

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### A. Background of the Study

English is an international language that is spoken in many countries. English language enables people around the globe to communicate with each other directly through face-to-face communication and indirectly through social media for example. Indonesians learn English in formal or informal schools with the purpose to be able to communicate orally and in written, and thus make them ready to communicate with people from other countries, one important aspect of learning English is how people learn it or their learning style.

It is claimed that learning styles influence learners' ability to acquire information and respond to the learning environment (Azlinda, 2006). Language learners can plan and manage their language learning activities if they discover their preferred learning styles. This can "assist the students to enhance and take advantage of their natural skills and inclinations. As student's motivation will be sustained and they can progress well in the language process" (Azlinda, 2006, p.1). Therefore, teacher should not disregard the importance in choosing the appropriate teaching method to set right students learning style, teaching and learning styles play a vital role in language learning and for the students' achievement. Therefore, the collaboration between of students and teachers are needed to support the effectiveness of student's learning style.

It has been commonly believed that learning style preferences have a significant relationship with academic achievement. Due to the reason teachers should help learners to discover their own learning style. Further, students will benefit from the knowledge about their own learning style and they can take control or direct their own learning through modifying their habits and material for optimum learning. According to Sternberg (1997),

when learners learn in a way that suits them, improvements in the effectiveness of the learning process normally ensue.

Learning style has been defined as a consistent way of functioning that reflects the underlying causes of learning behavior (Keefe, 1987). Learning style is both a characteristic which indicates how a student learns and likes to learn, as well as instructional strategy informing the cognition, context and content of learning.

There has been growing interest to study learning styles. For example, a study conducted by (Gappi, 2013), explored on the students' preferred learning styles and their academic achievements. The specific objectives of the study were: to describe the learning style preferences of the students; to find out whether learning style preferences of the students differed with age, gender, and academic program; and determine the relationship between the learning style preference and the students' academic performance. The study found that there was no significant effect of gender, age and academic program on the learning style preferences of the students ( $r = -0.056$ ). Based on the result, there was no significant statistical correlation between the academic achievement and the learning style preferences of the students. This study was conducted among first year students in college, and therefore (based on the small age-gaps) the results may not vary substantially.

Another different study conducted by Anand and Rajendraprasad (2016) have observed learning styles and their impact of science teaching among primary school students. This study is aimed to find out the significant difference between the mean scores of learning styles of Primary school students in terms of their sex, Locality of school and Parental Education, and to find out the significant difference between the mean scores of impact of science Teaching of Primary school students in terms of their sex, Locality of school and Parental Education The findings showed that most of the students preferred learning style was visual. The purpose of this study is to increase Teachers awareness and understanding of the effect of learning styles on the teaching process.

The present study observes the students preferred learning style of Senior high school at SMK Muhammadiyah 2 Surakarta. This study will analyzes and discusses preferred learning styles and the teachers' awareness about the students' learning styles in this study entitles "**PREFERRED LEARNING STYLES OF THE STUDENTS OF SMK MUHAMMADIYAH 2 SURAKARTA**"

### **B. Limitation of the Study**

In order to have the specific research, the researcher limits the study as follow. This research paper only focuses on analyzing the preferred learning style including the aspect of Visual, Auditory, and Kinesthetic learning styles in this study means the preferences of the students to learn English at school and at home. To obtain the data, the resserach only used a questionnaire. the theory that is used to analyzed the learning styles is the one proposed by Balasubramaniam, and Indhu. Thus, learning styles discussed by other different theories are not discussed in this study. The learning styles in this study are limited to the ones used by students at SMK Muhammadiyah 2 Surakarta.

### **C. Research Questions**

Based on the background of the study above, the study formulates the research questions as follows:

1. What is the most preferred learning style of second school students in SMK Muhammadiyah 2 Surakarta?
2. Are the teachers aware of the second school student's learning styles?

### **D. Objective of the Study**

In general, this study aims to describe the preference learning styles of students in teaching learning process at SMK Muhammadiyah 2 Surakarta. Especially, are:

1. To study the most preferred learning style of the students in SMK Muhammadiyah 2 Surakarta.
2. To investigate whether the teachers are aware or not of the students' preferred learning styles.

#### **E. Significance of the Study**

Based on the objective of the study above, this study is supposed to be able to give several results. First, the finding will inform the preferred of study in SMK Muhammadiyah 2 Surakarta, the result of this study will add to the body of knowledge in English learning in Indonesian context, particularly in teaching learning model.

Second, it is so important to know the result that the success of teachers in teaching has a strong relationship toward the student preferred learning styles; hence the teachers' suitable model will influences the students' understanding about the learning materials. It also helps teachers to improve the quality of teaching learning process in classroom.

Third, the research may inform local publisher decisions related to development of appropriate learning material for students. The present study can be employed as reference for other prospective studies that are interested in conducting similar topic.

#### **F. Research Paper Organization**

The organization of this study is presented as follows:

Chapter I introduces the research, begins with a brief explanation of how and why the tittle chosen on the basis of occurring phenomena providing specific details about learning style.

Chapter II discusses previous studies and related theories including the notion of learning, notion of learning strategies, notion of strategies for learning foreign language, notion of learning style, and VAK learning styles.

Chapter III is research method which discusses the research approach, research design, the research setting, subject of the research, data and data

source, technique of collecting data, the technique of analyzing data, and the credibility of data which consists of validity of research data, reliability of action research, and triangulation.

Chapter IV contains data analysis, research finding and discussion that consists the description of analysis the individual students preference learning style, description of overall students preference learning style, description of teachers' awareness of students' learning styles, analysis of the data and the discussion of the result findings.

Chapter V is the conclusion and suggestion that provides the basis of research findings, discussions, and some suggestions for students, teachers, and future studies.