

Chapter 90

Differences Between Visual Style and Verbal Style Learners in Learning English

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ABSTRACT

English proverb is an interested part when learner applied it in real life situation. The participants of this study were chosen from a big university in the middle area of Taiwan. The researchers selected some learners from Department of Foreign Language (DFL) and Department of Non-Foreign Language (DNFL). 40 students were from DFL, and 40 students were from DNFL. According to learner's short-term memory (STM) abilities, the researchers separated participants into four quadrants (Q1-Q4). According to visual style and verbal style of learning style, learning content representation (LCR) types are clarified into Type A, B, C. The research question is that participants with different STM abilities, how different LCR types affect the learning performance of English proverbs? The authors' results described that LCR with pictorial annotation (Type A) help participants with lower verbal ability and higher visual ability (Q2) to have better performance than other three quadrants, because type A participants feel easier to learn content presented in a visual form than in a verbal form. Providing LCR with both written and pictorial annotation (Type C) helps learners best with higher verbal ability and higher visual ability (Q1) in the recognition test. Providing redundancy learning content lead a higher cognitive load and result to irritation and lack of concentration, in accordance with the Cognitive Load theory. It implied that providing simple learning materials (only written annotation, Type B) is useful to participants with lower verbal ability and lower visual ability (Q3). The research results show that instructors should provide suitable learning materials to their learners in accordance with their STM abilities.

INTRODUCTION

Because English is the common language to communicate with foreign people, learning English as second language is the most important thing for people to do business or jet jobs around the world (Crystal, 1997). Learning second language need to focus on many parts, such as understanding of grammar, applying in sentence, memorizing vocabulary, and using proverbs. The researchers focus on the importance of

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learning proverbs because English proverbs are an interesting part of learning English. In some papers, researchers describe proverbs as “a succinct and memorable statement that contains advice, a warning or a prediction, or an analytical observation” (Tsai, 2008). Based on these identities, native speakers use proverbs widely in daily life. Also, native speakers use proverbs in daily conversations. Teacher can teach students how to use proverbs in a writing classroom. Therefore, proverbs are valuable phrases for teachers to show students the beauty of language. Proverbs are thought as cultural products that reveal cross-cultural beliefs and behaviors (Tsai, 2008). The more proverbs are read by students, the more knowledge of culture, literature and language are acquired by their second language study. That is the reasons why the researchers chose proverbs as the content of English in this paper.

Using learning strategies are the most effective method when students learning a second language. However, most of students seldom consider how to use learning strategies well. When students learn strategies of learning, they also have to confirm their learning situation and individual learning style. However, it is really hard for students to understand their own learning style because they never really understand what it is. Thus, teachers should assist students to check their own learning styles, and then students can adopt suitable learning strategies for themselves in order to improve learning outcomes (Chiang & Liao, 2007). It is benefit to both teachers and students when the teacher provides appropriate and suitable materials to the students. On the one hand, students learn more efficient and successful when they learn better with their preference. On the other hand, finding learning style of students saves a lot of effort for teachers in language teaching and it also increases teachers’ teaching accomplishment. It was called win-win policy because it is good for not only teachers but also students.

Many English learners emphasize on vocabulary memorization in their Short-Term Memory (STM). English learners seldom use learning strategies to help them to remember vocabulary quickly. Moreover, they never recognize their learning style before they choose learning material. There are two main kinds of leaning styles, which are verbal style and visual style, name as Learning Content Representation Types (LCR) (Sadler-Smith, 2011). Because of different learning style, not every leaning materials suit with every learners. Therefore, they have to know their preferences while they choose new learning materials. When it comes to the term “learning style”(ex. verbal and visual mode), it has just been used to describe an individual’s natural, habitual, and preferred way of absorbing, processing, and retaining new information and skills (Christopher & Mercer, 2001). Hence, learners have to choose suitable learning content and check their learning styles when they want to enhance their learning performance during learning a second language.

The target of our research was to explore how different of learning content (LCR types) presenting English proverb with learners’ individual STM ability (verbal or visual). Also, this study examined how to affects English proverb learning with different learning strategies. The English Proverb Recognition and Recall (EPRR) test was used to evaluate the level of learners’ English proverb, so the scores of EPRR test was used to calculate students’ performance in learning English proverbs.

According to students’ STM ability, the researchers separated students into four quadrants. Quadrants 1(Q1) is higher STM ability in verbal and higher STM ability in visual. Quadrants 2(Q2) is lower STM ability in verbal and higher STM ability in visual. Quadrants 3(Q3) is lower STM ability in verbal and lower STM ability in visual. Quadrants 4(Q4) is higher STM ability in verbal and lower STM ability in visual. Besides, Learning Content Representation (LCR) Types are described into three types (Type A, B, C) according to two main learning styles (verbal style and visual style). The research questions designed in this study are as follows:

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