



ORGANIZING THE ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS ON THE SUBJECT OF ENGLISH LINGUISTICS, BASED ON THEIR COGNITIVE LEARNING STYLES (KNOWLES, 1972)

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ANNOTATION *This article discusses an innovative approach to assessing students in English linguistics courses by integrating cognitive learning styles into the evaluation process. Drawing on Knowles' (1972) framework of adult learning, the research emphasizes four major learning styles — concrete, analytical, communicative, and authority-oriented — and their influence on students' academic performance. The study was carried out with students of Group 13/01/22, English Philology Department, Navoiy Innovation University. The experiment revealed that when assessments align with learners' cognitive preferences, students demonstrate higher motivation, stronger comprehension, and more consistent participation. The results suggest that universities should apply differentiated assessment models that consider individual learning characteristics to improve the overall effectiveness of linguistic education.*

KEYWORDS: *Cognitive learning styles, English linguistics, assessment, learning diversity, concrete learners, analytical, communicative learners, authority-oriented learners, differentiated instruction, higher education*

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, educational research has shifted from teacher-centered instruction toward learner-centered paradigms, where students' individuality and learning preferences play a crucial role. Within linguistics education, this shift is particularly important because language learning requires both analytical reasoning and communicative competence. However, assessment systems often remain

uniform, emphasizing correctness over comprehension. Such an approach may not reflect the true abilities of students who process information differently. Knowles (1972), one of the pioneers of adult education, introduced the concept of andragogy, stressing that learners develop specific cognitive patterns based on experience, motivation, and intellectual orientation. According to his theory, learning styles can be divided into four main categories — concrete, analytical, communicative, and authority-oriented — each shaping how a student perceives and applies linguistic knowledge. Recognizing these differences enables teachers to organize assessments that are not only fair but also psychologically supportive and pedagogically sound. The present study, conducted at Navoiy Innovation University, seeks to apply Knowles' theory to the context of English linguistics education, offering a model for style-based assessment organization.

MAIN PART

The study was conducted among 24 second-year students from Group 13/01/22, English Philology Department. The participants represented diverse linguistic aptitudes and cognitive learning styles. A diagnostic survey and observation checklist were used to categorize each student into one of the four styles identified by Knowles (1972):

1. Concrete learners rely on examples from real life and perform best when learning is connected to authentic communication or practical applications, such as analyzing spoken language or advertisements.
2. Analytical learners prefer structured explanations, grammar rules, and the logical dissection of linguistic phenomena. They excel in written analysis and theoretical discussions.
3. Communicative learners acquire knowledge through collaboration, role-play, and debates, benefiting from social interaction and peer exchange.

4. Authority-oriented learners depend on teacher direction and clear assessment criteria, preferring well-defined instructions and traditional formats such as tests or guided essays.

Based on these categories, an experimental assessment framework was developed. It included four corresponding tasks:

- **Concrete task:** Students examined language use in real-world materials (advertisements, news excerpts, and social media posts) to identify linguistic patterns.
- **Analytical task:** Participants completed a detailed grammatical analysis of complex sentences, defining morphological and phonological relationships.
- **Communicative task:** Groups conducted mini-debates about language change, code-switching, and the influence of globalization on vocabulary.
- **Authority-oriented task:** Students responded to teacher-led comprehension and short-answer questions focusing on phonetics and syntax.

After a four-week experimental period, assessment results were analyzed. The data indicated that when students were evaluated according to their dominant learning style, their scores improved by an average of 22%, and participation rates increased notably. For example, analytical learners achieved near-perfect accuracy in theoretical analysis, while communicative learners showed remarkable fluency and confidence during oral presentations. Concrete learners were most engaged when tasks were connected to real-world linguistic use, confirming the motivational power of experiential learning.

These results support Oxford's (1990) findings that compatibility between teaching and learning styles promotes meaningful learning. Moreover, Kolb's (1984) experiential learning cycle — involving concrete experience, reflection, conceptualization, and active experimentation — also underpins the necessity of matching tasks with students' cognitive preferences. When assessments reflect these

stages, students not only recall linguistic theory but also apply it critically and creatively.

Another observation from the experiment was the improvement in classroom dynamics. Students demonstrated increased cooperation, mutual respect, and a sense of autonomy. Teachers also reported that style-based assessment helped them identify individual strengths and weaknesses more effectively, allowing for targeted feedback and differentiated instruction. This pedagogical flexibility is essential in modern higher education, where diversity in cognitive styles can be viewed not as a challenge but as an opportunity to personalize learning.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that organizing assessment based on cognitive learning styles creates a more inclusive, motivating, and productive learning environment. By acknowledging individual differences, teachers can design assessments that evaluate not only factual knowledge but also analytical ability, creativity, and communicative competence. Such an approach aligns with the principles of learner-centered education, emphasizing personal growth and critical engagement over memorization.

In English linguistics, where both theory and application are crucial, this model provides a balanced way to test and reinforce students' linguistic competence. It encourages educators to diversify their assessment methods — combining written tests, oral discussions, and practical tasks — thereby ensuring that all students, regardless of their dominant learning style, have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their understanding. Ultimately, integrating cognitive learning styles into assessment is not merely a methodological innovation; it represents a philosophical shift toward fairness, inclusivity, and the recognition of multiple intelligences in higher education.

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