

## An Exploratory Study of Libyan Students Learning Styles of English as a Foreign Language

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### Abstract

"An Exploratory Study of Libyan Students Learning Styles of EFL" was conducted on the students of English Department in Zawia University during the academic year 2019- 2020. The purpose of this research is to find out the most common learning style profile of Libyan students, and to investigate whether gender and age affect the preferred learning style of EFL Libyan students or they do not have any effect on their learning process. 100 EFL students participated in this study. The data were collected through a quantitative questionnaire and analyzed statistically. The results revealed that the most common learning style is visual learning style. The findings also indicate that the gender and age have a significant impact on preferred learning styles. Based on the findings of this study, recommendations are given on how to deal with these challenges.

**Key words:** language learning styles, Visual, Aural, Kinesthetic, and Read/ Write.

## دراسة استكشافية لأساليب تعلم الطلاب الليبيين للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية

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الملخص:

هي "دراسة استكشافية لأساليب تعلم الطلاب الليبيين للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية". أجريت هذه الدراسة على طلاب قسم اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة الزاوية خلال العام الدراسي 2019-2020. وتهدف هذه الدراسة إلى اكتشاف انماط التعلم الأكثر شيوعاً للطلبة الليبيين وكذلك معرفة ما إذا كان عمر وجنس الطالب يؤثران على نمط التعلم المفضل لديه او ليس لهما تأثير أثناء تعلم الإنجليزية. حيث شارك 100 طالب وطالبة في هذا البحث، وتم جمع بيانات الدراسة من خلال استبيان ومن ثم تم تحليلها إحصائياً. كشفت نتائج الدراسة ان أسلوب التعلم الأكثر شيوعاً هو أسلوب التعلم المرئي. وتشير النتائج أيضاً إلى أن جنس الطلاب وعمرهم لهما تأثير على أساليب التعلم المفضلة لديهم. وبناءً على هذه النتائج تم تقديم توصيات حول كيفية التعامل مع هذه التحديات.

## **Introduction**

Over the past fifty years, individual differences and the numerous ways through which learners acquire and process new information have given considerable attention in various fields, such as native and foreign language acquisition, education and psychology. As been noted, individuals differ in their preferred ways of perceiving, processing and acquiring information (see e.g. Cassidy, 2004; Fleming, 2001; Kinsella, 1995; Oxford, 2003; Peacock, 2001; Reid, 1995; Sarasin, 1999). In accordance to Kinsella (1995), learning style “appears to be influenced by both nature and nurture; it is a biological and developmental set of characteristics” (p. 171). This confirms that factors such as up-bringing experiences and the environment have a specific role in forming the individuals’ learning styles.

It should be indicated that though language learning styles have frequently been searched in Europe, North America and East Asia, similar studies in the Libyan context have been scarce. This context deserves special attention given the distinctive characteristics of the Libyan culture. In accordance to Oxford (1996), “language learning is fully situated within a given cultural context” (p. x). Brickman and Nuzzo (1999) also agree that educators should be aware of the influence of culture on students’ learning styles.

Significantly, learning style research does not only identify how individuals prefer to learn, but it also helps teachers and educators to adjust to the individuality of their learners in order to create an effective learning environment. This might have such positive effects as improving trends towards the learning process and enhancing intellectual skills and performance (Irvine & York, 1995). So this study has arisen out of a fundamental belief that investigating the different learning styles that exist in Libyan EFL classes can supply language instructors and educators with a useful means of identifying diversity in the language classroom and creating a stimulating environment for the learners. That was particularly interesting given the unique status of English in Libya as the only FL officially taught in the country.

## **Literature Review**

This section presents the theoretical part of the study. It surveys many researchers' articles on learning styles: definitions of learning styles, important considerations about learning styles and benefits of learning styles.

## **Definitions of learning styles**

Learning style has been defined in various different ways, and there has been little agreement on its precise nature. Ehrman, Leaver and Oxford (2003) explain that terms such as *learning styles*, *cognitive styles* and *personality types* have different meanings however are often used interchangeably, causing confusion regarding their distinction. Healey, Kneale and Bradbeer (2005) also say that some researches “refer to learning styles, others to learning approach and learning orientation. Often, the same construct is described in different terms and the same term can be used to refer to quite different constructs” (p. 31).

Many scholars (e.g. Felder & Spurlin, 2005; Gilbert & Swanier, 2008; Psaltou-Joycey & Kantaridou, 2011; Shaw, 2012; Xu, 2011) argue that one of the most prominent and frequently cited definitions in the literature is the one supplied by Keefe (1979), that presents learning styles as “characteristic cognitive, affective, and psychological behaviours that serve as relatively stable indicators of how learners perceive, interact with, and respond to the learning environment” (p. 2). Kinsella (1995) describes learning style as “an individual’s natural, habitual, and preferred way of absorbing, processing, and retaining new information and skills” (p. 171). A similar definition of learning style has been suggested by Fleming (2001), who views learning styles as “an individual’s characteristics and preferred ways of gathering, organizing, and thinking about information” (p. 1).

The above definitions are especially significant to this study, as they present shape and direction to the present research. The researchers view learning styles as preferences that individual learners show when responding to new information in the learning environment. Moreover, there seems to be a dynamic interplay between those learning styles on the one hand and the learning environment and what learners bring to it on the other hand. As indicated above, the term *learning style* has particularly been used synonymously with *cognitive style*. Cassidy (2004) shows the distinction between these two terms by explaining that “cognitive style is an individual’s typical or habitual mode of problem solving, thinking, perceiving and remembering, while the term learning style is adopted to reflect a concern with the application of cognitive style in a learning situation.” (pp. 420–421). Also, Cuthbert (2005) clarifies that cognitive styles involve “a fusion of particular methods of thinking and of personality” (p. 236).

In addition, learning styles have often been confused with learning strategies. Oxford (2001) clarifies the difference between the two concepts by indicating that learning styles refer to “general approaches” to language learning, while learning strategies describe “specific actions, behaviors, steps, or techniques” used to perform language tasks in specific learning situations (pp. 44–45). Furthermore, Oxford (2003) shows that “when the learner consciously chooses strategies that fit his or her

learning style and the L2 task at hand, these strategies become a useful toolkit for active, conscious, and purposeful self-regulation of learning.” Nunan (2010) also explains that learning styles differ from learning strategies in that the former are spontaneous and characterizes the individual, while the learning strategies involve specific actions employed by learners in order to facilitate their learning.

Last but not least, it should be indicated that learning styles are not the same as multiple intelligences. Gardner (1983) describes intelligence as “the ability to solve problems or to create fashion products that are valued within one or more cultural settings” (p. 81). He challenges the traditional view of intelligence that is limited to linguistic intelligence and mathematical intelligence by suggesting the existence of several or multiple intelligences: spatial intelligence, naturalist intelligence, bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, interpersonal intelligence, intrapersonal intelligence and musical intelligence. Moreover, Gardner (1983) clarifies that all individuals have these types of intelligences but in different degrees and combinations. These intelligences “are used concurrently and typically complement each other as individuals develop skills and solve problems” (Manner, 2001, p. 392).

Both learning styles and multiple intelligences are student-centered learning theories that call for changes in traditional teaching methods so as to accommodate individual differences among learners in the same classroom and create an optimal learning environment. However, Silver, Strong and Perini (1997) explain the difference between them by showing that learning style theory is interested in the contents and outcomes of learning, while multiple intelligence theory bases on the differences in the learning process. Gardner (1999) further explains that “the concept of style designates a general approach that an individual can apply equally to an indefinite range of content. In contrast, an intelligence is a capacity, with its component computational processes, that is geared to a specific content in the world” (p. 83)

### **Important considerations about learning styles**

In this section, the researchers present a few important issues that usually feature when the concept of learning style is discussed.

#### **1. Although learning styles are generally presented as opposites, they are not dichotomous.**

The opposite pairs (e.g. visual vs. aural, tolerance vs. intolerance of ambiguity) “operate on a continuum or on multiple, intersecting continua” (Oxford, 2003, p. 3). In other words, one learning style does not exclude the existence of another, and learners may exhibit a variety of learning style preferences. For example, some learners may like visual presentations of information more than verbal explanations, others may

learn best through hands-on activities and still others may be more comfortable with both group and individual modes of learning. Even within the same individual, learning style is not a steady phenomenon which acts in the same case all the time (Ehrman, 1996).

Kolb (1981), another pioneer in the learning style field, confirms that “learning styles represent preferences for one mode of adaptation over the others; but these preferences do not operate to the exclusion of other adaptive modes and will change from situation to situation and time to time. This idea of variability seems essential, since change and adaptation to environmental circumstances are central to any concept of learning” (p. 290). More recently, Brown (2007) abbreviates this point by arguing that as learning tasks vary, some individuals may prefer to draw on visual or verbal information, while others may be both highly field dependent and highly field independent relying on the context. In other words, it is not impossible for learners to adjust their learning styles to the requirements of the specific subject or task at hand (Entwistle & Ramsden, 1983). So, one of the best ways to view learning styles could be to consider them as “comfort zones”, reflecting the modes through which individuals learn best (Gibson & Chandler, 1988, p. 258).

**2. Learning styles should be regarded as typical or habitual approaches to learning rather than fixed behaviours that are unaffected by the learning task, situation or environment (Cuthbert, 2005).**

Preferences regarding learning styles denote individual choices and develop with the learner subconsciously (Keefe, 1987). Fielding (1994), also argues that “learning styles are flexible structures, not immutable personality traits” (p. 403). People are born with certain preferences towards particular learning styles but personal development and learning experiences can have a great effect on those preferences (Healey et al., 2005).

These concepts of instability and change are of particular significance to the present study. It seems that students come to their English classes with a set of learning style preferences that according to Reiff (1992), effect how they learn, how they interact with each other and how their teachers present information. Awareness of these preferences is the key to creating a flexible educational environment for all learners.

**3. There is no one right way to learn a FL.**

Successful learners perceive and process information in many manners. Accordingly, different learning styles should be presented as “value-neutral” (MacKeracher, 2004, p. 80) and should not be judged as better or worse. In other words, “one learning style is neither preferable nor inferior to another, but is simply different, with different characteristic

strengths and weaknesses” (Felder & Brent, 2005, p. 58). What contributes to learning success is the appropriateness of certain styles to particular learning contexts and tasks.

By the same token, learning style is not a reflection of one’s learning ability. Riding (1997) cautions that the terms *learning style* and *learning ability* are sometimes confused with each other. The researcher clarified that the two concepts are independent of each other and that certain tasks might appear easier to some learners than others just because those tasks better suit those learners’ preferred styles of learning. Unlike abilities, styles can be adapted in some learning contexts and for some tasks (Snowman & McCown, 2011). What makes such confusion might be that some educational contexts value certain learning styles more than others and thus, mistakenly perceive the less-appreciated ones as learning disabilities (MacKeracher, 2004). In fact, as Hickson and Baltimore (1996) indicate, the idea of learning style pays attention to learners’ strengths rather than their deficits.

### **Benefits of Learning Styles**

Learning styles are considered to be sensitive, effective, important and serious factors in preparing ESL students for the academic and communicative professional practices in class.

Individuals’ learning styles are considered one of the important factors that affect the comprehension level of ESL students. According to Kruzich, Friesen, & Van (1986), to increase the academic level of students in schools, educators are urged to take into consideration three important elements: the nature of knowledge and skills that are taught to students in schools, the teaching methods that are used in schools, and the learning styles that students use to learn in classroom so learning styles and teaching styles have a key role in developing and enhancing the students’ learning process.

The process of learning styles need to be studied in depth for the benefit of student in general and for the benefit of the EFL students in particular. The reason behind the profound discussion is that a better understanding of the ESL students’ different learning styles can compel teachers to connect their teaching styles to students’ learning styles which may lead to a higher level of students’ proficiency in learning English.

Boatman, Courtney and Lee (2008) conducted a research about the effects of learning styles and the relation between them and teaching styles. The researchers supplied the “VARK questionnaire” on 211 students in Saint Mary College in California. Of the targeted students 49% were women and the rest were men. Of all students, 57 % of the students were Caucasian, 20% were Latino, 13% were Asian-American, 7 % were African-American, and 2 % were Native American.

The study showed that there was a strong preference for visual learning styles. Therefore, teachers were advised to use the visual teaching

methods so as to assist students improve their performance level, help students to feel that they are studying in an encouraging environment, allow student to feel special and achieve self-respect, and also help students to improve the level of comprehension in classroom.

Dunn and Stevenson (1997) discussed in their article "Teaching Diverse College Students" that trained teachers should be assigned to teach freshmen to study with strategies that complement their learning style preferences. They suggested that this strategy may help students to motivate them to be high achievers. The researchers administered both learning style (LSI) and the Productivity Environmental Preference Survey (PEPS) to students. Students who were taught according to their learning styles achieved statistically higher grades and grade point average than students who were not taught according to their learning styles. As a result, the researchers advised faculty to examine and identify the learning styles of students. In addition, they encouraged teachers to identify their teaching styles and bridge the gaps among teachers' teaching methods and students' learning styles.

Brunner and Majewski (1990) conducted a research study about the teaching and learning styles. They were able to prove that teachers who changed their teaching styles from traditional teaching to learning-style teaching methods were able to help their students to have higher comprehension level that led to higher achievement levels in classroom (as cited in Shaughnessy, 1998). According to Gallaher and Nunn (1998), the knowledge of learning styles can supply clear directions and successful teaching lesson plans on how to teach individuals by using suitable teaching methods. The researchers indicated that the knowledge of learning styles can help students recognize their own learning styles so they will be able to teach themselves. Consequently, students will be able to reduce stress and increase the level of learning and comprehension.

Jenkins (1991) discussed the benefits of learning style assessment for middle school students and provides ways to apply results and increase teacher effectiveness at varying instructional methods. According to Jenkins, when educators plan to design more personalized middle schools, they have to consider the learning styles of student because it is one of the major students' characteristics. Instructors need to have knowledge of students' learning styles, and how ethnicity and time variables affect them so as to improve the learning performance level of students. Most research studies proved the fact that recognition of students' learning styles can help both teachers and students to achieve effective learning. The students will get more knowledge and comprehension and teachers will know how to prepare their teachings in classrooms (Claxton & Murrell, 1987). The knowledge of learning styles is beneficial for both, students and instructors. The knowledge of learning styles will act as a gate that can help lesson plans which will result in creating a supportive learning



environment in classroom. As a result, individuals will feel special and achieve better understanding of lessons.

Finally, most research studies proved the fact that recognition of students' learning styles can help both teachers and students to achieve effective learning. The students will get more knowledge and comprehension and teachers will know how to prepare their teachings in classrooms (Claxton & Murrell, 1987).

## **Methodology**

### **Research Questions:**

This research aims to answer the following questions:

1. What is the most common learning styles profile of EFL Libyan students?
2. Do gender and age affect the preference learning styles of EFL Libyan students?

### **Design of the study**

Between November 20 and December 20 in 2020, a non- experimental study was conducted using a descriptive design to evaluate the preferred learning style of undergraduate English language students and to assess whether gender and age have an impact on their learning style preferences.

### **Participants**

All participants in this study were chosen at the University of Zawia. A total of 100 students participated in this study in the fall semester of 2020.

### **Instrumentation**

This research study used the "VARK" learning style instrument. The researchers have modified the questionnaire to suit the aims of the study. It was formulated for the study so that it clearly signifies quantitative perspectives of the work. The modified version of the questionnaire works on a structured schema to get accurate and useful information from the participants. This learning style instrument was created in 1987 by a researcher called Neil D. Fleming. The VARK acronym stands for visual, auditory, write/read, and kinesthetic learners. The questionnaire that is used by VARK supported for the validity of the VARK scores in several research studies (Leite, Svinicki, & Shi, 2009; Hawk & Thomas, 2007). The VARK Internet and paper-based format questionnaire has 16 questions. It tests visual, aural, reading/writing, and kinesthetic perceptual

learning styles. The questionnaire helps users find out their perceptual learning styles. It also tests the visual/tactile mode which operationally resembles note taking. Each learning style is scored for a scale from 0 to 16.

### Procedures

The procedural data collection process started by inviting the participants to share the research while they are in class and only those who agreed could participate in the research. The students were asked to complete the VARK learning style questionnaire. They were asked to choose answers that best explain their learning preferences and were asked to circle the letter next to them. They had about 25- 30 minutes to complete the questionnaire. The participants were free to choose more than one if one single answer did not match their perception. They were free to leave any questions that did not apply. The questionnaire included 16 short questions. The questionnaire was short and could be completed in less than 20 minutes, which made it easy for students. 100 responses were transferred to a spreadsheet and calculated for as a percentage. The percentages were then analyzed.

### Results and Data analysis

At this section, 100 participants' responses were analyzed to determine the preferred learning styles in the EFL classroom and to investigate whether gender influences the students' learning styles or not. The significance of each variable was analyzed based on the classification of the high and low frequency variability. The results are set out in six tables. All the variables are examined and compared to each other for relative intensity and impact.

**Table 1**

*Style Preferences of Visual Learners*

Choices that represent visual learning style	No.	Percentage
1. I like reading through charts, pictures, maps diagrams and videos.	25	25%.
2. When teacher writes on the board, I understand better.	14	14%
3. I prefer to take notes during the class so as to remember it by writing it down.	7	7%
4. I prefer written instructions for a task	3	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>49%</b>

Comparing the percentage of the research questionnaire variables, it can be seen that the percentage of the visual learning style was the highest 49% indicating that the learners showed the greatest preference for this learning style. More specifically, it was found that the majority 25% of them preferred to use visual aids (such as maps, charts, pictures) to learn new information and close percentage of them understood class better when the teacher writes on the board. In addition, 7% of those surveyed indicated that they take notes during the class and remember the lesson by writing it down. Furthermore, 3% of the respondents reported that they like writing instructions for a task. This finding seems to be consistent with some previous studies that have concluded that the visual style is the most preferred perceptual style of EFL learners. For example, a study by Aqel and Mahmoud's (2006) on Palestinian learners of English showed that students preferred to learn English through the visual and written representations.

**Table 2**

*Style Preference of Read / Write*

Choices that represent Read/ Write learning style	No.	percentage
1. I prefer to learn through reading book articles and handouts.	18	18%
2. I like reading the instructions rather than listen to them.	7	7%
3. I prefer to summarize text materials and to make lists of new vocabulary to better recall it.	4	4%
4. I prefer to use written instructions rather than oral ones when carrying new tasks.	1	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30%</b>

Table 2 above shows that the percentage of Read/Write was the second highest percentage 30%. A significant percentage 7% of the participants said they preferred to learn by reading books, articles and handouts. Similarly, 4% of the respondents stated that they preferred to summarize text materials and to make lists of new vocabulary to better recall it. In the same line, 1% of the respondents indicated that they preferred to read instructions rather than listen to them when carrying out tasks. Therefore, some of them indicated that they preferred to use written instructions rather than oral ones.

**Table 3**

*Style Preference of Kinesthetic*

Choices that present kinesthetic learning style	No.	percentage
1. When I participate in role- plays I understand the things better in the class.	7	7%
2. I like learning by doing exercise and drills in the classroom.	3	3%
3. I learn better from practicing in computer lab classes than listening to the lecture.	2	2%
4. When I pose a question or an answer back to the teacher, I move my hands and arms.	1	1%
<b>Total</b>	13	13%

Data from in Table 3 above show that the Kinesthetic learning style was the third preferred perceptual style 13% among study participants. It was found that the majority of them preferred to understand the things better in the class when participating in role plays and other related activities 7% as well as by doing exercises and drills 3%. Abidin, Abdullah, Rezaee and Singh (2011) clarify the features of a kinesthetic learner. They explain that those learners prefer to get involved in group discussions, interactions with others and teamwork, role- plays and dialogues.

In line with the findings of this variable, 2% of participants acknowledged the statement that they learn better by practicing in the computer lab than listening to a lecturer 1%. This variable closely matches the results of Reif's study (1992) which concludes that " Role- playing, creative dramatics, and physical activities would enable learners to use their strengths." He also demonstrated that, " outside the classroom the bodily-kinesthetic person may excel an athlete. But he or she should also be able to find success in the academic arena."

**Table 4**  
*Style Preference of Auditory*

Choices that represent Aural learning style	No.	percentage
1. I remember information better by discussing it aloud with a classmate.	4	4%
2. I prefer to learn by listening to a lecture rather than reading.	2	2%
3. When I hear the information, I remember it better.	1	1%
4. I like listening to words to learn their correct pronunciation	-	-

Total

7

7%

Table 4. showed that the aural style was found to be the least preferred one 7% by the learners. Nonetheless, it was found that only small differences existed in the percentage of the four variables of this style. An examination of the data reported that 4% of the students stated that they remembered information better when discussing it with a classmate, and 2% of them revealed that they preferred to learn by listening to a lecturer rather than by reading. This finding agree with an earlier study performed by Nageeb and Awad's (2011) who have had found the aural style to be the most favorite style among their participants.

In general, the variety in the participants' learning styles could reinforce that learning styles are not stead phenomena that function in the same manner all the time (Ehrman, 1996) but it can be considered " flexible stable" (Coffield et al, 2004). That is, even though learners mostly demonstrate typical preferences for specific learning modes, they are likely to change and develop during the learning process.

**Table5**

*Comparison between Male and Female about VARK Learning Style*

Learning style	Male %	Female %
Visual learning style	32%	17%
Read/Write learning style	4%	26%
Kinesthetic learning style	12%	1%
Aural learning style	1%	7%

The findings presented in table 5 showed that 32% of males and only 17% of females preferred visual learning style. Among the male respondents, 32% were visual learners, 4% preferred Kinesthetic, 12% liked Read/Write and 1% were Aural learners. Within females, 26% preferred Read/Write, 7% were aural, 1% liked kinesthetic, and 17% were visual. The data investigated above show that the participants differ by gender. Males tend to be more visual and kinesthetic than females. Males tend to learn by reading charts, pictures, and videos and understand better as they write on the board. They also prefer to participate in role- plays and to do

exercises and drills in the classrooms. However, males tend to learn less by listening and by reading articles and handouts. Females more than males tend to learn through reading and writing. They would rather read articles and instructions instead of listening to them.

Several studies have showed that there is a significant difference in the preference between learning styles in relation to gender. According to Raddon(2007), gender is considered as an effective factor of preference for learning styles. In addition, the results of the present study are consistent with a study conducted by Lincoln, et al (2006). The study investigated differences between male and female students according to the VARK questionnaire. The results indicated that there is a difference between the learning style preference of male and female students.

**Table 6**

*Learning Styles Preferences of Students' responses according to their age*

Age	visual style		Read/Write		Kinesthetic		Aural	
	No.	percenta.	No.	Percenta.	No.	Percenta.	No.	percenta
19	14	14%	14	14%	7	7%	1	1%
20	19	19%	1	1%	2	2%	2	2%
21	5	5%	11	11%	3	3%	1	1%
22	11	11%	4	4%	1	1%	4	4%

Table six presents the learning style preferences of the students based on their age. The participants' ages ranged from 19 to 22. Among the 19 – year – old respondents, 14 students preferred the visual learning styles, 19 preferred the Read/Write learning style, 5 preferred the kinesthetic learning style and 11 preferred Aural learning style. Of the 20- year- old respondents, 19 preferred visual learning style, 1 preferred Read/Write, 2 preferred kinesthetic and 2 preferred Aural. Among the 21-year – old respondents, 5 students preferred Visual learning style, 4 liked Read/Write learning style, 3 were kinesthetic and 2 preferred Aural learning style. Among the 21- year-old, 5 participants liked visual learning style, 11 respondents preferred Read/Write learning style, 3 students liked Kinesthetic and 3 liked Visual learning style. Among 22- year- olds, 11 respondents preferred Visual learning style, 1 respondent was Kinesthetic and 4 students liked the auditory learning style.

Based on the data obtained, it was found that 20- year- old participants preferred visual learning style to the other learning styles. Respondents aged 19 have a tendency to like Visual and Read/Write learning styles. For 21- year- old students, Read/Write was the preferred style of learning, whereas 22- year- olds tended to be visuals rather than other learning styles. These results show that in this sample of students, age affects students' learning styles. This finding is supported by Bamber and Terri (2009) and O'Donnell and Tobell(2007) who argued that age differences affect learning outcomes. However, they are different from results reported by Garner- ONeale and Harrisson (2013) where they did not find any significant relationship between age and learning preferences.

### **Conclusion**

The most common learning style profile of Libyan EFL students was examined in this study. The results indicated that the most common learning style among EFL Libyan students was the visual learning style. There were 49 (49%) students who reported visual learning style, 30(30%) who reported kinesthetic learning style, 7(7%) who reported Read/Write learning style, and 4 (4%) who reported Aural learning style. These results prove that the Libyan EFL students participating in this study are more visual than Aural learners. These students can learn better through charts and pictures than through any other types of activities.

The gender and age of the participants have shown significant difference in preferred learning style. The majority of female students reported Read\Write learning style but the majority of male students reported Visual learning style. We can conclude that gender and age play a significant role in choosing which style of learning is preferred.

### **Recommendations**

1. More research is needed to explore learning styles of Libyan English learners.
2. An exploratory research is also necessary to determine whether the learning style preference of the learners that influence them will increase, decrease or remain as it is over time.
3. An investigation of the language learning styles and the affective factors in language learning across many higher education institutions in Libya so as to supply more generalizable findings.
4. Future work could use indirect methods of gathering data from many sources. These could include classroom observations and

interviews with teachers, students and family members. The results could then be triangulated with the results obtained from the learners to determine the extent to which they corroborate each other.

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