

Chapter One

Introduction

At the beginning of this chapter, the researcher presents some points of the main problem namely the background of the research which states the reason why the researcher chooses the topic in this research presents, identification of the problem and explains the limitation of the problem. Then the researcher presents the research questions and purposes of the research. At last, the researcher explains the significances of the research.

Background of the Study

The success of learning English as a foreign language (EFL) in Indonesia is determined by many factors, ranging from curriculum design to classroom activities. Changes to the national curriculum at all levels of educational institutions are intended to optimize the learning process in achieving learning objectives. Chung (2005) argued that current programs such as student-centered learning and independent learning are approaches that support the analysis and personalization of student needs.

Students, as one of the independent factors in education, are unique entities with different internal and external characteristics. Internal characteristics are such as motivation, attitudes, and beliefs, personality, learning styles, and learning strategies while external characteristics are such as environmental factors, social background, physical differences, and past experiences. Based on

both of definitions, students are able to teach that the characteristics are important factors in determining the success of language learning.

To meet the characteristics of different students, Walqui (2000) stated that techniques and environments must be made that support the desires and abilities to learn new languages because students come from different backgrounds with different needs and different goals. However, students not only have different needs and goals, but they also have different language learning styles to learn. It can be stated that students are not the same in their needs, goals and courses or skills. Besides, they also have different ways of understanding, absorbing, and maintaining learning. In solving a problem in the learning process students have different learning styles in approaching a new language. Students have their language learning style in processing the material that has been delivered by the teacher in class. Every difference in learning style requires different treatment. The right treatment will help someone to learn something new. According to Beth, Barbara and Tallal (2015), learners should know their best style, because it can serve recommendation for learners on what they should do.

Chung (2005) argued that among a group of students, some learn better with pictures and diagrams (visual learners) and some absorb knowledge faster with participation (kinesthetic learners). In this case, the teacher's role is very important in being responsible for helping their students identify their learning styles because they interact mostly with students. Fox, Wanda and Geneva (1995) stated that by identifying student learning styles, teachers can apply appropriate

teaching techniques and match their teaching styles that will maximize in learning process.

Some experts have found that a tendency in language learning styles between male and female. Several factors influence learning style preferences. According to Jill, Heidi and Stephen (2007), students have certain learning style preferences, and these preferences may differ between male and female students. Also, they added that understanding student learning style preferences is an important consideration when designing classroom instruction.

Of the observations of the researcher at the Language Training Center at an International Relation Department in a private university in Yogyakarta, some students who do not use language learning styles may have difficulties in language learning. The reason students of International Relation Department are because one of non-English Department majors' required taking English course in six semesters in LTC. They already have more learning experiences using English than other departments' from non-English students. They study English at Language Training Center for six semesters while other departments non-English only one semester. So, students of International Relations Department have a long learning experience in learning English without using a suitable learning style, because they do not recognize the learning style to begin with. The reason why the researcher wants to know gender trends in this research is because of the research that conducted by Erica, Heidi and Stephen (2007) said that the majority of female students preferred multimodal instruction while the male students preferred the single mode instruction. Usually, students use one of three types of

language learning styles to increase knowledge. For example, for visual learning style, the lecturer asks students to read books or watch videos. Then, for audio of learning style, the lecturer instructs students to listen to lectures and for kinesthetic of learning style, the lecturer ask students to write texts. Some of them are not aware, that by recognizing learning styles can help them in learning English. So, they can achieve their goals. These students have experienced language learning, unfortunately, they can hardly identify their learning styles, most of them do not know about their language learning styles. The researcher concludes that interested in research to find out information about the learning style preference of students of International Relation Department.

Identification of the Problem

According to the researcher's previous observation, the researcher found many students in the International Relations Department found it difficult to identify their learning styles. Many students do not recognize the learning style, so they do not feel the benefits. Students find it difficult to process material that has been delivered by the teacher. Some of them are not aware, that recognizing learning styles can help them in learning English. Students have their learning styles. They also may have problems deciding what styles they belong with them. There are some factors also might affect their preferences on language learning styles such as habit, environment, and personality traits.

Learning style is one component that must be considered to achieve success in language learning. There are benefits that students will feel if they recognize their language learning styles. The student will find it easier to digest

the material with proper treatment. According to Ahmad (2019), students will be successful in learning if they recognize their learning style; they can understand the material easily. Thus, helping them to find out information will help them significantly to improve their language learning process.

Delimitation of the Problem

From the problems mentioned in the identification of the problems, the researcher limits the problems because of the limitation of the researcher's time. This research allocated attention on the language learning style preferred the most by the students. The learning which is studied is generally from those six categories of Perceptual Learning Style Preferences by Reid (1987). This research identifies which of those six categories that the learners preferred the most. The researcher is interested in research to find out information about the preference of learning style among students of the International Relations Department. Besides, the researcher is also interested to know the preferences of the learning style used by males and females among students at an International Relations Department in a private university in Yogyakarta.

Research Questions

The key points of this research are focused on the language learning style preferences by students in the International Relation in learning English. The researcher formulates the research in three questions. The questions are:

1. How is the preference of learning style among students of International Relation Department?

2. How is the learning style preference of male students of International Relation Department?
3. How is the learning style preference of female students of International Relation Department?

Purposes of the Research

Based on the research questions, the aims of this research are:

1. To find out information about the learning style preference of students of International Relation Department.
2. To find out information about the learning style preference of male students of International Relation Department.
3. To find out information about the learning style preference of female students of International Relation Department.

Significance of the Research

The researcher hopes this research can be useful for parties in educational backgrounds. Also, this research can enrich knowledge about language learning styles for students and teachers in teaching English. They get a representation of what must be considered when processing and delivering new material. The parties are learners, lecturers, and next to the researchers. The explanations are presented as follows:

For students. There are benefits if students can recognize the language learning style. The students will be able to identify what language learning styles that students in their department use. Students must recognize the learning style,

which is most suitable for success in learning English. The researcher hopes to help students in determining learning styles, to be used as a reference as a guide in learning English.

For lecturers. This research is useful to lecturers because provides knowledge and information about language learning style in non-English department students. The result of this research is expected to give benefit to the lecturer to become aware of creating various activities when delivering material in class.

For next researchers. This research can help the next researchers as a representation or information about language learning styles for students in non-English departments. Also, if they have the same interests with this problem, the researcher realizes that this research still has shortcomings. Next researchers can manage this research with different methods or designs, and get more respondents to improve the findings.

Organization of the Chapter

In this research, there are several things that are discussed in each chapter. Chapter one discusses the introduction of the study which consists of background of the study, identification of the problem, delimitation of the problem, research questions, purposes of the research, significance of the research and the organization of the chapter. Chapter two discusses about literature review and review of related study. Chapter three discusses the research methodology which consists of research design, research setting, research population, research sample,

sampling technique, data collection method, validity, reliability, data collection procedure and data analysis. Chapter four presents the findings and discussions of the research and chapter five presents the conclusion and recommendation of the research.

