

## Verbal Learning Styles: Implications to Oral English Skills

Kurt S. Candilas<sup>1\*</sup>, Xyla Meghan Diane<sup>1</sup>, Justine Kaye Gaid<sup>1</sup>, Precious Juliet Kolog<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lourdes College, Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines

\*Corresponding author's email: [kurt.candilas@lccdo.edu.ph](mailto:kurt.candilas@lccdo.edu.ph)

\*  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2299-8575>

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### ABSTRACT

**Keywords:** Verbal Learning Styles, Oral English Skills, College Students

Learning styles are unique to each person, and Verbal Learning Style is specific to people who learn best with words. This study aimed to determine the implications of Verbal Learning Style Characteristics of College Students' Oral English Skills. A correlational research design was used. The study was participated in by (50) fifty Teacher Education Program College students. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical tools to assess students' verbal learning style and oral English skills. The findings of the study showed that there is a significant correlation found between college students' verbal learning style as to memory and their level of oral English skills as to pronunciation which implied that ability to pronounce words is determined by their term memory to recall the manner on how words and phrases are sounded in English.

### Introduction

The verbal learning approach is focused on language and words. It is focused on how individuals engage with all forms of language, including speaking, writing, and reading. Verbal learners are more comfortable expressing themselves verbally and in writing. They also find comfort in writing and reading. The greatest way to teach someone with a verbal learning type is to use spoken or written words. De Gree et al. (2021) posit that verbal learning occurs when a person learns best through written and spoken words. A person who learns in a verbal learning style tends to remember unfamiliar words and has a large vocabulary.

Verbal learning processes contribute to students' ability to encode, retrieve, and comprehend information. This learning style is concerned with how people generally interact with words, be it through reading, writing, or speaking. Furthermore, words may be pleasurable to the learner, such as a willingness to read extensively or simply preferring the written and spoken word to other forms of learning, such as hands-on tasks. Furthermore, verbal learner places great importance on the act of communicating through words because they have to process and remember information they have read, written, heard, spoken, or spoken well themselves (Jenna, 2022).

Subsequently, verbal learning compels everyone to adopt a specific learning style to absorb more knowledge and perform better in school. In general, some learners find it simpler to study their schoolwork when logic and reasoning are necessary, while others perform better in areas

that call for more original thought and creative thinking. However, verbal learners struggle with tasks that call for good body coordination, such as understanding images and resolving mathematical equations. Verbal learners succeed in school activities like reading and writing. They have a great recall of spoken information, a well-developed memory for the information they have read, and are generally good listeners. They also have good communication skills. However, tasks requiring hand-eye coordination or visual-spatial skills may be difficult for verbal learners. They could also find it difficult to comprehend information presented visually. For instance, verbal-linguistic learners have a harder time understanding a mind map, reading a graph, or interpreting a chart. Some verbal learners are so fascinated with using language correctly that they point out other people's grammatical mistakes or draw attention to language or word misuse. Some verbal learners find it simple to grasp other concepts even though they may not be able to understand grammatical rules completely.

Although there is a great deal of literature and research on verbal learning style being the least preferred learning style of students in an Asian country (Poliden, 2016), learners eventually develop a preferred method of choosing their learning styles due to their genetic makeup, life experiences, and the demands of their current environment. People know little to nothing about it, and an explanation of the problem has become out-of-date and irrelevant. Thus, new research is required to close the knowledge gap. As learning to speak the English language has drawn much attention from educators and students, according to several literature and studies (Nguyen & Pham, 2022; Tran, 2022, Tuong, 2022, Vo, 2022), the researchers are motivated to investigate the implications of verbal learning style characteristics of college students' oral English skills.

## Literature review

This study argues that Verbal Learning Styles correlate with students' oral English skills, with verbal learners having an easy time picking up novel words and having a large vocabulary. Verbal learners process and remember information they have read, written, heard, spoken, or spoken well themselves. Jean Piaget, a Swiss psychologist and the founder of Cognitive Learning Theory, favored this learner-centered approach to teaching.

### *Verbal Learning Styles*

The emphasis on verbal learning highlights the fact that verbal learners favor verbal learning through reading or listening. In order to build connections for new learning, the mind works as an information processor, and students process information by activating existing knowledge or schema. Jean Piaget's Cognitivism Theory is primarily concerned with how to take in information, deal with issues, and eventually learn. In order to create a richer learning environment where new information may be retained in the long-term memory and added to the permanent knowledge base, educators and students employ a variety of tactics. Mainly, Jean Piaget proposes that learning theory focuses on mental processes.

From the perspective of cognitivist learning theory, how people learn is influenced by how their minds process, store, and access information. When individuals learn anything new, their brains transfer the knowledge to solve new issues or situations. By integrating research on the brain and mental processes for learning and applying new information, cognitivism, commonly called cognitive learning theory, helps create better learning programs. De Gree et al. (2022) reckoned that learners investigate which strategies work best for these students in the classroom. Memory, vocabulary, hobbies, and abilities are the independent variables that are assumed to be the causes of this research. Hence, the learning theories' main goal is to achieve this.

Firstly, memory is a substantial amount of information stored by people. Images, sounds, and meaning are just a few. The ability to speak solely depends on memory. Without this, people are unable to function in the present or consider the future. They couldn't share what happened yesterday, what happened today, or what they planned to do tomorrow. If they lacked memory, they would be unable to learn anything (McLeod, 2013). In the context of this study, memory refers to information stored by students so they can have something to express while speaking English.

Secondly, a language's vocabulary is referred to as lexis. Lexis, a Greek word that translates to "word" or "speak," is the source of the adjective lexical. The study of lexis and the lexicon, or collection of words in a language, is known as lexicology. Lexicalization is the technique of adding words and word patterns to a language's lexicon. All the words in a language, or its full vocabulary, are referred to by the term lexis, which derives from the Greek word for "word" (Nordquist, 2019). In this study, lexis refers to the vocabulary usage of students when expressing themselves in English.

Thirdly, hobbies are typically referring to recreational activities. Hobbies are things one does in leisure time that are typically unpaid and are not professionally related. Hobbies include playing sports, making art and crafts, collecting stamps, and learning new things (Severt, 2022). Hobbies in this study refer to leisure time through the exposure of the English language in reading, writing, listening, speaking, and viewing.

Lastly, verbal learners who excel in arts such as poetry and writing are referred to as Abilities. Furthermore, they are frequently the most sensitive to grammatical nuances. Verbal learners, on the other hand, may struggle with hand-eye coordination, mathematics, and fine motor skills (De Gree et al., 202). In the context of this study, the term refers to the ability of students to write and speak in English in class presentations and activities.

### *Oral English Skills*

To learn a language, a person must already have a linguistic framework in their brain that is activated by the input they receive. Pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, fluency, and comprehension are thus the dependent variables that are assumed to be the cause of this research (Candilas, 2016). Furthermore, the dependent variable of this study is the student's oral English skills, which are dependent on the other verbal learning styles measured and the expected effects of this research.

Pronunciation is the act of saying or producing words correctly. Making the correct sounds that make up a word and saying the entire word correctly. It is the act of saying a word in a concise and clear manner so that the correct sounds and the entire word are understood. Pronunciation refers to how a word should sound when spoken aloud. It focuses on the word's syllables and how the speaker should put them together correctly. Pronunciation is concerned with the sounds of each syllable and how to say them correctly. Vo (2022) suggests that students must practice their pronunciation on a regular basis so they can produce English words correctly.

Vocabulary is a practical and essential tool for communication and knowledge acquisition, and it normally grows with age. A language's vocabulary is made up of all the words that a particular person or group of people comprehends. The word vocabulary comes from the Latin word for "name." The two primary categories of vocabulary are active and passive. A person's vocabulary is a collection of terms from their original tongue that they are familiar with. A vocabulary is active when it is used and understood in speaking and writing. Words that learners may recognize but don't often employ in everyday conversation make up passive vocabulary (Nordquist, 2019).

For one to speak English with confidence and fluency, grammar is necessary. By being aware of grammar, learners can prevent errors that make their English sound weird to native speakers. The use of proper grammar shows off their command of the language as well as their dedication and attention to detail (Woodford, 2022).

The capacity to speak a language naturally and freely without having to hunt up terms or idioms is referred to as fluency. Fluent speakers sound like native speakers and speak at typical speeds with little pauses or stumbles. For most people, acquiring vocabulary and fundamental grammar is the first step toward being able to speak. Fluency is when someone can explain themselves without speaking their native tongue by combining these key skills. Speaking English fluently means being able to do so without stuttering or hesitation. The capacity to utilize a language without having to think about it is frequently referred to as "automaticity." The capacity to quickly put together a sentence is a common definition of fluency. A fluent person, for example, may be able to communicate clearly but make many mistakes. This is due to the speaker's inaccuracy in what they are saying (Mayor, 2015).

Comprehension is the capacity to process information that has been read and comprehend its meaning or written words. Reading comprehension gives the written word meaning. Additionally, comprehension enhances the fun, enjoyment, and educational aspects of reading. It's essential for success in everything from work to school to life in general (Brandon, 2021). Brandon claims that comprehension makes reading interesting, entertaining, and educational.

Thus far, the theories and studies cited help perform this study because they provide more explanation of how a person decides the features of Verbal Learning Style in Oral English Skills. In conclusion, the aforementioned reviews of related readings are imperative in substantiating the argument of this study.

#### *Aims of the study*

The study aimed to determine the implications of verbal learning style characteristics of college students' oral English skills.

## **Methods**

### *Pedagogical Setting & Participants*

Fifty (50) college education student participants in this study were selected. These students were officially enrolled in a private Catholic College School in Cagayan de Oro City in the school year 2022-2023. In this study, the participants were selected using the non-probability sampling design, particularly purposive sampling. In non-probability sampling methods, known as purposive sampling, participants are chosen because they possess the qualities the research seeks to investigate (Ames et al., 2019). In other words, participants were selected on purpose. Moreover, these participants were selected with the following inclusion criteria: first, they provided information about their specific preferences. Second, they understand the learning style and know what works best to assess their learning and adapt their education experience accordingly. Furthermore, the said sampling was utilized because the participants gained and made use of their verbal learning styles as having implications on their oral English skills.

### *Design of the Study*

A correlational research design was used in this study. Correlational research is a non-experimental quantitative design in which the researcher applies correlational statistics to measure and describe the degree of association among variables or sets of scores (Creswell,

2012). This study attempts to find relationships between college students' verbal learning styles and their oral English skills.

### *Data collection & analysis*

In gathering the data for this study, the researchers sought permission from the school's principal and the Dean of the Teacher Education Program in one of the private schools in Cagayan de Oro City through a letter seeking authorization to obtain a response from the selected students. After the approval, the researchers administered the questionnaire to the participants for the data on Verbal Learning styles. In contrast, the data on Oral English skills was gathered through an interview.

Upon receiving the approval, the researchers informed the participants of the purpose of the study and asked about their readiness to participate. Then, the researchers distributed the survey questionnaires online, and participants were given time to answer. They were collected, tallied, and processed for analysis and interpretation. The participants were reminded of the purpose of the discussion, the importance of genuine efforts, and honesty to ensure the study's validity. Full confidentiality of the respondents' identities was strictly observed during the discussion of the results. All portions of their answers were included in the presentation and discussion of the findings. After the research study, all the collected answers and information that were stored digitally were deleted. Thus, the responses provided by the participants during the survey were only utilized for research purposes only.

Participants were gathered in a private live video conference where the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was administered. Carefully, the researchers selected this method to gain more in-depth responses of their online English skills. The participants were again oriented on the purpose of the study. The participants spoke impromptu in explaining their answers. The duration of the interview was 30-35 minutes. After the research study, all the collected responses and information stored digitally were deleted. Thus, the responses provided by the participants during the interview were utilized for research purposes only.

The following statistical tools were utilized in the study: for problems 1 and 2, descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean distribution, and standard deviation were used to assess the verbal learning style and oral English skills of students. As for Problem 3, Pearson correlation was used to identify the relationship between verbal learning styles and oral English skills.

## **Results/Findings and discussion**

This section presents the findings drawn from the study. The analysis and interpretation of results are presented according to the specific problems outlined in the introduction.

### *Students' verbal learning styles*

*Table 1: Mean Distribution of Verbal Learning Styles*

<b>Students' Verbal Learning Styles</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Description</b>
Memory	3.42	.538	Moderate
Lexicon	3.68	.587	High Extent
Hobbies	3.54	.613	High Extent
Abilities	3.56	.611	High Extent
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>3.56</b>	<b>.588</b>	<b>High Extent</b>

Table 1 presents the overall mean distribution of verbal learning styles. Results reveal that verbal learning styles in terms of memory with an overall mean of 3.42 can be described as moderate, which means that participants remember and recall information to detail. This result is supported by the study of (Rodigier et al., 2011), who stated that the capacity of the mind to store and recall information is truly prodigious. Lexicon with an overall mean of 3.68, which is described as a high extent, means that participants easily understand the book they have read when they are familiar with words. This corresponds to the study of Rash (2013), who pointed out that the ability to recall a term during speech is the strongest indicator of a good command of the English language. Hobbies with an overall mean of 3.54, which is described as a great extent means that participants are likely to learn new things and read a lot to get the information needed. Braze et al. (2015) posit that students are often intrigued by new vocabulary and easily pick up existing terms, where they value both written and spoken words, making them passionate to develop an interest in acquiring unfamiliar words. Abilities with an overall mean of 3.56 can be described as high extent, which means that participants read English books that help them to communicate in English Language. According to the study of Barnard (2021), verbal learners who used words from their hobbies and have linguistic abilities are likely to be expressive with their ideas and opinions through the English language.

#### *Level of Participants' oral English skills*

Table 2 presents the overall mean distribution of oral English skills. Results reveal that oral English skills in terms of pronunciation have an overall mean of 4.38 which is described as a good extent, meaning that participants are saying and producing words correctly. This is supported by the study of (Nguyen & Newton, 2020) that students considered pronunciation as an internal component as it mainly focuses on the sounds of each syllable.

*Table 2. Mean Distribution of Oral English Skills*

<b>Students' Oral English Skills</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S.D.</b>	<b>Description</b>
Pronunciation	4.38	.530	<i>Good extent</i>
Vocabulary	4.36	.563	<i>Good extent</i>
Grammar	4.34	.658	<i>Good extent</i>
Fluency	4.44	.675	<i>Good extent</i>
Comprehension	4.68	.513	<i>Very great extent</i>
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>4.44</b>	<b>.588</b>	<b><i>Good extent</i></b>

Vocabulary with an overall mean of 4.36 is described as a good extent, meaning that participants have a large vocabulary that serves as the fundamental tool for communication and acquiring knowledge. Alqahtani (2015) asserted that words used in speaking and writing make up an active vocabulary. A wide vocabulary is essential for learning a second or foreign language since, without the appropriate and sufficient vocabulary, learners cannot comprehend others or express their own feelings. Tuong (2022) mentioned that speaking performance is hampered when learners lack vocabulary skills.

Grammar with an overall mean of 4.34, which is described as a good extent, means that participants combine and manipulate words to form more extended units of meaning and determine how grammatically accurate phrases are constructed and this is supported by the study of Eisenmann & Summer (2017) state that grammatical competence is required component of Language Education and still widely regarded as a sufficient requirement for effective language acquisition. Vo (2022) argued that since mastering English grammar is delicate, especially when speaking, students must practice speaking the language to become proficient.

Fluency with an overall mean of 4.44 which is described as a good extent means that participants are related to the extent to which they are confident on what has been stored is reliable. This corresponds to the study of Housen et al. (2012) who articulated that speed fluency is based on techniques for storage and recall, confidence that what has stored is dependable. This speed fluency was observed by the researchers in the conduct of this study.

Comprehension with an overall mean of 4.68 described as a great extent means participants understand and interpret what they are reading or speaking. According to Gilikjani & Sabouri (2016) comprehension promotes learning and comprehension relates to the process of comprehending and making meaning of spoken language.

### *Significant relationship between College Students' verbal learning style and their level of oral English skills*

Table 3 revealed that the r values show the association between College Students' verbal learning style and their level of oral English skills. A significant correlation was found between College Students' verbal learning style as to memory and their level of oral English skills as to pronunciation ( $r = .285$ ;  $p = .045$ ). English pronunciation towards students at the initial level is focused on improving the memory ability to communicate verbally with clear and understandable communication.

*Table 3. Significant relationship between College Students' verbal learning style and their level of oral English skills*

Verbal Learning Style	Level of Oral English Skills									
	Comprehension		Fluency		Vocabulary		Pronunciation		Grammar	
	r-value	p-value	r-value	p-value	r-value	p-value	r-value	p-value	r-value	p-value
Memory	.127	.378	.238	.096	.173	.231	<b>.285</b>	<b>.045*</b>	.239	.095
Lexicon	.060	.681	.049	.733	.109	.452	.136	.345	.135	.349
Hobbies	.088	.542	.043	.756	.017	.909	.046	.749	.211	.141
Abilities	.062	.666	.016	.913	.005	.974	.149	.303	.179	.215

*Legend:* \*significant at  $p < 0.05$  alpha level

In connection with the result, a study by Mulyani & Sartika (2019) claimed that pronunciation skills are one of the keys to achieving communicative competence in language learning. English pronunciation towards students at the initial level is focused on improving the memory ability to communicate verbally with clear and understandable communication. Thus far, pronunciation is both productive and receptive, and can be taught using mnemonic labels such as mind meaning and memory sounds.

Furthermore, memory is essential to people. Without a memory of the past, people cannot operate in the present or think about the future. Pronunciation is the act of saying or producing words correctly. Hubber (2022) espoused that making the correct sounds that make up a word and saying the entire word correctly help an individual to express his ideas and opinions fully. Additionally, this general finding is supported by the study of Gilakjani (2016) that students dedicate much effort in improving their pronunciation. Learners with appropriate pronunciation and intonation may communicate effectively despite their poor grammar and vocabulary.

## Conclusion

This study intended to determine the implications of students' Verbal Learning Styles and their level of oral English Skills. In this study, it is inferred that memory is necessary for speaking as it is dependent on operating appropriately in activating their ability to articulate English speech sounds. This result confirms Jean Piaget's Cognitivism Theory, which is essentially focused on how to absorb information and ultimately learn. Mainly, Jean Piaget suggests that the theory of learning focuses on processes of the mind which were also supported by Cognitivist learning. This theory states that when people learn something new, the process that occurs in mind begins with the activation of prior knowledge.

The study retained some limitations in terms of the methodology. Thus, it is suggested that future researchers will conduct a sequential mixed method to validate the findings of students' verbal learning styles and oral English skills.

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### **Biodata**

Dr. Kurt S. Candilas is the Dean of the Arts and Sciences Program of Lourdes College, Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines. He earned his undergraduate degree of Arts in English at Bukidnon State University, Malaybalay City. He obtained his master degree in Education major in Teaching English Communication Arts at Lourdes College, Cagayan de Oro City. He finished his Doctorate degree in English major in literature at the University of San Jose Recoletos, Cebu City, Philippines. Dr. Candilas also earned his TESOL advanced certification with the American TESOL Institute of the Philippines, Inc.

Xyla Meghan Diane, Justine Kaye Gaid, and Precious Juliet Kolog are third-year education students majoring in English at Lourdes College, Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines.