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Role of VARK Learning Styles on English proficiency of English Language Learners

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Abstract

English language is the most spoken language of the world. It is the language of science and technology and unofficial language of internet. Teaching English in an ESL classroom is always challenging for the English language teachers. In modern days, different techniques and models are in use to teach the English language and VARK model is one of them. The study explores the relationship between VARK learning styles and the English Learning Proficiency of ESL learners. The study further investigates the role of gender in language learning and the difference between learning styles of male and female learners as well as knowledge of teachers about VARK. The study involves 400 students and 40 English language teachers from both public and private schools of Bahawalpur region of Punjab, Pakistan. Study carried through adapted VARK questionnaire suitable for fifth grade students, to find out students' learner type and then a language, proficiency was also taken from the same students to find correlation between English language learning proficiency and learner type. The teacher to show their level of knowledge and understanding about VARK also filled a questionnaire. The results from these questionnaire and language proficiency showed a moderate positive relation between English language proficiency in reading, writing, listening, speaking and learner type i.e. Visual, Auditory, Read/Write and Kinesthetic. Results from independent sample t-test shows that there is a significant difference between proficiency of male and female learner. Therefore, teachers should use different methods and techniques to incorporate all learner types and male or female learners in ESL classrooms.

Keywords: VARK, Visual, Auditory, Read/Write, Kinesthetic, Audio-Visual Aids, Activity-based learning.

1. Introduction

According to dictionary, proficiency is a higher degree of skills or competency in a specific subject or area. If we talk about proficiency in education and proficiency of a language, we may define it as the learning of a language and it consists of four main skills including reading, writing, speaking and listening proficiency, including skills like comprehension skills, communication skills, accuracy and fluency. Proficiency in a language is important in a country like Pakistan where English has been taught and learnt as second language. English is considered as official language in Pakistan. The proficiency in English language is very important in the field of education as our curriculum is designed in English language from primary till higher education level. English proficiency is also important on professional level and to get a good job because higher-level communication skills are needed to get a good job in Pakistan.

This study aims to find the role of VARK learning style in teaching English to ESL learners at primary school level. The study analyzes all four VARK techniques and hence categorizes the four learners' type, which includes Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic and Read/ Write learners. This categorization is based on the individual differences in learning abilities of the learners in a classroom. Not all the learners in a class are same neither they can learn in the same fashion. Each student has different learning abilities and they learn in different fashion. Some students are good auditory learners; they learn easily by listening, some students are visual learners; they learn by watching, seeing and observing. Other students are of read/write category which learn by reading or writings books, notebooks etc. some belongs to kinesthetic learners' category who are active participants of the class and instead of passive learning they learn actively through classroom activities.

Every student has its own learning style. In a common man's term, it is: "a person's preferred method of absorbing, processing, comprehending, and remembering knowledge". Actually, different humans use their different senses including sense of sight, hearing and touch for the learning process. Some students are good at using the visual aids, while others perform well by auditory learning, some are good at kinesthetic. If a teacher becomes able to understand the learning style of a student, he or she can then understand and adopt according to the personal learning need of the student. This will lead to a better learning process and results in achieving better learning outcomes. We need to stay informed of the different strategies and resources that are available for providing more personalized learning experiences for our students at primary school level. To be able to differentiate our teaching style for different learners mainly depends on our understanding of the types of learners that we have in our classroom. When we differentiate, we design our lessons based on specific student learning styles. Either we have options to create individualized choices for students to work independently, or we can group students based on a specific topic, an area of interest or even based on level of understanding with the content. When it comes to resources, we can create handouts, study guides, worksheets, and use different teaching strategies in our classroom. One example is through blended learning and the use of stations in the classroom. Using stations, teachers can design different activities for each station where students interact with the content in a variety of ways. By creating structured activities that provide a variety of learning options for each student, we empower students with more meaningful learning and provide time for teachers to work with each student throughout the class. In today's learning environment, teachers are needed to be well informed about the personalized learning needs and the resources available to fulfill them. This need enhances at primary level; as the students are too young to understand their own learning needs so the teacher became more responsible for understanding them and design their teaching methodology according to it.

Either teacher can create an individual choice for student or he/she can make groups of the students with similar learning needs. Groups can also be created because of interest.

1.2 Background of the study

About 67 countries and 27 non-sovereign entities use English as their official language and about 18% of world's population speaks English means that every 1 person out of 5 can speak English and this number is increasing day by day. 26% of the English speakers have English as their native and first language while remaining 74% use English as their second language. According to Shrishthy .s (2023), our world has become more accessible for everyone living at any corner of the world and English is used as a universal language. There may be a difference in dialects and vocabulary used in different regions, way of speaking may be different but we cannot deny it as a universal language. As world has shrunk globally, all the nations are required to have good terms with one another and for the purpose common language learning and usage is a key to bring people and nations together. International trade, globalization in business, formation of multinational business organization has increased the need of common language learning and English language is serving the purpose. In the same way tourism industry has developed across the globe. As this industry has grown so much so the common language such as English is very important for the natives and tourist as well to communicate effectively. If both understand each other's language then understanding of cross culture similarities and differences can become easier.

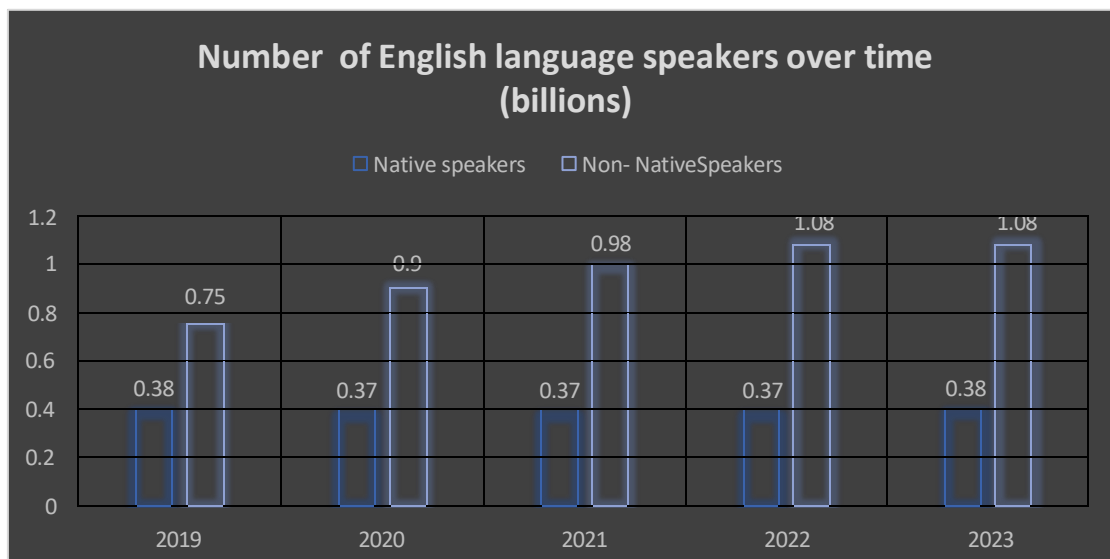


Figure 1: Number of English Language speakers over time

This graph tells us about the drastic increase in English language speakers with the passage of time. The graph will tell the increase in English language speakers from past 5 years from 2019 to 2023. Most of the institutions and companies demand English language speaking skills in job requirements. It is the language of most of the scientific researches and first global lingua franca, which is so commonly used in almost every field of life. Shrishthy .s (2023). English is a global language which is used across the world for the purpose of communication. To reach the outside world learning English is necessary. English as Second Language is a term that is generally used for the English language learning by the people which are not native speaker of it (Salwa, 2021.). This approach is designed for the countries like Pakistan where English Language is learned as secondary Language. Pakistan is a

developing country, which is continuously struggling to cope up with international challenges. Youth of Pakistan is striving to get a chance to compete in international world. To compete in international world, Pakistani youth, kids and students must study English Language as it is an international language widely using in the world. Learners find difficult to learn English because it is not native language and the teachers who are teaching English language are also not well trained to use up to dated methods of language learning.

In private sector as well, cost cutting and hiring of less qualified and incompetent teachers on less salary is a common practice especially in small level schools. These schools are producing many students which even after completing their primary schooling; students are unable to write a paragraph of creative writing and sometimes writing a sentence by themselves. They are only taught to memorize few sentences and paragraphs so that they can pass the exam. The goals set by the teachers and the parents are just to pass the exam and to get good grades. No conceptual understandings are focused. They are made to learn and memorize the definitions of grammatical rules rather than practical use of language due to incompetency of teacher or instructor. These students are non proficient in writing, vocabulary, speaking, listening and understanding.

Learning can be made effective through vigorous teaching process. A trained and motivated teacher can enhance the student learning by using various new techniques in their traditional classroom and effect student learning outcomes. Nurhaliza, & Sari, (2023). Various models of studies are considered in modern age, which helps the teachers to improve the learning process such as Gardner's Multiple Intelligence, Kolb's Learning Style or VARK learning styles. "Learning styles are of the factors influencing academic achievement. The learning style is defined as a combination of cognitive, emotional, and physiological traits that show how the learner perceives and responds to the learning environment" (Mozefferi et al., 2020).

1.2.1. VARK model and Questionnaire

Neil Fleming developed the VARK model and questionnaire in order to determine the learning type. VARK learning model is the latest and widely accepted model that evaluates different learning styles and the learner's preference about mode of learning. To evaluate those learners types VARK questionnaire. Bhayangkara et.al. (2019). States that online VARK questionnaire is a great tool to maximize the students learning by identifying student's learning type. According to McKenna et al. (2018), the three main thoughts from VARK include that every learner has distinct learning style, when we consider their different learning style the learning proficiency and motivation level of learner is increased, teacher's instructions are analyzed and implemented by the learner by using his four major senses (sense of sight, hearing, touch).

1.2.2. Types of VARK learners

According to VARK there are four learners' types including Visual, Auditory, Read/Write and kinesthetic learners.

1.2.2.1 Visual learners

Visual learners better understand and learn when they visually see it. (Tantog et al., 2023) They find it more helpful to see information by the teacher in presentation mode rather than reading it from a textbook or notes provided by the teacher rather they focus on instructor visual presentation and body language. The use of AV aids by the teacher which includes use

of black/white boards, flashcards, charts, pan flexes, graphical and pictorial display of information are found more helpful for the visual learner type.

1.2.2.2 Aural or Auditory learners

Aural or Auditory learners are the ones who learn by listening rather than watching or reading they listen to the teacher's words and remember what they say and that is how they learn. Instead of taking notes they prefer listening to the lecture delivered, listening to the recordings of lectures and explanations, because they better understand by listening in other people words. They may enjoy the class discussion or a discussion session by their instructor.

1.2.2.3 Read/ Write learners

According to Tantog et al. (2023), a student that prefers reading or writing learning styles learn effectively by reading text and writing. They usually understand the concept by reading them from their textbooks, relevant materials, and study summaries, new learning materials, making notes, writing important points and headings, underlining and marking important points after reading are all characteristics of Reading / Writing learner.

1.2.2.4 Kinesthetic learners

Kinesthetic learners can be called the doers as they are the ones who learn by doing various activities, they physically involve in doing things and understand how things and functions and to implement the theories rather than just studying them. They like to test the concepts and hence are the active participants or member of the class. These students cannot sit idle and just read lines rather they like to practically experience what they learn and hence activity based learning is more suitable for them.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The English language learning is always seen as a big challenge among the students who learn English as their second language. The Pakistani teachers especially in public sector do not focus on using the new learning strategies because either they are unaware of it or they don't use it. Use of modern day's leaning model such as VARK may be helpful where teachers teach students after identification of the learner type. Teachers teach students according to their learning needs and then find out the difference in their learning skills and abilities. The aim of study is to find the role of VARK learning style on English proficiency of ESL learners at Primary Level, study focused on understanding the effect of different learning styles on language acquisition and performance of ESL learners as well as the correlation between English proficiency skills such as speaking, reading writing and different type of learners. If the teachers of the primary schools use VARK model for the learner identification among male and female learners and adopt methods for teaching English language according to the student learning type at primary school level there would be a significant impact on learning English language and getting proficiency in reading, writing, speaking and grammatical skills of the students.

1.4 Research Questions

1. To what extent English teachers have knowledge related to VARK strategies in the ESL classroom?
2. What are the dominant learning styles among male and female learners in ESL classrooms at primary schools?

3. How differently VARK strategies are being used for male and female ESL learners having different English language learning proficiency in primary school classrooms?
4. Is there any significant relationship between English Language learning proficiency and VARK learning style of learners?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study holds a substantial impact to enhance the learning and teaching practices while teaching English in ESL classroom at primary level. The research investigated the teacher's awareness about different learning styles and how do they know about the learners' type at primary level. The findings will contribute to investigate some new ways to teach different learners by using different learning styles according to their learning types and needs rather than just teaching all of the students in similar way in a traditional classroom. Furthermore, the study will contribute to find the prominent learning styles among male and female students at primary level. The research found the effective use of VARK strategies to enhance the proficiency and to find out any significant relation between the English learning of ESL learners at primary school level. The study focused on primary level students of Pakistan, which were never focused before this and will tell the impact of using VARK learner styles on ESL learners of Pakistan.

2. Literature Review

2.1 English Language Learning in Pakistan

Pakistan is a developing country faced British Colonization about 77 years ago. English from then is considered as second and official language of the country from the time of colonization. English is official language, which is spoken by 49% as their second language and 8 to 9 % of Pakistani as their first language. English is important globally and locally as well. The curriculum designed is also English medium. Our students learn English by grammatical rules without getting proficiency in speaking skills. According to Muhammad (2017), teachers use Urdu language to teach students the meanings of the words and ask them to memorize. The culture of punishment is de-motivating students. The class differences among the students make it impossible to reach the level of education as rich. There is a huge difference in the environment of government and private sector schools of Pakistan.

2.1 English Language Proficiency (ELP)

Assessing English language proficiency is a complex task that requires a range of methods and tools (Bachman, 1990). Language tests, such as TOEFL, IELTS, and Cambridge English, are widely used to assess English language proficiency (Chapelle, 2003). Language interviews are also used to assess English language proficiency, particularly in speaking and listening comprehension Writing samples, such as essays and reports, are used to assess writing proficiency. Self-assessment is also used to assess English language proficiency, with learners rating their own language abilities (Oxford, 1990). Theoretical frameworks, such as Krashen's input hypothesis, Gardner's integrative motivation theory, and Bachman's framework, provide a foundation for understanding English language proficiency (Krashen, 1982; Gardner, 1985; Bachman, 1990). Krashen's input hypothesis suggests that language acquisition occurs when learners are exposed to comprehensible input (Krashen, 1982). Gardner's integrative motivation theory suggests that motivation to learn a language is influenced by the learner's desire to integrate into the target language community (Gardner, 1985). Bachman's framework suggests that language proficiency consists of two components:

language knowledge and language use (Bachman, 1990). These theoretical frameworks provide a foundation for understanding the complex and multi-faceted nature of English language proficiency (Oxford, 1990). Additionally, research has shown that English language proficiency is closely linked to academic and professional success, with individuals who possess high levels of English language proficiency tend to have better job prospects and higher earning potential (Chiswick, 2008).

Overall, English language proficiency is a complex and multi-faceted construct that encompasses various aspects of language use (Bachman, 1990). It is influenced by a range of factors, including age, motivation, learning style, and cultural background, and can be assessed using a range of methods and tools (Oxford, 1990). Theoretical frameworks provide a foundation for understanding English language proficiency (Krashen, 1982; Gardner, 1985; Bachman, 1990), and research has shown that it is closely linked to academic and professional success (Chiswick, 2008). As the world becomes increasingly globalized, the importance of English language proficiency will only continue to grow, making it essential for individuals to develop high levels of proficiency in order to succeed in their personal and professional lives (Graddol, 2006).

2.1. VARK model & Questionnaire

VARK stands for Visual, Auditory, Read/ Write and Kinesthetic learners. According to Tomić et.al. (2023) explored the VARK model tells us about the unique preferences of every person and one can find out that difference using VARK questionnaire. The researcher reviewed 40 articles and 20 articles suggested that the VARK questionnaire has high level of validity and reliability, 24 articles found a positive relation between individuals learning styles and learner's academic performance. VARK questionnaire and academic performance are related according to almost all the researches. However, this relationship is affected by many other factors. There is no special technique for teaching each student; different learners got benefitted from different learning techniques. The individual preference of learning may got effected by their demographics such as age, gender. This may vary from culture to culture. Nevertheless, we cannot ignore the influence of other factors on them also. Different type of activities must be design for the individual learners. Use of teaching aids and learning material may also vary with learning type. Learning style is a cognitive composite, affective, and psychological factor that act as an indicator on how individuals interact and respond to learning environment (Duff 2000) .Othman and Amiruddin (2010) states that there are many models on learning styles that can be identified from earlier studies. Among them are models that emerged from earlier researchers, such as learning styles models by Felder-Silverman, Dunn & Dunn, Kolb, Honey and Murnford , and VARK (Visual, Aural, Read or Write and Kinesthetic) .

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

Quantitative approach is used to get the results from data that are more objective and replicable in nature. The sample size used was of 400 students and 40 teachers selected through random sampling to increase the generalizability of the research from various public and private schools of Bahawalpur region. A structured questionnaire is used to get data from teachers and students. The Pearson's correlation was found among two variables VARK learning styles and English learning proficiency of ESL learners. Descriptive statistics

technique used to answer other research questions including difference between male and female, public and private ESL learners. The study's internal validity was checked through pilot testing and expert validation of data collection tools. The data collection process was held, keeping ethical consideration in mind. Participant's anonymity and consent was considered carefully.

3.2 Population and Sampling

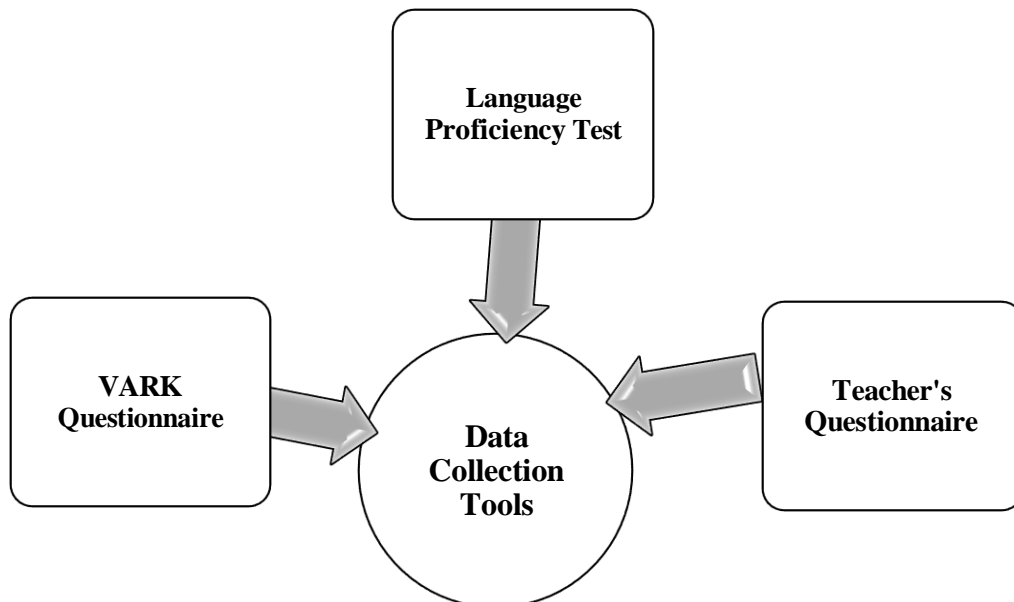
Population of the study will include primary schools and primary sections of both public and private schools of southern Punjab region especially of Bahawalpur district. There are approximately 1936 schools in district Bahawalpur that will be included in population of our study. The sample of the study will include 400 students which consist of 100 male and 100 female students of public schools, 100 male and 100 female students of private schools of two Tehsils of Bahawalpur region naming Bahawalpur City and Bahawalpur Saddar. It will also include 20 public and 20 private school teachers teaching English at primary school level.

3.3 Data Collection Tools

The following data collection tools were used while conducting this research.

3.3.1 VARK Questionnaire

VARK questionnaire was used while conducting this research to find the students learning type at primary school level. Some parts of the questionnaire will be adapted and modified according to the need, to make it easy to understand for primary school students. This questionnaire helped the teachers and researcher to understand the different learner types.



3.3.2 Teacher's Questionnaire

Teachers were given a separate questionnaire by the researcher to check their level of knowledge and understandings regarding VARK techniques. Researchers himself have designed this questionnaire.

3.3.2 Language Proficiency test

The researcher designed a test comprises of questionnaire check the English learning proficiency of learners. The results were compared with their VARK learning style to find out the relation between English learning proficiency and VARK learning style of ESL learner at primary level.

4. Data Analysis

Data was collected by using three main tools including adapted VARK questionnaire which was filled by the 5th grade students of public and private schools, a teacher's questionnaire which was filled by English teachers of both public and private schools. A language proficiency test was taken on the basis of five skills. Each skill contain ten marks which represents the proficiency of ESL classroom learners on the basis of their skills in speaking, reading, writing, grammar and listening skills. The chapter contain the graphical representation of each question that how many public, private male and female students responds to each question. Most of the students are visual learners between male and female. The data is compared and interpreted based on male, female comparison. Than their learner types are compared with their test score and each section score to check that visual, auditory, read/write or kinesthetic learner are good at which learning type. Teacher's level of knowledge about VARK and its implementation and usefulness is also checked by the questionnaire results. The graphs are than further interpreted and analyzed by the researcher to make a conclusion about the thesis results.

4.1 Results of Questionnaire

A questionnaire was designed by using adapt strategy where online VARK questionnaire was adapted and changed according to the according fifth grade standard. The students then respond each question according to their personal choices. The Likert scale was used in questionnaire where 5 stands for strongly agree, 4 stands for agree, 3 for neutral, 2 for disagree and 1 for strongly disagree. The total score of each section was calculated and the section having highest score determine the learner type.

4.1.1 Visual Learner

Visual learners are the most common learner type. Students from any gender or age group learn more quickly by seeing things. Students to learn different things use visual learning abilities most commonly. The ten questions of first part of questionnaire checked that which learners can be teach by using visual learning strategies.

Table 1. Results of visual learning strategies

Questions	Gender	SA	A	N	DA	SDA	Mean Score
1. I enjoy making drawings: even my notebooks have many pictures and symbols.	Male	23%	22%	19%	20%	16%	3.16
	Female	28%	29%	10%	17%	16%	3.53
2. If I write down any information, it helps me to remember it better.	Male	26.5%	39%	13.5%	11%	10%	3.61
	Female	33.5%	31%	12.5%	14.5%	16.5%	3.67
3. If I want to visit my friend's	Male	12.5%	16%	26.5%	21.5%	23.5%	2.48

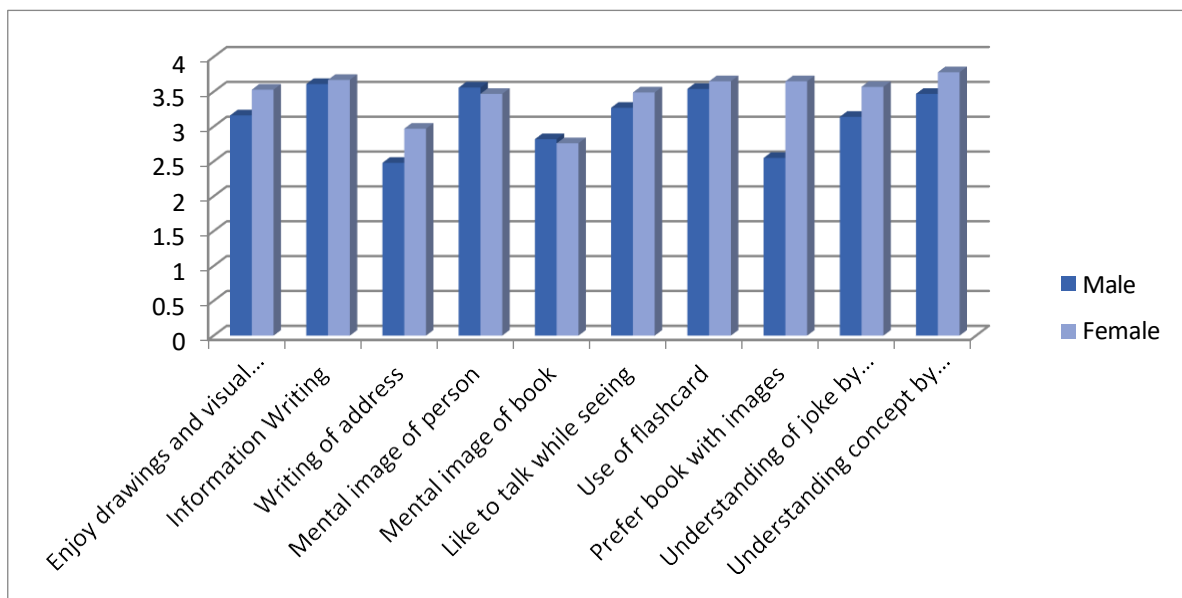
house first time, without writing down address; there is a chance that I get lost.	Female	20.5%	22.5%	13.5%	23.5%	20%	2.97
4. When trying to remember someone's telephone number or anything new, it helps me to get its picture in my mind.	Male	28%	33.5%	15.5%	12%	11%	3.56
	Female	28.5%	30.5%	12.5%	16%	12.5%	3.47
5. If my teacher is asking me a question from textbook, I can "see" the textbook page, where answer is located.	Male	16.5%	19.5%	15%	27.5%	21.5%	2.82
	Female	13.5%	16.5%	19.5%	33%	17.5%	2.76
6. I like talking to a person by seeing him as it keeps me more focused.	Male	24%	28.5%	13%	20%	14.5%	3.27
	Female	28.5%	32.5%	11%	15%	13%	3.49
7. Using flashcards helps me understands more about the topic.	Male	29%	30.5%	14%	17%	9.5%	3.54
	Female	30%	35.5%	12.5%	13.5%	8.5%	3.65
8. I prefer reading textbooks or other books with images and diagrams.	Male	21.5%	34.5%	12.5%	17.5%	14%	2.55
	Female	30%	35.5%	12.5%	13.5%	8.5%	3.65
9. It is hard for me to understand a joke by only listening to it.	Male	19%	25%	23%	16.5%	16.5%	3.14
	Female	27.5%	35%	13.5%	14.5%	9.5%	3.57
10. I would like to watch a video related to a new scientific concept.	Male	30%	32.5%	7.5%	15%	15%	3.47
	Female	33%	41.5%	3%	15%	7.5%	3.78

The table and bar graph shows the mean values of all the ten questions which was asked in the visual sections. Most of the bars were near about 3.5 or 4 which shows that both male and female participants agree to the most of the statements. Most of the students agree they enjoy drawings and visual images and form mental image of a person if they talk about them. Most of the students with a mean score less than 3 disagree that they see the page number while teacher ask any question from that page. It was seen that mostly girls prefer books with images and understand a joke by listening to it. Mostly girls agree with a mean score of 3.78 agrees that they like to watch a video to understand a scientific concept. The percentage of agreement is more in girls than boys in last three words.

Table 2. Results of questionnaire

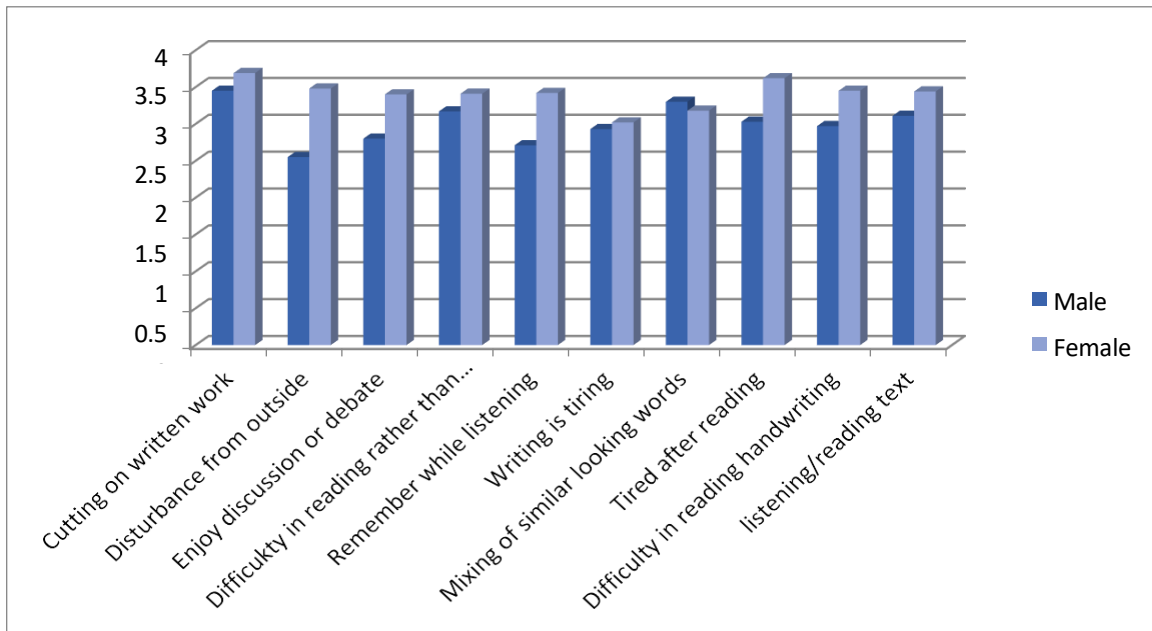
Questions	Gender	SA	A	N	DA	SDA	Mean Score
My written work is not so neat. I often do cuttings and erasing on my work.	Male	21.5%	41.5%	8.5%	17.5%	11%	3.45
	Female	31.5%	39.5%	4.5%	15.5%	9%	3.69
I enjoy taking part in group discussions or debate.	Male	8%	12.5%	17.5%	35%	22%	2.55
	Female	24.5%	38.5%	8%	18%	11%	3.48
It is hard for me to understand teacher's words, when there is any	Male	16.5%	19%	11.5%	36.5%	16.5%	2.82

sort of disturbing sound coming from outside.	Female	23%	37.5%	8%	19.5%	12%	3.40
It is easier for me to understand if teacher tells me how to do it rather than reading instructions myself.	Male	18%	26%	21%	25%	10%	3.17
	Female	21.5%	37.5%	12.5%	17.5%	11%	3.41
I remember things or instructions, which I hear, rather than I see or read.	Male	12%	15%	21%	36%	16%	2.71
	Female	20.5%	37%	17.5%	14%	11%	3.42
Writing is very tiring. I do not like writing tasks assigned to me.	Male	25%	32%	11%	20.5%	11.5%	2.93
	Female	22%	25.5%	7%	23%	22.5%	3.02
When I read any text, I sometimes mix up the similar looking words but not during verbal communication.	Male	19%	35%	15.5%	18%	12.5%	3.30
	Female	22%	27.5%	13.5%	20%	17%	3.18
I feel so much tired after doing reading/ writing task.	Male	18.5%	30.5%	10%	22.5%	18.5%	3.03
	Female	26%	43%	9.5%	9.5%	12%	3.62
I prefer sending/listening voice notes to my friend instead of texting.	Male	17.5%	23%	16%	26%	17.5%	2.97
	Female	25.5%	34%	16.5%	12%	12%	3.45
If I had an option to learn a new information by listening to my teacher or reading it myself. I would choose to hear my teacher.	Male	17%	28%	16%	26.5%	12.5%	3.11
	Female	26.5%	34%	10%	15.5%	14%	3.44



4.1.2 Auditory Learner

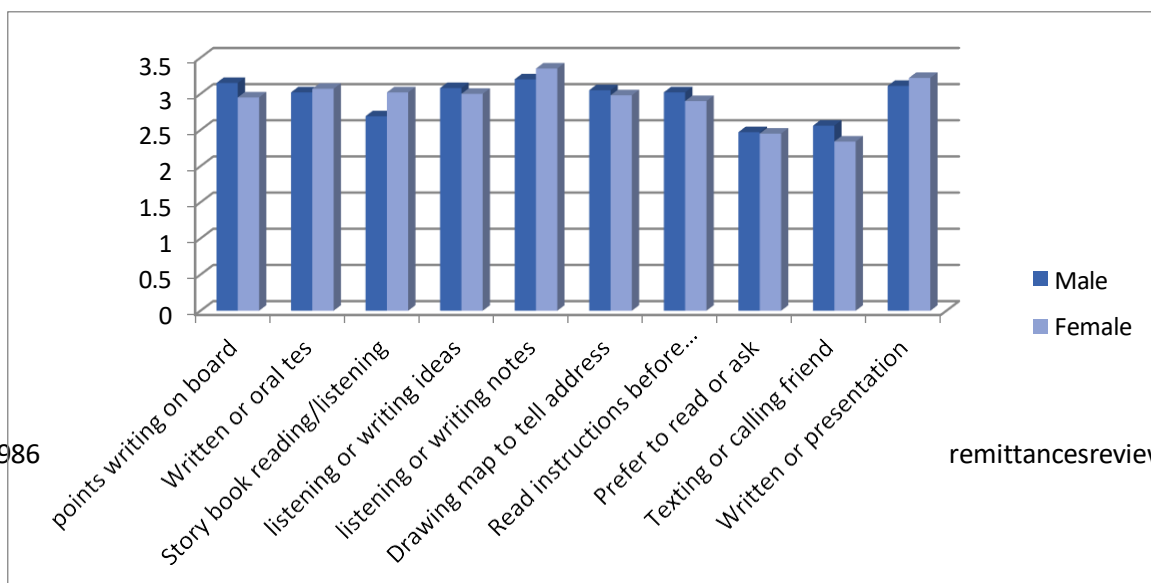
There were ten questions in this section of auditory learners. Most of the questions were those from which the auditory learners tend to agree. The learners get 5 marks if they strongly agree with the statement and 1 if they strongly disagree.



As evident from the responses of the mean score of male and female respondents, female tends to agree more with the statements of visual part of questionnaire. Male members have only higher score than females in the question asked either they mix similar looking words i.e. bad or dad etc. otherwise it is evident that females are more auditory learners than male as they agree more that they got disturbed from the sound outside the class while male member's mean score is 2.82 which means most of them are neutral in that aspect, while females being auditory learners got more disturbed by it. Another important question of the section was that they remember things which they read themselves or which are read by the others any they listen only. Male mean score was 2.71, which is clear evidence that most of them disagree with the statement, while female score of 3.42 shows that most of them agree with it.

4.1.3 Read/ Write Learner

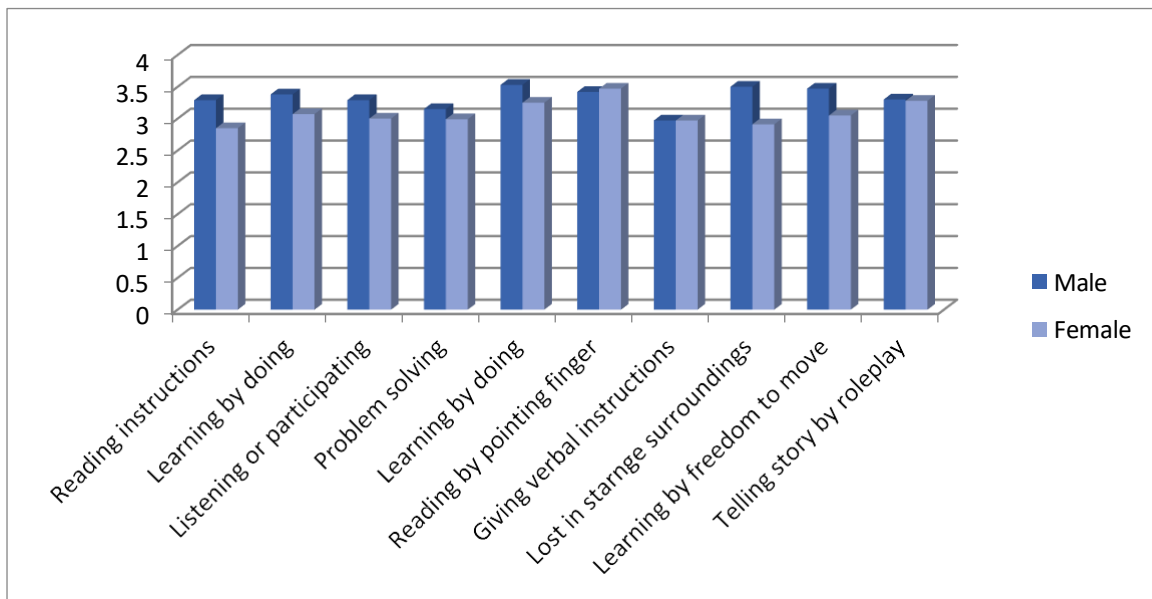
Read/write learners sections also comprised often questions. Students who belongs to read/write category mostly agrees with the statements, which are in accordance with read/write learners. Other learner types disagree but agreement and disagreement can also differ according to age, gender and personal differences among learners.



The 10 questions asked from the students to check that either they are reading/writing type of learners or not. In first question, they were asked that whether they like teacher to write main points of the lecture on board and you need to want to copy them. The mean score of male respondents was 3.15 and female respondents were 2.95 which shows a neutral response. This also shows that equal number of participants agreed and disagreed with the statement. Similarly, in second question also, where question was asked about student’s preference on written or oral test, again mean value is 3.-02 and 3.07 for male and female learners again shows a mix response. In 8th question the respondents were asked that they would prefer to read a text themselves rather than their teacher read it for them. Most of the students male or female with the mean score of 2.47 and 2.45 disagreed that they like to read text by themselves. Overall, in reading/writing part of the questionnaire the participants who agree with the statement almost equal to participants disagreed and hence least number of students tends to be read/write learners.

4.1.4 Kinesthetic Learners

Kinesthetic learners are the learners who learn new things by “doing”. They love in participating in various class activities and hence are the active members of class. The like activities like practical in science subject, real life problem solving in mathematics and role-plays in language learning. During the research from the score of the questionnaire it was found that most of the male learners after being visual learners are kinesthetic.



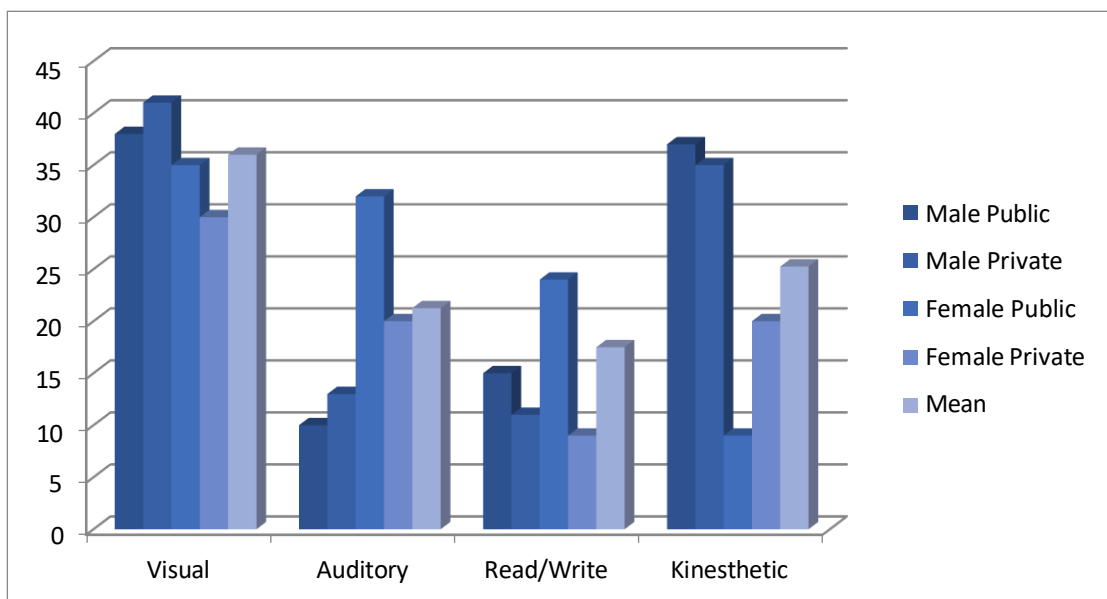
As evident from the multiple bar diagram, the bars of male participants are higher in almost all questions than the female participants. Ten questions were asked from them in this section about reading instructions before playing with a toy where male participants male score is 3.29 and female mean score was 2.85, next question is learning more by doing things male learners with mean score of 3.38 and females with slightly less score of 3.07. Other questions includes listening only to teacher or participating themselves in learning, problem solving by try and error method, learning by doing method, reading text by using finger as a pointer, the results of all these questions shows that male participants have a higher mean score than female students. This shows those males are more kinesthetic learners. Overall, results shows that more male members show their agreement to the statements of this sections and hence more male members are more kinesthetic learners than females.

4.1.5 Student's Dominant Learner Type

After analysis of students' learner type through questionnaire, the results were compiled. In VARK questionnaire comprised of four sections. Section 1 consist of 10 questions those who are visual learners usually agree or strongly agree to the most of the questions in that section. The score was than calculated from each section. Those who get highest score in auditory sections considered as auditory learner and similarly for read/write and kinesthetic. After compiling results using VARK score of each section, and adding data to SPSS sheet, we get the following results shown in table.

Table 3: student's dominant learner type

Learner School Type	Visual	Auditory	Read/Write	Kinesthetic	Mean
Male Public	38%	10%	15%	37%	100
Male Private	41%	13%	11%	35%	100
Female Public	35%	32%	24%	9%	100
Female Private	30%	30%	20%	20%	100
Mean	36	21.25	17.5	25.25	400



From the data mentioned above it is evident that the most and the greatest number of students belong to any sample group are visual learner. The Mean score of Visual learners is 36% means that 36% of the total sample size is visual learner and male and female both have visual style as dominant learning styles.

These visual learners learn by “seeing” or “watching” things like watching videos, watching short clips, other visual aids including white board, textbooks, charts, power point slides and flashcards used by the instructors. But male learners are mostly kinesthetic and female learners are auditory in the second place. Only 10% male public and 13% male private sample groups was found to be auditory learners whereas 32% of female public and 30% of female private students was found to be auditory learners because they mostly found learning by “listening”. Listening may include listening to the teacher, listening to the audio recordings, listening from friends and group discussions etc. the least number of students found to be Read/Write learners. Only 17.5% of the total sample belongs to this category among which mostly are female learners. Very few male students are found to be Read/ Write learners. Overall 25.25% of the total learners are kinesthetic learners who actually like to learn things by doing. They like to perform activities, practical, chart and model making, role-plays, perform skit and dramas etc. most of male learners with a percentage of 37 in male public and 35 in male private. Female students are less kinesthetic learner with a percentage of 9% and 20% for public and private school.

4.2 Result of Teacher’s Questionnaire

The teacher’s questionnaire comprised of five sections. Section 1 is of demographic information contains the questions like Name which is optional for teachers to mention. Then the questions was asked about age group and academic qualifications. Finally teaching experience in years and the school type i.e. public or private was asked in which they are teaching and the grade they are teaching was also asked. Section B was about teacher’s level of knowledge, section C was about implementation of VARK strategies in ESL classroom, section D was perceived effectiveness of VARK strategies and final section E was about training and support programs for teachers related to VARK.

4.2.1 Teacher’s level of knowledge

Teacher’s level of knowledge is checked by a set of five questions, three questions used Likert scale; having five options of no knowledge; limited knowledge, some knowledge, good knowledge and excellent knowledge. The result shows that public school teachers have more knowledge of VARK than private school students. A question was asked from public and private school teachers that when they first learn about VARK strategies where did they about them. 50% of public school teachers agree that they learn from teachers training program and 50% of private school teachers agree that they learn about VARK from personal research. While 30% public school teachers said that, they learn about VARK in teachers training. Almost quarter of the sample said that to have no knowledge about VARK. 30% of both public and private school teachers said that they have limited knowledge of VARK learner type. Highest percentage agrees to the so knowledge and zero percentage said that they have excellent knowledge. Most of the public and private school teachers said that they have some knowledge about their student’s learner types. Most of the teachers strongly agree that they found all the VARK learning strategies interesting. On average 57% of the teachers, agree that all the four learning strategies are useful for different situation and to different learners. Some teachers found visual and reading/writing strategies most important option after all of these. Almost 20% public and private school teachers think that kinesthetic or activity based learning is more useful.

4.2.2 Implementation of VARK Strategies in ESL Classroom

The question was asked from the respondents about the use of visual aids; most of the

teachers in the public school i.e. 45% said that they sometimes use visual learning strategies to teach their students. Visual learning materials include videos, charts, flashcards etc. about 40% of the private school teachers agree that they often use such type of visual learning strategies. Only 5% of both public and private school teachers agrees that they always use these strategies. Most of the teachers from public school said that they often use Auditory learning method. 60% public school teachers agree that they teach their students often by using auditory learning strategies (e.g., discussions, listening activities, lectures), while 30% said that they sometimes uses it. Similarly 35% of private school teachers agree that they sometimes use these strategies but 55% agrees that they always use these to teach their students in a ESL classroom. A question “How regularly you use Reading/Writing learning strategies (e.g., reading comprehension exercises, creative writing tasks) in your English class?” was asked from the primary school English teachers. 55% public and 50% private school teachers responded that they sometimes use these strategies whereas 30% public and 25% private school teachers responded that they often use such read/write strategies. A low percentage of students agree that they never used kinesthetic strategies in their ESL classroom. 20% of public school teachers said that they sometimes use these strategies sometimes and 35% said that they often use them. Similarly, 30% private school teachers said that they only sometimes uses kinesthetic learning strategies like activities, role-plays, skits to teach their students English.40% of the teachers said that they often use these strategies in their ESL classroom.

4.2.3 Perceived Effectiveness& implementation of VARK Strategies

This section D is about the perceived effectiveness of VARK strategies. This section constitutes of four questions. These questions will tell us that how teachers perceived these VARK strategies and also that how will they implement those strategies in classroom and find out about student’s learning type in their classroom. English teachers of both public and private schools agree with an equal percentage of 30% that Visual learning strategies i.e. use of charts, board, videos, flashcards etc. is best for teaching students in an ESL classroom. Public school teachers 35% agrees that read/write strategies are very useful and 30% teachers agrees that kinesthetic learning strategies are useful than other strategies. 45% of Public while 40% of Private school teachers often believe that the use of VARK strategies (Visual, Auditory, Reading and Kinesthetic) plays a significant role to enhance students’ understanding of English language while 25% public and 30% private teachers have firm believe that by using VARK strategies, they can ensure better language comprehension. A less percentage i.e.15 and 20% of public and private school teachers respectively believe that integrating VARK strategies enhances student engagement and improves proficiency of English language. Both private and public school teachers face various challenges in implementing VARK (Visual, Auditory, Reading and Kinesthetic) strategies. 5% public and 5% private teachers believe that lack of resources such as technology and teaching aids makes it difficult to cater to diverse learning styles. 10% public and 15% private teachers consider time constraints a challenging factor that hinders implementation of VARK strategies. ‘Large class sizes’ is a challenge faced by 5% public teachers but private school teachers don’t encounter this issue much. Additionally, many teachers lack formal training in VARK strategies, which include 10% public and 15% private school teachers, leaving them unsure of how to integrate these strategies into their lessons. Most of the educators i.e. 70% public and 65% private believe that a combination of these challenges is faced by them in their classes and makes it difficult for them to fully implement VARK based teaching strategies. When asked about the method of observation of student’s learner type . 90% public and 90% private school teachers observe students’ behavior and participation to gain insight into their learning styles, enabling them to design their ESL lessons that meet

individual needs effectively.

4.2.4 Training and Support

A very low percentage of 5% both public and private school teachers said that they never got any training related to VARK strategies and its usage. 10% public and 5% private school teachers said that they rarely get a chance to know about VARK in training. It was seen that more public school teacher with a slight high percentage agree and strongly agree that they often and always receive training about VARK strategies. There are only 5 % teachers who disagree that VARK strategies are useful and 0% strongly disagrees which clearly shows the teachers found these strategies very effective. 10 to 15 percent teachers remains neutral whereas 50% public and 55% private school teachers agree that after they got training about VARK they found these strategies very effective and 35% public school teachers and 25% private school teachers strongly agree to the statement. The questions was asked from 20 public and 20 private school teachers that do they think that VARK is effective and it should be the part of teacher’s training. Most of the teachers agree to the statement. About 70% of the public and private school students agree to the statement similarly 50% of private school students agrees to it. Similarly, 40% of private and 30% public school students strongly agrees to the statement. A high mean score of an average value of 4.3, shows that mostly teachers agree to the statement while 0% disagreement shows the importance of VARK strategies in teacher’s training program as well as student’s English language learning proficiency.

4.2.4 Comparison of Male/ Female learners test score

The male and female learners test score result was analyzed because of gender difference. The SPSS software was used to tabulate data and to analyze the result. For data analysis mean comparison method was used. The independent sample t-test was used to compare means. This test is used to compare the means of two different groups like here we are comparing the scores of male and female learners in their English language proficiency test. The test also tells us that there is a significance difference between the score of male and female learners. Continuity and normality of data can also be checked using SPSS independent sample t-test. The test results answers the third research question about difference in male and female learners English language learning proficiency of ESL learners of fifth grade.

Gender	N	Mean	St. Deviation	Std. Error Difference	Mean difference	t-value	Sig value (p-value)	95% conf. int. of difference
Male	200	23.28	4.586	0.495	-5.760	11.648	0.034	Upper - 4.788
Female	200	29.04	5.280	0.495	-5.760			Lower - 6.732

Students learner type	Student's Speaking Skills	Student's listening skills	Student's Reading Skills	Student's grammatical Skills	Student's Creative Writing Skills
Value of Pearson Correlation (r)	0.386	0.232	0.201	0.231	0.361
Significance Value (p)	0.0001	0.0001	0.0001	0.0001	0.0001

The value of Pearson Correlation (R) tells us about the strength of the relation. The value of Pearson Correlation was calculated by analyzing data through SPSS. A correlation was found between different proficiency test skills i.e. speaking, listening, reading, grammatical skills and creative writing. A positive value of r shows positive correlation and negative value of r shows negative correlation whereas 0 indicates no relation. A value of +1 shows perfect positive while value of -1 indicates perfect negative correlation. While the values from 0.00 to 0.30 shows weak correlation and value of 0.30 to 0.50 shows moderate correlation, values from 0.50 to 0.70 shows strong while values from 0.70 to 1.00 shows very strong correlation. Here the value of correlation between students speaking skills and learner type is 0.386 which shows a moderate correlation between students' speaking skills and learner type. Most of the Visual and Read/Write learners were not good at speaking. However, the 'Auditory' and 'Kinesthetic' learners were found good at them. The relation of student's listening skills and learner type shows value of 0.232 which shows a weak positive relation. Most of the 'Auditory' learners were found good at it. In this skill teacher read a paragraph aloud and then asked questions from the students from the same paragraph. Other than auditory learner, no other learners performed well at that skill. The student's reading skill and type of learner's correlation gave a value of 0.201 which also shows a weak positive relation. Both 'Visual' and 'Read/Write' learners performed well in this section.

The fourth correlation was between grammatical skills and learner type that shows the value of 0.231, which also shows weak positive relation. It was found that auditory learners did not perform well in grammatical task as compare to other learner type. The weak positive relation in these three skills shows that other external factors are also affecting the results. External factors include the student's age. Mostly students enrolled late in the schools learn easily due to their age. It may include student's gender. Females are better performers than male learners found in the results of this research and other researches too. Quality of education, availability of resources, teaching standards, family background and class, school environment and many other factors affect the results and relation to be strong. The different in test scores may also be affected by student's own personal abilities rather than only by learner type. The correlation coefficient score of student's learner type and their creative writing skills is 0.361, which is moderately positive because other factors also act to prevent it to be strong positive or perfect.

5. Findings & Discussion

The topic of thesis was about VARK learning styles Visual, Auditory, Read/Write, and Kinesthetic. The research was conducted to find out the role of VARK learning style on English language proficiency of ESL learners. Data analysis in chapter four gives us some results and findings which are from teacher's questionnaire, student's questionnaire, and English language proficiency test.

5.1 Data from student's questionnaire

The findings of the research includes that most common style at primary level among male and female of both public and private schools is Visual learning, the highest percentage of students are visual learners. Today is the digital era, most of the students learn by seeing things. Teachers are asked to teach students through visual aids. Kids also learn things by watching television, smart phones, tablets and I-pads. So their learning is mostly visual learning so most of the students proved to be visual learners. After that the male learners were found kinesthetic in second place while female learners were found auditory learners. From past researches, it is evident that females usually remember things after listening for a long time. Similarly from the student's questionnaire data it was clear that in comparison with males, females are more auditory learners. Male students mostly like to do work by doing it and the research also prove that because according to the data collected from 400 students of grade five the most common learner type; after visual learners was kinesthetic learning. Reading/ writing was the most disliked type of learning according to the fifth grade students. They find writing tiring and boring. Reading books and notes is no more the hobby of the students. So, students who consider reading/writing as their favorite learning type are very few in number.

5.2 Data from Student's Language Proficiency Test

Student's language proficiency test was taken to check the proficiency of fifth grade student according to five parameters. Five parameters include checking languages according to five skills including speaking, listening, reading, grammatical and creative writing. The test score of each section shows the proficiency of language learners of ESL classroom in different skills according the marks they obtained out of ten in each section. It was found that mostly female learners having high language learning proficiency than female learners. Visual learners are good in grammatical writing and reading skills, while they were found weak at speaking and listening skills. Auditory learners are good at listening, speaking, less grammar writing reading. Read/Write learners are good in reading, writing and grammatical skills but found less proficient in listening and speaking skills. Kinesthetic learners are good at speaking, writing and grammatical skills while they are seem to be less competent in listening and reading comprehension.

5.3 Data from Teacher's Questionnaire

Data from teacher's questionnaire shows that most of the teachers of both public and private have a limited knowledge about VARK learning styles, use of VARK strategies and even the learner type of their own students. Nevertheless, they found these strategies useful specially the combination of all the strategies because in every class there are students with different

learner types. So, according to the findings from teacher's questionnaire, filled by the teachers, which are currently teaching English subject at primary level. Teachers wanted to know about their student's learner type by observation. Teachers also want VARK learning model to be the part of their training programs.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, the study investigates the "Role of VARK learning style in English language Proficiency of ESL learners". The results show that there is a significant relationship between English Language Proficiency of fifth grade students and VARK learning styles. The study's findings have important repercussion for ESL instructions and it guide the teachers that how they can include the VARK learning strategies for all the genders and age groups. In the analysis, the study shows the individual difference among students and their learning types. It also shows how a teacher can overcome them by focusing on their individual learner type. The results indicate that every class has different individuals whose learning styles are different. The students can be benefited if the teachers have knowledge about the learning styles of their students and they use learning strategies to cater individual learning needs. By adapting these strategies by teachers, learners can take part that is more active in language learner and develop more effective habits of language learning in ESL classroom. Teachers training programs needs to be more focused on use of new learning styles and models like VARK model and many others so that teacher gets best insight of their students and hence improve student's leanings.

7. Recommendations

1. Consider to incorporate VARK learning strategies like use of videos, charts diagrams, activities and writing tasks to benefits all types of learners in an ESL classroom.
2. Provide more opportunities to primary school students; as they are at early stage of learning in an interactive environment by letting them participate in group discussion, role plays etc.
3. Curriculum must include activities that help not only one, but all the learning types. Teachers mostly find it difficult to use these strategies due to time constraints and burden of syllabus. Making these strategies and activities, part of curriculum and syllabus make it easy for teachers to manage them.
4. Government and private sectors teachers lake training programs in which VARK strategies and other professional development courses must be arranged by authorities and administration so that teacher must get knowledge and know how to use these new strategies to teach students in an ESL classroom by them.

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