1. THE IMPACT OF FIELD-DEPENDENT/INDEPENDENT COGNITIVE STYLE ON THE NOTIONS OF LANGUAGE LEARNING AND LANGUAGE TEACHING

As a significant variety of cognitive styles, the issue of field dependency has a considerable effect on the notion of language learning and teaching. The importance of FDI can be explained in the following way:

1. The connection between instructor and learners’ cognitive style in the teaching environment has a significant influence on the learning procedure. It has been realized that harmony between cognitive styles would cause higher level of success among learners rather than inconformity between styles. That proposes the significance of attaining a perfect harmony between the stylistic features of learners and their instructors.

2. Instructors must do their best to coordinate the teaching materials with learner’s features, for example, instructors should develop their style of performance to assist learner who have not reacted to their usual techniques.

3. Cognitive style differences affect the realization to both consent and proficiency among learners and instructors in the running academic environment content. Thus the design of teaching methodologies, designation of levels and broadly, the communicating condition of the class can be influenced by sensitivity to the impact of learner and instructor cognitive style.

2. COORDINATING TEACHING METHODS WITH COGNITIVE STYLE

2.1. THE IMPORTANCE OF HARMONY BETWEEN TEACHING METHOD AND COGNITIVE STYLE IN TEACHING/LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The features of Field-dependent/independent cognitive styles illustrate that learners and instructors react to teaching mode in a different way; hence, they can
supply significant data useful for the learners’ achievement and personalizing academic system (Saracho, 2001). Witkin suggested the “matching hypothesis” about three decades ago. He hypothesized, “When students are matched with their preferred instructional mode, achievement and satisfaction with learning will be enhanced” (cited from Hudak 1985, p.405). An effective harmony is one that convinces and encourages learners and is synchronous and progressed. A synchronous harmony assists students to utilize their abilities or new methods to cope with the demands of their environments. Researches regarding cognitive styles indicate that learners who have harmony in cognitive style understand each other in extremely positive terms, while individuals who mismatch in cognitive style perceive each other in negative words (Saracho 2001). In addition, Distefano (1970) states that individual and cognitive features impress the negative and positive opinions learners and instructors express about others. His research represents that communicating attractiveness is stronger between learners and instructors who have harmony in cognitive style. Additionally, a cognitive style harmony maintains a distinct correlation between students with relevant individual features and interests. If cognitive style affects the learners’ proficiency and understanding, then it may influence on the learners learning and instructors’ teaching strategies. Instructors are more helpful with learners who coordinate with their cognitive styles. When instructors and learners are situated altogether in an academic circumstance, various results can be foreseen associated with if an instructor and a learner are matched or mismatched in cognitive style. The variations in learner’s understanding that have been seen in the harmony may be the result of utilization of different teaching methods in a classroom. The researches mentioned above indicate that the field dependency of instructors connects with the style they manage their classes and perform in a diversity of instructional
environments. It is mandatory that both instructors’ teaching styles and learners learning to be attended in the learning/teaching procedure. The learners’ evaluation of their instructors may be affected by the instructors. The learners may be more flexible and positive to particular features or methods of classroom samples.

2.2. THE PROBLEMS IN COORDINATING TEACHING METHOD WITH THE COGNITIVE STYLE IN TEACHING/LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

2.2.1. VARIETY OF COGNITIVE STYLES

Some of the learners like to learn independently by themselves, whereas other learners would prefer to receive a lot of assistances from instructors. Some learners like to communicate with other learners in class while others want to do lonely. In general, field-dependent learners like to represent a more communicative tendency in their psychological performance in compare with, partly, more independent, self-organizing method of field-independent learners. Moreover, the learners’ responds to various instructional contexts and teaching methods are influenced by their cognitive styles. For example, field-dependent learners respond more positively to syllabus with social context, while field-independent learners respond more positively to syllabus with impersonal background (Witkin et al. 1977). Field-dependent learners learn better with instruction that needs organization and structure, on opposite, field-dependent learners are interested in instruction which is already arranged and organized, that consists of clear directions in problem-solving strategies and comprehensibly described results of performance. Regarding the impact of cognitive style on academic performance, field-independent learners are mostly distinguished to be stronger in school rather than more field-dependent learners, particularly in elementary phase (Saracho 2001).
2.2.2. VARIETY OF TEACHING METHODS

Cognitive style impacts learners’ mode of learning, style of teaching, and the mode of interaction between learners and instructors in the class. Actually, classroom teamwork is thought to be a content probably to make differences in instructor and learner manner connected with cognitive style. For instance field-dependent learners and instructors may be more probably interested in group-problem-solving condition that is of communicative/interpersonal situation, while field-independent learners and instructors may like conditions which require independency-oriented problem-solving techniques that are context-based. Furthermore, field-dependent and field independent instructors like to be different in their employment of particular teaching strategies. Field-dependent instructors are interested in argument and exploration approaches, as they foster interpersonal interaction, while field-independent instructors have tendency in presenting an interpersonal method. Saracho (1996) asserts that according to their level of field independence or field dependence, instructors react to the responds of their students in a different way. Field-dependent instructors do not evaluate their students frankly. Errors are not red-penciled whereas correct responses are interacted utterly by following the subsequent question. In contrast, field-independent instructors do not continue to the subsequent question unless the students encounter some problems responding the questions. Other researches confirm the statement that field-dependent and field-independent instructors are different in the style they react to students who make errors (Jolly & Strawitz 1984). Evidently, field-dependent and field-independent instructors communicate in different ways with their students in conditions, contents, perceptual degree of teaching exercise, and the types of response they present to the learners.
2.2.3. CONFLICTING IDEAS TOWARDS THE MATCHING

At present there still exist conflicting ideas towards this kind of matching. Ideally teachers should gear the schooling environment to each child’s unique learning needs and preferences. Otherwise they may risk placing a student in a hostile environment that breeds frustration hostility and low motivation. However, others argue that under some circumstances students should be exposed to a challenge match, one in which they find themselves in an uncongenial context so that they are compelled to deal with their area of weakness and gain appropriate coping mechanism. What’s more, learning style and teaching style characteristics do not necessarily cluster into near package. Neither students nor teachers are consistently one way or another. Therefore, it is more difficult for teachers to match instructional practice to the cognitive style in the classroom.

The argument till now has, optimistically, illustrated that the notion of learning and cognitive styles is possibly crucial issue in research and theoretical viewpoint. But may the concept have any functional or useful benefit? In other word, is it possible to utilize it in any way to develop the efficiency of teaching second language? The true response is yes and no. Increasing the knowledge of cognitive styles both in the instructors and the learners may have some educational advantageous but additionally there are several critical difficulties regarding any kind of actual functional programs. First of all, it is better to mention the positive aspects. In Ehrman’s (1996) opinion about comprehending the problems of second language acquisition, she explained the vast treatment of cognitive styles by asserting that “Learning style mismatches are at the root of many learning difficulties” (p.50). Actually, the general presumption developed by the supporters of study in the field of cognitive style is that a more systematic teaching method which would entail the effect of different style features on
learning might decrease or even eliminate a lot of unconformities and may therefore increase the efficiency of learning. Which types of unconformities are being discussed? According to (Dörnyei, 2005) minimum six kinds of conceivable style contrast can be assumed:

1. Inconformity between the learners’ cognitive style and the instructor’s teaching approach, a contrast that has been considerably named a “style war” according to Oxford et al. (1991).

2. Inconformity between the learners’ cognitive style and the materials, for instance when second one does not entail grammar methodically, however learners with analytic features would require that.

3. Inconformity between the learners’ cognitive style and the language task, for instance when an optical learner takes part in an activity which includes receiving audio input (for example, from a tape).

4. Inconformity between the learners’ cognitive style and his/her ideas regarding learning, for instance in a situation that an analytic student feels that rote learning is the most efficient teaching approach (whiles that technique would be more convenient for a memory-oriented student).

5. Inconformity between the learners’ cognitive style and the teaching techniques employed, for instance in a situation that a field-independent student attempts to utilize social techniques, or a learner with global cognitive style employs bottom-up reading techniques.

6. Additionally an Inconformity between the learners’ cognitive style and his/her capabilities can be assumed, for instance while an ectenic student has underdeveloped sensibility over grammar.
Thus, it is obvious that some kind of style conformity would be advantageous in several dimensions for both students and instructors equally. The matter is if this can be possible or not. The supporters of style-oriented teaching methods surveyed and expect that creating the cognitive style adjustment in practical conditions can be feasible somehow:

- The most typical and relatively simplified suggestion is that instructors can alter the learning tasks they utilize in their teaching classes so that may cause the best results for specific learners with special cognitive style preferences. However, one may think that students are not homogeneous in their style inclinations, to which the rationale response has been represented by Peacock “teachers should strive for a balanced teaching style that does not excessively favor any one learning style—or rather that tries to accommodate multiple learning styles” (Peacock, 2001, p. 15).

- The latter advice, pointed out by Oxford and Anderson (1995), is that by submitting a cognitive style questionnaire to learners and arguing the test outcomes with them, we may assist them to recognize their own cognitive styles and to identify that being familiar with language learning styles can make the learning process easier and more efficient. An explanation of some feasible adjustment of this method in four countries (Egypt, Hungary, Russia, and Spain) can be seen in Reid et al. (1998).

- It can be effective for instructors as well to identify their own cognitive styles because, as Kinsella (1995) mentioned, however it is a principle that, instructors teach the method they were instructed, is a fact somehow, but saying that instructors teach the method they learned is the best and more accurate. Also she asserted that some instructors, intentionally or
unintentionally, utilize approaches which extracted from their own desirable modes of processing educational tasks. Although, as it has been stated by Oxford and Anderson (1995), this might not be effective to all the learners and knowledge in the instructors regarding the advantageous of harmony between teachers and students cognitive styles.

- Furthermore it can be beneficial for learners if the instructors teach them how to act out of their preferred styles, a technique which is usually named as “*style stretching*”. When learners have knowledge about their own cognitive style preferences, probably they will be more ready to receive instruction in organizing their activities in the classroom and homework alongside the lines which get started in their convenience areas and slowly stretch them outside of this area (Ehrman, 1996). In addition, Cohen (2002) proposed that learners can be ‘brought on board’ in this situation, that is, after some time learners can be motivated to participate in “style-stretching” so that to integrate methods to learning they were avoiding previously. Due to the complicated character of language and due to its vast and various demonstrations in the real world, it is a rationale hypothesis that learners who can act in a several styles in a particular situation with pliable feature are probably to become more successful learners.

- Another approach of enabling learners is to making them familiar with learning strategies that would be adjusted to their styles. One method includes what Andrew Cohen (1998, 2002; Cohen & Dörnyei, 2002) has named “*Styles and strategies-based instruction*” (SSBI), which entails the instructors’ helping learners to improve the knowledge about their own preferred cognitive styles, afterwards specify the qualities or features of their usual learner
strategy collection, and in the end, to finalize their strategy collection with further strategies which are coordinate with their styles. According to Cohen (2002), it is an especially advantageous technique and “The future looks bright for SSBI work” (p. 59).

- In fact, teachers can also conceive streaming learners based on their cognitive style inclinations and then make particular lesson plans for various courses.

However, all these and probably some other suggestions are practical and possible methods of utilizing learners’ styles in theory, It seems teachers required to be honest as well regarding the serious difficulties which happen in this area and that have, altogether, forbidden styles from being available and feasible for using in the classroom. As argued by Reid (1995), the complex and segmented feature of the matter of cognitive styles with the plethora of often common concept terms distracts the instructors in the classroom and furthermore, even scholars themselves as much as it has been observed, some of them have suggested research by extricating styles. If it is incorporated to what Ehrman (1996) claimed, in a way that the categorization into different styles in itself is only a comfortable simplifying of a more complicated portrait, it can be observed that the average number of academic instructors may not be able at the moment, to significantly cope with the style matters. Naturally, in an ideal environment in that instructor teaching would involve much more distinguished psychological constituents; instructors could pursue Ehrman’s (1996) own process: She has an opinion that different persons make various style aspects significant and thus while she determines which style type to utilize as a perceptual instrument with a person she considers the specific learners’ characteristics. In a properly reasonable analysis of the feasible academic utilization of cognitive styles, Yates (2000) notified that the notion that it is possible to develop educational plans or various syllabuses to
adjust our learners’ cognitive style features shows a “visionary position that, unfortunately, is neither viable nor justified. It is unrealistic for a classroom teacher to classify students into cognitive style categories to be used to prescribe differential educational experience” (p.359). Therefore, Yates asserts, it is commonly infeasible or even not fair try to alter our syllabuses for the purpose of evaluation of some individual differences. Although, Yates did suggest one strong technique which an instructor can employ in a style-oriented situation: “*time management*”.

As for teaching environments, time is one of the essential components which the teacher tries to adjust for responding the students. According to Yates (2000) “the teacher can change the times of lecture, lecture speed, duration allocated to direct modeling, thinking time, wait-time in questioning, time spent in revision and remediation, and time allocated for extended practice (i.e., independent enrichment and elaboration work)” (p.360). Thus, in Yates’s (2000) idea, the most impressive method for instructors to represent knowledge of cognitive styles is to be aware of the learners’ different time demands in dealing with some kinds of activities. Based on Yates’ statement, the notion that different learners require various amounts of time to attain specific learning goals is one of the most fundamental but simultaneously ignored rules of academic psychology somewhat. Since some scholars would disaccord that time management is an essential element and that it can be utilized to adjust cognitive style differences, it is required to ask if there are actually no more certain lessons can be learned from styles survey. In fact the inharmonious feature of style diversity and the complicated intervention of some compeer cognitive styles may cause style-oriented teaching to be so complicated matter for usual instructors to deal with. Nevertheless, it has been proved that there are some intensive and powerful inclinations in learners’ style preferences which could be better to consider. For
instance, Kinsella (1995) mentioned that in secondary schools of U.S. approximately 90% of traditional approaches in the classroom for teenagers seem to cater for the qualified auditory student whiles in Oxford’s (1995) idea, the ratio of actual auditory students is less than half of the whole people. Cognitive style survey has obviously represented the requirement for a more equivalent combination of training input, with the principles offered both verbally and visually, and amplified via drawing, speaking, or writing tasks. Another forward-pointing and feasible survey guidance has been suggested by Oxford (1999d): In a qualitative survey of written student narratives, the scholar recognized particular kinds of style contrast between instructors and learners. Four kinds of particular contrasts, detected in the research analysis: (1) learners who hated vagueness and whose ending requirements were neglected, (2) introverted learners dealing with extroverted instructors who conducted the class (3) global, intuitive-random learners coping with analytic, concrete-sequential features supplied by the instructor, and (d) learners whose intuitive preferences were counteracted.

The attractiveness of this method is that it determines real outcomes to cope with, therefore making it feasible to conceive particular problem-solving techniques attending such contrast circumstances. It is clear that a range of these surveyed and evaluated methods would be an accepted addition to all language instructor training plans. For further review to such survey in that the style contrast data is tested in the viewpoint of Bakhtin’s theories, refer to Oxford & Massey, in press. Such instances represent that it may be feasible for future investigation to deal with style-oriented instructing proposals that are both effective and feasible; for the current situations, although, suggestion presented by Peacock’s (2001) appears to be rationale: An evident method to reduce the inharmonious between instructors’ and learners’ cognitive styles is to be more interested in involving students in making lesson plans
and tasks, in other words, to enable them to direct over their learning process. Eventually, education in the 21st century could consist of, virtually as a standard, some kind of a personalized negotiation procedure for learners regarding their cognitive styles. Ehrman and Leaver (2003) explained how this procedure has been effectively executed in the language teaching at the Foreign Service Institute. There the process includes four phases:

1. At the beginning learners are called up to a voluntary consultation, purposed at enhancing learning efficiency either for those who are encountering problems or those who feel they are performing well.

2. When a learner has determined to make benefits of this suggestion, he/she answers a diagnostic questionnaire of cognitive style.

3. The next phase is the explanation of the questionnaire outcomes. At the FSI, this is first executed in group sittings so that the consultants do not have to interpret the similar data again for every learner, and then in personal sittings to use the generalizations to the learner’s own condition.

4. The last phase is the follow-up, wherewith a selected Learning counselor assures that the suggestions presented at the time of consultation procedure are employed in practice. Afterwards learners are welcome to go back for follow-up discussions with a consultant on every coming matter.

The complex issue of learning and cognitive styles can be contrasted with the complicated color samples in our surrounding environment. We live in a sheeny globe with an unlimited diversity of shadows of colors. Nevertheless, we can feel that under such apparently unlimited color complication, an uncomplicated system exists, and it has in fact been discovered that all of the colors in the eyesight are created only from
three fundamental main colors. The search for cognitive styles is not different from the primary search for such main colors. However several specific improvement has been done in recognizing particular building blocks in the complication of individual style features, it has not been determined for sure as to if we own the basic styles. For instance, in the globe of colors, green seems to be a primary component and yet, we are aware that it is a derived, a subordinate color, created from two primary colors, yellow and blue. What we require to specify regarding the different all common dimensions of style is which of them are yellow and blue, and which are kinds of green combinations of the two colors. Furthermore it is feasible to consider the color simile to describe the distinction between learning and cognitive styles. It seems that cognitive styles actually can be considered as parallels of the colors, whiles learning styles are the advents of the colors in the actual world, including the contexture of the theme and the coloring, the dimension and the template of the colored shape, and the correlation of different colors making color layouts. In the graphic techniques in fact there has been at least one effort to realize the ‘cognitive styles system’ of colors: At the starting phase of the 20 century, the personnel of the popular Bauhaus art school in Germany that consisted of world-known artists like Paul Klee and Wassily Kandinsky, created and trained the rules of a “color theory” that connected specific forms and attributes with colors. For instance, a yellow triangle was observed by Kandinsky to illustrate the greatest wisdom and a blue circle to represent inner senses.

However the mighty portraits of Klee and Kandinsky have accredited their theory deviously in several ways, color survey is yet a dynamic and continuous issue, exploring methodical authentication of specific disciplines which artistic sensibility can discover. As for cognitive styles, several directly attracting methodologies have been created that cut through the fields of cognitive styles, capabilities, and character,
but yet there is lack of a precise verification of the suggested systems. Therefore, it is obvious that the most suitable explanation of the situation of language learning styles in the wider field of SLA is that they form an as yet unrecognized potential. The matter is that it was identically the idea stated by several researchers in the 1980s and 1990s; in accordance with Rod Ellis’s (1994) findings little changes have been done during the past decade. As stated by Ellis (1994) currently there are small number of generalized findings that can be extracted from the survey on cognitive style. Obviously learners are extremely different in their preferred method to second language learning, but it is infeasible to determine which cognitive style acts effectively. Quite probably it is students who demonstrate pliability who are most victorious, but still there is no actual proof for this statement. One of the main difficulties is that the notion of ‘cognitive style’ is described weakly, evidently overlapping with other individual differences of both an efficient and a cognitive essence. It is improbably that a lot of developments will be created when scholars being aware of what it is they decide to evaluate (Ellis, 1994).

Theoretically this research has demonstrated that field dependence/independence cognitive style is an element impacting the performance of the learners. These outcomes bring new directions for the ideology of teaching and examination. According to Bachman’s (1995) statement proficiency on the language tasks are influenced by components other than language skill. One of the elements which Bachman points out is the features of the learners that are not seemed to be component of the language skills that instructors want to evaluate. As well, Hansen and Stansfield (1983) assert that if some learners with a particular cognitive style perform better than other learners on a specific test of language, so the test is not reliable, as a bias is in practice- “a bias that would lessen the validity of this
instrument as test of general second language proficiency" (p.33). Finally, the prerequisite of coordinating teaching methods to cognitive style is whether the harmony can be effective in better learning. It has been demonstrated that while learners are matched with their desirable teaching style, success and consent with learning will be increased. But, still there are some issues in the employment of field-dependent/independent cognitive style in the classroom. Hence, much practical work has to be executed for further investigation in this area.