Estrategias de enseñanza del idioma inglés y estilos de aprendizaje entre los estudiantes de noveno grado de la escuela secundaria 27 de Febrero

English language teaching strategies and learning styles among ninth-grade students at 27 de Febrero high school

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Información del Artículo

RESUMEN

Este estudio examinó la relación entre los estilos de aprendizaje de los estudiantes de noveno grado y las estrategias de enseñanza empleadas por los docentes de inglés en una escuela de Loja, utilizando el modelo VAK (visual, auditivo, kinestésico). Los objetivos fueron determinar los estilos de aprendizaje predominantes entre los estudiantes y analizar cómo las estrategias de enseñanza se alinean con estos estilos. Se aplicó un diseño cuantitativo, descriptivo y transversal con una muestra de 96 estudiantes de entre 13 y 15 años y 4 docentes de inglés. Los datos se recolectaron durante tres semanas mediante dos cuestionarios validados: uno dirigido a los estudiantes, que identificó sus estilos de aprendizaje y sus percepciones sobre las estrategias docentes; y otro dirigido a los docentes, que reportó las estrategias que utilizaban. Los resultados mostraron que el estilo de aprendizaje auditivo predominaba entre los estudiantes. Los estudiantes percibieron que los docentes enfatizaban estrategias auditivas, mientras que los docentes reportaron utilizar principalmente recursos visuales. Esta desalineación sugiere que las preferencias de aprendizaje de los estudiantes no se abordan completamente en la instrucción en el aula. El estudio aporta evidencia sobre la necesidad de alinear las estrategias de enseñanza con los estilos de aprendizaje de los estudiantes para fomentar la motivación, la participación y la inclusión. Se concluye que implementar estrategias equilibradas que aborden los tres estilos VAK puede mejorar la adquisición del idioma por parte de los estudiantes.

ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between the learning styles of ninth-grade students and the teaching strategies employed by English teachers at a school in Loja, using the VAK model (visual, auditory, kinesthetic). The objectives were to determine the predominant learning styles among students and to analyze how teaching strategies align with these styles. A quantitative, descriptive, cross-sectional design was applied with a sample of 96 students aged 13–15 and 4 English teachers. Data were collected over three weeks using two validated questionnaires: one for students, which identified their learning styles and perceptions of teaching strategies, and one for teachers, which reported the strategies they used. The results showed that the auditory learning style was predominant among the students. Students perceived that teachers emphasized auditory strategies, while teachers reported primarily using visual resources. This misalignment suggests that students' learning preferences are not fully addressed in classroom instruction. The study contributes by highlighting the need for alignment between teaching strategies and students' learning styles to foster motivation, engagement, and inclusion. It concludes that implementing balanced strategies that address all three VAK styles can improve students' language acquisition.

INTRODUCCIÓN

English as a foreign language plays a vital role in contemporary society, especially within education. Learning English effectively depends not only on the curriculum but also on the pedagogical strategies teachers apply in their classrooms. These strategies should adapt to students' individual needs to promote meaningful communication and real-life language use. This perspective connects with Kolb's (1984) idea of learning as a continuous process in which people build knowledge through experience, reflection, and practice.

Understanding how students learn is essential for improving teaching effectiveness in EFL contexts. Over the past decades, several approaches have explained individual learning differences, among which the VAK model (Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic) proposed by Fleming and Bonwell (2019) has become widely used. The model suggests that learners tend to rely on one sensory channel visual, auditory, or kinesthetic to process and retain new information, a factor teachers should consider when planning lessons.

Empirical research supports this connection between teaching strategies and learning styles. For example, Yousefi and Pourhossein (2023) found that Iranian students improved reading comprehension and self-efficacy when lessons matched their preferred learning styles. Likewise, Benítez et al. (2022) reported positive results in Latin American classrooms when instruction incorporated sensory-based activities. Other studies, such as Sengsouliya et al. (2021), noted that a lack of alignment between methods and learning preferences can discourage students and slow language development. Nevertheless, most of this research has been conducted in international contexts, and studies in Ecuador remain limited. This lack of local evidence highlights the need to explore how English teaching strategies relate to learning styles in English language acquisition in Ecuadorian classrooms.

International and national frameworks also emphasize the need to adapt instruction to learners' characteristics. UNESCO (2015) points out that inclusive education requires strategies aligned with students' needs and learning styles to strengthen motivation and participation. Similarly, UNICEF (2022) highlights the relevance of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), encouraging teachers to embrace diversity and design flexible, inclusive environments. In Ecuador, the Ministry of Education (2019) promotes differentiated strategies that integrate a variety of techniques, resources, and activities to address learners' differences.

Despite these recommendations, classroom practice often shows a gap between theory and implementation. Large class sizes, limited planning time, traditional methodologies, scarce materials, and technological constraints frequently prevent teachers from personalizing instruction. As a result, students may struggle to achieve meaningful and inclusive learning outcomes.

This study seeks to address these challenges by analyzing teaching strategies adapted to students' predominant learning styles. Learning styles represent individual preferences for receiving and processing information, generally grouped as visual, auditory, or kinesthetic (Pashler, McDaniel, Rohrer, & Bjork, 2008). Recognizing these preferences allows teachers to design more engaging lessons and facilitate language acquisition. The research aims to encourage inclusive, learner-centered approaches that help students develop English skills more effectively. It also provides evidence useful for teachers, school leaders, and policymakers interested in strengthening curriculum design, teacher training, and innovation.

This study was conducted in a secondary school in Loja, Ecuador, and explores the relationship between students' learning styles and the English language teaching strategies employed by teachers. Specifically, it seeks to answer:

1. What is the relationship between students' learning styles and the English language teaching strategies?
2. What are the most predominant students' learning styles for learning English?
3. How are the English language teaching strategies associated with students' learning styles.

MATERIALES Y MÉTODOS

Approach and design

The study was conducted using a quantitative approach and a cross-sectional design, as it focused on collecting and comparing numerical data to analyze the relationship between learning styles and the teaching strategies applied by teachers in the classroom. For this purpose, standardized questionnaires were used, specifically designed to measure the key aspects of the research and to facilitate the identification of areas for improvement in pedagogical practices. According to Creswell and Gutterman (2018), quantitative research is a method that allows testing objective theories through the statistical analysis of the relationship between variables. Following this approach, a cross-sectional design was adopted, which allows data to be collected at a single point in time and from a specific population. This approach is quite efficient for

examining the relationship between learning styles and pedagogical strategies, as it facilitates obtaining clear and specific information without the need for continuous monitoring, as well as allowing a comparison between both variables within the same context. As stated by Manterola et al. (2023), cross-sectional studies enable the identification of associations between variables and the assessment of trends within a given environment.

Setting and participants
The research was carried out at the 27 de Febrero high school, located in the city of Loja, over a period of three weeks. A total of 96 ninth-grade students from classes A, B, C, and D participated, aged between 13 and 15 years old, and with an English level of A1.2, in line with their age. Given that they were minors, informed consent was obtained from their parents or legal guardians, ensuring compliance with the ethical principles of the research. In addition, four English teachers participated, providing information on the resources and strategies they use in their classes. A non-probability convenience sample was used, which, according to Fernández and Baptista (2014), consists of selecting participants who are available and accessible to the researcher. The choice of this institution was relevant due to the diversity of its student population and the favorable academic conditions for the development of the study.

Research type
This study is descriptive, as it seeks to observe, record, analyze, and correlate data without establishing causal relationships. It focuses on identifying students' learning preferences (visual, auditory, or kinesthetic) and the teaching strategies used by teachers. This approach allows educators to adapt their teaching methods to the needs of their students and analyze educational phenomena as they occur in the classroom, providing valuable information for improving teaching-learning processes (Guevara et al., 2020).

Research Methods
This research was based on the deductive method, related to quantitative research. This method allows us to start from known general theories and principles about an accepted statement. In this way, researchers use theories, which are general ideas, to reach conclusions about what might happen in different situations. The deductive method, in a quantitative study, allows the researcher to verify a theory by asking questions derived directly from it. These theories contain specific variables that must be defined, either by the researcher or based on existing literature. Subsequently, an instrument is selected to measure the attitudes or behaviors of the participants, and data are collected to confirm or refute the theory (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). This approach is useful for analyzing how these two variables relate: learning styles, known as a description of the attitude and behaviors that define an individual's preferred way of learning (Pashler et al., 2008, cited in Naenah, 2022), and teaching strategies, which are tools used by teachers to develop skills and promote meaningful learning in students (Ochoa Mendieta et al..., 2024).

Data Collection Sources and Techniques
Two structured and previously validated questionnaires based on the VAK model (visual, auditory, and kinesthetic) adapted from Joy M. Reid's instrument (1987) were used for data collection. The questionnaire for students consisted of two parts: one aimed at identifying predominant learning styles and the other at determining their perception of the teaching methods used by teachers. The questionnaire for teachers allowed information to be gathered about the strategies most used in teaching English. Both instruments included 18 items divided into three dimensions aligned with the VAK model and were applied using a five-point Likert scale. Content validity was ensured through expert judgment, and the questionnaires were administered over three weeks in sessions previously coordinated with the institution.

Data Analysis
To analyze the data obtained, descriptive statistics were used. These statistics focus on collecting, organizing, and simply summarizing data using frequency tables and percentages to facilitate understanding. According to Creswell & Creswell (2018), descriptive statistics are used to report the general characteristics of the data collected in a study. These statistics include frequencies, means, standard deviations, and ranges of values, allowing for the description of both independent and dependent variables. Quantitative data were analyzed to explore the relationship between variables and identify relevant differences. The results were interpreted by comparing the findings with existing literature and relevant theoretical frameworks.

RESULTADOS Y DISCUSIÓN

The analysis of questionnaires administered to 96 ninth-grade students and 4 English teachers revealed important information about learning styles and their relationship to the teaching strategies used in the classroom.

Objective 1: To describe the most predominant students' learning styles for learning English.
 Sub-question 1: What are the most predominant students' learning styles for learning   English?

Table 1: Dominant learning style

Learning style	f	%
Visual	35	36%
Auditory	38	40%
Kinesthetic	23	24%
TOTAL	96	100%

The results showed that the auditory learning style was the most predominant among students (40%), followed by visual (36%) and kinesthetic (24%). This suggests that most students understand information better through oral explanations and verbal interaction. Studies such as that of Yousefi and Pourhossein (2023) have shown that adapting teaching to this style significantly improves students' comprehension and confidence.
The predominance of the auditory learning style aligns with findings from studies such as Yousefi and Pourhossein (2023), who emphasize the effectiveness of adapting strategies to learners' auditory preferences to enhance comprehension and self-efficacy. Similarly, Benítez et al. (2022) highlight that tailoring instruction to students' learning styles improves their reading and writing skills.
 In the local context, teaching remains largely traditional, focusing on oral presentation by the teacher and repetition by the students, which favors auditory learning. This approach contrasts with other contexts where more varied and practical methods are used that stimulate different learning styles. Therefore, it is essential to recognize these particularities to design strategies that are better adapted to the way students learn.

 Objective 2: To identify the English language teaching strategies associated with students' learning styles.
Sub-question 2: How are the English language teaching strategies associated with students' learning styles?

Table 2: Students' perceptions of learning styles and teachers' strategies used in English Teaching

Learning style	Student's perception	Teaching strategies
Auditory	44%	25%
Visual	31%	75%
Kinesthetic	25%	0%

Concerning the second objective, students perceived that teachers primarily used auditory strategies (44%), while visual and kinesthetic strategies were used less frequently (31%) and (25%). However, from the teachers' perspective, 75% reported prioritizing visual strategies and only 25% acknowledged using auditory ones. Notably, no teachers mentioned using kinesthetic strategies. This discrepancy reflects a lack of alignment between teaching practices and students' learning preferences, which can limit learning effectiveness.
This finding mirrors the results of Sengsouliya et al. (2021), who conducted a study in a Laos secondary school and identified a similar discrepancy. In that context, teachers primarily used oral and written instruction, without adapting to students' preferred learning styles. This evidence reinforces the need to adapt pedagogical strategies to students' needs.
This research provides novel empirical evidence from the Ecuadorian context, where little has been documented on the connection between VAK learning styles and English teaching strategies. It emphasizes the importance of pedagogical alignment in promoting inclusive and student-centered education.

CONCLUSIÓN

This study aimed to examine the relationship between learning styles and English teaching strategies. It was conducted with ninth-grade students at a high school in Loja. The results revealed that the predominant learning style among students was auditory, indicating a preference for acquiring knowledge through auditory stimuli. While students perceived the frequent use of auditory strategies in the classroom, teachers expressed a preference for visual strategies, highlighting a discrepancy between pedagogical practices and students' needs. These findings underscore the importance of identifying and integrating students' learning styles into educational planning to foster more meaningful, inclusive, and effective educational experiences. Based on these results, it is recommended that students be aware of their own learning styles to develop personalized study techniques and monitor their progress more effectively. It is also suggested that teachers design and implement materials and activities that integrate visual, auditory, and kinesthetic (VAK) strategies to offer more dynamic and diverse teaching. School leaders also play a key role and should promote inclusive policies, facilitate access to educational resources, and provide ongoing training and support to teachers so they can effectively implement differentiated strategies. However, this study was limited to one institution, one grade level, and a cross-sectional design, which limits the generalizability of the results. The scope was also limited to only three learning styles (visual, auditory, and kinesthetic) and relied primarily on self-reported data using questionnaires. Despite these limitations, the findings provide valuable evidence for improving pedagogical practices by promoting inclusive and learner-centered education aligned with students' learning preferences.

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