



Field Independence/Dependence and Ownership Writing Differences

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ABSTRACT

This study explores differences between field dependent and field independent students 'writing with a special focus on ownership. Total number of 46 sophomores English Translation from Islamic Azad University, Arak Branch participated. They were both male and female students aged between 22 and 26. The Portable Rod and Frame Test (PRFT) and the Embedded Figures Test (EFT) were used to evaluate cognitive style. Pearson correlations showed a relationship between field dependency and ownership in writing.

KEY WORDS: field dependence-independence; ownership; learning style; writing performance; EFL.

INTRODUCTION

The way we learn things in general and the particular approach we adopt when dealing with problems is said to depend on a link between personality and cognition; this link is referred to as cognitive style which in an educational context is referred to as learning styles. One of well-researched areas in this regard is field independence (FI) or field dependence (FD). Field dependence-independence (FDI) is defined by Witkin and Goodenough [7] as a cognitive style that refers to individual differences with regard to the preferences of internal versus external cues in the organization of behavior. Confidence placed in internal cues, which is characteristic of field-independent subjects, is associated with a greater restructuring ability; that is, an increased facility to impose personal organization on information obtained or derived from the environment. Field-dependent subjects, who are more sensitive to external cues, tend to accept percepts or symbolic representations as they are given. These tendencies appear to have a different adaptive value in an educational environment. Field-independent subjects consistently achieve higher academic levels than field-dependent subjects, whether specific subjects or global performance are considered. To use a single test to evaluate FDI implies that the researcher ignores the bidimensional nature of the construct. At one stage, Witkin and co-workers considered that tests of perception of the upright, such as the Rod and Frame Test (RFT; Witkin & Asch[5], and perceptual disembedding tests, such as the EFT, measured the same thing. However, the results of correlational, factor-analytic, and experimental studies of subjects' scores convinced these workers of the need to make a distinction between classifications of field dependence or independence in subjects' performance on each test. It was hypothesized that a subject's performance on tests of vertical perception might, in fact, be governed by that subject's position on a bipolar dimension of confidence in vestibular versus visual cues, and that this dimension was distinct from (though clearly related to) the unipolar dimension of restructuring ability (Witkin & Goodenough[7]). Subsequent studies have confirmed the bidimensionality of field dependence independence. Numerous studies have reported a correlation between measures of FDI and various types of ability; specifically general intelligence and spatial aptitudes (Bloom-Feshbach[1]; Laosa [2]; McKenna [3]; McKenna, Duncan, & Brown[4]; Witkin, Dyk, Faterson, Goodenough, & Karp[6]).

In this paper we explore possible variation between field dependent and field independent students' writing style focusing on length.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

52 students participated in this study. They were both male and female students. Their major was English Translation and they were studying in Islamic Azad University, Arak Branch. They were given a general proficiency test (Nelson) at the beginning of the study. To take homogeneous subjects, students with scores of one standard deviation above and below the mean were selected which were 46 in number. PRFT and EFT were administered to the subjects individually. Field-dependent and field-independent subjects were defined as those who scored

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respectively above or below the median of the distributions of each test separately. Both groups were asked to answer some open-ended questions. A response was coded "1" if it contained one or more words indicating ownership of the idea, sentiment, or experience ("I", "me", "my" or "mine"). It was coded "0" if it did not include any of the ownership terms. Pearson correlations was used to determine the relationship between ownership in writing (number of words in the response) and FDI.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Person Correlation Coefficient formula $r = \frac{\sum XY - \frac{(\sum X)(\sum Y)}{n}}{\sqrt{(\sum X^2 - \frac{(\sum X)^2}{n})(\sum Y^2 - \frac{(\sum Y)^2}{n})}}$ was used.

The results showed a relationship between ownership and field dependence ($r=.50$) than between ownership and field independence ($r=.16$).

Field dependent students were more likely than field independent students to use first person singular pronouns and possessive adjectives indicating ownership, in their responses.

Conclusion

Research has demonstrated differences in ownership in writing of field dependent and field independent students. Ownership, the use of first person singular pronouns and /or possessive adjectives was more characteristic of field dependent students. The findings of this study have provided a new dimension. Students can enhance their writing power by being aware of style areas in which they feel less comfortable, providing avenues to foster their intellectual growth. Similarly, teachers can identify strong style patterns in their writing classes and make effective use of such information by devising lesson plans which accommodate individual learning style preferences.

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