Identifying Students' Learning Styles in English Learning

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Abstract

This research highlights students' learning styles in English learnin to find out (1) the types of learning styles of class VIII students at SMP Negeri 24 Makassar, and (2) how do class VII students at SMP Negeri 24 Makassar empower their learning styles in English learning. This research used mixed methods taking 118 class VIII students of SMP Negeri 24 Makassar as the sample by using random sampling techniques. The instruments were questionnaire, observation, and interview. Twenty-five students as representatives of the three types of learning styles were observed and interviewed regarding how they empowered their learning styles. The results show that (1) class VIII students of SMP Negeri 24 Makassar predominantly have a visual learning style with a total of 66 students (55.93%), followed by the auditory learning style of 43 students (36.44%), and kinesthetic learning style of 9 students (7.63 %), and (2) visual learning style students empower their learning style by having neat and orderly writing, note important points from the material, and utilize online media; auditory learning style students empower their learning style by collaborate in doing their assignments, create a calm environment, and utilize online media; and kinesthetic learning style students empower their learning style by point to the text while reading, choose practical activities, and move their body parts when they are focused. Thus, it can be concluded that class VIII students at SMP Negeri 24 Makassar predominantly have visual learning style by empowering their learning style with activities that rely on their sight, while students with auditory learning style rely on their hearing and students with kinesthetic learning style are happy with activities that rely on physicality.

Key words-- *visual, auditory, kinesthetic, learning styles, English learning.*

INTRODUCTION

Student learning styles are one of the characteristics of students that is important for teachers to pay attention to in the learning process. This is because each student has their own strengths and weaknesses, as well as differences in preferences regarding how information is processed. By knowing students' learning styles, it will be easier for teachers to provide a supportive environment and make it easier for students to absorb information optimally. The basic idea of finding learning styles aims to help and make it easier for students when learning.

Every student has the easiest way to absorb information and that way usually tends to be preferred when studying as well as in learning English. If the differences in students' learning styles are not considered, it will make the teacher teach as she/he pleases so that students need more time and energy to understand the lesson. Meanwhile, one of the teacher's roles is as a facilitator who gives students convenience in the learning process. This is in line with Haling, Salam, and Arnidah (2007) which says that one of the roles of the teacher is as a facilitator who

will provide facilities for ease of learning, create a learning atmosphere in such a way, in harmony with the development of students, so that interactions in learning will take place effectively. Therefore, the teacher also has a role in maximizing the most prominent student learning styles in the learning process and introducing them to other learning styles so that students can learn optimally.

The researcher has interviewed an English teacher at SMA Negeri 24 Makassar regarding the difficulties teachers face in teaching. From the results of the interviews, the researcher discover that adjusting passive and active students is one of the difficulties teachers face when teaching because there are usually more passive students than active ones in the class. This is because the learning methods applied by teachers are monotonous and do not suit the students' dominant learning styles. Hence, teachers should know students' learning styles in advance to make it easier for him to design learning models or methods that are more appropriate to students' learning styles so as to increase students' activity during learning. This is in line with Ratumana & Rosmiati (2020) that educators can design more appropriate learning if they understand the differences in students' learning styles so that this can increase the activeness and intensity of students' attention.

In relation to the students' learning styles, several studies have been researched. Bakri et al. (2019) with the title "Exploring the Impact of VAK Learning Style on Teenager Level Language Learners in Indonesia" tried to explore the VAK learning styles and focus on junior high school students, as well as the researcher. The aim of the study was to find the impact of VAK learning styles on junior high school teenagers, especially on their speaking abilities while the current study focused on identifying students' learning styles of class VIII at SMP Negeri 24 Makassar and how they empowered their learning styles in English learning. In addition, the study used experimental method while the researcher used quantitative survey method and qualitative descriptive method. The second study was from Hajar et al. (2020) under the title "Learning Style of An Outstanding Student in English Learning at SMA Negeri 1 Buru". The study aimed to find out the learning style of a student in English learning as well as the intention of the researcher. However, the focus on the previous study was to find out the learning style of an outstanding student and the factors that influence her to be able to achieve many achievements and still enjoy the learning process, while the researcher focused on discovering the students' learning styles and how they empowered their learning styles. In addition, the study implemented a descriptive qualitative method while the researcher used a survey quantitative and descriptive qualitative method.

The third study was from Fadhilah and Suherdi (2020) under the title "Perceptual Learning Style Preferences of Junior High School Students". The previous study focused on the junior high school students same as the focus of the researcher. They tried to explore differences in learning style preferences between male and female students in their studies, while the researcher focused on discovering students' learning styles and how they empower their learning styles in English learning. In addition, the study focused on perceptual learning styles with Reid's in 1987 theory, that there are 6 basic perceptual style preferences: visual, auditory, kinesthetic, tactile, group, individual. Meanwhile, the researcher focused on learning styles based on sensory learning styles according to Deporter & Hernacki (2015). The study was a quantitative study while the researcher used mixed methods (qualitative and quantitative) study.

In 2018, a study was undertaken by Abdulrahman *et al.* to determine how podcast affected students' listening comprehension. The study's findings revealed that podcast significantly improved students' ability to understand what they were hearing. It showed that podcast has a positive effect on the improvement of the students' listening skill. To ascertain whether the usage

of podcast significantly had an impact on students' ability in English speaking and listening, Fitria *et al.* (2015) conducted research. The findings of this study demonstrated that podcast was a cutting-edge and successful media for teaching English, particularly speaking and listening. In his study, Muliasari (2020) tried to understand how using podcast affected the listening skill of the students and how they perceived the use of podcast to enhance their listening skill, found that used podcast could be an alternative way to hone listening skill. A research by Permatasari (2013) used podcast to help students develop their listening skills. The findings of this study indicated that podcast may improve students' listening skill.

The outcomes of this research are similar to those of earlier ones in that each of them indicated how the use of podcast affected students' skill or comprehension in listening. This study was different from the previous studies. The earlier studies looked at students' perceptions on using podcast as a tool to enhance listening skills, meanwhile in this study the researcher aimed to improve students' listening skill by applying the Spotify audio podcast, especially in listening for main ideas, listening for details, and listening for making inferences.

Since listening is the skill that contributes the most to mastering English but is rarely taught in schools, the researcher chose podcast as the learning media which is easily accessible to be used in this research in order to assist the students in terms of improving their listening skill. The researcher wanted to encourage students to use podcast to improve their listening skill. Podcast is internet audio or video recordings that may be saved and played on any portable MP3 device or computer for free. Podcast make it possible to learn anywhere, at any time. They make it possible for students to access educational materials whether they are at home, in a classroom, at work, or participating in any other activity they want. They can play the recordings whenever it's convenient for them, rather than being restricted to set class times. They provide the same function as audio cassettes did in the past, making them an obvious choice for distance learning. Unlike other types of audio, podcast are automatically provided online via a website or music program. These provide English teachers as well as learners an access to a variety of choices for more practice with listening both in and outside the classroom.

Based on the description above and the results of observations with students at SMP Negeri 24 Makassar, the researcher felt it is necessary to conduct research entitled: "Identifying Students' Learning Styles in English Learning".

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Definition of Learning Styles

Based on the results of the researcher's reading, the researcher found several definitions from various references related to students learning styles in the learning process. These definitions are as follows.

a. Widayanti (2013) defines learning style as the way a person receives, processes, remembers and applies information easily.

b. Sundayana (2016) explains that learning style is a consistent way that students do in capturing information or stimulus, remembering, thinking, and solving problems.

c. Santrock (2010) in Papilaya and Huliselan (2016), learning style is a method that a person chooses to use his abilities, related to the preferred learning method.

d. Learning styles are the easiest way people use to receive information from the enviro nment, absorb, organize and process that information (Bire, Gerardus, & Bire, 2014).

e. Learning styles are a process of behavior, appreciation, and a person's tendency to acquire knowledge in his own way (Wahyuni, 2017).

f. Learning styles are characteristics that people consider in choosing the most appropriate learning strategies, methods and techniques (Cimermanova, 2018).

Based on the opinions of several researchers above, the researcher conclude that learning style is an approach that explains the way that each person takes to concentrate on a process to receive and master new information. In other words, learning style can be defined as the preferred way of students to receive and process information in the learning process. Students usually choose certain learning styles that are considered more effective in learning, including learning English.

2. Types of Learning Styles

Based on the results of the literature, the researcher found several types of learning styles from several experts based on sensory learning styles as follows:

a. Wood (2000) divided learning styles into 4 types, namely visual learner, auditory learner, global learner, and kinesthetic learner.
b. Ratumanan and Rosmiati (2020, pp. 88) divided learning styles into visual, auditory, and kinesthetic.
c. Gunawan, Imam, Palupi (2012) from the way people enter information into the brain through the five senses, there are 5 learning styles namely visual (sight), auditory (hearing), tactile or kinesthetic (touch or movement, olfactory (smell), and gustatory (taste)). But of the five learning styles, he mentions that there are three dominant and most frequently used learning styles. These are visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning styles.
d. DePorter and Hernacki (2015) divides sensory modalities into three types, namely visual learning style, auditory learning style, and kinesthetic learning style.

Due to its popularity and wide use, the researcher only focused on classifying learning styles based on sensory preferences according to DePorter and Herncacki (2015), namely visual learning styles, auditory learning styles, and kinesthetic learning styles.

3. Characteristics of Learning Styles

Based on the results of the literature, the researcher found several characteristics of the visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning styles from several experts, namely as follows:

a. DePorter & Hernacki (2015) mentioned the characteristics of visual learning style are learning in a visual way, remembering what was seen rather than what was heard, being neat and orderly, not being bothered by the noise, difficulty receiving verbal instructions. Auditory learner have characteristics such as learning by hearing, being good in oral activity, having a sensitivity to music, being easily distracted by noise, being weak in visual activity. Meanwhile, the characteristics of kinesthetic are learning with physical activity, being sensitive to expressions and body language, moving a lot and physically oriented, liking to try and less neat, liking group work and practice.
b. Ratumanan & Rosmiati (2020, p. 89) mentioned the characteristics of visual are being organized, paying attention to everything, keeping up appearances, remembering with pictures,

prefer reading rather than being read aloud, and requiring an overall picture and purpose and captures details, remembers what is seen. Meanwhile auditory learner have characteristics such as his attention is easily distracted speaking in a rhythmic pattern, learning by listening, moving lips or sounding while reading, dialogue internally and externally. The characteristics of kinesthetic are touching others and standing close together, moving around a lot, learning by doing, pointing at writing while reading, responding physically, and remembering while walking and seeing.

Based on the characteristics above, the researcher conclude that the characteristics of the visual learning style relate to a person's ability and ease of understanding and remembering pictures, auditory relates to a person's ability and ease of understanding something with sound, while kinesthetic relates to someone's ability to do something using body movements. Visual learning style have characteristics namely being neat and organized, remembering visual associations, choosing to read rather than being read to, not being bothered by noise. Meanwhile, the characteristics of auditory learning styles are liking to talk, his/her attention is easily distracted, learning by listening, having the ability to express opinions, whereas the characteristics of kinesthetic learning style are learning by way of physical activity or practice, moving activeness, concentrating by moving, being sensitive to expressions and body language.

METHOD

1. Research Design

This study used mixed methods to identify students' learning styles in English learning and how they empower their learning styles. The researcher conducted a quantitative survey and descriptive qualitative method. A quantitative method used to determine students' learning styles and a qualitative method used to find out how students empowered their learning styles. The research design used in this study is triangulation method.

2. Place and Time of the Research

This research was conducted in SMA Negeri 24 Makassar on Februari until Mei of 2023.

3. Population and Sample

The population of this study was the students of class VIII at SMP Negeri 24 Makassar in 2022-2023 academic year that consists of 340 students. The sample selection was carried out using a random sampling technique.This is because the characteristics of class VIII students at SMP Negeri 24 Makassar are homogeneous. The researcher took four classes from the population as research samples with a total of 118 students.

4. Research Instrument

In this study, the researcher distributed questionnaires. The student learning styles questionnaire is in the form of a written statement that used to obtain information from respondents regarding their learning styles. In each statement items are grouped based on indicators that are the focus of attention by the researcher.

The researcher also conducted observations and interviews to obtain as complete and valid data as possible regarding students' learning styles in English learning. This is because the researcher feels that it is necessary to make observations so that the information obtained is more natural and as it is. On the other hand, observations of learning styles used to determine students' learning styles and how they empowered their learning styles in learning English. In addition, the

researcher also conducted interviews as reinforcement of the data to be obtained. The main instrument in qualitative research is the researcher herself (human instrument) accompanied by tools. Therefore, the supporting instruments used by researcher are observation guidelines, interview guidelines, tape recorders, cameras, and stationery.

5. Technique of Analyzing Data

In order to analyze the data that the researcher got, the researcher used SPSS version 22 to give a score of students' learning styles based on their type. The researcher used a likert scale scoring by giving weights 4, 3, 2, 1 for positive statement choices and weights 1,2,3,4 for negative statements for each answer (Sugiyono, 2016).

Table 3. 1 Score Answer Likert Scale

Answers	Positive Answer Scores	Negative Answer Scores
Strongly Agree	4	1
Agree	3	2
Disagree	2	3
Strongly Disagree	1	4

(Sugiyono, 2016)

In addition, data obtained and collected by the researcher through observation and in-depth interviews were analyzed using descriptive-qualitative analysis. According to (Miles et al., 2018) in conducting qualitative descriptive data analysis, there are three steps that must be carried out as follows.

a. Data Condensation

Data condensation was a process when data is analyzed by sorting, focusing, or simplifying the data that has been obtained, whether in the form of interview transcripts, documents, or other forms. This has been done to obtain more accurate data and conclusions can be drawn from the data obtained.

b. Data Display

The second step of the analysis process was data display, namely the organized display of data or information that allows the data to be processed. In the display data process, data analysis helps the researcher to obtain more concise data so that conclusions can be drawn about what happened or the type of data to be included in subsequent data analysis.

c. Draw and Verify Conclusions

The third step in the analysis process is drawing conclusions and verification, namely drawing final conclusions and verifying the data. In the verification process, the truth or validity of the data has been thoroughly tested by the researcher.

RESULTS

1. Types of Students' Learning Styles

The results of descriptive statistical analysis reveal that there are three types of learning styles in English learning, namely visual, auditory and kinesthetic which can be seen in the following table:

Table 4. 1 Results of Descriptive Statistical Analysis of Students' Learning Styles

No.	Statistic	Learning Styles			The Whole Learning Styles
		V	A	K	
1.	Total respondents	66	43	9	118
2.	Maximum Score	40	37	33	100
3.	Minimum Score	26	25	26	65
4.	Maximum Ideal Score	40	40	40	120
5.	Minimum Ideal Score	10	10	10	30
6.	Mean	30.26	29.35	28.22	80.36
7.	Mode	30	29	26	79
8.	Std. Deviation (s)	3.23	2.58	2.22	6.13
9.	Variance (s2)	10.44	6.66	4.94	37.65
10	Percentage	55.93%	36.44%	7.63%	100%

Based on Table 4.1, data shows that there are 66 students (55.93 %) with visual learning style with the maximum score of answers is 40, minimum score is 26, the variance is 10.44, the standard deviation is 3.23 and the mean is 30.26. Meanwhile, there are 43 students (36.44%) with auditory learning style with the maximum score of answers is 37, the lowest score is 25, the variance is 6.66, the standard deviation is 2.58, and the mean is 28.22. There are 9 students (7.63 %) with kinesthetic learning style with the maximum score of answer is 33, the minimum score is 26, the variance is 4.94, the standard deviation is 2.22, and the mean is 28.22. So it can be concluded that the most dominant learning style possessed by class VIII students at SMPN 24 Makassar is the visual learning style.

The visual learners are helped in empowering their learning styles through teachers teaching styles and the learning media used by the teachers. The visual learners tend to absorb information from pictures and writing on videos via the YouTube and TikTok applications, written explanations on the whiteboard, and like reading books or notes. The results of this research are in accordance with Gunawan, Imam, and Palupi (2012) that visual learners very easily understand information written or in the form of images. Mahajani's (2013) research results also show that visual learning style refers to students' preferred way of absorbing and processing lesson material easily through learning with pictures.

Auditory learning style is the second most common learning style used by class VIII students at SMP Negeri 24 Makassar. The auditory learners empower their learning style assisted by the learning method commonly used by teachers, namely the lecture method. The auditory learners are facilitated by this because they learn by relying on their hearing, therefore they are easily distracted. The auditory learners tend to absorb information by listening to material presented by the teacher, verbal explanations from the teacher or friends. This is relating with the characteristics of the auditory learning style according to research by Mahajani (2013) that the

auditory learning style is the way students choose to absorb and process material through listening to the teacher's explanation.

Kinesthetic learning style are the type of learning style that is least used by class VIII students at SMP Negeri 24 Makassar. This is because the teachers do not provide practical experience or demonstrations when learning English. Meanwhile, one of the main characteristics of kinesthetic learners is learning with physical activities. Therefore, the kinesthetic students enjoy practical activities. This is in line with DePorter and Hernacki's theory in 2015 regarding the characteristics of kinesthetic learners, namely learning with physical activity.

2. How The Students Empower Their Learning Style

Students have their own ways of empowering their learning styles. There are three styles for visual learners in empowering their learning style, namely (a) having neat and orderly writing, (b) noting important points from the material, and (c) utilizing online media. Meanwhile, auditory learners empowering their learning style by three styles, namely (a) collaborating in doing their assignments, (b) creating a calm environment, and (c) utilizing online media. Kinesthetic leaners empowering their learning style by three styles, namely (a) pointing to the text while reading, (b) choosing practical activities, and (c) moving his body parts when he is focused. These findings will be discussed in relation to previous research that is relevant to the results of this research.

a. Visual Learners
1) Having neat and orderly writing

The visual learners have neat and orderly drawings and writing. This is one of the main characteristics of visual learners. This is because the visual learners tend to rely on their eyesight so that they pay enough attention to appearance or everything they see, especially writing. By having neat and orderly writing, it makes it easier for them to read their writing again. This is in line with Nurwidayanti and Mukminan (2018) who state that one of the characteristics of the visual learners is remembering what they see, rather than what they hear, being neat and orderly, and being careful about details. This is also in line with the characteristics according to DePorter and Hernacki (2015) which state that visual learners are neat and orderly.

2) Noting important points from the material

The visual learners empower their learning style by noting important points from the material. This method is strengthened through assignments that teachers usually give to students in the form of taking notes, so that visual learners can easily implement their learning style. This is done so that they can read it again, making it easier for them to understand the material. Apart from that, visual learners also note down the vocabulary they want to memorize before trying to memorize it. This is because visual students memorize more easily based on what they see compared to what they hear. This is in line with Safrianti (2017) who states that students with a visual learning style memorize what they see rather than what they hear, memorize by looking and always pay attention to something. Nurwidayanti and Mukminan (2018) also stated that people who have a visual learning style remember what they see rather than what they hear, and are fast and diligent readers. Therefore, it can be said that choosing to read rather than being read to is one of the visual learners' characteristics.

3) Utilizing online media

The visual learners empower their learning style by utilizing online media. The online media used are the TikTok, YouTube, Webtoon and Telegram applications. The visual learners are helped by teachers who use online media as a learning medium in learning English, making it

easier for them to empower their learning style. The online media commonly used in learning English in class are the YouTube and TikTok applications which are usedto watch videos, while other applications besides Webtoon and Telegram are also used by some visual learners to read stories and watch films. This is because visual students rely on their eyesight when learning. This is in line with DePorter and Hernacki (2015) who stated that people who have a visual learning style remember visual associations. Therefore, it can be said that remembering visual assosition is one of the chracteristics of visual learmers.

b. Auditory Learners
1) Collaborating in doing their assignments
        The auditory learners empowered their learning styles by collaborating when carrying out their assignments. They chose to work together and discuss with their friends to complete their tasks rather than having to sit neatly and quietly in their seats. This is because auditory learners tended to enjoy telling stories and talking. This is in line with the characteristics stated by DePorter and Hernacki (2015) that people who have an auditory learning style like to talk and have the ability to express their opinions. Nurwidayanti and Mukminan (2018) also stated that people who have an auditory learning style listen and remember what is discussed rather than what they see, like to talk, like to discuss and explain things at length and like to do assignments in groups. That's why when students are given assignments by the teacher, they choose to do it with their friends. Therefore, it can be said that liking to talk and having ability to express opinion are the characteristics of auditory learners.

2) Creating a calm environment
        The auditory learners empowered their learning style by trying to create a calm environment while studying. The auditory learners did not hesitate to reprimand their friends loudly when they felt disturbed. Apart from that, it can also be seen when auditory learners memorize vocabulary, they try to focus by covering their ears so as not to hear the movement around them. They also admitted through interviews that they could not focus on studying when there was noise. It is because auditory learners rely on their hearing so their attention is easily distracted when there is noise. Therefore, being easily distracted are the main characteristics of auditory learners. This is in line with DePorter and Hernacki (2015) who stated that people who have auditory learning style are learning by listening and easily distracted. Safrianti (2017) also stated that people who have an auditory learning style do not focus easily if there is noise. Therefore, it can be said that one of the characteristics of the auditory leaners is their attention is easily distracted.

3) Utilizing online media
        Based on the findings, the auditory learners empowered their learning style by utilizing online media. They admitted through interviews that they used online media to learn English. The online media used are YouTube, Google Translate, Spotify. YouTube and Spotify are used to listen to music, while Google translate is used to listen to the correct English pronunciation. It is because auditory learners rely on their hearing when studying. This is in line with DePorter and Hernacki (2015) who state that people who have an auditory learning style learn by listening. Nurwidayanti and Mukminan (2018) also stated that people who have an auditory learning style like music and singing. Hence, learning by listening is one of the main characteristics of auditory learners.

c. Kinesthetic Learners
1) Pointing to the text while reading

Based on the findings, the kinesthetic learners empowered their learning style by pointing to the reading they are reading. Students who point to reading materials used their fingers or pens. The finger or pen moved to follow the text they were reading. This is because their focus on reading is right on target. This is in line with Safrianti (2017) who stated that students with a kinesthetic learning style point to sentences while reading.

2) Choosing practical activities

Based on the findings, the kinesthetic learners chose practical activities such as games. They are more enthusiastic about learning when given practical activities. This is in line with DePorter and Hernacki (2015) which states that people who have a visual learning style learn by way of physical activity or practice and moving activeness. Safrianti (2017) also stated that people who have a kinesthetic learning style like playing games and sports, preferring to move rather than stay still. Therefore, it can be said that learning by way of physical activity or practice is one of the kinesthetics learners characteristics.

3) Concentrating by moving

Based on the findings, the kinesthetic learners empowered their learning style by moving parts of their body when focused. They moved to concentrate, such as memorizing while walking, memorizing while moving their fingers or toes, placing their hands on their chins when focused, and other physically oriented activities. This is in line with DePorter and Hernacki (2015) which states that people who have a visual learning style are moving activeness, the way he/she concentrates by moving, and be sensitive to expressions and body language. Safrianti (2017) also states that people who have a kinesthetic learning style prefer to move rather than stay still, respond to physical attention, are always physically oriented and move a lot, memorize by walking and looking. Therefore, it can be said that concentrating by moving is one of kinesthetics leaners characteristics.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results in the previous chapter, the researcher concludes two things as follows:

1. The students of class VIII at SMP Negeri 24 Makassar belong to three learning styles, namely (a) visual learning style with 66 students (55.93%), (b) auditory learning style with 43 students (36.44%), and (c) kinesthetic learning style with 9 students (7.63%).
2. The students carry out several activities to empower their learning styles. The visual learners empower their learning style by (a) having neat and orderly writing, (b) noting important points from the material, and (c) using online media; the auditory learners empower their learning style by (a) collaborating in doing their assignments, (b) creating a calm environment, and (c) utilizing online media; the kinesthetic learners empower their learning style by (a) pointing to the text while reading, (b) choosing practical activities, and (c) moving their body parts when they are focused.

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