



SNAP TO READ

HIGHLIGHTING STUDENTS' LEARNING STYLES TOWARD THE ENGLISH INSTRUCTION IN EFL CONTEXT

**Uzlifatul Masruroh Isnawati, Annisa Nur Indah Sari , Firazesri
Rahmadewi , Siska Amaliah Putri, Moh.Rodli**

*Universitas Islam Lamongan, Universitas Mayjen Sungkono
uzlifatulmasruroh@unisla.ac.id, cherryblossomannisa@gmail.com,
virazesri@gmail.com, amaliahsiska5@gmail.com, mohrodli003@gmail.
com*

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Abstract:

This study aims at identifying students' learning styles in learning as a foreign language. The participants involve 26 students of English education program. To collect the data, questionnaires are employed. The findings show 46% of students include using kinesthetic learning styles for learning. These students preferred to learn through practical application of knowledge or some kind of related activity and 0% of the 26 students who reached a level of about 6.5% chose to learn to read and write. Despite this, the learning achievement of students with kinesthetic learning styles is higher compared to visual, auditory and reading and writing learning styles. Another result of the study was that English education students did not like the learning style of reading and writing. The students are suggested to have the intention toward initiatives and motivation in the learning process in determining the learning styles they engaged.

Keywords: *Students, learning style, English instruction*

INTRODUCTION

In the context of learning English as a foreign language (EFL), students have various learning styles which they consider as the most comfortable learning preferences. The English language teachers and practitioners of language education generally agree that students' differences affect the ability and success of second language students. Research on personality differences focuses on individual characteristics that affect language learning. Learning style is one of the important factors that determine how students learn and influence their learning strategies, which can fundamentally affect their academic performance (Rao, 2014; Armstrong & Hughes, 2020; Ha, 2021, and Rasyid, 2023). Understanding how students learn will help teachers teach students with specific interests. Learning style is a very important teacher education because the first task of teacher education is to train teachers who are capable, courageous, have knowledge, attitudes and skills to educate the teacher community.

In addition, determining the factors that affect learning outcomes is one of the important factors studied by researchers, while learning style is a person's habit in processing information. Several problems were discovered during the research, especially in students' English learning which they actually learned by doing research. This also happens in the learning process. When teachers present material that students do not really keen on it, either nor the teaching process that does not fit with what they usually do, then they find it hard to follow or understand the instruction being taught. To enable the students succeed in the teaching-learning process, it is necessary to use appropriate learning styles or learning preferences.

As a matter of fact, some learners may prefer a visual mode to learn while others may learn best by listening or participating in related activities. To address the different characteristics of students. Arguing over the techniques and environments should be created that strongly support the desire and ability to learn a new, second or foreign language, as students come from backgrounds with different needs and target (Walqui, 2000). However,

students not only have different needs and goals. Therefore, the requirements should have clear preferences for language skills to be acquired, for example in the context of EFL in Indonesia. It is obvious that most students prefer to talk or speak rather than write and read. This learning style is an individual phenomenon of central importance to successful learning in modern learner-centered pedagogy (Jubhari, 2006).

As a matter of fact, learning styles are influenced by some aspects, such cognitive, affective, and psychological characteristics that are relatively stable indicators of how learners perceive, interact, and respond to the learning environment. To make it easier for students to learn English, six types of learning styles are commonly used by students: visual, auditory, kinesthetic, writing/reading, group, and individual. In addition to learning style, strategy is also very important in the learning process. There are 6 strategies commonly used by students, for example: recall strategy, cognitive strategy, compensatory strategy, metacognitive strategy, affective strategy and social strategy. In order to learn a foreign language effectively, learners' skills and learning assumptions need to be given special attention.

Additionally, Riadil and Nur (2019) assert language is a sign, symbol, or tool used to exchange the information through spoken or written. Language has a close connection to a daily conversation. Conversation can be easily recognized if they use a language that they understand. For some students will be easy to learn a language and the rest of them will feel difficult in learn the language. Meanwhile, Mamun (2018) discusses that learning is not an independent activity. In the last fifty years, research has established the influence of a number of variables on learning a second language. Hence, age, gender, intelligence, motivation and learning styles are some of the factors which can determine the amount of learning to take place.

Another view from Jamulia (2018) expresses students are not alike in their needs, goals and courses or skills. Moreover, they also vary in the way of perceiving, absorbing and retaining the lesson, and in solving their problems appear due to the differences of their learning styles and learning strategies

in approaching a new language. While, Syafrizal et.al (2020) emphasizes an appropriate learning style able to absorb and process information and make learning easier with student's learning styles. Style usage learning is limited in one form, especially those that are verbal or with an auditorial path, which can certainly cause the absorbing imbalance of information. Therefore, within learning activities, students need to be assisted and directed to recognize learning styles that suit her so that purpose learning can be achieved effectively. Meisuri and Hidayat (2020) state although there a strong emphasis on inductive grammar teaching, particularly in communicative language teaching approaches, both inductive and deductive strategies are required in the classroom gave the learning style of students. Learning style usually included analyzing language, seeing it, hearing it or using it in communication to do something real. Some activities focus on the present tense and involve of learning style. It means that, learning style in learning present tense is strategy language teaching that required in classroom can be help the students to easy in tenses comparison.

Further, in line with Cabual (2021), the VARK model of students' learning styles, developed by Neil Fleming, is commonly used by most researchers. VARK stands for Visual, Auditory, Reading/Writing Preference, and Kinesthetic. Students have different approaches to how they interpret information, which is referred to as "preferred learning modes" in the model. Visual learning style prefers images, maps, and graphic organizers to access and understand new information. Listening and speaking in seminars and group discussions help auditory learners understand new material. Students benefit from the use of mnemonic devices and use repetition as a study strategy. Read and Write learning style learns best through words. These students may present themselves as copious note-takers or avid readers and translate abstract concepts into words and essays. The kinesthetic learners best understand information through a tactile representation of data.

Moreover, some studies indicate different kinds of learning styles in the context of English instruction. Rao et.al (2021) state most preferred

learning styles according to this study are kinesthetic and aural. The students should be given more opportunities to see demonstrations and practically perform the procedures. Use of models and problem solving questionnaires can be helpful. Further, Putra and Pratiwi (2020), learning styles are attitudes and thinking behaviors, how to remember, how to observe, how to solve problems when individuals are in the learning process. Learning styles are very important to know so that teachers can adapt to children's learning styles. Meanwhile, Ridwan and Haryeti (2019) support the teaching style of the teachers which is Single-Modal, specifically Kinesthetic is not aligned to the students' learning style which is All-Modal (VARK) preference. The teachers should attend to this alarming concern. This study can be a good contribution in existing school and personnel as well. Wulandari et.al (2019) state learning style is one of the main factors that help determine how and how well the students learn a second language or foreign language which can influence their comprehension both in reading, writing, listening which is supported by Wenny and Bansa's (2022), who suggest students to know their learning style and adapt it into suitable learning way so that they could reach their learning achievement.

For the time being, Siregar and Haswani (2020) express each learner types has preferences in learning English; concrete learners used games, pictures, films, video or something related to visual media. Analytical learners preferred to study grammar, English book, alone, and others relate to analysis. Communicative learners choose their learning styles by listening to native speakers; talking to partners in English; watching television using English as its language; using English in the other places such as, public transportation and public places; hearing new vocabularies; and doing conversations to the other people using English. The learners who are authority- oriented like listening to the lectures' explanation, using the students' textbook, and writing everything in a notebook relating to English learning.

Related to the English literacy, Sulandi and Yulmiati (2019) reveal good level of literacy in English can be seen from the growth of language

competence. Purpose of learning academic writing is to help EFL students to exist in academic community by using standardized English. However, process in learning academic writing is unnegotiable. Albeta (2021) states student learning styles in this study were divided into three, visual, auditory and kinesthetic. During the Covid-19 pandemic, students studied online which was a new experience for students. Learning styles affect student learning performance significantly when learning is carried out online. Learning style positively affects student learning performance by 4.7%, while 95.3% of other factors are not examined in the study. Fahim et.al (2021) opine the majority of medical and dental undergraduate students prefer multimodal learning styles. Gender, academic year, and academic record have a direct influence on the preference style. There was no significant difference between preference styles of medical and dental students. Nor was there a significant difference between students of public and private sector. A vast majority of students are dissatisfied with their current teaching modalities in institution. Krishnamoorthy and Lokesh (2020), This study shows the ability of the machine learning algorithms to ascertain the relationships between the data. The learning styles are an important part of the student's way of processing the information during the education. Therefore, this study aims at identifying the learning styles of students used in learning English. The respondents involve 26 students of English Education department from the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education. In collecting the data, the researchers use questionnaires. The questionnaires in this study were used to determine which learning styles dominate students in their learning process.

METHOD

Design

This study employed descriptive design using a qualitative approach. The data were analyzed descriptively in the form of words and sentences in accordance with the conditions obtained from the results of the questionnaire. Qualitative research is an approach that represents familiar naturalistic

research (phenomenology). Moreover, the purpose of this descriptive research was to make a description, picture, or painting systematic, factual, and accurate regarding the facts, characteristics, and the relationship between phenomena investigated. Then, the data obtained were analyzed descriptively and qualitatively through interactive analysis models and this analysis model is divided into 4 stages, they are: (1). data collection, the data obtained from the results of the open-ended questionnaire. Then simplify and arrange systematically and describe important things about the findings and their meaning in the table. (3). data presentation, the presentation of data in the form of writing or words. The purpose of the data presentation was to combine information, so that, it could describe the situation that occurred. (4). conclusion. The research process take place as well as the process of data reduction after the data collected was quite adequate then a temporary concluded, and then after the data were completely complete the conclusions were made.

Respondents

The respondents of the study were the third semester students in the English department Universitas Islam Lamongan. The researchers involved 26 participants at the third-semester English education undergraduate students Universitas Islam Lamongan. The students were considered heterogeneous in terms of skills and capability, since there is no graders among the students.

Instruments

Data are collected by using questionnaires which were composed of two parts. The first part included questions (number 1-4) asking about learning styles preferences representing visual, audio, reading writing, and linesthetic. The second part (question 5-24) asking about the characteristics of each learning styles of VARK standard questionnaire which was developed by Fleming, which could determine learning styles of students. The VARK questionnaire, as a learning preference assessment tool, consists of 24 multiple choice questions, each having four choices. All choices correspond to the four sensory modalities which are measured by VARK (visual, aural/

auditory, read/write, and kinesthetic). The students can select one or more choices, based on the sensory modalities which are preferred by them, to take in new information.

The English version of VARK questionnaire was translated and its validity was approved by experts. The participants were visited by the researchers in their classes, who handed to them the questionnaires, and then these questionnaires were collected at the same time. Before the questionnaire filling, the explanation required was given to the students.

Procedures

In this study, the researchers maintained several steps to answer the study's questions. (1). looking for the suitable questionnaire about the learning styles; (2). making the online questionnaire reproduced by google form; (3). share the questionnaire to the students from English education department of the third semester students ; (4). classifying the responses from the respondents; and (5). finding out the answer about the most preference learning style used by the students. After collecting the respondents answer, the data were then analyzed in order to answer the research questions.

Data analysis

Data were reported as percentages of students in each category of learning style preference. The number of students who preferred each mode of learning was divided by the total number of responses to determine the percentage. Data were calculated manually and figured out into diagram.

Ethical issues

The questionnaires which had participant information sheets which had questions on the nature of the study were distributed to participants. Written consent forms were obtained from participants for their participation in the study. The questionnaire data were kept confidential and respondents were assured of their right to withdraw from the study at any time. The names of the respondents were not recorded on the questionnaire, which rendered the data as anonymous.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section discusses the results of this study that in order to conduct this research, the researchers shared the questionnaire through an online platform with the students of the English department of Universitas Islam Lamongan. The respondents of this study were the third semester students of the English department faculty of teacher training and education Universitas Islam Lamongan. This google-copied questionnaire includes 24 questions that the researchers think will become the outcome of this study. A total of 26 respondents answered the questionnaire. In the researchers have classified learning styles into four categories. The first is visual, the second is auditory, the third is reading writing, and finally kinesthetic. Visual learners indicated that they enjoyed reading and studying graphs, drawings, and other graphical information. Speaking of auditory learners, they preferred to listen to lectures or learn something on tape. Reading Writing learners were the type of people found in people who feel the most need to read or write information in order to learn something. Meanwhile, kinesthetic learners will enjoy performing and being physically active and using their body movements.

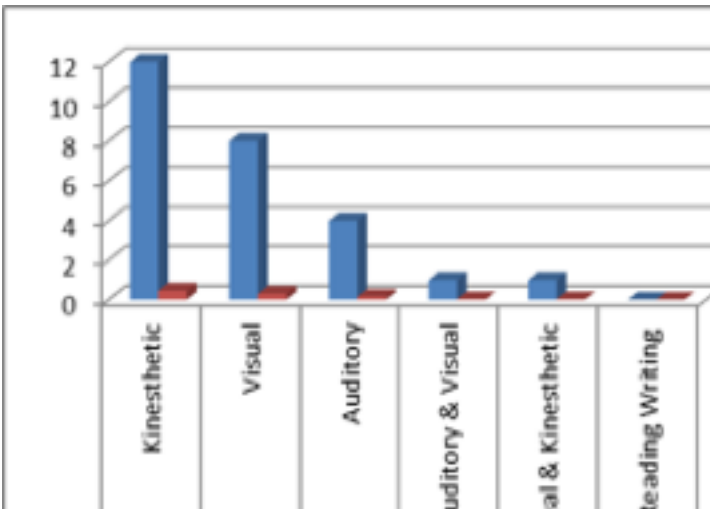


Figure 1. The result of respondents learning styles questionnaire

By analyzing data from respondents, the researchers found students practiced all four learning styles. In the respondents, all third-semester respondents answered the questionnaire. Talk about visual learning style, which is learning by seeing or watching demonstrations. According to the results of answering questionnaires of 26 English language students, the visual learning method was selected by 8 respondents. There are many characteristics of visual learning styles. For example, it recognizes the words look; based on word configuration. This shows that students with a visual learning style will easily learn something with just their eyes. Rich imagination; think with pictures and visualize details. The distraction of visual learning styles is that they do not perceive sound; distracted by movement.

Meanwhile, in the auditory learning style, it involves learning through verbal instructions from oneself or others. Auditory learning style has all 4 respondents out of 26 respondents. Students with an auditory learning style can easily learn through sound. Because of their preference for sound, students follow an auditory learning style that is easy to remember names but forget faces; memorize by auditory repetition.

Additionally, kinesthetic learning styles obtained a total of 12 respondents on kinesthetic learning styles out of 26 respondents. Kinesthetic learning style, learners learn by doing and directly participate. They used body movements to support the children in the learning process. Kinesthetic learning is still called hands-on because it uses movements as their learning style. In order to achieve success in their learning, kinesthetic learners are always trying things, such as touching something or feeling or manipulating something. They have to do something to remember what they have learned.

The reading writing style was not chosen by the respondents. The reading and writing style prefers to learn information by reading notes, documents, and textbooks. These learners used dictionaries and other reference materials. They also benefit from rewriting notes and reading them over and over in silence. There are also those who had a dual learning style. One person had auditory and visual learning style, another person had visual

and kinesthetic learning style.

Kinesthetic learner is learning activity through moving process, work and touch. Learner in this type has a unique way to learn they always move, sense activity and touch. Kinesthetic learner has special characteristics, such as: speak slowly, uncomfortable with noisy situation; touching is a symbol to ask the attention, early grow by big muscle, memorizing something by moved and looked, use body language and unable to sit nicely in long time. Worley (2011:21) states that kinesthetic learner need to be actively or moving situation, acts in their situation that have meaning for the learner in their processing of learning. This statement assumes that kinesthetic learner will be better in absorbing their information if they do or practice through their body or part of body. Kinesthetic - people with this learning style need movement, sensory touch and interaction with the environment to acquire information and create knowledge. Activities such as hands-on classes, problem solving, case studies, demonstrations or physical activities are best suited for learners using this pathway.

Visual learning style is a learning style that focuses more on the ability to see, in this case visual learners also need a high motivation to see and get visual information before understanding something. Visual learners will learn through picture description because they have a high sensitivity in memorizing colors and they have a good understanding of art. Specific things like the above can be demonstrate to learners an understanding of information processes. Abdurrahman asserts (2005) that visual learners have several characteristics which are: expression is always neat, speaking quickly, in detail, important is appearance, good analytical thinking, easier to remember what is presented than heard. Fast reader and eager to learn, likes to write meaningless lines when speaking and listening, short answers are preferred, presentations are preferred and easier to remember if supported by pictures. The reason visual learning styles dominate second only to kinesthetic is because visual learners have more visual focus than other learners and they tend to have difficulty understanding verbally conveyed information,

these visual learners will not be distracted even if they are in crowded places. Because visual learners will still focus on doing what they are doing even though they are in a crowded place at once.

Table 1

Learning style preferences of the students is shown in a tabulated form in frequency

Name	Preferred	Not Enthusiast
	Kinestetik	Reading Writing
ADL	9	2
K	13	4
MSS	13	0
NF	10	3
NH	12	3
PDS	15	3
SDA	11	3
SNA	9	2
S	12	2
TNR	13	1
WA	10	1
FMN	10	1

Table 1 shows that out of a total of 26 students, 12 students prefer kinesthetic as their first learning choice. This means that about 46% of students include using kinesthetic learning styles for learning. These students preferred to learn through practical application of knowledge or some kind of related activity and 0% of the 26 students who reached a level of about 6.5% chose to learn to read and write. Why not include it in the schematic since literacy is their last resort. The causes of students' low interest in reading are the school environment is not supportive, the role of the library is not maximized, the limitations of books or reading materials, the family is not supportive, the influence of watching television and the use of cellphones, decreased student motivation in learning, study habits, lack of willingness

and desire of students in learning and while the external factors that cause the decline in student interest are facilities and infrastructure that are not complete. Also kinesthetic method is the most preferred method of learning among the students. 3 Other studies done in this regard also pointed towards the fact that a preferred learning style always dominates a student depending upon his educational background. These high achievers prefer aesthetic learning The kinesthetic method is preferred by students because with this learning method, students can directly apply learning materials in daily life and in teaching and learning activities. Today's students are also easier to understand the practice is done directly than the theory, just learning in class makes students bored and not interested in following the lesson, the lesson will also be more difficult to understand. Other studies on the subject also point to the fact that the learning that students enjoy or dominate depends on their educational background.

According to Danta and Cunha (2020), based on this analysis, it seems therefore restrictive to choose a single learning style, in other words, to focus on a single type of stimulus for the organization of learning activities as a presupposition for better learning. While recognizing individuality and the preferences of the subject, providing students with different stimuli, equivalent to the various styles explained here, will constitute the most appropriate methodology to the construction of learning. Armstrong, Tudor and Hughes (2020), as for the learning styles investigated in this study, two of the domains (sensing and sequential) were marginally supported in the discriminate function. Sensing learners prefer details to memorize and sequential learners prefer straight forward studying steps that appear logical. Intuitively, it seems reasonable that how someone prefers to learn may impact student course success.

Furthermore, another view proposed by Abuzaid (2022), the learning styles that the student prefers are considered essential and fundamental matters that the teacher and the student must be familiar with to improve the student's knowledge acquisition methods because knowing the student's

distinctive learning style makes the learning process more efficient and effective. Beltran and Ramirez (2021), there is a connection between the use of mobile learning and the perceptual learning style preferences of South Americans EFL students enrolled in a business English course. The study's findings indicate that students enrolled in a business English course demonstrate a high degree of adoption of mobile learning technologies.

The mutual synergy between learning styles and language learning was proven in many studies. Mekie and Tefera (2021) discuss the result depicted that there was a statistically meaningful relationship between the learning style preferences and the language learning strategy preferences of the students. The results revealed that there are no statistically significant correlation coefficient between all strategies and all style except cognitive strategies with visual positive relation, and tactile with compensation strategies negative relation. Sengsouliya et.al (2021) also prove that students from different universities have different learning styles. This is clear to say that this difference occurs due to several factors, especially, the environment or so-called the context factor. This context factor may include management, structure, curricula, facilities, and teachers.

CONCLUSION

The learning styles reflected on the students in this study are namely visual, auditory, reading writing and kinesthetic. Despite this, the learning achievement of students with kinesthetic learning styles is higher compared to visual, auditory and reading and writing learning styles. The result of the study highlights English education students did not rely much on reading and writing activity as their parts of learning style. Therefore, it is suggested that the students have the intention to have some efforts toward reading and writing habit. In addition, they should consider that language teaching methodologies should allow for hands-on learning activities. This perception of teachers and students is conducive to fostering into the independence of learners. Finally, these findings could assist the educational policymakers and

of course practice teachers to spot the pitfalls involved in learning efforts and adopt the necessary changes to support students' learning style preferences for better educational outcomes respectively.

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