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Foreign language learners' experiences regarding their learning style in higher education

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Abstract

Learning styles is a cognitive factor that influences learning. In the teaching practice, they can help teachers provide positive learning experiences so that students succeed in acquiring foreign languages. Learning experiences can become negative in developing a foreign language if students' learning styles are not attended. This research aimed to identify the relationship between learning styles, academic achievement, and students' learning experiences in higher education. A mixed-method research design was employed. The quantitative results showed that students have a combination of learning styles with a predominance of the reflector style and that there was no significant relationship between learning styles and academic achievement. Nevertheless, it is convenient for students to spread the four learning styles' to have successful language learners' qualities. The qualitative results showed that students lived positive learning experiences because teachers had qualities that helped students learn the FL. On the contrary, learning experiences arose when learning styles and emotional factors were put aside, and having demotivating teachers. Based on the findings, the researcher concludes that teachers should students' regard learning styles to enrich learning experiences so that the FL academic performance improves and contributes to the development a FL learner profile to succeed in the EFL learning.

Keywords: Learning styles, learning experiences, academic achievement, higher education

[es] Experiencias de los estudiantes de idiomas extranjeros con respecto a su estilo de aprendizaje en la educación superior

Resumen

Los estilos de aprendizaje son un factor cognitivo que influye en el aprendizaje. En la práctica docente pueden ayudar a los maestros a brindar experiencias de aprendizaje positivas para que los estudiantes tengan éxito en la adquisición de lenguas extranjeras. Las experiencias de aprendizaje pueden ser negativas en el desarrollo de una lengua extranjera si no se atiende a los estilos de aprendizaje de los estudiantes. Esta investigación tuvo como objetivo identificar la relación entre los estilos de aprendizaje, el rendimiento académico y las experiencias de aprendizaje de los estudiantes en la educación superior. Se empleó un diseño de investigación de método mixto. Los resultados

cuantitativos mostraron que los estudiantes tienen una combinación de estilos de aprendizaje con predominio del estilo reflector y que no hubo relación significativa entre los estilos de aprendizaje y el rendimiento académico. Sin embargo, es conveniente que los estudiantes difundan los cuatro estilos de aprendizaje para que los estudiantes tengan las cualidades de aprendices exitosos de lenguas extranjeras. Los resultados cualitativos mostraron que los estudiantes vivieron experiencias de aprendizaje positivas porque los maestros tenían cualidades que ayudaron a los estudiantes a aprender el FL. Por el contrario, las experiencias de aprendizaje surgieron cuando se dejaron de lado los estilos de aprendizaje y los factores emocionales y con profesores desmotivadores. Con base en los hallazgos, el investigador concluye que los maestros deben considerar los estilos de aprendizaje de los estudiantes para enriquecer las experiencias de aprendizaje de modo que el rendimiento académico de LE mejore y contribuya al desarrollo de un perfil de aprendizaje de LE para tener éxito en el desarrollo del inglés como lengua extranjera.

Palabras clave: estilos de aprendizaje, experiencias de aprendizaje, rendimiento académico, educación superior

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1) Introduction

1.1. Learning styles definition

Physical, cognitive, affective, and contextual individual traits influence the language learning process and results. Regarding the cognitive aspect, learning styles manifest the way students prefer to learn. Keefe defines learning styles as “the composite of characteristic cognitive, affective and psychological factors that serve as relatively stable indicators of how a learner perceives, interacts with and responds to the learning environment” (Keefe & Languis, as cited in Keefe & Ferrell, 1990, p. 59).

1.2. Learning styles background

Some researchers have inquired about the relationship between learning styles (LS) and English as a foreign language (EFL) learning (Atmowardoyo, & Salija, 2019; Payaprom, & Payaprom, 2020). LS, language learning and instruction (Elyas, AlHashmi, & Fang, 2020; Munfa'ati, Mujiyanto, & Suwandi, 2020). LS, EFL and teaching styles (Alnujaidi, 2019). LS, EFL and academic achievement (Biabani, & Izadpanah, 2019; Effendi, Saleh, & Yufrizal, 2019; Feng & Díaz-Granados, 2013; Marzulina, Pitaloka, & Yolanda, 2019; Pei-Shi, 2012; Recke, Ortiz, & Rodríguez, 2016, Taheri, Bagheri, Bavali, & Khajavi, 2019). Their findings showed that reflector, theorist, and divergent styles correlate positively with academic performance. Some researchers suggest considering students' LS in the instruction so that students succeed in their learning process (Bahamón, Vianchá, Alarcón & Bohórquez, 2013; Biabani, & Izadpanah, 2019; Castro & Guzmán, 2005; De Moya, 2011; Hervás, 2008; Marzulina et al., 2019; Payaprom, & Payaprom, 2020; Taheri et al., 2019).

Researchers in Spain and Latin America commonly use the Honey and Mumford learning style proposal in higher education (Alonso, as cited in Cué, Rincón & García, 2008). Those studies found a positive correlation between the reflectors and academic achievement (Barja, 2015; Luengo & González, 2005; Manzano, 2007; Feng & Díaz-Granados, 2013) and a negative correlation between the active style and academic performance (Dai, 2015; Manzano, 2007). In other words, researchers found that when the predominance of reflector style is high, the development of the FL is faster and outstanding. On the contrary, when there is a high predominance of the activist style, the FL academic achievement is low. Despite the findings, researchers suggest that teachers promote the four LS

development because when the four styles evolve, students learn better, efficiently, and jolly. Considering learning styles in the instruction allows students to learn English effectively because they can interpret, analyze, process, store, and memorize the new information with their preferred learning style (Bahamón et al., 2013; Effendi et al., 2019; Taheri et al, 2019).

Most of the studies above were quantitative, whose central theme was learning styles and academic achievement. This study has addressed its phenomenon of study with the mixed-methods research design because apart from focusing on the relationship between LS and academic performance, it retrieved the learning experiences that EFL students lived in their classrooms.

1.3. Learning styles models

Jung began to study about LS in 1920 (Alonso et al., 2013). There are more than 20 LS models (Alonso et al., 2013; Cassidy, 2004; Gil & Domingo, 2006). They can be cognitive, personality, cerebral, or sensory, multifactorial. In 1986, Honey and Mumford put forward a cognitive model of learning styles based on Kolbs' proposal. They retake some elements of Kolb's LS model, such as the cyclic learning idea and experience as an essential part of learning. In the Honey and Mumford model, learning styles are classified as activist, reflector, theorist and pragmatist. They have peculiar characteristics, defined by Alonso, and ways to deal with new information (Alonso et al., 1997).

Activists are open-minded and spontaneous. They like encouraging, improvising, discovering, risking, and collaborating. They enjoy learning with activities that do not consume too much time since they engage enthusiastically in them for a short time. Emotion becomes boredom when they get involved in prolonged tasks. They like variety and perform one task after task. They focus on activities and tend to work in groups.

Reflectors are weighted, careful, receptive, meticulous, and analytical, prefer working individually in a comfortable environment. They like to learn through visual and auditory channels. Before participating or making conclusions, they collect, explore, and analyze new information thoroughly. They treat the information carefully to grasp it.

Theorists are methodical, logical, objective, critical, structured, and perfectionist. They avoid ambiguity and subjectivity, enjoy conceptualizing, analyzing, integrating, and synthesizing new information. They integrate information systematically into logical theories.

Pragmatists are practical, direct, effective, and realistic. They involve in attractive projects. When they are interested in a project, they act to quickly and safely carry it out. They apply ideas in real and everyday situations (Alonso et al., 1997).

The previous studies identified students' characteristics; researchers suggest that teachers motivate learners to spread the four LS. They go through the four learning cycles, so the educational quality rises. Teachers need to prepare learning experiences considering the events that can facilitate or block the learning cycle (Alonso et al., 1997). Table one includes some actions that could activate or hinder learning.

Table 1

Activation and inhibition of learning regarding learning-style predominance

Learning style	Students learn better when	Students find learnig difficult when
Activist	Trying new activities Working in teams Proposing ideas Dramatizing Involving in short term tasks Involving in activities of interest...	Listening explanations with a lot of theory Assimilating, analyzing data that is not clear for them Taking care of detail Working individually Repeating activities Being passive...
Reflector	Drawing conclusions at their own pace Working without hurry Reading or preparing beforehand Having enough time to assimilate,	Being a leader Being cynosure Conducting discussions Dramatizing Performing without planning

consider and analyze new information...

Theorist	Being in organized events with clear objectives Having enough time to explore the scenarios Questioning Enjoying intellectual pressure Participating in complex tasks...	Participating in emotional or emotional situations Working with confusing methods Working on trivial issues Doing something decontextualized or with unclear objective Participating in unstructured or ambiguous activities...
Pragmatist	Copying or imitating models Applying what they learned immediately Experiencing Finding a relationship between theory and practice Seeing many examples Simulating real problems Focusing on practice	Doing activities without relation to an immediate need Detecting that learning is not applicable Learning theories Working without understanding how to do it Working with people below their work pace Obtaining no rewards

Source: Own elaboration based on Alonso et al. (1997)

1.4 Learning experience definition

Unlike the satisfactory result obtained in search of learning style definitions, it was not the same concerning the learning experience. Therefore, for this study, it was necessary to define it. Larrosa (2009) considers that experience happens, transforms, and allows individuals to relate to something that involves, affects, and uniquely alters them. From a cognitivist view, learning is "a relatively permanent change in mental associations or representations as a result of experience" (Ellis, 2005, p.5). Based on those terms, in this study, a learning experience is considered as a temporal event that occurs to individuals that affect them and uniquely transform their mental representations through interaction with their environment.

1.5 Learning experiences background

There are some studies about learning experiences in the EFL, in some of the only present positive learning experiences. Tin (2013) identified that teachers need to present the content clearly; assist doubtful learners; use the FL inside and outside the classroom, and is a proficient English user. Besides, Rowland (2011) saw that the exposure to the FL is fundamental; additional practice outside the classroom through entertaining activities helps learn the FL.

Others portray only negative experiences in FL learning. They occur when learners are not familiar with the teaching method (Debreli, 2016; Ho et al., 2004; Sawir, 2005). Also, the lack of teachers' assistance causes negative experiences since learners can not handle the learning process independently (Herrera, 2012).

Several studies report learning experiences that facilitate and hinder the foreign language (FL) development. They report learners' experiences while studying English as an FL. Some of them have focused on learning experiences and academic context (Debreli, 2016; Hernández & Díaz, 2015; Tin, 2013). Others on learners' emotions experienced while learning the FL (Pishghadam, Zabetipour & Aminzadeh, 2016; Trang & Moni, 2015). Some others inquired about learning experiences in the EFL and the experiential learning theory (Jenkins and Clarke, 2017).

In the FL learning experiences studies, researchers mainly report successful experiences that helped learners develop an FL. This study focuses on the relationship between learning experiences and academic achievement in the FL regarding students' learning style predominance. Exploring the learning experiences, either positive or negative, can take teachers to understand such experiences better. Distinguishing them could lead teachers to improve the learning experiences quality so that learners can reach a higher FL level, which has not been achieved in the Mexican context yet. In Mexico, FL learners have developed a low FL level. It has been ranked in the 57th place out of 88

countries. In the state of Puebla, where this study was carried out, students have reached a low FL level, too. (EF EPI, 2018).

2. Materials and methods

2.1. Research Design

This study is a mixed-methods research design because it allows researchers to understand the objective and subjective results. The type of design is a QUAN-qual exploratory sequential design characterized by the alternate use of the quantitative design followed by the qualitative one. The qualitative information allows enriching the quantitative data (Creswell, 2009). In the quantitative stage, the researcher identified students' learning styles predominance and the relationship with academic performance. Then, in the qualitative stage, the learning experiences were gathered to complement the quantitative results.

2.2. Research questions

General question

How do learning styles and academic performance relate to the FL students' learning experiences in higher education?

Specific questions

What is the learning style predominates in English foreign language learners?

How do learning styles relate to students' academic performance in higher education?

What learning experiences do EFL students live in higher education regarding their learning style?

The researcher had two hypotheses. The first one suggested a positive relationship between the reflector style and academic achievement, and the second one proposed a negative relationship between pragmatist style and academic performance.

2.3. Participants

The quantitative sample size was composed of 365 cases (159 men and 206 women). Their ages range between 19 and 26 years old. In the qualitative sample were 33 informants. They were chosen because they answered the Honey-Alonso learning style questionnaire, did the departmental exams, obtained the highest or lowest score in the departmental exam, were 19 years old or above, attended to the face-to-face mode, and went to public institutions in high school. They are from different majors: 22.7% electronics, 22.5% law, 21.6% stomatology. A smaller percentage are the majors of administration, computer science, engineering, topography, physical education, medicine, psychology, chemical engineering, international trade, and educational processes. The participants were numbered and tagged with some letters. Those letters stand for sex, learning style predominance, and academic achievement. Thus, female is (f), male is (m); activist (a), reflector (r), theorist (t), pragmatist (p); low (l) and high (h).

2.4. Instruments

Two instruments were used to collect quantitative data. The first one was the Honey-Alonso learning style questionnaire. It allowed identifying the learning style profile, which was determined based on the learning styles predominance scale (Alonso et al., 1997).

The second instrument was a departmental exam. It helped obtain the academic performance scale; the number of correct answers obtained in the exam was taken to rank the students' academic performance. They were classified in an insufficient level with 0-17.5 ticks; average level with 18-22 ticks; good level with 22-25 ticks; very good level with 25.5-28 ticks; and excellent level with 28.5-30 ticks.

In the qualitative phase, the interview helped to gather informants' data. The qualitative data collection ended when the researcher obtained the saturation principle (Álvarez-Gayou, 2003).

2.5. Procedures and data analysis

Different data analysis techniques were used to scrutinize the information. In the quantitative stage, the descriptive analysis was used because its "main function is to characterize a group with one or

more of the analyzed variables" (Briones, 2002, p.72). The SPSS version 23 computer program was used for the descriptive analysis.

The researcher took some ideas proposed by Gibbs (2007) to do the qualitative analysis, such as transcribing the whole interviews, respecting the participants' anonymity and confidentiality, and reproducing an exact copy of what participants expressed in the interviews. The type of coding was open. The Atlas ti version 7 was used to analyze the qualitative information. In the coding phase, the information was labeled with words; then, they were classified thematically and integrated into categories.

2.6. Results validity

The strategy of complementarity helped integrate qualitative and quantitative results. According to Blanco and Pirela (2016), this methodological strategy is used in mixed-method studies to obtain a global panorama of the studied phenomenon.

3. Results

Firstly, the quantitative results and discussion are shown. Subsequently, the quantitative analysis and scrutiny are presented, followed by the data complementarity.

3.1. Learning style predominance

Students have a combination of styles, although the level of predominance varies. The data showed that the participants have a very high theorist predominance 32.3%, followed by the activist with 17.0%, with 15.35% the pragmatist, and with 0.5% the theorist. It was observed that 118 students have a very high predominance of reflective style (n = 111); moderate predominance (n = 122) and low predominance (n = 2). On the other hand, 56 participants have a very high predominance of the pragmatic learning style.

3.2. Learning Styles and Academic achievement

Table 2 displays the results obtained from the academic achievement, and learning style, which revealed that only 9 participants obtained excellent results. Among them, there were (n=4) theorists, (n=3) reflectors, (n=1) activist, and (n=1) pragmatist. Sixty students obtained very good academic achievement. Among them, there are (n=32) reflectors, (n=18) theorists, (n=5) activists and (n=5) pragmatists. On the other hand, pragmatists (n=16) out of (n=38) obtained insufficient academic achievement. In general, 82.87% of the participants obtained unsatisfactory results, and 30.41% reached regular results.

Table 2
Academic achievement and learning styles

Learning styles	Academic achievement					Total
	Insufficient	Regular	Good	Very good	Excellent	
Active	17	17	11	5	1	51
Reflexive	46	52	33	32	3	166
Theorist	41	29	18	18	4	110
Pragmatist	16	13	3	5	1	38
Total	120 32.87%	111 30.41%	65 18.57%	60 17.14%	9 2.46%	365

Source: Own elaboration

3.3. Correlation analysis between learning style and academic achievement

The statistical correlation analysis indicates no significant relationship between the learning styles and academic performance ($p>0.05$). See table 3.

Table 3

Correlation analysis between learning styles and academic achievement (n=365)

	Value	Asymptotic (bilateral) significance
Activist LS and academic achievement Chi-squared test	19.478	.245
Reflector LS and academic achievement Chi-squared test	11.044	.807
Theorist LS and academic achievement Chi-squared test	12.318	.722
Pragmatist LS and academic achievement Chi-squared test	15.985	.718

Source: Own elaboration

3.4. Discussion of quantitative results

In the quantitative results, it was found that there is a very low, low, moderate, high, and very high predominance in the four learning styles. The predominance levels varied, (n=118) are reflectors; followed by (n=62) activists; then (n=56) pragmatists and (n=2) theorists. So, in this sample, there is a superiority of reflectors with very high predominance. This result is similar to the one obtained by Barja (2015) and Valenzuela & González (2010), who found many reflectors. In this sample, each participant has developed the four styles, so there is a combination of learning styles, where there is a high and very high predominance in the reflector style.

This information allowed answering the research question. What is the learning style predominates in English foreign language learners? The participants have developed the four learning styles, although the reflector style stands out. These students learn better through the auditory and visual channels and in-depth analysis of the new information (Alonso et al., 1997). However, it seems to be necessary that teachers promote the development of the four learning styles. Their combination can make students have the qualities a language learner needs, such as being good at communicating, making mistakes, accepting ambiguity, and being risky (Beeve, 1988).

These qualities can be achieved by developing and combining the specific characteristics of the four learning styles. Activists are risky. Theorists are analytical, establish rules, develop hypotheses, review and reformulate the FL form and use. Pragmatists apply what they have learned. Reflectors could be encouraged to be risky and willing to err in the FL development and invite theorists to accept ambiguity. Since language is ambiguous, they will not have a reasonable explanation or answer to learn and use the FL all the time. In this sense, if learners develop the four learning styles' qualities, they may match foreign language learners' particularities and may develop the FL successfully.

3.5. Learning style and academic performance

A high number of participants, (n=120), achieved unsatisfactory results, and (n=111) students got regular results. The results revealed that the majority of the sample had achieved unsatisfactory academic performance. Although the number of participants varies in the FL academic performance, the statistical correlation analysis indicates no significant relationship between the learning style and academic performance.

That results answered the research question, how do learning styles relate to students' academic performance in higher education? Based on the results, there is no significant relationship between learning styles and academic performance. The results partially coincide with the findings obtained in Feng and Díaz-Granados (2013), who found that among the activists, reflectors, and pragmatists, there is no correlation with academic performance. There is no correlation between academic performance and the theorists' style in this sample; nevertheless, a positive correlation was found between the reflector style and academic performance in other studies (Barja, 2015; Luengo & González, 2005; Manzano, 2007).

The results indicate no significant relationship between the learning styles and academic performance; therefore, insufficient evidence was obtained to accept the study hypotheses. The first one suggested a positive relationship between reflector style and academic achievement, and the second one referred to a negative relationship between pragmatic style and academic performance. It is worth mentioning that the hypotheses arose from knowing the characteristics of each profile. In the case of pragmatic students, they like to observe the functionality of what they learn in their daily tasks. This condition is hard to satisfy in the context of study since they learn general English. However, students' FL needs are more related to English for specific purposes; they have to read articles in English related to their majors. The reflector style seems to be satisfactory for the development of the FL since, in other studies, they found a positive relationship between the reflector style and academic performance.

3.6. Qualitative results and discusión

In the qualitative phase, 33 informants were interviewed. The purpose of the interviews was to answer the research question: what learning experiences do EFL students live in higher education regarding their learning style? The analysis displayed that there some experiences that facilitated and others that blocked the FL learning.

Positive learning experiences happened when teachers were interested in the teaching-learning process, performed engaging activities, used learning resources that fit students' tastes, and assigned homework. Some informants considered that the experiences inside and outside their classrooms allowed them to learn the FL. They indicated that teachers' way of being, treatment, attention, error correction, and support generated favorable FL learning experiences. Three participants said:

"Well, I remember ... the teacher corrected me ... so I feel that this importance he gave us to explain, changed my attitude positively towards English learning..." (I3mal).

"We put phrases, or we had to participate a lot ... the doctor gave me confidence because he told me, "Say it without freight... do not worry" (I20frl).

Participant 27 indicated that the teacher contributed to FL's development because he paid attention to all students' doubts and personally answered their questions. She said:

"The teacher was trying to get everyone to learn ... he answered questions, the attention was not in general ... but personal" (I27frl).

Participant 14 considered what allowed him to develop the FL was when the professor was interested in teaching and promoting autonomous work. She mentioned:

"The teachers engaged in their classes. Apart from what we saw in class; he recommended us other things for learning outside the classroom" (I14ftl).

The informants' experiences coincided with Tin's results (2013), which showed that the students considered having had positive learning experiences because the teachers helped and encouraged them to do the activities or tasks and promoted communication among teachers-students, students-students, and even students-foreigners. For example, informant 20 considered that teacher-student interaction raises confidence and no pressure to participate in class. According to Mitchell (1998), when there is a low level of anxiety, learners carry out any assigned activity.

Another study indicates that showing empathy for students' needs and doubts produces positive learning experiences. According to Remolina et al. (2004), teachers must be empathic and committed to increasing student motivation, which is a favorable emotional factor for learning. Also, beneficial learning experiences are achieved when teachers treat students well and assist them in their learning process (Debreli, 2016). Teachers, in this study, possess those qualities that helped students to learn the FL, so students consider those teachers generated positive learning experiences.

Participants mentioned that teachers generated negative learning experiences that hindered the FL learning. In the negative experiences, failure is attributed to teachers. Informants reported that teachers caused negative learning experiences because of their lack of commitment to teaching, working, correcting, teaching, and managing teachers' talking time. Informant 9 considered that the teacher's discursive strategy makes learning difficult. The amount of time the teacher took for his speech generated boredom. He stated:

"There have been times when the teacher likes speaking, speaking, and speaking, and then I get bored ... and stressed..." (I9mah).

Participant 27 considered that the teacher did not explain well, so the student had many doubts. She expressed:

"I feel that in a course, I did not understand anything that I saw. I had many doubts. I did not know the meaning of the words. Then the teacher assigned homework, but he did not explain..." (I27frl).

Participant 2 considered that the teacher did not explain; he just wrote on the board, and students did the activities on their own, but the teacher did not care for students' doubts. She commented:

"The teacher did not explain anything. He just put things on the board, and never cleared our doubts" (I2fpl).

Another aspect that negatively affected the FL development was the way a teacher corrected the participant. She said:

"I did not know how to say a word, so the teacher scolded me because we were already in the fourth level... I did not like the way she said it, and since that moment, I thought, "Oh no, now I do not want to go to English, I am afraid of going to the English class (I25fal).

Participant 15ftl felt that the teacher arrived with a negative attitude to the class, which was transmitted to the students. She expressed:

"Although I did my tasks, the teacher was very, explosive, impulsive, hmm, teachers' attitude made me feel bad" (I15ftl).

Some learning experiences caused negative feelings and emotions in the participants; according to Ellis (1994), affective factors and attitudes influence positively or negatively the FL learning and move learners to learn or not to learn. Some were demotivated, bored, uninterested, and insecure regarding students' feelings in their learning experiences. In the inhibiting learning experiences, teachers showed a lack of interest in the students. There was a hostile treat, violent threat, unpunctuality, and absenteeism; those traits depict demotivating teachers (Cabello et al., 2018).

3.7. Quantitative and qualitative result complementarity

Learning activities can facilitate FL development, but at the same time, they can obstruct it. According to Alonso et al. (1997), students learn differently, which caused dissimilar students' performance and reactions. Two participants commented:

"I liked going out to the square to interview English speakers. So, I practiced a lot because I prepared and practiced the questions beforehand, then I saw how the English native speakers pronounced, and that helped me a lot" (I7mtl).

On the contrary, another student pointed out that the same activity as a negative learning experience. He mentioned:

"The English teacher sent us to interview English speakers. It was in teams, and it was not easy because they speak very fast. Here, teachers speak more slowly, that's why I did not understand what the tourists told me" (I6mrh).

In both examples, it was observed that an activity can be perceived as either a positive or negative learning experience. Alonso et al. (1997) indicated that teachers need to consider that one form of instruction is not suitable for all students since they have particular characteristics, making them learn in different ways.

3.8. Positive and negative learning experiences

Positive learning experiences were possible when teachers respected the reflectors' pace. They received information through the aural and visual channels, which they scrutinizingly examine to grasp it; work without pressure; prepare in advance; have enough time to work. Reflectors considered these conditions caused positive learning experiences. However, stress and haste negatively affected participant 21frh, who considers that working fast affects their learning outcomes badly. According to Alonso et al. (1997), reflectors' academic performance is affected when they work under time pressure and change activities quickly.

According to the informant 26fatl, the organization is vital for learning. He had two experiences, one with an organized teacher and another with a disorganized teacher. According to Alonso et al. (1997), theorist students learn better when they organize environments with clear objectives. In contexts with opposite qualities such as disarray or unstructured activities, reflectors' learning

outcomes are hampered. Another aspect that characterizes theorists is to be rational and reach logical explanations and conclusions; participant 13mtb read and insisted on finding the English reasoning pronunciation patterns.

Participant 30mpb was not involved in the learning experiences until he saw the practicality of the topics discussed in class. It was in a real problem that he experienced when his attitude towards EFL learning changed. In an academic interchange, he saw that he needed the FL to make friends. Before that experience, the student did not pay attention in class because he had no immediate practical relevance. Pragmatists find it challenging to learn when they use what they are learning in real contexts (Alonso et al., 1997). Some students manifest their learning style traits in the different learning experiences, which did not match with teachers' learning proposal and academic achievement was low. Marzulina et al. (2019) indicate that students obtain unsatisfactory learning outcomes when teachers' do not address their LS. Therefore, teachers should heed students' LS to involve, prepare, and motivate students to learn the FL (Effendi, 2019; Payaprom, & Payaprom, 2019; Taheri, 2019). That condition was observed when teachers regarded students' LS.

4. Conclusions

It is concluded that there is a combination of learning styles since participants have developed the four styles; nevertheless, the reflectors prevail at a very high level, followed by the activists, pragmatists, and finally, the theorists. However, teachers may promote the development of the four learning styles because that can lead to successful learning outcomes and help students develop qualities language learners need (Beeve, 1998) That could be achieved by raising awareness among students about the importance of developing and combining the four learning styles' characteristics (Marzulina, 2019).

It also concluded that the sample's academic performance, in general, is insufficient and low regardless of their learning style. The results of this study are different from those found in Barja (2015), Dai (2015), Feng, Díaz-Granados (2013), Manzano (2007), and Luengo & González (2005), where they quantitatively found a relationship between learning styles and academic performance. Moreover, it is concluded that an activity or way of instruction can be favorable for some students, but can be unfavorable for others. So teachers should care for students' qualities regarding their learning styles because students' learning experiences showed a relationship among learning styles, learning experiences, and FL academic achievement.

On the other hand, it is determined that the exploration of learning experiences from the participants' voices helped to understand that the students' academic performance was mostly insufficient and low because the learning styles and the emotional aspects are neglected in the teaching process. Other source of negativity of the learning experiences was generated mainly by teachers who fit the description of demotivating teachers (Cabello et al., 2018).

Concerning each learning style, it is concluded that activists, theorists, reflectors, and pragmatists depend significantly on the teacher to learn the FL. Teachers have a significant role in students' learning process because, in most cases, students attribute their language learning success or failure to teachers. All in all, the findings suggest that teachers need to take care of students' learning styles to enrich their learning experiences so that the FL academic performance improves.

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