

## LINGUISTIC AND PRAGMATIC ASPECTS OF CLARIFYING LEARNERS' BRAIN DOMINANCE IN SUCCESSFUL ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

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*Abstract.* This article investigates “Brain dominance theory, which suggests that each individual’s brain symmetry varies and really affects their attitudes towards language learning methods, study skills, task completion, self-expression etc. The research paper further attempts to prove that clarifying learners’ dominant brain will help teachers to analyze which skills their learners are capable of and can perform better. More specifically, the aim of this case study is to compare left and right brain dominance among language learners and compare which side is more or less capable in each English skill. Besides, this research endeavors to find out the best methods for English teachers to adapt English lessons to learners’ needs and abilities.

*Key words:* Brain dominance, left-brained learners, right-brained learners, introvert, extrovert, self-expression, body language, problem-solving skills

## ЛИНГВИСТИЧЕСКИЕ И ПРАГМАТИЧЕСКИЕ АСПЕКТЫ ВЫЯСНЕНИЯ МОЗГОВОЙ ДОМИНАЦИИ УЧАЩИХСЯ В УСПЕШНОМ ИЗУЧЕНИИ АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА

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*Аннотация* В этой статье исследуется «теория доминирования мозга», которая предполагает, что симметрия мозга каждого человека различается и действительно влияет на их отношение к методам изучения языка, учебные навыки, выполнение задач, самовыражение и т. д. В исследовательской работе предпринимаются дальнейшие попытки доказать, что выяснение доминирующего мозга учащихся поможет учителям проанализировать, на какие навыки их ученики способны и могут работать лучше. В частности, цель этого тематического исследования состоит в том, чтобы сравнить доминирование левого и правого полушарий среди изучающих язык и сравнить, какая сторона более или менее способна в каждом навыке английского языка. Кроме того, это исследование направлено на то, чтобы найти лучшие методы для учителей английского языка, чтобы адаптировать уроки английского языка к потребностям и способностям учащихся.

*Ключевые слова:* доминирование мозга, левополушарные учащиеся, правополушарные учащиеся, интроверт, экстраверт, самовыражение, язык тела, навыки решения проблем.

## INGLIZ TILINI MUVAFFAQQIYATLI O'RGANISHDA O'QUVCHILARNING MIYA USTUNLIGINI ANIQLASHNING LINGVISTIK VA PRAGMATIK AHAMIYATI

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*Annotatsiya* Ushbu maqola “Miya ustuvorligi nazariyasi”ni, ya’ni bu holat har bir shaxsning miya simmetriyasi turlicha bo’lishini va ularning til o’rganish usullariga, o’rganish ko’nikmalariga, topshiriqlarni bajarishga, o’zini ifoda etishga ta’sir qilishini yoritib beradi. Tadqiqot maqolasida o’quvchilarning dominant miya faoliyatiga aniqlik kiritish orqali o’qituvchilarga o’quvchilarni qaysi ko’nikmalarga qodir va yaxshiroq ishlashlari mumkinligini tahlil qilishga yordam berishini isbotlaydi. Aniqroq qilib aytganda, ushbu amaliy tadqiqotning maqsadi til o’rganuvchilar orasida chap va o’ng miya ustunligini solishtirish va har bir ingliz tili o’rganishda qaysi tomon ko’proq yoki kamroq qobiliyatli ekanligini solishtirishdir. Bundan tashqari, ushbu tadqiqot ingliz tili o’qituvchilari uchun ingliz tili darslarini o’quvchilarning ehtiyojlari va qobiliyatlariga moslashtirishning eng yaxshi usullarini muhokama qiladi.

*Kalit so’zlar:* Miya ustunligi, chap miyasi faol o’quvchilar; o’ng miyasi faol o’quvchilar, introvert, ekstrovert, o’zini ifoda etish, tana tili, muammoni hal qilish qobiliyatlari

1. Introduction. Teaching English as a Second/Foreign language has never been an easy task for teachers as each learners has their own learning styles, abilities and lacks. It is important for instructors

to be familiar with their students' learning abilities and facilitate language learning according to their capacity owing to the fact that acquiring a language is a complex process which requires learners to develop fundamental knowledge along with the four basic language skills. This review investigates the factors that determine the effects of right and left brain on learners' academic process which will help both English instructors and learners to use appropriate styles and strategies according to the dominance of brain hemisphere in order to achieve academic success in English language learning. This paper will compare the different ways in which clarifying the dominant part of the brain will give a teacher an opportunity of being able to deal with students' acquisition problems and implement effective methods and use teaching materials adequately.

2. Literature review. Psycholinguistics studies the relationship between language and human mind and this field considers language learners as individuals, but not as a whole representative. According to different conducted researches, for instance, Kolb(1979) stated that "brain dominance is connected with various academic major and occupations". He believed that people tend to choose their majors based on the compatibility between their individual hemispheric dominance and the norms of disciplinary fields. Coulson et al. (1986) categorized some fields by mentioning that "academic subjects such as architecture, the humanities and arts are believed to belong to right-brain dominant students which require them more global, spatial and synthetic orientation, whereas the subjects such as engineering, science and language focus on verbal and logic analysis which are more suitable for left-brain dominant students. A closer look to this literature on language learning, however, reveals a number of debates. To illustrate, Gabriel (2007, p.5) argued that language aspects may involve both brain stating "Language itself is creative because every sentence we construct is the creation because artistic creativity invokes more right hemisphere capacities rather than left part". In this case, learning a language is a question of balance. At schools or institutions, many English teachers have difficulties with their students such as keeping them focused on a task, finishing home assignments and understanding the topics that they explain. Morris (2006) found out the reasons which are associated with the dominant side of the brain and added that "left brained learners make schedules, have analytical thinking, always want to know the rules and follow them. Because they analyze, observe and think while grasping new information. As a result, they do not have much trouble with self-expression". Lim et al. (2020) in their investigation found out that "people may also maximize the usage of both parts of the hemisphere who are known to be whole brain thinkers". They proved that "achieving to balance two sides of the brain can cause the potential of brain capability and successful achievement in a person's life". Similarly, Dulger (2012) also stated the same opinion by saying that "although individuals prefer either left or right side of the brain processing particular information, some can depend on both hemispheres which can bring them some advantages in learning process". Further studies on brain dominance by this researcher prove that left-right mode preference helps the ways a student perceive information in language learning and students may obtain a high level of academic achievement when teachers teach in a way that are compatible with learning styles or strategies. To illustrate similar notions, the research by Gibson (2002) provided evidence proposing that "Students' learning strategies vary from each other in terms of hemisphere dominance and this has a great impact on their input and output process". In other words, each individual uses different parts of the brain in order to perceive various types of information and perform specific tasks. More specific research questions and investigations will be discussed in this second part of the review by analyzing how students' hemisphere is applied in language learning. English teachers should find out the learning and cognitive preferences of learners and take these individual features into account while teaching. Lightbown (2003) mentioned that "Teachers can facilitate learning conditions and effects by using visual, auditory and kinesthetic activities". In this way, learners' language achievement can be promoted and they can learn the language through the elements that fit best for their ability and preference. In order to develop this notion properly, Torrance's study (1980) categorized some of the peculiarities of the left and right brain dominant learners. To illustrate this,

Right-brain dominant learners are capable of remembering faces and fantasizing; they can make subjective judgments; can see both sides of a story; dislike reading directions; with regards to English learning, they perform better in writing about books or reading literature, do well in creative writing and grammar skills naturally come in language learning process; they focus on images in remembering and thinking; prefer to answer open-ended questions; tend to focus on feelings and body language; use their intuitive feelings in problem solving. In other words, they are intuitive and emotional and practical and synthesizing readers.

Left-brain dominant learners are talented at remembering names; they tend to make analytical judgments; rely on thinking and remembering in language learning; prefer multiple choice questions, writing and talking; they are able to control their feelings but not good at using body language; when it comes to problem solving, they prefer to use logical problem solving skills; this type of learners can answer questions spontaneously, like to read with instructions and never lose their interest or concentration even if they listen to long lectures; they are good at understanding sentence structures in grammar. In fact, they are intellectual, structured, planned, less emotional and precise in self-expression.

Brown (2007) examines a study by Crasher et al. (1974) in which they carried an investigation in teachers' teaching style in connection with students' brain hemisphericity. They found out that right-brained students preferred to be involved in inductive class, whereas left-brained learners were interested in deductive teaching environment. Further research can suggest that teachers can use various teaching techniques in accordance with their students' state of brain dominance. To illustrate, for right-brained students, it is recommended for teachers to assign more group work as this type of learners are fond of collaborative work rather than individual ones; as these learners are creative learners, they enjoy being assigned creative tasks. Because right-brained learners may not concentrate on lectures completely and miss what teachers say verbally, it is better to use overhead projectors or whiteboard as much as possible; using charts and maps will make it easier for them to understand information better as they have better spatial and visual aptitudes. However, further research provides some suggestions in teaching left-brained students effectively. For this type, it is recommended to use fewer group projects as they prefer individual assignments more and because of the fact that they do not prefer auditory distractions, it is better to keep the class comfortable and peace. In addition, introducing lists of vocabulary and grammar structures help them to learn better as they tend to follow instructions and order.

3. Methods. 3.1 Participant profile. The participants of this case study are ten students who study in a boarding school and have had English exposure for six years. The participants agreed to attend in the case study voluntarily and approved of their willingness of participation in the interviews and questionnaires by signing an informal consent form and their anonymity was guaranteed. The reason why those pupils of grade eleven were selected was that they are more cognitively mature and have gained a relatively better proficiency in English. Secondly, they know their own linguistic strength and weaknesses in second language acquisition. They are aware of their learning styles and can compare different types of learning strategies which best suit them.

3.2 Research design. In the current research five items were used to collect data: Brain test questionnaire, Reading passage, Listening comprehension, Writing task Speaking

The first instrument utilized in this study was online and paper-based questionnaire that aimed at determining whether pupils are right-brained, left-brained or both-brained dominant. According to Parrot (1993), questionnaires often provide common characteristics and preferences of a learner to particular factors in learning process. The first questionnaire was conducted online on the site [arealme.com/left-right-brain/en/](http://arealme.com/left-right-brain/en/). Twenty pupils in the class answered all the questions turn by turn individually so that the most suitable two participants would be chosen. As a result, ten of them were chosen, five of those have the highest right-brain dominance percentage, while the other five have the most left-brain dominance.

Reading passage After ten pupils were selected, they were given a reading passage (level B1) with open-ended and multiple-choice questions. The purpose of giving reading task was to clarify which learner can perform better according to their brain capacity.

Listening comprehension The pupils were given a short listening task (B1) so as to decide which learner is good at listening for gist or listening for details depending on their brain function.

Writing task The participants were asked to write two types of writing: descriptive and process. The aim of this task was to clarify which brain-dominant student performs better or worse in each task.

Speaking task The learners were given a "topic card" speaking activity in order to analyze the usage of their body language, way of self-expression and the content of the message depending on the role of their brain hemisphere during speaking.

4. Results and discussions. The final step was to collect and analyze the data gathered from five types of instruments. The first instrument which was brain dominance test showed that five student

was 80% right-brain dominant while other ones were 70% left-brain dominant. This result was a fundamental base for the completion of the other instruments because nearly all the results vary from each other because of the impact of brain dominance on pupils' learning style and strategy preferences.

According to the second reading instrument data, left-brained pupils showed better result in multiple-choice questions as they make analytical judgment, while the right-brained pupils were better in open-ended question because of being more practical and synthesizing reader. When choosing one option in multiple-choice questions, they had difficulty in deciding the correct answer, as they were not as logical thinker as his left-brained pupils were. The results will be illustrated in the table below.

Concerning listening comprehension, right-brained students could perform well in listening for gist, which means that they could comprehend the message with the help of their ability to guess and imagine. However, they had difficulty in multiple-choice question because of lacking enough concentration, logical thinking. In this task, left-brained learner's both results were better in comparison to the right-brained pupil because, according to the facts, left brain function focuses on concentration and is rarely distracted by other factors. This is the reason why they also did well in listening for gist. Furthermore, with the help of his problem solving and logical thinking skills, they could also easily find the correct options in multiple-choice test.

With regards to writing task, right-brained pupils had good productive skills, particularly, in descriptive writing because they tends to focus on their own experience and use creativity and imagination in composing a piece of writing. The fact that they read a lot of fiction books may be possible reason of better performance in essays. When it comes to left-brained students, they showed a great result in process writing as they rely on instructions, sequence and order. However, their essays were not as well-written as right-brained student's work because when writing, they do not use their creativity or experience.

With regards to speaking skills, right-brained pupils showed quite better result as this type of a learners are good at imagining, listening and speaking for a long time, using body language, creating and self-expression. On the contrary, left-brained pupils, even though their knowledge was good enough, they did not perform as actively as the other students did because they do not prefer long lectures and speeches, body language, gestures and imagining. They lacked creativity and independent self-expression. According to the literature review, it was found out that right-brained pupils are extrovert and left-brained students are introvert by nature.

5. Conclusion. Through the detailed analysis and implications which are based on online brain dominance test, skill based tests and post-interview, the study finds out that brain dominance has a great impact on learners' way of learning and abilities in each English skill. There is no exact research proving that only one particular type of brain dominance is better in language acquisition, however, each brain side has its own priority in performing a task. To illustrate, right-brained pupils are emotional, intuitive and creative thinkers in learning. They can visualize the whole ideas and are easily distracted, handle situations, use body language a lot and have very good self-expression. On the other hand, left-brained pupils are rational and analytical thinkers. They are better in critical thinking, following orders but they rarely use body language and express themselves concisely. In spite of this notion, learners can also have balanced brain dominance or both brain sides dominance. In this case, their brain usually combines each feature of the descriptions above. By investigating this study, the researcher realized that understanding about the brain dominance and its peculiarities encourage English teachers to teach in a way that affects learners' ability and discover the strength and weaknesses of their students in learning process. As a result, they can adapt the lesson by using suitable strategies and methods. In other words, knowing about right and left hemisphere will be very helpful for educators to organize lessons effectively and develop students' motivation and language proficiency according to the way they are capable of performing well.

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