

## LEARNER NEEDS RECOGNITION AS A REQUIREMENT IN MODERN LANGUAGE EDUCATION



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### ABSTRACT

*Language acquisition success is associated with the recognition of learner peculiarities in the following areas: personality, aptitude, motivation, learning styles and strategies and the factor of age. It is essential to note that these learner traits should be taken into account in the process of language learning and teaching.*

**Keywords:** learner variety, language acquisition, successful learning, motivation, aptitude, age, personality.

### АННОТАЦИЯ

*Успех в овладении языком связан с признанием особенностей учащегося в следующих областях: личность, способности, мотивация, стили и стратегии обучения и фактор возраста. Важно отметить, что эти черты учащегося следует учитывать в процессе изучения и преподавания языка.*

**Ключевые слова:** разнообразие учащихся, овладение языком, успешное обучение, мотивация, способности, возраст, личность.

### INTRODUCTION

There are some key factors influencing language acquisition success in the procedure of language learning. These factors are mostly made up of some basic characteristics of a learner including personality, aptitude, motivation, learning styles and strategies and the factor of age [Zoltan Dornyei, 2005, p. 6]. From the perspective of age, it should be specifically noted that the relationship between age and success in second language acquisition is a complex and controversial subject matter dealt with in the research of language acquisition study. At this point, it is important to clarify the notion of language acquisition.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

The terms “language acquisition” and “language learning” are widely used in methodology, however, they carry different meanings and mostly understood in different senses. For example, Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and

Applied Linguistics defines these terms as the following way: **language acquisition** (*n*)-the learning and development of a person’s language. The learning of a native first language is called first language acquisition, and of a second or foreign language, second language acquisition. Some theorists use “learning” and “acquisition” synonymously. Others maintain a contrast between the two terms, using “learning” to mean a conscious process involving the study of explicit rules of language and monitoring one’s performance, as is often typical of classroom learning in a foreign language context, and using “acquisition” to refer to a nonconscious process of rule internalization resulting from exposure to comprehensible input when the learner’s attention is on meaning rather than form, as is more common in a second language context. Still others use “acquisition” only with reference to the learning of one’s first language [Jack C. Richards and Richard Schmidt, 2002, p. 284]

## DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

Moreover, the same idea has also been supported by many other theorists. For instance, according to Stephen Krashen, there is a clear distinction between acquisition and learning. To be more concise, the former is subconscious and anxiety free, whereas learning is a conscious process where separate items from the language are studied and practised in sequence. Krashen also suggested that teachers should concentrate on acquisition rather than learning and that the role of the language teacher should be to provide the right kind of language exposure, namely **comprehensible input** (that is, language that the students understand more or less, even if it is a bit above their own level of production) [S.Krashen, 1982, p. 34]. From these arguments it is clear that the relationship between age and language acquisition is so interrelated that it is important for teachers to be aware of this so that they can choose the right choice of language teaching methods, approaches and techniques.

In addition to the age factor influencing the language acquisition process, there are other key issues of teaching individuals a foreign language that should be taken into consideration during the teaching procedure. In this connection, it should be highlighted that learning styles and strategies are considered to be the most essential points to which English language teachers should pay much attention when they teach students a language. It is an irrefutable fact that the way students learn is different, therefore English language teachers should have the necessary skills for dealing with different learning styles and strategies in the classroom so as to enable their students to learn most efficiently according to their learning style and strategy preferences. The terms learning styles and learning strategies can be confusing.

According to the standard definition, learning styles refer to “...an individual’s natural, habitual, and preferred ways of absorbing, processing and retaining new information and skills. From this definition it is clear that every learner has their own way of learning something new and they apply them in the process of learning. These learning styles seem to be the root of the effectiveness and success of their learning. Therefore, the English language teachers’ interest in learning styles has dramatically increased in recent years. Furthermore, in the last decade the number of the works specifically devoted to learning styles and English language teaching such as Reid (1995, 1997), Kinsella (1995), Oxford (1990), and Oxford and Anderson (1995) has increased significantly [J.M. O’Malley, A.U. Chamot, 1990, p. 23]. The perceptual learning styles such as visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile are the most prevalent types of learning styles. However, they are only one piece of a much larger learning-style picture. Therefore, it is important to see the different learning styles as connected because learners will have more than one learning style. In addition, different tasks may be approached in different ways, more than one learning style can be significant to accomplish a given task. The following three broad categories of learning styles have been regarded as the best taxonomy working well for English language teachers [David Nunan, 2003, p. 270]

See the following table:

<b>Learning Style Classification for the Second Language Classroom</b>
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<b>Cognitive styles</b>	<b>Sensory styles</b>	<b>Personality styles</b>
<b>Field Dependent</b> — learns best when information is presented in context. They are often more fluent language learners	<b>1-Perceptual:</b> <b>Visual</b> -learns best when there is visual reinforcement such as charts, pictures, graphs, etc.	<b>Tolerance of Ambiguity:</b> refers to how comfortable a learner is with uncertainty; some students do well in situations where there are several possible answers; others prefer one correct answer
<b>Field Independent</b> - learns most effectively step-by-step and with sequential instruction. They are often more	<b>Auditory</b> -learns more effectively by listening to information	<b>Hemisphere Dominance:</b> <b>Left-brain dominant</b> learners tend to be more visual, analytical, reflective and self-reliant

accurate language learners		
<b>Analytic</b> -works more effectively alone and at his/her own pace	<b>Tactile</b> -learns more effectively when there is an opportunity to use manipulative resources	<b>Right-brain dominant</b> learners tend to be more auditory, global, impulsive and interactive
<b>Global</b> -works more effectively in groups	<b>Kinesthetic</b> —learns more effectively when there is movement associated with Learning	
<b>Reflective</b> -learns more effectively when they have time to consider new information before responding	<b>2- Environmental: Physical</b> —sensitive to learning environment, such as light, temperature, furniture	
<b>Impulsive</b> -learns more effectively when they can respond to new information immediately; as language learners, they are risk takers	<b>Sociological</b> - sensitive to relationships within the learning environment	

## CONCLUSIONS

To sum up, it is reasonable to note that style preferences of learners should be recognized and taken into account by teachers while they select appropriate teaching methods and approaches to teach them effectively. Therefore, it should be particularly highlighted that in order to recognize different styles in their learners and create lesson plans and classroom activities that address these varied styles, teachers

should have certain knowledge of the general categories of learning styles. The main reason for this is that every student in the classroom will have cognitive, sensory, and personality type learning styles.

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