DESIGNING ENGLISH CLASSROOM METHOD BASED ON STUDENTS' LEARNING STYLE

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Abstrak

Siswa memiliki pilihan – pilihan yang berbeda dalam cara mereka memperoleh dan memproses informasi yang kemudian bisa dikatakan bahwa mereka memiliki gaya belajar yang berbeda. Gaya belajar tersebut terdiri dari visual (V), auditori (A), and kinestatik (K). Karena siswa berbeda dalam cara belajar, guru butuh mengaplikasikan cara yang berbeda dalam proses pengajaran dengan memperhatikan perbedaaan-perbedaan cara belajar sswa. Memahami gaya belajar siswa merupakan pertimbangan yang penting dalam merancang metode pengajaran Bahasa Inggris. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini dilakukan untuk meneliti gaya belajar siswa dan menyarankan metode yang paling baik untuk proses pengajaran dan pembelajaran yang sesuai dengan gaya belajar siswa. Peneliti menggunakan questioner VAK kepada siswa kelas 12 di MA. Walisongo Putri, Ngabar; 20 siswa diminta untuk melengkapi questioner. Tanggapan dari questioner menunjukkan gaya belajar siswa. Sebagian besar siswa merupakan siswa dengan gaya belajar visual (35%). Sisanya merupakan siswa Auditory (15%), 20% merupakan siswa kinetetik, dan 5% Visual – audio. Siswa Visual-Kinetetik dan Audio-Kinestetik jumlahnya sama, masing-masing 10%. Sisanya 5% merupakan siswa VAK. Berdasarkan hasil dari penelitian, para guru butuh menyesuaikan perbedaan gaya belajar dan mengembangkan metode yang sesuai di dalam aktifitas kelas.

Kata kunci: *metode pengajaran, gaya belajar, aktifitas kelas*.

Abstract

Students have different preferences in the way they take in and process information. In another words, they have different learning styles. Their learning style include visual (V), auditory (A), and kinesthetic (K). Since individuals differ in their ways of learning, teachers require applying different ways of teaching which take into account these individual differences. Understanding students' learning styles is an important consideration when designing method for English classroom instruction. Therefore, this study was conducted to investigate the students' learning styles and propose the best method for the teaching and learning process that suits their styles. The researcher administered the VAK questionnaire to twelfth grade students of MA. Walisongo Putri, Ngabar; 20 students were asked to complete the questionnaire. The responses showed the learning styles of the students. Most of the students are visual learner (35%). The rest of the students are A learners (15%), 20% of the students are K learners, and 5% of them are VA learners. The VK and AK students are equal in number (10%). The remaining 5% are VAK learners. Based on the result, the teachers need to address this diversity of learning styles and develop appropriate teaching method in the classroom activities.

Keywords: *teaching method, learning styles, classroom activities*

INTRODUCTION

Teaching and learning is an active process involving the participation of teachers and learners. It is important for both to understand their role in the classroom. To have a successful class, teachers need to implement the right teaching method. The selection of the method is influenced by some factors namely teaching goals, content, learners, and resources. In classroom activities, teachers mostly rely heavily on the teaching goals as well as content. There is only a few concern/focus on the learners, specifically their learning styles. Meanwhile, it is essential to understand that learning styles has a significant role in the learning process, and it should not be neglected in the teaching of a foreign language. Language teachers' awareness of differences in students' learning can lead to more productive and effective lessons. Therefore, administering proper learning styles

investigation before designing English classroom method is very important. Thus, the aim of this study is to investigate the students' learning styles and propose the best method for the teaching and learning process in the classroom that suitable with learners' styles.

Understanding a person learning style is crucial since how well a person absorbs and retains information depends largely on whether the information is received in the person's preferred learning modality (Zapalska & Dabb, 2002). It is supported by Dunn and Dunn (1992; 1993; 1999) who state that learning style is the way in which each student begins to concentrate on, process, absorb, and retain new and difficult information. Then, a person's learning style is hypothesized to be a combination of cognitive, affective, and psychological characteristics that describe how that individual interacts with his or her environment.

Nunan (2002, p. 168 as cited in Fauziati, 2015, p. 11) states that learning style is any individual's preferred way of going about learning. Besides, Pashler at.al. (2009) state that learning styles refer to the concept that individuals differ in regard to what mode of instruction or study is most effective for them. Then, the term *learning styles* is widely used to describe how learners gather, shift through, interpret, organize, come to conclusions about, and "store" information for further use. Therefore students' learning style differs from one to another. It is in accordance with what Dunn & Griggs (1988, p. 3) who state that learning style is the biologically and developmentally imposed set of characteristics that make the same teaching method wonderful for some and terrible for others.

Further, Reid (1999, p. 6 as cited in Fauziati, 2015, p. 12) classifies learning styles into three major types: cognitive, personality, and sensory. Cognitive styles refer to the mental processes of information. According to Reid (1999, p. 6 as cited in Fauziati, 2015, p. 12), cognitive styles are divided into three major type; field-independent/ dependent learning styles (FI/FD), global or holistic/ analytical learning styles and reflective/ impulsive

learning styles. Then, personality learning style is a construct based on Carl Yung's concept of archetypes (Fauziati, 2015, p. 18). An individual's personality profile is identified along three dimensions; extroversion/introversion, tolerance of ambiguity, and left/right brain functioning. Meanwhile, sensory learning style refers to the physical, perceptual learning channels with which a learner is most comfortable with (Oxford, 2002:360 as cited in Fauziati, 2015, p. 14). These can be classified into three major types: visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learners.

Referring to various type of learning styles, this research focused on sensory learning styles; visual, auditory, and kinesthetic style. Visual students are the ones who learn effectively and efficiently through seeing thing. The more the students are able to see the information, the easier they learn. They tend to learn by using textbooks, worksheets, written notes, etc. According to Mortensen (2008, p. 3 as cited in Fauziati, 2005, p.16), learning activities that suit to the visual learners are: drawing a map, making outlines of everything, copying what's on the board, asking the teacher for diagram, etc. Furthermore, visual learners commonly have some characteristics: good at spelling but forget names, need quite study time, have to think awhile before understanding lecture, like colors & fashion, understand charts, etc. Sometimes, visual students favor sitting in the front of the classroom. They also take descriptive notes over the material being presented (Gilakjani, 2011, p. 1).

Auditory students are the ones who learn best information through hearing things. The more students are able to hear information, the easier they learn. Therefore, oral presentations are crucial for understanding the subject. According to Mortensen (2008, p. 4-5 as cited in Fauziati, 2005, p. 14), auditory learners get better understanding in classroom by doing some of activities, namely: recording lectures, using word associations, listening to audiotapes, reading notes aloud. Auditory students favor sitting in the front of class where the teacher can easily be seen and heard, and studying and discussing subject with other students. Gilakjani (2011, p. 2) explains that these

individuals gain knowledge from reading out loud in the classroom and may not have a full understanding of information that is written.

Kinesthetic students are the students who are able to get information through experiencing or doing things. They learn best when information is presented using touch and movement. The more the learners are able to touch, manipulate the materials used to present information, the easier they learn them. Kinesthetic learners need to move, build, investigate, and physically create concepts. Based on the Morteen (2008, p. 3 as cited in Fauziati, 2005, p. 17), kinesthetic learners have following characteristics: good at sports, cannot sit for long, like science lab, take break when studying, good at building models, etc. It is supported by Gilakjani (2011, p. 2) that most of the time kinesthetic learners have a difficult time staying on target and can become unfocused effortlessly.

In correlation with the theories that have been explained above, many previous studies into the learning styles of EFL students have been done to know in which styles students learn best. According to Dunn and Dunn (1978), only 20-30% of school age children appear to be auditory learners, 40% are visual learners, and 30-40% is tactile/kinesthetic or visual/tactile learners. Barbe and Milone (1981) state that for grade school children the most frequent modality strengths are visual (30%) or mixed (30%), followed by auditory (25%), and then by kinesthetic (15%).

METHOD

Research Design

This study investigates students' learning styles at MA. Walisongo Putri, Ngabar. This research used survey research design in which the survey is in the form of quantitative data. The survey in the form of VAK questionnaire is distributed to the twelfth grade students to find out students' belief, opinion, characteristic, and past or present behavior. Survey is appropriate for research questions about self-reported belief or behavior (Lawrence: 2003 as cited in Sugiyono, 2015, p. 34).

Population and Sample

The participants in this study consist of twelfth grade students at MA. Walisongo Putri, Ngabar in the academic year of 2016/2017. A total of 20 students are involved in this research from a population of 100 students who completed the questionnaire (20%). The researcher uses non probability sampling because the sampling technique is not given to all populations as sample equally (Sugiyono, 2013, p. 84). Further, the researcher used purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is sampling technique based on researcher' subjective assessment in certain characteristic of sample which is believed has relationship with characteristic of population which known before (Dessy, 2012, p. 47).

Data Collection Technique

This study gathered data from VAK questionnaire. The VAK questionnaire was developed by Ganesha Operation Ponorogo. The questionnaire was given to the twelfth grade students of MA. Walisongo Putri, Ngabar at the first meeting when they were joining school program collaborating with Ganesha Operation Ponorogo for preparing national examination.

Instrument

This study used VAK questionnaire which was developed by Ganesha Operation Ponorogo. The questionnaire has 54 questions in which the students had to choose "YES/ NO" to decide their tendency related to their learning style.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics was used to display the result of the questionnaires depicting percentages of students' learning styles. The number of students having each style of learning was divided by the total number of responses to determine the percentage.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 Result of Students' Learning Style

Students' Learning Style	Number of the students	Percentage
V	7	35%
A	3	15%
K	4	20%
VA	1	5%
VK	2	10%
AK	2	10%
VAK	1	5%
Total number of the students	20	100%
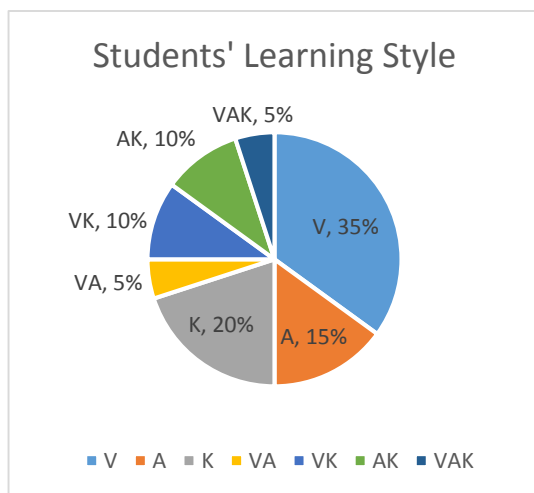
Picture 1 Result of Students' Learning Styles

The figure shows the percentages of students' learning styles. Presented in the graph that is most students are visual learners. It can be seen from the graph that 35% of the students learn effectively by seeing thing that teacher presents in the classroom. Specifically, there are 15% auditory students, 20% are kinesthetic students. The rest of the percentages show that students have bi-style mode of preference even tri-style mode of preference. The bi-style mode students are VA, VK, or AK. There are only 5% VA learners. Meanwhile, the numbers of VK and AK learners are equal (10%). Moreover, the remaining 5% is VAK students.

The purpose of the study was to investigate learning styles of twelfth grade students and propose classroom design based on the students' learning styles. The knowledge of students' learning styles is vital for teachers to design the most appropriate teaching method. Knowing students' learning styles also helps overcome the tendency of many teachers to treat all students in a similar way as well as motivate teachers to move from their preferred style(s) to using others. In doing so, they can reach more students due to the appropriateness between teacher's method used in the classroom and learners' styles. The results of the VAK questionnaire should convince teachers to use appropriate modes of information presentation.

The result of VAK questionnaire showed that among twelfth grade students, most of them are visual style (35%). It means that most of them learn effectively and efficiently through seeing thing. The more the students are able to see the information, the easier they learn. Therefore, it is advised to the teacher to design method that accommodates students' need through these activities: drawing a map, making outlines of everything, copying what's on the board, asking the teacher for diagram, etc. Moreover, usage of multimedia aids can be a helpful tool for teacher to address the need of students with different learning styles to cope with new technologies advancement. Some of multimedia that teachers can utilize is power points, prezi presentation, digital videos and you tube, etc.

In some cases, it may be difficult to apply the best method or technique appropriate with individual's learning styles of each student. However, in these situations, by being aware of their learning styles, the students may contribute to their academic success by promoting self-awareness and applying learning strategies that work for their own learning styles. It is essential for teacher to have teaching styles that provide access for students with different styles.

CLOSING

Conclusion

Every student has specific learning styles. It can be determined by the use of the VAK questionnaire which can assist both the teachers and learners in identifying each student's learning styles. The result showed that most of the students tend to have visual learning styles. It means that they learn better by seeing things. Then it is important to understand students' learning styles to assist

teachers in designing the best method that fit in the classroom. Based on the result of the study, it is advised to the teacher to design method that accommodates students' need through these activities: drawing a map, making outlines of everything, copying what's on the board, asking the teacher for diagram, etc.

Implications for teaching

Gathering data on students' learning styles can strengthen a teacher's ability to identify which teaching method best applied in the classroom. To help learners learn better when being assigned activities that do not match their learners' styles, the teachers need to make clear objective of each learning method they want to achieve, especially those having learners with different learning styles. Detailed instructions should be given so as to "reduce learner misunderstanding, dissatisfaction and opposition" (Peacock, 1998, p. 245). Since the result showed that most of the students are visual learners, it is better for the teachers to design method that accommodate students' needs. Some of the recommended learning activities are drawing a map, making outlines of everything, copying what's on the board, asking the teacher for diagram, etc.

Implications for learning

Inventories of learning styles and other processes can also be used to help make students aware of their own preferences and strengths (Claxton and Murrell, 1987, p. 6). It is a promising strategy to help students understand more about their own styles in learning and to suggest ways for them to cope more effectively in classroom activities. By doing so, students can learn to take increasing charge of their own learning and be more active in the process (Claxton and Murrell, 1987, p. 6).

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