

RESEARCH REPORT

LANGUAGE LEARNING STYLE PREFERENCES OF ENGLISH LITERATURE STUDENTS



Written by

1. Name : Setya Ariani, M.Pd (Chief)

NIDN : 0004048602

2. Name : Nita Maya Valiantien, M.Pd (Member)

NIDN : 0024128402

ENGLISH LITERATURE STUDY PROGRAM

FACULTY OF CULTURAL SCIENCES

MULAWARMAN UNIVERSITY

SAMARINDA

2019

HALAMAN PENGESAHAN

Judul Penelitian : Language Learning Style Preferences of English Literature Students

1. Ketua Peneliti
 - a. Nama Lengkap : Setya Ariani, M.Pd
 - b. Jenis Kelamin : Perempuan
 - c. NIDN : 0004048602
 - d. Disiplin Ilmu : Pengajaran Bahasa Inggris
 - e. Jabatan : Dosen Program Studi Sastra Inggris
 - f. Fakultas/Prodi : Fakultas Ilmu Budaya / Sastra Inggris
 - g. Alamat : Jl. Pulau Flores No.1 Samarinda
 - h. Telepon/email : 0541 734582
 - i. Alamat Rumah : Jl. Dr. Wahidin Sudirohusodo No.37
 - j. Telepon/email : 085250897147 / arianisetya@yahoo.com
2. Anggota Peneliti
 - a. Nama Anggota : Nita Maya Valiantien, M.Pd
 - b. NIDN : 0024128402
 - c. Jabatan : Dosen Program Studi Sastra Inggris
 - d. Alamat Rumah :
 - e. Telepon/email :
3. Lokasi Kegiatan : Samarinda
4. Jumlah biaya yang diusulkan : Rp. 7.500.000

Samarinda, 25 November 2019

Mengetahui,

Dekan Fakultas Ilmu Budaya



Dr. H. Masrur, M.Hum.

NIP. 1963 1231 198903 1 037

Ketua Peneliti,



Setya Ariani, M.Pd

NIDN. 0004048602

ABSTRACT

Learning style influences learners' success on second or foreign language learning. This present research attempted to identify various learning styles used in learning English by administering *Perceptual Learning Style Preference Questionnaire (PLSPQ)* for 121 EFL students at English literature study program. Based on the descriptive analysis, two most dominant learning style preferences used by students were auditory style (M= 37.5, SD = 4.48) and kinaesthetic style (M = 37.4, SD = 5.08). Individual learning style became the least frequent style used by the participants (M = 35.2, SD = 7.53). The findings contribute to the improvement of teaching practice quality. Educators are recommended to employ various teaching styles and design variety of activities that enable students to activate their own learning styles more effectively.

Keywords: learning style, Second Language Acquisition (SLA), *Perceptual Learning Style Preference Questionnaire (PLSPQ)*

ABSTRAK

Gaya belajar mempengaruhi keberhasilan siswa dalam pembelajaran bahasa kedua maupun bahasa asing. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengidentifikasi berbagai macam gaya belajar siswa di dalam pelajaran Bahasa Inggris. Kuesioner berjudul *Perceptual Learning Style Preference Questionnaire (PLSPQ)* disebarkan kepada 121 mahasiswa program studi Sastra Inggris. Berdasarkan hasil analisis statistik deskriptif, secara umum, dua jenis gaya belajar yang digunakan oleh mahasiswa dalam belajar bahasa Inggris adalah gaya belajar auditori (M= 37.5, SD = 4.48) dan gaya belajar kinestetik (M = 37.4, SD = 5.08). Selain itu, gaya belajar individu merupakan gaya belajar yang paling tidak sering digunakan oleh siswa (M = 35.2, SD = 7.53). Hasil penelitian ini memiliki kontribusi terhadap perbaikan kualitas praktik mengajar. Para pendidik diharapkan mampu mengaplikasikan variasi gaya belajar dalam pengajaran dan menciptakan rancangan aktivitas pembelajaran yang mampu memotivasi siswa dalam mengaktifkan gaya belajar masing-masing.

Kata kunci: gaya belajar, Pembelajaran Bahasa Kedua, kuesioner *Perceptual Learning Style Preference Questionnaire (PLSPQ)*

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents six following sub chapters. They are research background, research problem, research objective, scope and limitation of the research, research significances and definition of key terms.

1.1. Research Background

It is observable that students' proficiency in mastering a foreign language differs from their experience of acquiring their first language. However, a similar problem arises, how to map form and function to produce meaningful utterances based upon their language experiences (Ellis, 2002 ; Lieven & Tomasello, 2008). In formal educational institutions such as university and college, skill and content language subjects are required to be mastered by students and these two should work hand in hand. Skill subjects such as listening, reading, speaking and writing must be developed in order to learn and comprehend any content subjects which discuss more about theories, concepts and principles in specific academic courses. As a medium of instruction, English is mostly spoken in the interaction between teachers and their students. However, knowing the fact that it is not their first language, some students are presumably more proficient than others when engaging in classroom activities which result in their language performance. Due to their different language background, students are observed to have distinct styles that influence how they learn English as a foreign language.

Learning style is a broad field and there are almost seventy one learning style models (Hall & Moseley, 2005). Students show different learning styles when learning English. Some may have combination of their learning styles, but the others may prefer

one dominant style. Moreover, according to Felder (1993,2010), students will feel more comfortable in the class when various learning styles are applied by teachers during teaching and learning activities because these are very helpful to strengthen their skill in less preferred areas of language. For example, students may have particular interest on one of the language subjects, but lack in other areas. In this case, language learning styles are likely to be one among the other factors associated with L2 learning both in skill subjects and content subjects.

This language learning style phenomenon has attracted a number of researchers to investigate it more thoroughly. It is in line with the fact that “a plethora of other learning styles has been researched in SLA with varying degrees of small success” (Ortega, 2009). Instruments as well as learning style models have been developed and adapted by a number of researchers to measure the learning style preferences in the second and foreign language learning context. In this study, the researchers attempt to know which learning styles applied by both male and female students in the English class because it is possible that they perform significantly different in their ways of responding and interacting with their lecturers as well as classmates during specific subjects. Among various instruments, Reid’s *Perceptual Learning Style Preference Questionnaire* (1987) was used to reveal students’ particular style preferences in foreign language learning consisting of visual, auditory, kinaesthetic, tactile, group and individual areas.

1.2. Research Problems

Learning styles are “someone’s overall preferences for learning and processing information from the environment” (VanPatten & Benati, 2015, p. 45-46). In SLA, learning style has a great impact on students’ success in learning language. Based on the research background above, this present research focused on the investigation of learning styles used by English literature students during teaching and learning process. The

different learning style preferences used by both groups, male and female students, were also particularly addressed to enrich data.

1.3. Research Objectives

The objective of this study concerned the identification of the language learning style preferences used by the first semester students in the English class. It also aimed at finding what learning styles were frequently applied by male and female students when learning English.

1.4. Scope and Limitation of the Research

This study was conducted to identify the language learning styles applied by students in English class both during skill and content subjects using Reid's perceptual learning style preference questionnaire (1987) consisting of 30 items that cover visual, auditory, kinaesthetic, tactile, group and individual areas. It also investigated what frequent learning styles performed by male and female students. Although the aims of this study were mentioned, several limitations were addressed. Because of the time limit, this study only included a small size of student population who was attending all subjects at English literature study program. The participants were limited to the first semester students of English literature study program. Out of different models of learning style instruments, *Perceptual Learning Style Preference Questionnaire* developed by Reid (1987) was administered to elicit the information on the language learning styles used by EFL students.

1.5. Research Significances

The significance of the study describes what contribution offered by this study to the broad literature and educational practices. It is divided into two parts: theoretical

significance and practical significance. Theoretically, the findings are expected to be beneficial to enhance the study of Second Language Acquisition especially the factors affected the learning of English both as a second and a foreign language. In addition, practically, through this study, teachers and lecturers are able to apply various language learning styles that are helpful to motivate students to learn English in the class.

1.6. Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding and misperception throughout this study, some defined terms are necessary to be included to give precise meaning. The terms are explained as follows:

1) Language Learning style

Language learning style is students' preferred models of learning language applicable to the classroom environment. One or more learning styles are considered helpful to motivate and increase students' performance in learning second or foreign language.

2) Second Language Acquisition (SLA)

SLA is a research field that focuses on the process of how learners learn languages other than their first (native) language during late childhood, adolescence or adulthood.

3) Second language

Second language is a language that people use other than their first language and is used as the primary vehicle for everyday interaction. It is usually learnt in the formal and informal way and abundant input exists in that language.

4) Foreign language

Foreign language is defined as the other language people learnt other than their first language. Unlike second language, a foreign language is not the primary tool for daily

communication and input in that language is restricted. The term L2 is mostly referred to either a second or a foreign language or abbreviated as second or foreign language (SFL).

5) Perceptual Learning Style Preferences

Students' preferred learning styles cover areas of visual, auditory, kinaesthetic/tactile and group/individualistic orientation. Reid (1987) developed *Perceptual Learning Style Preference Questionnaire* to identify students' learning style preferences.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides information about language learning styles, learning style categories, Perceptual Learning Style Preference Questionnaire (PLSPQ) and previous studies.

2.1. Language Learning Styles

Learning style has long become an interesting discussion among the experts across multidisciplinary to understand the factors that influence someone's in learning. The term "learning" can be described from various perspectives. Schmeck (1988) discusses three perspectives of learning: the experiential, the behavioral, and the neurological. From the perspective of the experiential (or phenomenological), learning covers students' experiences involved in the learning process that are distinct from each other.

Another perspective of learning is behavioral learning. It is observed from students' change of reaction in accordance with specific learning situations such as tests and examinations. The neurological perspective learning is related to the transformation of active neurons due to neural activity and this process is the core of learning. Meanwhile, a style is defined as "any pattern we see in a person's way of accomplishing a particular type of task" (Schmeck, 1988: ix). To be more specific, the "task" referred in this context is related to students' L2 learning process that occurs during any materials transferred in the class.

Learning style is one of many factors that determines how well students learn a second or foreign language. Every language expert and researcher defines learning styles from different perspectives. In 1980s, Kolb proposed that learning styles were basically

constructed from two main dimensions which was called as “*concrete vs. abstract thinking* and *active vs. reflective information processing*” (Kolb, 2015). Reid developed the concept of learning style as “the variations among learners in using one or more senses to understand, organize, and retain experience” (Reid, 1987, p. 89).

The term ‘learning style’ is defined as individual preferences for obtaining, processing and retaining information (Gass & Selinker, 2008). Similarly, it is an approach used by students both in acquiring a new language and learning any other object (Oxford, 2001). Learning styles can also be described as the different ways in which learners perceive, absorb, process and recall new information and skill (VanPatten & Benati, 2015). Moreover, Dunn *et al* (1995) express that learning style is related to learners’ variations with regard to how they use their senses to understand, organize and retain experiences. Shortly learning styles are associated with the fact that individuals learn best in different ways and these might influence their language performance during learning activities.

Some experts have continued exploring the basic concepts of learning style. For instance, Sternberg (1997) believes that learning style is not an ability but it is the choice of the students when using their abilities and the reflection of the students’ way of thinking. Even though students may show identical ability but they will perform different learning style. Oxford (2001) defines learning style as the general way selected by the students when learning a specific course, acquiring a language, or dealing with a difficult problem. In further explanation Oxford (2003) points out that learning style is the construction of frequent pattern that provides wide-ranging direction to learning and makes the same instructional method that can be considered exciting by some students or tedious by others. Another idea is given by Dörnyei (2005) who argues that learning styles do not reflect distinctive legacy that automatically leads to success rather they refer to *personal preferences*. They are “bipolar” units, which means each type of learning style has its own

opposite side and someone can be successful in every style position but only in different ways.

In addition to the previous concepts, it is also considerably important to differentiate between learning style and cognitive style. Learning styles are defined as “an individual’s preferred and habitual modes of perceiving, remembering, organizing, processing, and representing information” (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 125 cited in Purpura, 2014). Meanwhile, cognitive styles refer to “how individual think, process information and solve problems in general” (Griffiths, 2012, p. 152). Each learning style preference contributes to provide students with what so called ‘comfort zone’, and attempts to stretch their comfort zone through practice (Oxford, 2001). Rather than seeing all students as equal, understanding the language learning style concepts is potential to enhance learning and make learning more enjoyable and successful.

To conclude, learning style is related to learners’ preferences about how they use their potential to learn something. Their choice on particular style somehow may affect their success in learning depending on how they want to use it at their best potential.

2.2. Learning Style Categories

Some experts have classified learning styles into different categories. Kolb *et al.* (1979) in Torrance and Rockenstein (1988, p. 276 - 277) distinguish types of people from their learning styles: divergers, assimilators, convergers, and accomodators. Specifically, divergers are people who “generalize from what they see”. *Divergers* (concrete & reflective) are the learners who use more concrete situations that require the generation of ideas, such as a brainstorming session. This does not mean they are abstract thinkers, but they learn best through concrete experience and like to look at concrete situations from many points of view in a reflective manner. They are also interested in other people and

are fairly emotional in their dealings with them. They have broad cultural interests and often specialize in the arts. When they are dealing with classroom situations they prefer to work in groups.

Assimilators are people who tend to “think and watch”. *Assimilators* (abstract & reflective) are also abstract thinkers but unlike the *convergers*, people with this style have a good understanding toward a wide range of information and are able to put it into a brief and logical form. People with this style represent best the stereotype of the ‘aloof academic’, as they are less interested in people and choose to pay attention to abstract concepts as they believe that abstract concept or theory has logical soundness than practical value.

People who start with an idea then test it experimentally are described as convergers. *Convergers* (abstract & active) are known as abstract thinkers who generate ideas and theories. As learners, they are good at solving specific problems, especially if the tasks are technical, not the one that involves the interpersonal or social in nature. In formal learning situations, people with this style prefer experiments and simulations, laboratory assignments, and practical applications.

Accommodators are people who act as “sensor/feelers and doers”. *Accommodators* (concrete & active) are the most hands-on learners in which they prefer concrete experience and active experimentation, and they are stimulated by challenging experiences even to the extent of taking risks. They often follow their ‘gut’ feelings rather than logical analysis. This learning style is most effective in action-oriented careers such as marketing or sales. In formal learning situations they like to work with others on active projects and enjoy field work.

Another well-known classification of learning style is the concept of perceptual learning style. Galbraith and James (in Higbee and Ginter, 1991) define perceptual learning

styles as the way that a person applies to process information via the senses. They developed seven areas of perceptual learning style which include *print*, *aural*, *visual*, *interactive haptic*, *kinesthetic* and *olfactory*.

Students who prefer *print* dimension as their learning style are those who enjoy reading a lot. When dealing with the translation of words to meaning and vice versa, they are likely to require little effort. Preferring print area means that these students more successfully develop comprehension in reading. For the students who enjoy using their *aural* dimension, they will show more interests in listening activity since they rely more on the sense of hearing. The students who prefer this dimension will be likely more successful in retaining information presented in the form of lectures, audiotapes, and other auditory stimuli.

Students who prefer visual style learning is enhanced when information is presented in the form of pictures, graphs, videotapes and transparencies. When using haptic style, the students learn by using the sense of touch. This student processes information effectively through an approach commonly referred to as a "hands-on approach". An example is the student who avoids written or spoken instructions, preferring to figure out how something is assembled by simply "doing it". Kinesthetic style is a kind of style where the students learn best while moving. When processing information, this person is actively pacing around the room or is moving some part of the body (e.g., tapping a pencil, fidgeting, kicking a leg, etc).

Students who learn through the senses of taste and smell are olfactory learners. These individuals often report vivid memories that are elicited when they encounter a particular smell or taste. Unlike another types of learning style which show students' personal preference, students who enjoy *interactive* style would learn most effectively

through group discussion where the different ideas could arise when discussing a certain subject.

Higbee and Ginter (1991) believe that each type of learning styles developed by Galbraith and James seems to have a unique impact on learning. In the traditional university classroom, print and aural learners will show that they both have discrete advantage. However, when doing the activities involved in a laboratory, haptic or olfactory learners are those who have more advantage. When there is more emphasize in conversation when learning modern languages, then it is the best situation for the interactive learners. For the kinesthetic learners, they might prefer dance or physical education.

Another notion from Higbee and Ginter (1991) is about how students' perceptual preference may give impact to their success in certain content areas, satisfaction with a major, and ability to successfully implement specific study strategies. It is suggested that early identification of students' preferences provides the opportunity for students, teachers and counselors to create academic environments that are more beneficial to learning. In educational and career counseling, an understanding of learning styles will help the exploration and decision making process. Not only should the students' values, life goals, abilities and interests be considered but also the uniqueness of their learning style. It could be argued that enjoyment of and success with a major is somewhat associated with a person's learning style.

Fleming (2001) proposes VARK learning style model which stands for Visual (V), Aural (A), Read/Write (R) and Kinaesthetic (K). Visual learners prefer maps, charts, graphs, diagrams, highlighters, different colors, pictures, word pictures, and different spatial arrangements. Aural learners like to explain new ideas to others, discuss topics with other students and their teachers, use a tape recorder, attend lectures, and discussion groups

use jokes. Read/Write learners prefer lists, essays, reports, textbooks, definitions, printed handouts, readings, web- pages and taking notes. Kinaesthetic learners like field trips, trial and error, doing things to understand them, laboratories, recipes and solutions to problems, hands-on approaches, using their senses and collections and samples.

Four dimensions of learning styles are also discussed by Oxford (2001) consisting of sensory preferences, personality types, desired degree of generality, and biological differences. Reid (1987) cited in Oxford (2001) points out that ESL students varied significantly in their sensory preferences which are divided into four main areas: visual, auditory, kinesthetic (movement-oriented), and tactile (touch-oriented). Personality types (often called psychological types) are based on the work of psychologist Carl Jung.

Oxford (2001) summarizes the personality types of learners into four strands: extroverted versus introverted; intuitive-random versus sensing-sequential; thinking versus feeling; and closure-oriented/judging versus open/perceiving. Next, desired degree of generality as summarized by Oxford (2001, p. 361) focuses on students “with the main idea or big picture and avoid analysis of grammatical minutiae (global or holistic)” and students who concentrate on “grammatical details and often avoid more free-flowing communicative activities (analytical)”. The last dimension summarized by Oxford (2001) is closely related to biological factors such as when students’ best performance in language learning (biorhythms), students’ physiological needs while learning language (sustenance) and students’ learning environment (location).

2.3. Perceptual Learning Style Preference Questionnaire (PLSPQ)

Perceptual Learning Style Preference Questionnaire or known as PLSPQ developed by Reid (1987) in Dörnyei (2005) was the first learning style measure widely known in the L2 field, specifically to measure the six learning style preferences which include visual, auditory, kinesthetic, tactile, group learning, and individual learning. According to Reid

(1987:91) before her PLSP questionnaire, “there has been no published research that describes the perceptual learning style preferences of Non- Native English speakers (NNSs)” . The questionnaire is very user-friendly, with an accompanying self-scoring sheet and a short explanation of learning style preferences that also contains practical suggestions for learners. In addition, Perceptual Learning Style Preference Questionnaire in Reid’s study (1987) was the pioneer for perceiving the perceptual learning style preferences of ESL/EFL learners at the university level (Vaseghi, Ramezani, & Gholami, 2012).

Reid’s *Perceptual Learning Style Preference Questionnaire* consists of 30 items with 5-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly agree (5 points), agree (4 points), undecided (3 points), disagree (2 points), strongly disagree (1 point)”. The learning styles are grouped into three categories: major learning style preference (38-50) , minor learning style preference (25-37) and negligible (0-24). Each sensory learning style is described as follows:

1. Visual Learning Style

Students with this type of learning style “like to read and obtain a great deal from visual simulation” (Oxford, 2001). They remember and understand information from conversations, lectures and oral instructions better with visual backup such as taking notes and reading books. In addition, according to Reid (1987) in Dörnyei (2005), the visual learners are those who prefer to see ideas through written materials such as reading the handouts. The questionnaire items that mostly relate to visual learners are “I learn better by reading what the teacher writes on the chalkboard” (Item 6), “When I read instructions, I remember them better”(Item 10), “I understand better when I read instructions” (Item 12), “I learn better by reading than by listening to someone” (Item 24) and “I learn more by reading textbooks than by listening to lectures” (Item 29).

2. Tactile Learning Style

Students with tactile learning style learn best when having the opportunity to do “hands-on” experiences with materials such as working on experiments in a laboratory and handling and building models. Questionnaire items that relate to tactile learners are “I learn more when I can make a model of something” (Item 11), “I learn more when I make something for a class project (Item 14), ” I learn better when I make drawings as I study” (Item 16), “When I build something, I remember what I have learned better” (Item 22) and “I enjoy making something for a class project” (Item 25).

3. Auditory Learning Style

Auditory students prefer direct lectures, conversations and oral instructions even without any visual input (Oxford, 2001). For the learners who perform the auditory style, they favor to listen when learning something, for example listening to oral explanation or discussion. They enjoy interacting with classmates during role play activities and participating in class discussion. Auditory learning styles appear in “When the teacher tells me the instructions I understand better” (Item 1), “I learn better in class when the teacher gives a lecture” (Item 7), “I remember things I have heard in class better than things I have read“(Item 9), “I learn better in class when the teacher gives a lecture” (Item 17) and “I learn better in class when I listen to someone” (Item 20).

4. Kinaesthetic Learning Style

Similar to tactile students, kinaesthetic type of students enjoy “lots of movement and working with tangible objects, collages and flashcards” (Oxford, 2011). In other words, students learn best by physically involving in classroom activities. Kinaesthetic learning styles appear in the questionnaire statements “I prefer to learn by doing something

in class” (Item 2), “When I do things in class, I learn better”(Item 8), “I enjoy learning in class by doing experiments” (Item 15), “I understand things better in class when I participate in role-playing” (Item19) and “I learn best in class when I can participate in related activities” (Item 26).

5. Group Learning Style

Students prefer interaction and working with other students in completing tasks. They tend to receive and understand new information better from their peers by working in groups. Questionnaire items that concern with group learning style are “I get more work done when I work with others” (Item 3), “I learn more when I study with a group” (Item 4), “In class, I learn best when I work with others”(Item 5), “I enjoy working on an assignment with two or three classmates” (Item 21), and “I prefer to study with others” (Item 23).

6. Individual Learning Style

Individualistic students learn best when working alone. They make better progress when studying without any interference from others. Individual learning styles appear in the questionnaire statements “When I study alone, I remember things better” (Item 13), “When I work alone, I learn better” (Item 18), “In class, I work better when I work alone” (Item 27), “I prefer working on projects by myself “ (Item 28), and “I prefer to work by myself” (Item 30).

2.4. Previous Studies

A number of studies have indicated that learning styles are factors that are associated with second or foreign language learning. In Reid’s study (1987), a total of 1,234 undergraduate and graduate students representing 98 countries, 29 major fields of study and 52 language backgrounds voluntarily completed the questionnaire. The survey responses were statistically analyzed and revealed that in terms of preferences, majority

students chose kinaesthetic and tactile learning styles. In addition, it was also revealed that group learning style was least favoured by the participants.

Another study conducted by Tabanlıoğlu (2003) investigated the relationship between learning styles and language learning strategies of sixty Turkish university students. In this study, auditory and individual learning styles were mostly preferred by the participants. It was also found that tactile learning style became the least disfavoured among others. Different study conducted by Nasarieh (2009) revealed that 138 graduate students from six faculties at Shahid Beheshti University, Tehran, Iran favoured kinaesthetic and tactile learning styles and least frequently used group learning style. In addition, analysis of three most popular learning styles namely visual, auditory and kinaesthetic styles carried out by Gilakjani (2012) found that 100 Iranian EFL university students preferred visual learning style (50%), auditory learning style (35%) and kinaesthetic learning style (15%).

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter consists of research design, population and sample, research instrument, data collection, and data analysis.

3.1. Research Design

To identify the language learning styles used by the English literature students, descriptive quantitative study was applied to report information through numerical form. The quantitative data are obtained “when the variable being studied is measured along a scale that indicates how much is the variable is present (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012: 188). In this case, the variable was the category of language learning styles. Reid (1987) classifies it into visual, auditory, kinaesthetic, tactile, group and individual styles. These types of learning styles were investigated in order to find out which styles were frequently used to learn English in the class. Moreover, it also addressed particular language learning style preferences of both male and female student groups.

3.2. Population and sample

The entire population of the first semester students at English literature study program was selected to be the participants of this study. There are four classes with approximately thirty until thirty-five students in each class. A total number of the students were 128, but only 121 students were present, 48 male students (39.7%) and 73 female students (60.3%).

3.3. Research Instrument

Reid's *Perceptual Learning Style Preference Questionnaire (PLSPQ)* was the research instrument used in this study. This questionnaire consists of 30 items that cover visual, auditory, kinaesthetic, tactile, group and individual styles with 5-point Likert scales ranging from "strongly agree (5 points), agree (4 points), undecided (3 points), disagree (2 points), strongly disagree (1 point)". As reported by Reid (1987), the validation of this questionnaire was done by split half method with an original set of 60 statements (10 per learning style) determined which 5 statements should remain within each subset. The learning styles are grouped into three categories based on their mean score: major learning style preference (38-50), minor learning style preference (25-37) and negligible (0-24).

3.4. Data Collection

Reid's *Perceptual Learning Style Preference Questionnaire (PLSPQ)* was administered to the first semester students at English literature study program on 22 October 2019. About 130 copies of the questionnaire were distributed. Students participated in filling in the questionnaire under the supervision of the researcher team. The researchers ensured that the elicited information would remain confidential.

In the initial stage, the students were required to complete their identity by writing their name and gender. After that, they were instructed to respond to each questionnaire item as applied to their foreign language learning in less than 30 minutes. They were suggested to respond to each item quickly without having too much thought and trying not to change the responses. After the questionnaire submission, only 121 questionnaires were returned because some students were absent on the day when the questionnaire was administered. Questionnaires contained incomplete or inconsistent information were also excluded prior to the analysis.

3.4. Data Analysis

All the statistical analysis for the PLSPQ responses was carried out using Microsoft Excel and Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 17.0. To identify language learning styles which were generally used by students at English literature study program, the variables of descriptive statistics such as the Mean (M), the standard deviation (SD), maximum, minimum, and frequency distribution of the variables were calculated. In the second phase of the analysis, the normality test was carried out prior to the descriptive analysis of specific learning styles used by male and female students.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the results and discussion of students' language learning style preferences for both male and female student groups.

4.1. FINDINGS

The finding section shows the analysis of the results of students' perceptual learning style preferences and students' perceptual learning styles based on gender

4.1.1 Students' Perceptual Learning Style Preferences

The first semester students at English literature study program used different learning styles in learning English as a foreign language. Table 4.1 shows the frequency of the language learning styles based on the students' preferences.

Table 4.1 Frequency of Students' Perceptual Learning Style Preferences

		VISUAL	TACTILE	AUDITORY	KINAESTHETIC	GROUP	INDIVIDUAL
N	Valid	121	121	121	121	121	121
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		36.2479	36.9256	37.5868	37.4380	36.7603	35.2893
Std. Deviation		4.85503	5.21563	4.48640	5.08739	6.21963	7.53153
Minimum		22.00	22.00	26.00	24.00	18.00	12.00
Maximum		50.00	50.00	50.00	48.00	50.00	50.00

Note: major learning style preference (38-50), minor learning style preference (25-37) and negligible (0-24)

A number of students participated in this study were 121 and it was obviously shown that these students employed different styles in learning English. The minimum score for all categories was 12.00 and the maximum one was 50.00. Among six perceptual

learning style preferences, generally, most of the students used auditory learning style (M= 37.5, SD = 4.48). The second most preferred learning style category was kinaesthetic style (M = 37.4, SD = 5.08). The other learning styles such as tactile (M = 36.9, SD =5.21), group (M = 36.7, SD = 6.21) and visual (M= 36.2, SD = 4.85) came respectively as the third, fourth and fifth styles preferred to learn English. The least frequent style used by students was individual learning style (M = 35.2, SD = 7.53).

In the statistical analysis of frequency, students' learning style preferences ranged from 35.2 to 37.5. Based on the cut off points stated in Reid (1987), all students' learning style preferences fell into the category of minor learning style preference with scores ranging from 25 – 37. This category indicated that students can function well in specific areas. Usually a very successful student can learn in several different ways.

4.1.2. Students' Perceptual Learning Styles Based on Gender

The normal distribution was the first phase to carry out in order to look at how the values of a variable are distributed. The Shapiro-Wilk test is more appropriate for small sample sizes (< 50 samples) with sig.>0.05. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test is used for greater sample sizes (> 50 samples) with sig. >0.05. Table 4.2 presents the normal distribution of gender variable.

Table 4.2 Statistical Analysis of Normality Test

		Tests of Normality					
Gender		Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
LS	Male	.066	48	.200*	.991	48	.963
	Female	.091	73	.200*	.967	73	.056

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

Based on the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk normality test, the gender variable was normally distributed (Male : .963>0.05, female : .200>0.05). Next phase was the analysis of how male and female students applied language learning styles. Table 4.3 shows differences between male students' learning styles and female students' learning styles.

Table 4.3 Frequency of Students' Perceptual Learning Styles Based on Gender

Perceptual Learning Styles	Gender	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation
Visual	Male	48	36.5	4.64
	Female	73	36.0	5.00
Tactile	Male	48	37.7	5.27
	Female	73	36.3	5.13
Auditory	Male	48	38.6	4.27
	Female	73	36.8	5.13
Kinaesthetic	Male	48	38.2	5.22
	Female	73	36.9	4.95
Group	Male	48	37.9	5.64
	Female	73	36.0	6.49
Individual	Male	48	35.5	7.31
	Female	73	35.0	7.71

Note: major learning style preference (38-50), minor learning style preference (25-37) and negligible (0-24)

According to the statistical analysis above, both groups, male and female students applied different learning styles. A majority of male students were auditory students ($M = 38.6$, $SD = 4.27$) in comparison with the female ones ($M = 36.8$, $SD = 5.13$). The female students were observed to have tendency to be in the category of kinaesthetic students ($M = 3.69$, $SD = .49$) although the mean score was still lower than that of the male students ($M = 3.82$, $SD = .52$). Individual learning style appeared to be the least frequent style used by the students.

The range of learning style frequency for both groups was between 35.0 and 38.6. Visual, tactile, group and individual learning styles were categorized as minor learning

style preference group (25 – 37) which indicated that the use of these different styles was helpful to engage in the English learning activity. Auditory and kinaesthetic styles were favoured by male students and these two fell into major learning style preference (38 – 50). Major learning style preference indicated that students could learn best when applying certain styles they were comfortable with.

4.1.3 *Perceptual Learning Style Preference Questionnaire (PLSPQ) Item Analysis*

In this part of the finding section, the analysis of each PLSPQ item was carried out. Table 4.4 presents the frequent learning styles used by students based on the mean score of each response.

Table 4.4 *Frequency of Questionnaire Item Responses Based on Mean Scores*

Questionnaire Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. When the teacher tells me the instructions I understand better.	3,90	,73
2. I prefer to learn by moving around and doing something in class.	3,51	,81
3. I get more work done when I work with others.	3,52	,91
4. I learn more when I study with a group.	3,82	,79
5. In class, I learn best when I work with others.	3,66	,74
6. I learn better by reading what teacher writes on the whiteboard	3,74	,78
7. When someone tells me how to do something in class, I learn better.	3,90	,65
8. When I make things in class, I learn better.	3,73	,70
9. I remember things I have heard in class better than things I have read.	3,34	,85
10. When I read instructions, I remember them better.	3,65	,77
11. I learn more when I can make a model of something.	3,83	,75
12. I understand better when I read instructions myself.	3,86	,80
13. When I study alone, I remember things better.	3,88	,91
14. I learn more when I make something for class project.	3,77	,69
15. I enjoy learning in class by doing experiments.	4,00	,77
16. I learn better when I make drawings as I study.	3,33	1,09
17. I learn better in class when the teacher gives a lecture.	3,88	,69
18. When I work alone, I learn better.	3,69	,91
19. I understand things better in class when I participate in role-playing.	3,69	,84
20. I learn better in class when I listen to someone.	3,78	,91
21. I enjoy working on an assignment with two or three classmates.	3,79	,93
22. When I build something, I remember what I have learned better.	3,87	,67

23. I prefer to study with others.	3,60	,92
24. I learn better by seeing the directions than by listening to someone.	3,59	,82
25. I enjoy making something for a class project.	3,66	,85
26. I learn best in class when I can participate in related activities.	3,79	,76
27. In class I work better when I work alone.	3,31	1,01
28. I prefer working on projects by myself.	3,26	1,02
29. I learn more by reading textbooks than by listening to lectures.	3,27	,93
30. In general I prefer to work by myself.	3,50	,99

As viewed from the table, the highest mean score was obtained from item 15 “I enjoy learning in class by doing experiments“ which belongs to kinaesthetic learning style category ($M = 4.00$). Two items following the previous category belong to auditory learning style namely item 1 “When the teacher tells me the instructions I understand better” and item 7 “When someone tells me how to do something in class, I learn better” with the same mean scores 3.90. This clearly indicated that auditory and kinaesthetic types of learning styles were most preferred by students.

With respect to the least frequent learning styles, three items with the lowest rank of mean scores were obtained: item 28 “I prefer working on projects by myself” ($M = 3.26$), item 29 “I learn more by reading textbooks than by listening to lectures” ($M = 3.27$) and item 27 “In class I work better when I work alone” ($M = 3.31$). These three items both belong to visual and individual learning styles.

4.2. DISCUSSION

As the general approaches to learn languages, EFL’s particular learning styles are essential to be viewed in second or foreign language teaching and learning process. Learning styles are “the overall patterns that give general direction to learning behaviour (Cornett, 1983, p.9 in Oxford, 2001). Some studies have discovered that ESL/ EFL learners varied in their types of learning which they are comfortable with. This present study

revealed the overall learning styles used by EFL students as well as discovered which learning style most favoured and disfavoured in learning English. Specifically, male and female student groups' learning styles were also identified.

Generally, the results of this study showed that EFL students strongly preferred auditory and kinaesthetic learning styles. They enjoyed doing experiments, listening to the lecturers and doing something as instructed. Some previous studies also discovered that most of their participants were either auditory or kinaesthetic (Reid, 1987; Melton, 1990; Reid, 1995; Tabanlıoğlu, 2003; and Isemonger and Sheppard;2003). The EFL students may have combination of their learning styles, but the others may prefer one dominant style. Felder (1993,2010) adds that when teachers introduce various styles to students during English instruction, this will help them strengthen their skill in less preferred language areas and make them feel more comfortable in the class.

In relation to the context of the study, the participants were adult EFL learners who study and are expected to be fluent in English in class. Hilles and Sutton (2001) argue that adult learners have “a great deal invested in their identities as proficient speakers of their first language”, but in actual observation, many are less proficient in communicating English as a medium of instruction. This led to the assumption that they became auditory since they enjoy listening to oral explanation or discussion from their lecturers. In this regard auditory students are described to be comfortable in learning without any visual backup and therefore advantageous of unembellished lectures, conversations and oral instructions (Oxford, 2001).

Students favour kinaesthetic style to process information while pacing around the room or moving their body parts such as tapping a pencil, fidgeting, kicking a leg, etc (Galbraith and James cited in Higbee and Ginter, 1991). In other words, kinaesthetic

learners prefer to learn through physical activity and movement. However, most of the time, they have difficulty in focusing on the learning target and get distracted easily. They ensure to show their best potential when participating actively in specific tasks they are engaged in.

Besides investigating the most preferred learning styles, it was also found in this study that the EFL students disfavoured individual learning style. They least preferred working on projects and doing tasks by themselves. Besides, activity of listening to lecturers seemed better than reading books for several students. The result was similar to Jones (1997) who administered *Perceptual Learning Style Preference Questionnaire* to 81 Chinese students. He found that individual learning style was the least preferred learning style. Basically, individualistic students make better progress when studying alone or without any interference from others (Reid, 1987). However, some learners found it hard working on task by themselves. With respect to English as a foreign language taught in university, the difficulty of absorbing spoken or written information without the help of teachers/lecturers and other students could lead to distress and anxious feelings.

The overall learning style preferences in this study fell into the same category. As the most preferred learning styles, both auditory and kinaesthetic learning styles fell into the minor learning style preference. Although individual learning style was least frequently used in class, it was also reported that it was in the same minor category with the preferred learning styles used by the EFL students. Minor preference relates to the application of any learning method in which the learner can function adequately according to the demand of the tasks (Reid, 1987).

Group of male and female students have particular interest on language learning styles. Male students used auditory learning styles most frequently, meanwhile, female students were found to be kinaesthetic students. Auditory and kinaesthetic major style

preferences indicated that students could learn best when applying certain styles they were comfortable with. Major preference refers to “any learning method that comes natural, ‘normal’ to the learner” (Reid, 1987). When certain types of learning styles include in the major preference category, “it constitutes someone’s strength with which he/she grasps the information” (Rhouma, 2016, p. 481 – 482).

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, SUGGESTIONS

This chapter presents conclusions of the results and analysis, implications for pedagogical practice and suggestions for future researchers.

5.1 CONCLUSIONS

Learning style is one of the factors that has a great influence on second or foreign language learning. Learning style models and scales are developed to identify learning style preferences among EFL students. One of the instruments created for Non-Native English Speakers (NNSs) and mostly used to perceive the perceptual learning style preferences of ESL/EFL learners at the university level is *Perceptual Learning Style Preference Questionnaire* (PLSPQ) by Reid (1987) which consists of visual, tactile, auditory, kinaesthetic, group and individual areas.

Concerning the EFL students' learning style preferences, it was revealed that auditory and kinaesthetic styles were mostly preferred based on the overall analysis. It was also found that the EFL students used individual learning style least frequently in class. In addition, learning style preferences based on gender found that most male and female students favoured auditory and kinaesthetic styles respectively. Individual learning style still became the least favoured learning style preference by both groups.

5.2 IMPLICATIONS

Students' learning style preferences can be identified and become adaptable to specific language tasks. Employing multiple learning styles results in greater success of

language performance. Concerning this issue, educators are encouraged to facilitate various learning styles through their teaching as well as motivate students to become more familiar when adapting those styles in learning. Allowing students to sample unfamiliar learning styles is also a goal of the instruction which may help students identify and assess their own learning style preferences. To help students function better in a university classroom, lecturers should develop creativity in designing activities that accommodate variations of learning styles.

5.3 SUGGESTIONS

The purpose of applying learning styles is to facilitate language learning effectively by finding the best ways to learn. Studies have revealed that learners may use one dominant style or employ various styles in learning language. Therefore, future researchers are recommended to:

1. include more aspects that are likely influence students' learning style preferences such as age, gender, achievement, proficiency, etc. Finding how these variables relates to learning styles will provide more descriptions and information on the SLA studies.
2. employ larger student samples from different levels of education. For instance, students from different semesters will include as research participants in order to observe how learning styles are used in class.

REFERENCES

- Dörnyei, Z. (2005). *The psychology of the language learner : Individual differences in second language acquisition*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Dunn, R., Griggs, S.A., Olson, J., and Beasley, M. (1995). A meta-analytic validation of the Dunn and Dunn model of learning-style preferences. *Journal of Educational Research*, 8, 353-362.
- Ellis, N. C. (2002). Frequency effects in language acquisition : A review with implications for theories of implicit and explicit language acquisition. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 24, 143-88.
- Felder, R. (1993). Reaching the second tier: Learning and teaching styles in college science education. *J. College Science Teaching*, 23 (5), 286 – 290.
- Felder, R. (2010). Are learning styles invalid? (hint-no) *On Course-Newsletter* North California State University.
- Fleming, N. D. (2001). *Teaching and learning styles: VARK strategies*. Christchurch: N.D. Fleming
- Fraenkel, J.R., Wallen, N.E. & Hyun, H.H. (2012). *How to design and evaluate research in education (Eighth edition)*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Gass, S.M. and Selinker, L. (2008). *Second Language Acquisition: An Introductory Course (Third edition)*. London: Taylor & Francis.
- Gilakjani, A.P. (2012). Visual, auditory, kinaesthetic learning styles and their impacts on English language teaching. *Journal of Studies in Education*, 2 (1), 104 – 113.
- Griffths, C. (2012). Learning styles: Traversing the quagmire. In Sarah Mercer, Stephen Ryan & Marion Williams (Eds), *Psychology for language learning: Insight from research, theory and practice*, 151 – 168.
- Hall, E and Moseley, D. (2005). Is there a role for learning styles in personalized education and training? *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 24, 243 – 255.
- Hilles, S & Sutton, A. (2001). Teaching Adults (1). In Marianne Celce-Murcia (Ed), *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language (Third Edition)*, 359 – 366. USA : Heinle & Heinle.
- Higbee, J.L., Ginter, E.J., and Taylor, W.D. (1991). Enhancing academic performance: seven perceptual styles of learning. *Research and Teaching in Developmental Education*, 7(2):5-10.
- Isemonger, I., & Sheppard, C. (2003). Learning styles. *RELC Journal*, 34(2), 195-222.
- Jones, N.B. (1997). Applying learning styles research to improve writing instruction. Paper presented at RELC Seminar on Learners and Language Learning, Singapore, April 1997.

- Kolb, D.A. (2015). *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*. New Jersey: Pearson Education
- Lieven, E. and Tomasello, M. (2008). Children's first language acquisition from a usage-based perspective. In P. Robinson & N. Ellis (Eds.), *Handbook of Cognitive Linguistics and Second Language Acquisition*, 168-196. New York/London : Routledge.
- Melton, C.D. 1990. Bridging the cultural gap: a study of Chinese students' learning style preferences. *RELC Journal*, 27(1): 70-88.
- Nasarieh, F. (2009). *The relationship between perceptual learning style preferences and skill-based learning strategies*. Unpublished thesis. Tehran: Shahid Beheshti University.
- Ortega, L. (2009). *Understanding Second Language Acquisition*. London: Hodder Education.
- Oxford, R.L. (2001). Language learning styles and strategies. In Marianne Celce-Murcia (Ed), *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language (Third Edition)*, 359 – 366. USA : Heinle & Heinle.
- Oxford, R.L. (2003). Language learning styles and strategies: Concepts and relationships. *International Review of Applied Linguistics in language teaching (IRAL)*, 41: 271–278
- Oxford, R.L. (2003). Language learning styles and strategies: an overview. *Learning Styles & Strategies/ Oxford, GALA*:1-25.
- Oxford, R. (2011). *Teaching and researching language learning strategies*. Harlow: Pearson Longman.
- Purpura, J.E. (2014). Language learning strategies and styles. In Marianne Celce-Murcia, Donna M. Brinton & Marguerite Ann Snow (Eds), *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language (Fourth Edition)*, 532 – 549. Boston: National Geographic Learning.
- Reid, J. (1987). The learning styles preferences of ESL students, *TESOL Quarterly*, 21 (1), 87 – 110.
- Reid, J. (1995). *Learning styles in the ESL / EFL classroom*. Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle Publishers.
- Rhouma, W.B. (2016). Perceptual learning style preferences and academic achievement. *International Journal of Arts and Sciences*, 9 (2), 479 – 492.

- Schmeck, R.R. (1988). An introduction to strategies and styles of learning. In Ronald R. Schmeck (Ed.), *Perspectives on individual differences: learning strategies and learning styles*, 3–19. Illinois: Springer Science + Business Media, LLC.
- Sternberg, R.J. (1997). Styles of thinking and learning. *Canadian Journal of School Psychology*, 13(2):15-40.
- Tabanlıoğlu, S. (2003). *The relationship between learning styles and language learning strategies of pre-intermediate EAP students*. Unpublished thesis. Ankara: The Graduate School of Social Sciences of Middle East Technical University.
- Torrance, E.P & Rockenstein, Z.L. (1988). Styles of thinking and creativity. In Ronald R. Schmeck (Ed.), *Perspectives on individual differences: learning strategies and learning styles*, 275 – 290. Illinois: Springer Science + Business Media, LLC.
- VanPatten, B & Benati, A.G. (2015). *Key terms in Second Language Acquisition (Second edition)*. New York : Bloomsbury.
- Vaseghi, R., Ramezani, A.E., & Gholami, R. (2012). Language learning style preferences: A theoretical and empirical study, *Advances in Asian Social Science*, 2 (2), 441 – 451.

STUDENTS' LANGUAGE LEARNING STYLE PREFERENCES AT ENGLISH LITERATURE STUDY PROGRAM

Setya Ariani^{1,*}, Nita Maya Valiantien², & Noor Rachmawaty³

¹ & ² Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Mulawarman University

³ Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Mulawarman University
East Kalimantan, Indonesia

Pos-el korespondensi : arianisetya@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

Learning style is one of the factors contributing to students' success on second or foreign language learning. This present research attempted to identify various learning styles used in learning English by administering *Perceptual Learning Style Preference Questionnaire (PLSPQ)* for 121 EFL students at English literature study program. The result of descriptive analysis showed that the overall students' preferred learning style was found to be auditory ($M = 37.5$, $SD = 4.48$). Based on gender differences, a majority of male students were auditory students ($M = 38.6$, $SD = 4.27$) and most of the female students were observed to have tendency to be in the category of kinaesthetic students ($M = 3.69$, $SD = .49$). The individual learning style became the least frequent style used by the students ($M = 35.2$, $SD = 7.53$). The findings contribute to the improvement of teaching practice quality. Educators are recommended to employ various teaching styles and design variety of activities that enable students to activate their own learning styles more effectively.

Keywords: learning style, Second Language Acquisition (SLA), *Perceptual Learning Style Preference Questionnaire (PLSPQ)*

ABSTRAK

Gaya belajar merupakan salah satu faktor yang berkontribusi terhadap kesuksesan siswa dalam pembelajaran bahasa kedua maupun bahasa asing. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi berbagai jenis gaya belajar dalam pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris dengan menggunakan kuesioner *Perceptual Learning Style Preference Questionnaire (PLSPQ)* kepada 121 siswa Program Studi Sastra Inggris. Hasil analisis deskriptif menunjukkan bahwa auditori ($M = 37.5$, $SD = 4.48$) merupakan gaya belajar yang diminati oleh mayoritas siswa. Sementara itu, dilihat dari perbedaan gender, siswa laki-laki merupakan pembelajar auditori ($M = 38.6$, $SD = 4.27$) sedangkan siswa perempuan lebih cenderung masuk ke dalam tipe kategori pembelajar kinestetik ($M = 3.69$, $SD = .49$). Gaya belajar individu merupakan gaya belajar yang paling sedikit digunakan oleh siswa ($M = 35.2$, $SD = 7.53$). Hasil penelitian diharapkan mampu berkontribusi terhadap perbaikan kualitas mengajar. Pendidik disarankan untuk dapat menerapkan berbagai jenis gaya dalam mengajar dan merancang beragam aktivitas pembelajaran sehingga memungkinkan siswa menggunakan jenis gaya belajar secara efektif.

Kata Kunci: Gaya belajar, pembelajaran bahasa kedua, *Perceptual Learning Style Preference Questionnaire (PLSPQ)*

A. INTRODUCTION

As a medium of instruction, English is mostly spoken in the interaction between teachers and their students. However, knowing the fact that it is not their first language, some students are presumably more proficient than others when engaging in classroom activities which result in their language performance. Due to their different language background, students are observed to have distinct styles that influence how they learn English in the class. Learning styles are defined as students' preferred ways of processing information based on particular situations and goals in learning (VanPatten & Benati, 2015). In other words, learning style is considered to be one of many factors contributing to students' success in learning second or foreign language which also covers a lot of learning style models.

In respect to various learning models, students may have combination of their learning styles, but the others may prefer one dominant style. Moreover, according to Felder (1993,2010), students will feel more comfortable in the class when various learning styles are applied during teaching and learning activities because these are very helpful to strengthen their skill in less preferred areas of language. For example, students may have particular interest on one of the language subjects, but lack in other areas.

Most successful students, however, are expected to be able to accommodate different learning styles for the purpose of processing information or select the best language learning style preference. This phenomenon has attracted a number of researchers to investigate it more thoroughly. Instruments as well as learning style models have been developed and adapted by a number of researchers to measure the learning style preferences in the second and foreign language learning context. In this study, the researchers attempted to know which learning styles applied by both male and female students in the English class because it is possible that they perform significantly different in their ways of responding and interacting with their lecturers as well as classmates during specific subjects. Among various instruments, Reid's *Perceptual Learning Style Preference Questionnaire* (1987) was used to reveal students' particular style preferences in foreign language learning consisting of visual, auditory, kinaesthetic, tactile, group and individual areas.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Language Learning Styles

Learning style is one of many factors that determines how well students learn a second or foreign language. Every language expert and researcher defines learning styles from different perspectives. Learning style is defined as "the variations among learners in using one or more senses to understand, organize, and retain experience" (Reid, 1987, p. 89). In addition, the term 'learning style' concerns individual preferences for obtaining, processing and retaining information (Gass & Selinker, 2008). Similarly, it is an approach used by students both in acquiring a new language and learning any other object (Oxford, 2001). Learning styles can also be described as the different ways in which learners perceive, absorb, process and recall new information and skill (VanPatten & Benati, 2015). Shortly learning styles are associated with the fact that individuals learn best in

different ways and these might influence their language performance during learning activities.

Some experts have continued exploring the basic concepts of learning style. For instance, Sternberg (1997) believes that learning style is not an ability but it is the choice of the students when using their abilities and the reflection of the students' way of thinking. Even though students may show identical ability but they will perform different learning style. Oxford (2001) defines learning style as the general way selected by the students when learning a specific course, acquiring a language, or dealing with a difficult problem. In further explanation, Oxford (2003) points out that learning style is the construction of frequent pattern that provides wide-ranging direction to learning and makes the same instructional method that can be considered exciting by some students or tedious by others. Another expert mentions learning style as "an individual's preferred and habitual modes of perceiving, remembering, organizing, processing, and representing information" (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 125 cited in Purpura, 2014). Each learning style preference contributes to provide students with what so called 'comfort zone', and attempts to stretch their comfort zone through practice (Oxford, 2001). Rather than seeing all students as equal, understanding the language learning style concepts is potential to enhance learning and make learning more enjoyable and successful. Their choice on particular style somehow may affect their success in learning depending on how they want to use it at their best potential.

2. Perceptual Learning Style Preference Questionnaire (PLSPQ)

Perceptual Learning Style Preference Questionnaire or known as PLSPQ developed by Reid (1987) in Dörnyei (2005) was the first learning style measure widely known in the L2 field, specifically to measure the six learning style preferences which include visual, auditory, kinesthetic, tactile, group learning, and individual learning. According to Reid (1987:91) before her PLSP questionnaire, "there has been no published research that describes the perceptual learning style preferences of Non- Native English speakers (NNSs)". The questionnaire is very user-friendly, with an accompanying self-scoring sheet and a short explanation of learning style preferences that also contains practical suggestions for learners. In addition, Perceptual Learning Style Preference Questionnaire in Reid's study (1987) was the pioneer for perceiving the perceptual learning style preferences of ESL/EFL learners at the university level (Vaseghi, Ramezani, & Gholami, 2012).

Reid's *Perceptual Learning Style Preference Questionnaire* consists of 30 items with 5-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly agree (5 points), agree (4 points), undecided (3 points), disagree (2 points), strongly disagree (1 point)". The learning styles are grouped into three categories: major learning style preference (38-50), minor learning style preference (25-37) and negligible (0-24). Each sensory learning style is described as follows:

a) *Visual Learning Style*

Students with this type of learning style "like to read and obtain a great deal from visual simulation" (Oxford, 2001). They remember and understand information from conversations, lectures and oral instructions better with visual backup such as taking notes and reading books. In addition, according to Reid (1987) in Dörnyei (2005), the visual learners are those who prefer to see ideas through written materials such as reading the handouts. The questionnaire items that mostly relate to visual learners are "I learn better

by reading what the teacher writes on the chalkboard" (Item 6), "When I read instructions, I remember them better"(Item 10), "I understand better when I read instructions" (Item 12), "I learn better by reading than by listening to someone" (Item 24) and "I learn more by reading textbooks than by listening to lectures" (Item 29).

b) *Tactile Learning Style*

Students with tactile learning style learn best when having the opportunity to do "hands-on" experiences with materials such as working on experiments in a laboratory and handling and building models. Questionnaire items that relate to tactile learners are "I learn more when I can make a model of something" (Item 11), "I learn more when I make something for a class project (Item 14), " I learn better when I make drawings as I study" (Item 16), "When I build something, I remember what I have learned better" (Item 22) and "I enjoy making something for a class project" (Item 25).

c) *Auditory Learning Style*

Auditory students prefer direct lectures, conversations and oral instructions even without any visual input (Oxford, 2001). For the learners who perform the auditory style, they favor to listen when learning something, for example listening to oral explanation or discussion. They enjoy interacting with classmates during role play activities and participating in class discussion. Auditory learning styles appear in "When the teacher tells me the instructions I understand better" (Item 1), "I learn better in class when the teacher gives a lecture" (Item 7), "I remember things I have heard in class better than things I have read"(Item 9), "I learn better in class when the teacher gives a lecture" (Item 17) and "I learn better in class when I listen to someone" (Item 20).

d) *Kinaesthetic Learning Style*

Similar to tactile students, kinaesthetic type of students enjoy "lots of movement and working with tangible objects, collages and flashcards" (Oxford, 2011). In other words, students learn best by physically involving in classroom activities. Kinaesthetic learning styles appear in the questionnaire statements "I prefer to learn by doing something in class" (Item 2), "When I do things in class, I learn better"(Item 8), "I enjoy learning in class by doing experiments" (Item 15), "I understand things better in class when I participate in role-playing" (Item19) and "I learn best in class when I can participate in related activities" (Item 26).

e) *Group Learning Style*

Students prefer interaction and working with other students in completing tasks. They tend to receive and understand new information better from their peers by working in groups. Questionnaire items that concern with group learning style are "I get more work done when I work with others" (Item 3), "I learn more when I study with a group" (Item 4), "In class, I learn best when I work with others"(Item 5), "I enjoy working on an assignment with two or three classmates" (Item 21), and "I prefer to study with others" (Item 23).

f) *Individual Learning Style*

Individualistic students learn best when working alone. They make better progress when studying without any interference from others. Individual learning styles appear in the questionnaire statements "When I study alone, I remember things better" (Item 13),

“When I work alone, I learn better” (Item 18), “In class, I work better when I work alone” (Item 27), “I prefer working on projects by myself “ (Item 28), and “I prefer to work by myself” (Item 30).

C. METHODOLOGY

To identify the language learning styles used by the English literature students, descriptive quantitative study was applied to report information through numerical form. Reid's *Perceptual Learning Style Preference Questionnaire* (PLSPQ) was administered to 121 students consisting of 48 male students (39.7%) and 73 female students (60.3%). The variables of descriptive statistics such as the Mean (M), the standard deviation (SD), maximum, minimum, and frequency distribution of the variables were calculated.

D. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. Findings

a) The Overall Students' Preferred Learning Style

As the general approaches to learn languages, EFL's particular learning styles are essential to be viewed in second or foreign language teaching and learning process. Learning styles are “the overall patterns that give general direction to learning behaviour (Cornett, 1983, p.9 in Oxford, 2001). Some studies have discovered that ESL/ EFL learners varied in their types of learning which they are comfortable with. A number of 121 students participated in this study employed different styles in learning English which is shown in the following table.

Table 1. Frequency of Students' Perceptual Learning Style Preferences

	VISUAL	TACTILE	AUDITORY	KINAESTHETIC	GROUP	INDIVIDUAL
N Valid	121	121	121	121	121	121
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean	36.2479	36.9256	37.5868	37.4380	36.7603	35.2893
Std. Deviation	4.85503	5.21563	4.48640	5.08739	6.21963	7.53153
Minimum	22.00	22.00	26.00	24.00	18.00	12.00
Maximum	50.00	50.00	50.00	48.00	50.00	50.00

Note: major learning style preference (38-50), minor learning style preference (25-37) and negligible (0-24)

The minimum score for all categories was 12.00 and the maximum one was 50.00. Among six perceptual learning style preferences, generally, most of the students used auditory learning style (M= 37.5, SD = 4.48). The second most preferred learning style category was kinaesthetic style (M = 37.4, SD = 5.08). The other learning styles such as tactile (M = 36.9, SD =5.21), group (M = 36.7, SD = 6.21) and visual (M= 36.2, SD = 4.85) came respectively as the third, fourth and fifth styles preferred to learn English. The least frequent style used by students was individual learning style (M = 35.2, SD = 7.53).

In the statistical analysis of frequency, students' learning style preferences ranged from 35.2 to 37.5. Based on the cut off points stated in Reid (1987), all students' learning

style preferences fell into the category of minor learning style preference with scores ranging from 25 – 37. This category indicated that students can function well in specific areas or in other words, a very successful student can learn in several different ways.

b) Learning Style Preferences Based on Gender

The other finding also revealed what types of learning styles mostly preferred by both male and female students. The normal distribution was the first phase to carry out in order to look at how the values of a variable are distributed. The Shapiro-Wilk test is more appropriate for small sample sizes (< 50 samples) with sig.>0.05. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test is used for greater sample sizes (> 50 samples) with sig. >0.05. Table 2 presents the normal distribution of gender variable.

Table 2. Statistical Analysis of Normality Test

		Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
Gender		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
LS	Male	.066	48	.200*	.991	48	.963
	Female	.091	73	.200*	.967	73	.056

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

Based on the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk normality test, the gender variable was normally distributed (Male : .963>0.05, female : .200>0.05). Next phase was the analysis of how male and female students applied language learning styles. Table 3 shows differences between male students' learning styles and female students' learning styles.

Table 3 Frequency of Students' Perceptual Learning Styles Based on Gender

Perceptual Learning Styles	Gender	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation
Visual	Male	48	36.5	4.64
	Female	73	36.0	5.00
Tactile	Male	48	37.7	5.27
	Female	73	36.3	5.13
Auditory	Male	48	38.6	4.27
	Female	73	36.8	5.13
Kinaesthetic	Male	48	38.2	5.22
	Female	73	36.9	4.95
Group	Male	48	37.9	5.64
	Female	73	36.0	6.49
Individual	Male	48	35.5	7.31
	Female	73	35.0	7.71

Note: major learning style preference (38-50), minor learning style preference (25-37) and negligible (0-24)

According to the statistical analysis above, both groups, male and female students applied different learning styles. A majority of male students were auditory students ($M = 38.6$, $SD = 4.27$) in comparison with the female ones ($M = 36.8$, $SD = 5.13$). The female students were observed to have tendency to be in the category of kinaesthetic students ($M = 3.69$, $SD = .49$) although the mean score was still lower than that of the male students ($M = 3.82$, $SD = .52$). Individual learning style appeared to be the least frequent style used by the students.

The range of learning style frequency for both groups was between 35.0 and 38.6. Visual, tactile, group and individual learning styles were categorized as minor learning style preference group (25 – 37) which indicated that the use of these different styles was helpful to engage in the English learning activity. Auditory and kinaesthetic styles were favoured by male students and these two fell into major learning style preference (38 – 50). Major learning style preference indicated that students could learn best when applying certain styles they were comfortable with.

2. Discussion

Generally, the results of this study showed that EFL students strongly preferred auditory learning style especially male students. Auditory students are described to be comfortable in learning without any visual backup and therefore advantageous of unembellished lectures, conversations and oral instructions (Oxford, 2001). The other learning style category favored by most of the students was kinaesthetic style with the students doing physical activities as well as working with tangible objects, collages and flashcards (Oxford, 2011). Students favour kinaesthetic style to process information while pacing around the room or moving their body parts such as tapping a pencil, fidgeting, kicking a leg, etc (Galbraith and James cited in Higbee and Ginter, 1991). These results were similar to some previous studies which revealed that most of their participants were either auditory or kinaesthetic (Reid, 1987; Melton, 1990; Reid, 1995; Tabanlıoğlu, 2003; and Isemonger and Sheppard;2003).

Besides investigating the most preferred learning styles, it was also found in this study that the EFL students disfavoured individual learning style. They least preferred working on projects and doing tasks by themselves. The result was similar to Jones (1997) who administered *Perceptual Learning Style Preference Questionnaire* to 81 Chinese students. He found that individual learning style was the least preferred learning style. Basically, individualistic students make better progress when studying alone or without any interference from others (Reid, 1987). However, some learners found it hard working on task by themselves. With respect to English as a foreign language taught in university, the difficulty of absorbing spoken or written information without the help of teachers/lecturers and other students could lead to distress and anxious feelings. In addition, the EFL students may have combination of their learning styles, but the others may prefer one dominant style. Felder (1993, 2010) adds that when teachers introduce various styles to students during English instruction, this will help them strengthen their skill in less preferred language areas and make them feel more comfortable in the class.

The overall learning style preferences in this study fell into the same category. As the most preferred learning styles, both auditory and kinaesthetic learning styles fell into the minor learning style preference. Although individual learning style was least frequently used in class, it was also reported that it was in the same minor category with

the preferred learning styles used by the EFL students. Minor preference relates to the application of any learning method in which the learner can function adequately according to the demand of the tasks (Reid, 1987).

E. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Learning style is one of the factors that has a great influence on second or foreign language learning. Learning style models and scales are developed to identify learning style preferences among EFL students. One of the instruments created for Non-Native English Speakers (NNSs) and mostly used to perceive the perceptual learning style preferences of ESL/EFL learners at the university level is *Perceptual Learning Style Preference Questionnaire* (PLSPQ) by Reid (1987) which consists of visual, tactile, auditory, kinaesthetic, group and individual areas. Concerning the EFL students' learning style preferences, it was revealed that auditory and kinaesthetic styles were mostly preferred based on the overall analysis. It was also found that the EFL students used individual learning style least frequently in class.

The purpose of applying learning styles is to facilitate language learning effectively by finding the best ways to learn. Studies have revealed that learners may use one dominant style or employ various styles in learning language. Therefore, future researchers are recommended to:

1. include more aspects that are likely influence students' learning style preferences such as age, gender, achievement, proficiency, etc. Finding how these variables relates to learning styles will provide more descriptions and information on the SLA studies.
2. employ larger student samples from different levels of education. For instance, students from different semesters will include as research participants in order to observe how learning styles are used in class.

REFERENCES

- Dörnyei, Z. (2005). *The psychology of the language learner : Individual differences in second language acquisition*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Felder, R. (1993). Reaching the second tier: Learning and teaching styles in college science education. *J. College Science Teaching*, 23 (5), 286 – 290.
- Felder, R. (2010). Are learning styles invalid? (hint-no) *On Course-Newsletter* North California State University.
- Gass, S.M. and Selinker, L. (2008). *Second Language Acquisition: An Introductory Course (Third edition)*. London: Taylor & Francis.
- Higbee, J.L., Ginter, E.J., and Taylor, W.D. (1991). Enhancing academic performance: seven perceptual styles of learning. *Research and Teaching in Developmental Education*, 7(2):5-10.

- Hilles, S & Sutton, A. (2001). Teaching Adults (1). In Marianne Celce-Murcia (Ed), *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language (Third Edition)*, 359 – 366. USA : Heinle & Heinle.
- Isemonger, I., & Sheppard, C. (2003). Learning styles. *RELC Journal*, 34(2), 195-222.
- Jones, N.B. (1997). Applying learning styles research to improve writing instruction. Paper presented at RELC Seminar on Learners and Language Learning, Singapore, April 1997.
- Melton, C.D. 1990. Bridging the cultural gap: a study of Chinese students' learning style preferences. *RELC Journal*, 27(1): 70-88.
- Oxford, R.L. (2001). Language learning styles and strategies. In Marianne Celce-Murcia (Ed), *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language (Third Edition)*, 359 – 366. USA : Heinle & Heinle.
- Oxford, R.L. (2003). Language learning styles and strategies: Concepts and relationships. *International Review of Applied Linguistics in language teaching (IRAL)*, 41: 271–278.
- Oxford, R. (2011). *Teaching and researching language learning strategies*. Harlow: Pearson Longman.
- Purpura, J.E. (2014). Language learning strategies and styles. In Marianne Celce-Murcia, Donna M. Brinton & Marguerite Ann Snow (Eds), *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language (Fourth Edition)*, 532 – 549. Boston: National Geographic Learning.
- Reid, J. (1987). The learning styles preferences of ESL students, *TESOL Quarterly*, 21 (1), 87 – 110.
- Reid, J. (1995). *Learning styles in the ESL / EFL classroom*. Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle Publishers.
- Tabanlıoğlu, S. (2003). *The relationship between learning styles and language learning strategies of pre-intermediate EAP students*. Unpublished thesis. Ankara: The Graduate School of Social Sciences of Middle East Technical University.
- VanPatten, B & Benati, A.G. (2015). *Key terms in Second Language Acquisition (Second edition)*. New York : Bloomsbury.
- Vaseghi, R., Ramezani, A.E., & Gholami, R. (2012). Language learning style preferences: A theoretical and empirical study, *Advances in Asian Social Science*, 2 (2), 441 – 451.

