

Identifying Perceptual Learning Styles Preferences on Students' Vocabulary Mastery

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Abstract

The study's aims were to determine the level of students' vocabulary mastery, identify the students' perceptual learning style preferences, and determine the impact of the perceptual learning style preferences on students' vocabulary mastery. Mixed method research was used in this study. This study included 25 students from MA Muallimin Muhammadiyah Makassar's eleventh grade. The research data were collected using vocabulary test, perceptual learning styles preference questionnaire by Reid (1987), and interview. Likert scale, descriptive statistics, SPSS 26 version, and Microsoft Excel were used to analyze the data. The result of this research showed that (1) The students' perceptual learning styles preferences was group learning style as a major classification. And the other learning style like visual, auditory, kinesthetic, tactile and individual were minor classification. (2) The impact of perceptual learning styles preferences on students' vocabulary mastery was that individual learners could focus on memorizing a new vocabulary; group learners could be enthusiastic and motivated to memorize English vocabulary; and auditory learners could help themselves memorize the vocabulary by listening repeatedly. (3) The level of the students' vocabulary mastery was classified as fair. Based on findings and discussions, it can be concluded that the perceptual learning styles preferences affect the students' vocabulary mastery. Students felt comfortable and it can help them to master vocabulary if they used their favor learning style.

Keywords: Vocabulary Mastery, Perceptual Learning Styles Preferences.

INTRODUCTION

The importance of English in today's global world cannot be denied or ignored because English is the most widely spoken universal language. Learning English takes time and effort. English is the second language in certain nations. English, on the other hand, is a foreign language in Indonesia and is studied by Indonesian students. Harmer (2004) defines English as a

foreign language as students who study general English at a school or institution in their home country as transient visitors in a target language nation.

Students must master four abilities while learning English: writing, reading, speaking, listening and, as well as language components such as grammar, pronunciation, spelling, and vocabulary. One of the most important aspects of learning English is vocabulary. Many academics believe that vocabulary is an essential component of language development. According to Joseph P. O'rourke (1999), "Vocabulary mastery is one of the factors involved in mastering English as a Foreign Language."

According to Krasen and Terrel (1983), vocabulary mastery is critical for the acquisition process. Some features of vocabulary must be examined, such as word meaning (synonym, antonym, connotation, and denotation), idioms, word combination collocation, and word grammar, which covers nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs, among others.

The researcher interviewed one of the English teachers at Ma Muallimin Muhammadiyah Makassar by phone. The interview conducted on August 2022. The teacher informs that there are many students have difficulty in learning English. The students find it difficult to speak or write. It is same when they are trying to comprehend what they read or listen to. It could be because of the students' limited vocabulary.

In mastering vocabulary, there are learning styles that influence the process of learning English, more precisely at school. There are a lot of styles that have done by students to improve their English language ability. Students as individuals had various differences and similarities that instructors could not ignore as natural circumstances. Differences and similarities may be attributed to both genesis factors and behaviors. Age, motivation, interest, attitude and aptitude, learning style, and learning technique are some examples (Dörnyei, 2005).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Learning Styles

Learning is a particular way of learning preferred by a learner (Richard & Schmidt, 2010). Learning styles are one of many types of individual differences that affect learning, according to Skehan (1989, 1994); other important variables in this regard include age, aptitude, general intelligence, modality preferences (e.g., visual, auditory, kinesthetic), motivation, and sociocultural factors.

Reid (1995) states learning styles as "a person's natural, habitual, and preferred way(s) of receiving, processing, and remembering new knowledge and abilities" and According to Hunt (1979), a student's learning style specifies the educational settings under which he or she is most likely to learn. The learning style of a student defines how he learns rather than what he has learnt. Hunt then narrows his concept by discussing how much structure is essential for the optimum learning.

Reid (1987) created the Perceptual Learning Style Preferences Model, in which she defined perceptual learning style as a combination of physiological and social interactions. Reid's perceptual learning styles Preferences classifies perceptual learning styles into six categories: visual learning style, auditory learning style, tactile learning style, kinesthetic learning style, group learning style, and individual learning style.

a. Visual

Visual learners, according to Gilakjani (2012), think in pictures and learn best in visual imagery. This type of learner is unsuitable for instructional methods such as discussion or oral explanation. The learners benefit from seeing words in books, on the blackboard, and in workbooks. Reading anything helps children remember and comprehend things better.

b. Auditory

This sort of learner is well-suited to classroom teaching methods such as oral explanation and discussion. According to Kanar (1995), auditory learners like hearing and speaking, have compatible personalities, and struggle to follow the written instructions. Reading aloud or moving lips as they read might help them retain information, especially if they are learning new subject.

c. Tactile

Learners like to tackle difficulties in the classroom using "hands-on" experiences, such as hands-on activities using laboratory items, constructing, touching, and working with materials, which offer them with the most beneficial learning setting. Writing notes or following directions may assist students in remembering material, and engaging in class-related activities can assist students in comprehending new information.

d. Kinesthetic

Learners like to tackle difficulties in class using their own bodily movement experiences, such as games and role play. According to Sternbrg (2008), kinesthetic learning style is the way learners respond and employ stimuli throughout the learning process. A kinesthetic learning process occurs when a person learns to utilize a swing or ride a bike. A combination of stimuli, such as an audiotape and an activity, will help the learners understand new material.

e. Group

When students study alongside at least one other student, they learn more readily and are more effective in completing tasks properly. The kids prefer group contact and classwork with other students, and they recall knowledge better when they work in groups of two or three. The stimulus given by group work assists in the acquisition and understanding of new material.

f. Individual

Learners like to study alone. They feel that studying alone is more productive than studying with others, and they recall material learned alone. They learn new stuff better when they study it alone, and they improve quicker when they work alone.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary is a target language for students who learn a new language. The students' vocabulary mastery could be a good predictor of their overall performance and acquisition of language skills. Nation (2012) contends that vocabulary knowledge and acquisition have a strong influence on language proficiency and use. Some vocabulary terms have been proposed by experts.

Vocabulary is a crucial aspect of language competency because it lays the groundwork for how effectively students listen, speak, read, and write. According to Graves (2006), vocabulary knowledge is critical to success in reading, literacy in general, in school, and in the world outside of school. Vocabulary is made up of words that students use in their daily writing and speaking.

Students' Vocabulary Mastery

According to Krashen and Terrell (1983), vocabulary mastery is crucial for the acquisition process. Students must master their vocabulary in order to acquire the language used in listening, speaking, writing, and reading. A student of a foreign language will be able to talk and write fluently and effectively, as well as comprehend what he or she reads and hears, if he or she has a big vocabulary and the capacity to apply it appropriately.

According to Allen French (1983), in order to learn the vocabulary, students might perform the following:

- a. The students understand the words' meaning
- b. The students can identify the synonym and antonym.
- c. The students may employ excellent grammar words.
- d. The students understand the word construction (noun, verb, adverb, and adjective).

Vocabulary is the core component that supports pupils in comprehending language, hence acquiring vocabulary is one of the most crucial components of learning a foreign language. They will be able to grasp the language skill rapidly if they have a broad vocabulary. Lubliner and Scott (2018) describe four characteristics of vocabulary that students should be aware of. The four aspects are word meaning, word usage, word construction, and word grammar. According to Hiebert and Kamil (2005), words have two forms: oral vocabulary and written vocabulary. The collection of words for which we know the meanings when we speak or read aloud is known as oral vocabulary. Second, print vocabulary comprises words whose meanings we know when writing or reading silently. Harmer (2010) divides vocabulary into two categories: productive vocabulary and receptive vocabulary.

Perceptual Learning Styles Preferences and Vocabulary Mastery

According to Henry and Pongrantz (2006), "mastering a language" is "being able to comprehend the vocabulary and phonological system in both speech and writing." Students studying English as a second language must comprehend the meaning of the terms and be able to use them in sentences, according to this definition. Vocabulary mastery refers to the number of words someone knows; the term is more precisely defined as knowing a word, because learners are said to have good vocabulary mastery if they can know the meaning as well as the form, spelling, and grammar of the word. According to Keefe (1997), a learning style is a student's consistent manner of reacting to and employing inputs in the context of learning, particularly while acquiring vocabulary. Learning approach based on perception Preferences are the many ways in which individuals absorb and remember information. Perceptual learning style preferences are skill traits that students who want to grasp and comprehend English should have.

By the definition above, it can conclude that the learning style of students might help them increase their vocabulary knowledge. A teacher must consider a student's chosen channel of perception while selecting the appropriate learning method. When teaching new language, these learning patterns should be considered. They will quickly grasp vocabulary if they know their best technique to study English, particularly vocabulary.

METHOD

Research Design

As the research design, this study employed a mixed-method approach that included quantitative and qualitative data. This study is categorized as quantitative because this study concern to identify the students' perceptual learning styles preferences using questionnaire and the level of students' vocabulary mastery using vocabulary test, and categorized qualitative because to investigate the impact of perceptual learning styles preferences on students' vocabulary mastery using an interview. According to Gay et al., (2012), to gather thorough information that cannot be gained using a single approach in a single study in order to achieve a deeper understanding, quantitative and qualitative research must be conducted using several types of data to investigate varied perspectives.

Research Instrument

In order to achieved the purpose and to answered the research question, the instruments of this research were questionnaire, observation, and interview, vocabulary test.

a. Vocabulary Test

A vocabulary test was used to get the data related to the level of the students' vocabulary mastery. There are 35 numbers of the test in this research. The form of the test was 17 numbers of multiple choices, 5 numbers of completing the table with the names of sports people, 5 numbers of matching the words to make correct collocations, and 8 numbers to complete the sentences with the missing verbs.

b. Questionnaire

The purpose of the questionnaire was to identify the students' perceptual learning styles preferences. The total of the question was 30 items, and it was adopted from the PLSPQ (Perceptual Learning Styles Preferences Questionnaire) by Reid (1987).

c. Interview

In this research, the semi-structure intensive interview was conducted to gain information the impact of perceptual learning styles preferences on students' vocabulary mastery. Intensive interviews, also known as in-depth interviews, are a mix of the one-on-one interview style. The intensive interview was conducted after the students have done the vocabulary test and the questionnaire. The students with the high and low vocabulary scores were interviewed.

Techniques of Data Analysis

After completing the questionnaire, the researcher used Microsoft Excel confirm the data calculations. The researcher used the Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) model to analyze the interview. The researcher checked the test scores manually one by one, and for statistical computations and graphical analysis of the data, SPSS version 26 was used.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The Students' Perceptual Learning Styles Preferences

Most of the students in the eleventh-grade preferred group learning as their learning style. The highest mean score was 38.72, as a major classification was group learning style. There are

five learning style as a minor classification: auditory (34.56), tactile (32.24), visual (31.16), kinesthetic (31.92). individual (25.44). Individual learning styles had the lowest mean score (25.44), indicating that individual learning styles were not favored by the majority of students.

Every person has their own perceptual learning style, and this also applies to the students in MA Muallimin Muhammadiyah Makassar. According to Oxford (2001), the phrase 'perceptual preferences' refers to the physical, perceptual channels with which the learner is most comfortable. According to Oflaz and Turunc (2012) study, group learning helps students focus, stay motivated, and perform well. As a result, pupils are more engaged and excited about the learning process. In line with that result of the study, this may explain why group learning style was preferred by the most students. Another study about group learning styles, done by Farzaneh and Nejadansari (2014), showed that the students get the benefit of group learning. The students are able to rely on their friends, which allows them to confidently complete assignments while still enjoying their studies. It may explain why an individual learning style was the least preferred by students. This result can give a clue to the teacher that most students can master the vocabulary better using a group learning style, so the teacher can provide more group learning when teaching English, especially vocabulary.

The Impact of Perceptual Learning Styles preferences on students' Vocabulary Mastery

Based on the interview, the researcher asked to the student about their learning styles preferences and how it can affect the vocabulary mastery. the researcher found that group learning was the best way to get students excited about learning vocabulary. Group learning is the majority of students' preferred learning style. Aside from that, group learning made students feel as if they were being helped by others to master the vocabulary. Auditory was a minor classification that could assist students in mastering their vocabulary. The students who did not really like to write the material can record it. The students could listen repeatedly to the recording to master the vocabulary. They can also master the vocabulary by listening to music or playing games. Individual learning style, as the minor classification and the learning style chosen by the least number of students, helps the students who preferred the individual learning style focus on memorizing vocabulary. Students who using their preferred perceptual learning styles will be motivated to learn. So, it can be concluded that there is an impact of the students' perceptual learning styles preferences on their vocabulary mastery. It might help them master the vocabulary.

Reid (1987) supports this study. The chosen learning style of a student may have an effect on the learner's achievement in the foreign language classroom. Academic failure, frustration, and demotivation may emerge from a mismatch between teaching and learning styles. According to Moussa N.M. (2014), learning styles are important in the learning process and contribute to the overall educational environment.

This study is related to Taiyeb's (2022) study. A correlational study on students' personalities, learning styles, and English learning success is the focus of the study. The study was conducted on UNISMUH Makassar fourth semester English Education students. The outcomes of the research demonstrated a significant association between learning style and academic achievement in English. Its range, 0.40–0.599, is thought to have a moderate relationship.

Faisal (2019) discovered a correlation between personality, learning style, and English achievement. According to statistical study, agreeableness is the most prevalent attribute in both boys and girls. Once again, boys prefer several learning modalities (multimodal), while females favor auditory. Some demographic variables, psychological traits, and learning styles of the learners were discovered to have an important link with GPA in this study. The study discovered a link between learning styles and learning English, implying that learning styles impact students' vocabulary as part of their English learning.

According to the findings of this research, perceptual learning styles preferences affect the students' vocabulary mastery. Students felt comfortable and it can help them to master vocabulary if they used their favor learning style. The students have to know their learning style to be effective in studying, especially in mastering vocabulary. There are six perceptual learning styles preferences that students can used to master their vocabulary.

The Level of Students' Vocabulary Mastery

The researcher discovered that the level of students' vocabulary mastery in the eleventh grade was classified as "fair" after collecting data. Most of the students in the eleventh grade at MA Muallimin Muhammadiyah Makassar got a score of 51–65. According to the classification, seven students out of 25 (or 28%) are considered to have "very good" classification, which range from 81 to 100. In addition, eight students out of 25 (32% of the total) achieve scores ranging from 66 to 80. It indicated that it considers them to be in the "good" classification. Moreover, there was not a single student out of the group of 25 who was considered to be in the "poor" level or classification with scores between 50 and 59. The data describe that students have fair a vocabulary mastery which means that most of students cannot answer rightly the vocabulary test was given by the researcher.

The students did not really understand the word formation or the grammar, like conjunctions, noun or the usage of the present continuous tense, etc. The students found it difficult to understand the meaning of the word as well. Because the students were always asking the researcher the meaning of words. It's because the students lack vocabulary mastery.

Allan French (1983) mentioned that the students must be able to know the meaning of the word, to find the synonym and antonym, to use good word grammatically, and to know the word formation of the word (noun, verb, adverb, and adjective). Collier (1971) stated that once a student has mastered the grammatical basic patterns of language, his task is to determine the vocabulary or vocabulary that he requires.

The development of students' vocabularies is a crucial component of their English language education. Students in senior high school are expected to study vocabulary. Students are unable to write, speak, or listen successfully if they do not master vocabulary. Schmitt (2014) explains that a person's vocabulary knowledge or size relates to the overall number of words they know. It indicates that a person's vocabulary consists of the words that they know and comprehend. In other words, vocabulary depth entails understanding how well a person understands a single term. Therefore, in this context, it is not only necessary to recognize and comprehend a word but also to comprehend its connection to other words, such as its synonyms, antonyms, etc.

According to Soenardi (2011), the following elements may impact students' vocabulary mastery: anxiety, confidence, learning style, and comprehension. Learning style can be one of

the factors that impact a student's vocabulary mastery. So, the students who were classified as fair can use their preferred learning style to master vocabulary while learning English.

CONCLUSION

The students' perceptual learning styles preferences were group learning style, as the major classification. Following with minor classification; auditory, tactile, visual, kinesthetics, and individual. The students' perceptual learning style preferences impacted their vocabulary mastery and even their English score. The students who were group learners can be motivated to memorize English vocabularies; were individual learners can focus on memorizing a new vocabulary; the and the students who were auditory learners can help them memorize the vocabulary by listening repeatedly. The results in this study found that the level of students' vocabulary mastery was classified fair. The perceptual learning styles preferences affect the students' vocabulary mastery. Students felt comfortable and it can help them to master vocabulary if they used their favor learning style.

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