within a system that focuses on self-control, intrinsic rewards and self-expression. Working with learning styles, you may find that you naturally move toward a student-centered discipline approach that encourages student self-responsibility. Students usually differ in their ways of learning. Each student can understand the subject in the way he can and interpret. There are so many external factors that affect leaning. Some of them are environmental and social. Others are psychological related to age, motivation, individual differences etc. The present study aims at investigating the correlation between learning styles of EFL college students and their academic

\* Corresponding Author: Inst. Ibraheem Khalaf, E.Mail: [ibraheemkhalaf540@gmail.com](mailto:ibraheemkhalaf540@gmail.com)  
Tel: +9647701751369 , Affiliation: Tikrit University -Iraq

	performance. The sample consists of thirty student-teachers from Department of English / College of Education for Humanities/ University of Tikrit. The instrument of the study is a learning style questionnaire that is adapted from O Brien (1985). Results show that there is a positive relationship between students' styles and their academic performance. Based on the results gained, specific recommendations are put forward.
--	---

م. إبراهيم خلف صالح / كلية التربية للعلوم الإنسانية / جامعة تكريت

<p><b>الخلاصة:</b> يعد أسلوب التعلم عملية فعالة وطبيعية يبدأ بها المتعلمون بما يعرفونه فعلياً أو يشعرون به أو يقرؤونه. ولا يمكن أن يحدث التعلم الحقيقي بشكل عشوائي. حيث أنه يعتمد على خطوات فعالة لتعلم شيء جديد سيؤدي ذلك إلى استخدام المحتوى الجديد والمشاركة في كيفية عمله في الحياة الواقعية. يُطلب من المتعلمين أيضاً أن يأخذوا ما تعلموه خارج الفصل الدراسي بطريقة إبداعية. وهذه هي الخطوة الأخيرة التي تتقل الطلاب خارج الفصل إلى أدائهم الحقيقي. ووفقاً لعملية التعلم، سيكون لكل طالب مكان في دورة التعلم حيث يكون أكثر راحة ويمكنه المساهمة في العمل الأكثر تميزاً. وعلى الرغم من أن الطلاب المختلفين يفضلون أماكن مختلفة في الدورة، فمن المهم لجميع الطلاب وأن نهج أساليب التعلم يعمل. متابعة كل خطوة من خطوات الدورة. بشكل أفضل داخل نظام يركز على ضبط النفس والمكافآت الجوهرية والتعبير عن الذات. من خلال العمل باستخدام أساليب التعلم، قد تجد أنك تتحرك بشكل طبيعي نحو نهج الانضباط المتمحور حول الطالب وعادة ما يختلف. والذي يشجع الطالب على تحمل المسؤولية الذاتية. الطلاب في طرق التعلم الخاصة بهم. حيث يمكن لكل طالب فهم وتفسير الموضوع بالطريقة التي يمكنه بها. وهناك العديد من العوامل الخارجية التي تؤثر على الانحراف. بعضها بيئي واجتماعي. البعض الآخر نفساني مرتبط بالعمر والدافع والفروق الفردية وما إلى ذلك. وتهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى التحقق من العلاقة بين أساليب التعلم وتتكون. لطلاب كلية اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية وأدائهم الأكاديمي العينة من ثلاثين طالباً - مدرساً من قسم اللغة الإنجليزية / كلية التربية للعلوم الإنسانية / جامعة تكريت. وان أداة الدراسة هي استبيان أسلوب</p>	<p><b>الكلمات الدالة:-</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- أساليب التعلم</li><li>- الأداء الأكاديمي</li><li>- اللغة الإنجليزية</li><li>كلغة أجنبية</li></ul> <p><b>معلومات البحث</b></p> <p><b>تاريخ البحث:</b></p> <p>الاستلام: 2022_1_30</p> <p>2022_2_25 القبول:</p> <p>التوفر على النت</p>
--	--

وتظهر النتائج أن O Brien (1985) O التعلم الذي تم اقتباسه من هناك علاقة إيجابية بين أنماط الطلاب وأدائهم الأكاديمي. بناءً على النتائج المكتسبة، ويتم تقديم توصيات محددة.	
---	--

## **Introduction**

### **1.1 Problem of the Study**

Benova and Mihova (2011: 6) define learning style "in relation to the way in which different individuals learn. As researchers have focused on different aspects of this wide range of interpretation and definition have been produced,". A learning style may also be defined as "an individual mode of gaining of knowledge" (dictionary.com.2012). They are three main types; visual learning style is defined to be a "process through which students gain knowledge and understanding through explicitly visual tools" (Lewis, 2012). In the auditory learning style, a learner learns best during the instruction (Fleming, 2012). The third one is the kinesthetic learning style which means that the student learns best during physical activity (Lewis, 2012).

Strengths and Preferences of each individual could be defined across five categories which could be the core of the problem (Benova and Mihova, 2011: 7), as follows:

- 1) Environmental factors which include light, sound, temperature, while some people like to study in silence, other quiet background, music; some might prefer to sit on a straight back chair, while other might prefer to sit on the floor or lie on a sofa. Some people like to work in bright light whereas others prefer low or natural lighting.
- 2) Emotional factors which include motivation in which it is the need, reason, or the feeling in or for doing something and persistent which means continuing in doing something.
- 3) Sociological factors in which some students prefer to study by themselves while others achieve better results when they learn with a friend or colleague.
- 4) Physical factors which include the time of the day when one's learning is likely to be more effective. Some individuals prefer to move around while reading and to have frequent breaks while others can sit and work for long time without breaks.
- 5) Psychological factors which include personal characteristics such as abilities, motivation, temperament on thinking. So, it is clear now that people, differ in their attitudes and preferences in all life aspects. These attitudes might become leaning barriers.

### **1.2 Aim of the Study**

The present study aims at investigating the correlation between learning styles of EFL college students and their academic performance.

### **1.3 Hypothesis of the Study**

It is hypothesized that there is a positive relationship between students' learning styles and their academic performance.

### **1.4 Value of the Study**

It is hoped that this study will be of value for those who are interested in methods of teaching in general and methods of teaching English in particular. It focuses on learning styles that may help in conveying the information in best way after knowing the learning styles of each learner.

### **1.5 Procedures of the Study**

To fulfil the aims of the study:

1. a learning style questionnaire is adapted from O'Brien (1985), which has been presented to the sample of the study. The sample consists of thirty student-teachers from the Department of English / College of Education for Human Sciences/ University of Tikrit.
2. The students have been asked to give their views about the students-teachers' responses which have been collected by the researcher.
3. The collected responses have been treated statistically.

## **Theoretical Background**

### **2.1 Studies related to this study**

#### **2.1 Boonadda Jayanama (2012: 18-30)**

The objectives on this study were:

- (1) Identifying the learning styles of low proficiency and high proficiency students in Foundation English at Srianthariniwrot University.
- (2) Examining the relationship between the learning styles of low and high proficiency students and their academic achievements in Foundation English at Srianthariniwrot University.
- (3) Comparing the learning styles of low and high proficiency students in Foundation English at the same university.
- (4) Examining the relationship between the learning styles of low and high proficiency students at the same university and demographic variables.

The researcher used the PLSPQ or perceptual learning style preference Questionnaire developed by Joy Reid (1995).

The study was a mixed methodology research which was both quantitative and qualitative. The researcher identified low and high proficiency students from English Foundation courses at Srianthariniwrot University.

The findings of this study indicated that:

1. It was found that low proficiency students had four major leaning styles ranging from auditory, group, kinesthetic and visual in order of preference. Moreover, the results indicated that the high proficiency (English for International Communication) students also had four major learning styles ranging from auditory, group, kinesthetic and visual in order of preference.
2. there was a positive relationship between learning style and the academic achievement of low proficiency or Srianthariniwrot University.
3. there was a significant relationship between some demographic variables and students' styles.

#### **2.2 Rahmani and Jahanbakhsh (2012: 1030-1034)**

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between learning styles of high school girls students and their academic achievement based on their

majors (major course of study in high school). The targeted individuals or the sample of the study was high school girls.

By using the multi stage randomly sampling method, 350 individuals were selected as a sample of research. By descriptive-survey research method and a questionnaire named Felder and Solomon Learning Style Index (FLSI), required data were collected.

According to the obtained result, sensing-intuitive learning styles showed significant correlations with academic achievement of students whose major was mathematic science. Academic achievement of students whose major was speculative science showed significant correlation with active-reflective learning styles. In students with empirical science, academic achievement showed significant correlation with both input dimension (visual-verbal) and understand dimension (sequential-global) of learning.

**2.3 Chermahini et al (2013: 322-333)** investigated the relationship between learning styles and the academic performance of students who attended an English class to learn English as a second language in Iran.

A randomly selected group of 488 high school students (248 male and 240 female) participated in the study.

The method followed was to ask the students to fill out the Kolb's learning styles inventory to identify four basic learning types: Accommodating, Diverging, assimilating, and converging. The survey results indicated significant relationship between the different learning styles and the performance results differently in the four groups with different preferred learning styles. Results also indicated gender differences in the performance in English test for convergent and divergent and did not accommodate and assimilate preferred learning styles. These results led the researcher to conclude that learning styles can be considered as a good predictor of any second language academic performance and it should be taken into account to enhance students' performances specially in learning and teaching the second language.

**2.4 Harida and Siregar (2017: 126-139)** state the following:

The aim of the study was to recognize learning style to correlation student's reading skills, moreover, it is committed to find out the significant difference on reading skill based on students leaning style.

A test and a questionnaire were the instruments of the research to collect valid data. The test is composed of five items in which it was scored different for each question to make the total score 100 and questionnaire for learning styles.

Finally, the study stated the following results:

1. Up to the statistics taken, the correlation of the research was positive correlation. It could be seen from calculation  $r_{xy}$  product moment which was 0.467.
2. The correlation between students' learning style and students' reading comprehension was not significant.

## **Methodology**

### **Procedure, Analysis of Data, Conclusions and Recommendations**

#### **3.1 Procedures**

##### **3.1.1. Population and Sample**

"It is the entire pool from which a statistical sample is drawn. It may refer to an entire group of people, objects, events or measurements. It is an aggregate observation of subjects grouped together by a common feature" [www.investopedia.com](http://www.investopedia.com)

The population of this study comprises the students-teachers of fourth stage in Tikrit University-College of Education for Human Sciences.

The choice is intentional in the selection of the University of Tikrit/ College of Education for Human Sciences, and it is random in the selection of representative number of 30 student-teachers from the fourth stage/ English Department.

A "sample is a smaller, manageable version of a larger group. It is a subset containing the characteristics of a larger population. Samples are used in statistical testing when population sizes are too large for the test to include all possible members or observations" or "it is just a part of population" [www.investopedia.com](http://www.investopedia.com) and [www.statisticshowto.com](http://www.statisticshowto.com).

The sample of the research consists of thirty student-teachers from the fourth-stage students English Department. The participants in the pilot study were excluded from the administration of the questionnaire.

### **3.1.2 Instruments of the Study**

To answer the question of the study, a questionnaire of O'Brien (1985) was adopted by the researcher, and subjected to the fourth year EFL college students in order to find students' average of the last year in all subjects to know the academic performance.

### **3.1.3 Validity of the Questionnaire**

Mousavi (1999: 441), and Brown (2004: 22) state that validity "the extent to which inferences made from assessment results are appropriate, meaningful and useful in terms of the purpose of the assessment." In other words, we can say that a test is valid if it measures what it is supposed to measure or can be used for the purposes for which it is intended for example if a researcher studies the phonemes, he (she) should test the learners with the same subject not any other subject, here the test can be regarded as a valid one.

### **3.1.4 Reliability of the Test**

Reliability means the overall consistency of a measure. A measure is said to have a high reliability if it produces similar results under consistent conditions ([wikienn.m.wikipedia.org](http://wikienn.m.wikipedia.org)). In psychological research, it refers to the consistency of a research study or measuring test. For example, if a person weighs himself during two days, the results should be the same, otherwise, the test is not reliable.

### **3.1.5 Final administration of the questionnaire**

The questionnaire was distributed to the subjects at 10<sup>th</sup> January 2019. The students were asked to give their views regarding its items and the three-point scale, the students-teachers' responses have been collected and treated stylistically.

## **3.2 Analysis of Data and Results**

In order to answer the question of the study which reads: What is the nature of the relationship between EFL college students learning style and their academic performance? The responses of the subjects were collected and treated stylistically.

Pearson Correlation Formula has been used. Result of the Correlation is 0.72 which means that there is a positive and significant correlation between learning styles and academic formula.

It is also found that the higher percentage of learning style is visual which gained 43% of students' responses. The last one is kinesthetic style which gained 33.3 % of students' responses.

### **3.4 Conclusions**

Conclusion remarks can be clearly stated as follows:

1. The results of the study clarify that there is a positive and significant relationship between students' learning styles and their academic performance.
2. Based on the study results, it is found that the style of most students in the sample under investigation were visual. 40% of the students in this study were represented as having auditory style of learning and kinesthetic style of learning gained 33.3. % as the results.

### **3.5 Recommendations**

Based on the study results, the following points are recommended:

1. It is recommended to use a combination of reaching methods and make the classroom environment as stimulating and interactive as possible. The teacher student interaction impact productively on a students' self-esteem and enhance their skills. Moreover, it is important for the development of the students' academic self-concept and enhance their enthusiasm and success.
2. Teachers should pay attention to students' individual differences. They should be the main task of teacher interest and thus they should be studied more because they distinguish one person from another and thus help to define each person's individuality, among the most important kinds are intelligence, personality traits and values.

### **References**

- Boneva, D. and Mihova, E. (2011) *Learning Styles and Learning Preferences. Bulgaria as part of an EU funded project*, Dyslang (www.dyslang.eu), Grant Agreement Number 2011-5070/001-001
- Brown, D. (2004). *Language Assessment, Principles and Classroom Practices*. San Frank to state University. Longman.com
- Chermahini, S.A. ; . Ghanbari, A. and. Ghanbari M (2013) "Learning Styles and Academic Performance of Students in English as a Second-Language Class in Iran" in [Bulgarian Journal of Science and Education Policy](#). 2013;7(2):322-333
- Dictionary.com. (2012). *Learning Style/Definition*. Retrieved from Dictionary.com: [http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/ learning](http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/learning) style
- Fleming, G. (2012). *Auditory Learning Style*. Retrieved from About.com: <http://homeworktips.about.com/od/homeworkhelp/a/auditory.htm>

Harida, E. S and Siregar, F. R. (2017) "The Correlation between Learning Style and Students' Achievement in Reading Comprehension at Grade XISMA NTAMBANGAN" in *English Education*. Vol.5 No.

Jahanbakhsh, Rahmani (2012) "Learning Styles and Academic Achievement: a Case Study of Iranian High School Girl's Students" in *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*. DOI: [10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.08.282](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.08.282)

Jayanam, Boonnada (2018) "Relationship Between Learning Styles and Academic Achievement of Low and High Proficiency Students in Foundation English of Srinakharinwirot University" in *Psychology*. <http://www.assumptionjournal.au.edu/index.php/Scholar/article/download/2980/1905>

Lewis, B. (2012). *Visual Learning*. Retrieved from About.com: <http://k6educators.about.com/od/educationglossary>

Mousavi, S A. (1999). *A Dictionary of Language Testing*. 2nd ed., Tehran : Rahnama Publications.

O'Brien, Lynn. (1988) SOS, Strengthening of Skills. Philadelphia, Pa.: Research for Better Schools, 1988.

[wikienn.m.wikipedia.org](http://wikienn.m.wikipedia.org)

### Appendix 1

Learning Style Questionnaire The modality (learning channel preference) questionnaire reproduced here is by O'Brien (1985). To complete, read each sentence carefully and consider if it applies to you. On the line in front of each statement, indicate how often the sentence applies to you, according to the chart below. Please respond to all questions.

1	2	3
Never applies to me.	Sometimes applies to me	Often applies to me.

### SECTION ONE:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ I enjoy doodling and even my notes have lots of pictures and arrows in them.
  2. \_\_\_\_\_ I remember something better if I write it down.
  3. \_\_\_\_\_ I get lost or am late if someone tells me how to get to a new place, and I don't write down the directions.
  4. \_\_\_\_\_ When trying to remember someone's telephone number, or something new like that, it helps me to get a picture of it in my mind.
  5. \_\_\_\_\_ If I am taking a test, I can see the textbook page and where the answer is located.
  6. \_\_\_\_\_ It helps me to look at the person while listening; it keeps me focused.
  7. \_\_\_\_\_ Using flashcards helps me to retain material for tests. It's hard for me to understand what a person saying when there are people talking or music playing.
  8. \_\_\_\_\_ It's hard for me to understand a joke when someone tells me.
  9. \_\_\_\_\_ It is better for me to get work done in a quiet place.
- Total \_\_\_\_\_



**SECTION TWO:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ My written work doesn't look neat to me. My papers have crossed-out words and erasures.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ It helps to use my finger as a pointer when reading to keep my place.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Papers with very small print, blotchy dittos or poor copies are tough on me.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ I understand how to do something if someone tells me, rather than having to read the same thing to myself.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ I remember things that I hear, rather than things that I see or read.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ Writing is tiring. I press down too hard with my pen or pencil.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ My eyes get tired fast, even though the eye doctor says that my eyes are ok.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ When I read, I mix up words that look alike, such as "them" and "then," "bad" and "dad."
9. \_\_\_\_\_ It's hard for me to read other people's handwriting.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ If I had the choice to learn new information through a lecture or textbook, I would choose to hear it rather than read it.

Total \_\_\_\_\_

**SECTION THREE:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ I don't like to read directions; I'd rather just start doing.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ I learn best when I am shown how to do something, and I have the opportunity to do it.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Studying at a desk is not for me.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ I tend to solve problems through a more trial-and-error approach, rather than from a step-by-step method.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Before I follow directions, it helps me to see someone else do it first.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ I find myself needing frequent breaks while studying.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ I am not skilled in giving verbal explanations or directions.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ I do not become easily lost, even in strange surroundings.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ I think better when I have the freedom to move around.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ When I can't think of a specific word, I'll use my hands a lot and call something a "what-cha-ma-call-it" or a "thing-a-ma-jig."

Total \_\_\_\_\_

**SCORING:**

Now, add up the scores for each of the three sections and record below. The maximum score in any section is 30 and the minimum score is 10. Note the preference next to each section.

Section One score \_\_\_\_\_ (visual)

Section Two Score \_\_\_\_\_ (Auditory)

Section Three score \_\_\_\_\_ (Kinesthetic)

**Appendix II**

**1.7 Jury members**

The questionnaire is exposed to a jury members to validate it and to have it in its final form and check its reliability. They are the staff members of the English Department-College of Education for Human Sciences. They are as follows:

1.	Prof. Nahida T. Majeed (Ph.D)	Tikrit University/ College of Education for Human Sciences
----	-------------------------------	--

2.	Prof. Amra I. Sultan (Ph.D)	Tikrit University/ College of Education for Human Sciences
3.	Prof. Nagham Q. Yaya (Ph.D)	Tikrit University/ College of Education for Human Sciences
4.	Prof. Istabraq T. Omer (Ph.D)	Tikrit University/ College of Education for Human Sciences
5.	Prof. Ahmed M. Salih (Ph.D)	Tikrit University/ College of Education for Human Sciences
6.	Prof. Mohammed B. Ahmed (Ph.D)	Tikrit University/ College of Education for Human Sciences
7.	Asst.Prof. Manal O. Mousa (Ph.D)	Tikrit University/ College of Education for Human Sciences
8.	Asst. Prof. Najwa Y. Ismaeel (Ph.D)	Tikrit University/ College of Education for Human Sciences
9.	Asst. Prof. Dunia T. Hameed (Ph.D)	Tikrit University/ College of Education for Human Sciences
10.	Batool A. Hameed (Ph.D)	Tikrit University/ College of Education for Human Sciences