



**COMPARATIVE STUDY OF LEARNING STYLES BETWEEN HIGH
AND LOW ACHIEVERS IN ENGLISH LISTENING SKILL**

SKRIPSI

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ABSTRACT

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The major objective of this study was to investigate the learning styles used by the students with high achievement and low achievement in listening skill. This study also sought to reveal whether there was any significant difference between learning styles used by high achievers and low achievers. The researcher used non-experimental comparative research design with the sample of 50 English Education Department students at University of Islam Malang. The instruments used on this study were Index of Learning Style as the questionnaire to identify students' learning style and Listening TOEFL scores as the matrix of students' listening skill achievement. The data were analysed using independent sample t-test of SPSS.

The results of the study showed that in the processing dimension, both high achievers and low achievers prefer to use Active Learning Style; in the perception dimension both groups tended to use Sensing Learning Style. In the input dimension, high achievers used Verbal Learning Style and low achievers used Visual Learning Style. In the understanding dimension, high achievers and low achievers prefer to employ Sequential Learning Style. The results of independent sample t-test proved that there was no significant difference of learning styles between high achievers and low achievers in listening skill with significant value 0.42 (>0.05).

In general, high achievers and low achievers were found to use almost the same learning styles in each dimension, so it is beneficial for teachers to apply the teaching style that matches with students' learning styles. However, teacher should assess students' learning styles before starting a new class, as well as students should be more aware of their learning style preferences. For further researcher, it is suggested to do conduct a research related to correlation between learning style and students' achievement.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discussed the background of the study, statements of the problem, objectives of the study, research hypothesis, assumptions, scope and limitation, significance of the study, and definition of key terms.

1.1 Background of the Study

Learning style plays an important role in the English learning process. According to Allen, Sheve, and Nieter (2010), learning style is preferential thinking, method, and perceptivity information. Students have a preferred way of understanding something which will affect their learning process. This means in a classroom environment, there are many different learning styles that students have of their own. Therefore, these students will learn and process the information differently. Nowadays in learning a foreign language, teacher-centred has not been used, as it changed by a student-centred learning. When the students become the centre of the learning process, that teacher cannot apply the teacher's strategy, but the teacher should follow the students' strategy. That is why, understanding students' learning styles is important for teacher, so that teacher can decide what strategy that can fit all students.

Investigating learning style is continuing concern within the teaching English as a foreign language, as mentioned by El-Hmoudova and Milkova (2015), that knowing learning styles of the students in learning a foreign language has a benefit that students

can learn better when they know their learning preferences. In learning a language especially English, students must master four basic skills, they are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Among those four skills listening is the trickiest skill to develop. Due to listening is a receptive skill that students can learn by themselves outside the classroom, students might have their own learning styles. When students come to the classroom, they already have the basic knowledge of listening skills. As stated in the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (Graham, Santos, & Brophy, 2014) students should "... use previous knowledge, context and other clues to work out the meaning of what they hear or read ...". Hence in the classroom teacher merely gives the theory which students do not know yet and lead the students to perform more. Therefore, knowing learners' preferences is important both for teacher and student.

Recently, some researchers have shown an increased interest in the relationship between learning styles as well as the growth of digital learning. It happened because today's generation can use technology. Technology can provide direct reinforcement to students so that individual learning tools can be made. "The use of ICT in learning also ensures that individual learner characteristics are taken off" (Al-Mahrooqi & Troudi, 2014). Moreover, ESL teachers in this day generation are also ready to apply and combine the technology smoothly in their classroom, which is important in fulfilling the need of learning language in this 21 centuries (Men & Noordin, 2019).

What most people know about learning style is largely based upon empirical studies that investigate how the processes of the students learn. The famously known learning

styles study comes from Reid (1998) that said students' diversities of learning styles can affect the students' performance in learning. In previous study, a casual investigation about the relationship between learning style preferences and learning styles strategies was found by Zarrabi (2017) in his investigation of the Relationship between Learning Style and Metacognitive Listening Awareness. This leads a concept that if there is a relation between the learning style and learning strategy, then there should be a relation between learning strategy and students' achievement. This also proved by the study which was conducted by Rezaeinejad, Azizifara, and Gowharya (2015), the results showed that there is a correlation between students' learning style and students' educational achievement. Therefore, the researcher wants to observe if there will be the same results in listening achievement.

In the field of language skills, listening is the trickiest skill to develop. Students must pay more attention to the recording and sometimes it is hard to concentrate. Therefore, here the teacher should improve and choose the best strategies for students considering what students' learning style (Jowkar, 2012). This means if the teacher could not identify students' learning styles effectively, there will be an unbalanced situation about students' listening achievement. As also mentioned by Milková and Hercikb (2014) that student's problem in the class is lack of motivation and self-efficacy from the students and others to individual difference.

In the literature of learning styles, however, the relative importance of comparing each style has been subject to considerable issue. Some researchers argue that one

learning style is not better than the others. Each learning style has its benefits for each student. Reid (1998) in his article mentioned that diversities of learning styles should not have contended one another. Maric et al. (2015) also have a concern about learning styles, that “no single style has an overwhelming advantage over any other. Each has strengths and weaknesses but the strengths may be especially important in one situation, but not in another” (p. 176).

After all, the generalizability of some previously published researches on this issue is only focused on the negative side of comparing each learning style. The researcher here wants to compare between high achievers and low achievers of learning style in listening skill, for the purpose is to know further if there is a difference between both of students. Furthermore, Burns, Johnson, and Gable, (1998) found in their study, that a teacher should not generalize students as the same group, because each student is different, and teacher could not apply a single method to teach the students who have a diverse learning style.

Based on the statement of a background study above, the researcher decides to conduct a study at the University of Islam Malang in the eighth semester of English Education Department. The reason why the researcher takes the subject from the eighth semester who took the TOEFL test that is programmed by P2BA. The TOEFL test that is conducted by the P2BA is one of the requirements for the eighth semester to graduate from the university, thus the students do the test earnestly. Therefore, the researcher believes that the data will be valid to be taken as the observation.

1.2 Statement of the Problems

Based on the background of the study stated above, the problems are formulated as follow:

1. What were the learning styles employed by the high and low achievers in listening skill?
2. Was there any significant difference of learning style used between high and low achievers in listening skill?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Based on the statement of problems above, there are two primary aims of this study:

1. To identify what learning styles employed by the high and low achievers in listening skill.
2. To identify if there is any significant difference of learning style used between high and low achievers in listening skill.

1.4 Research Hypothesis

The hypotheses of this study are formulated as follows:

1. Alternative hypothesis

There is significant difference of the learning styles used between the high achievers and low achievers in listening skill.

2. Null hypothesis

There is no significant difference of the learning styles used between the high achievers and low achievers in listening skill.

1.5 Assumption

The researcher assumed that high achievers and low achievers have the different learning styles.

1.6 Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study focuses on the difference in learning styles which are used by the two groups of students; they are the high achievers and low achievers in listening skill. The researcher considers that this study had the limitation related to time in obtaining the data. The collection of the data was conducted online so that the researcher was not able supervise the subject of the study intensively. Furthermore, it was uncertain to look up to the results of this study, as the sample of this study was limited to the English Education Department of University Islam Malang only.

1.7 Significance of the study

There are several important areas where this study contributes for:

1. Lecturer

The results of this study were expected to provide the beneficial information for lecturer. The lecturer can make a better plan for the class because they have known

what learning styles used by each student, whether the high achievers or the low achievers.

2. Students

With the analysis of comparison of learning styles, students can get the knowledge which learning styles that are employed by the high and low achievers, so they can decide what the best learning strategy to use with the differences of learning styles they have.

3. The future researchers

This study also aims to help giving more information to the next researcher. The next researcher can get the references for a future study that is related to the topic.

1.8 Definition of Key Terms

1. Learning Style

Learning style is the way the students of English Education Department at University of Islam Malang think or adapt some information, in which this learning style is different from each individual. There are four dimensions of Learning Styles according to Richard Felder: Active – Reflective, Sensing – Intuitive, Visual – Verbal, and Sequential – Global.

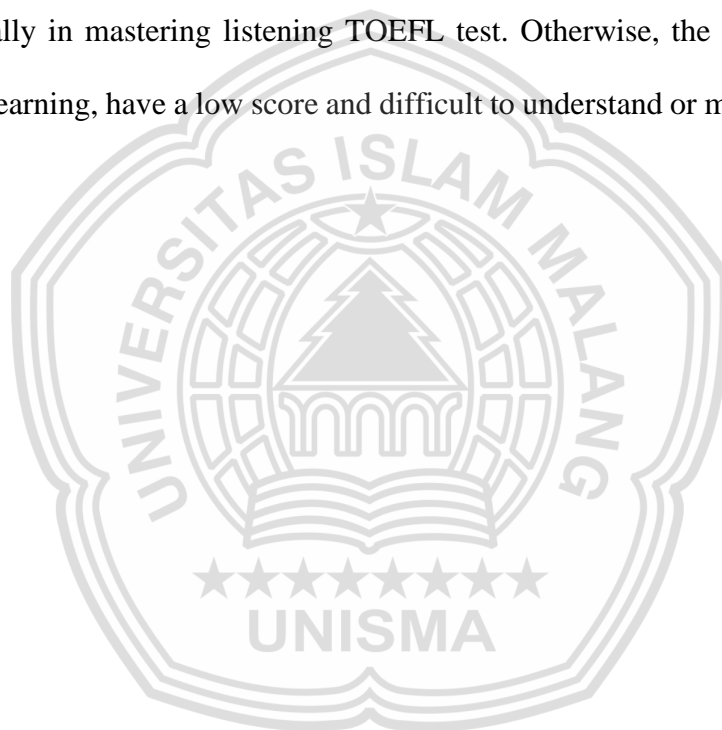
2. Listening Skill

Listening skill is a skill which the students must concern when they make communication to avoid miscommunication in understanding what the spoken

person said. For this study, listening skill refers to how well the students of English Education Department at Universitas Islam Malang do the Listening TOEFL test.

3. High achievers and low achievers

The high achievers are they who learn well, have a good score and a good understanding of the subject learned; in this case, they are good at listening skill specifically in mastering listening TOEFL test. Otherwise, the low achievers are poor at learning, have a low score and difficult to understand or master the listening skill.



CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

This study presents the conclusion and some suggestions for reader and future researchers.

1.1 Conclusion

The main goal of the current study was to find out what learning styles were used by high achievers and low achievers in listening skill and to identify if there is any significant difference in their learning styles. One of the results to emerge from this study is that both groups of students have many similarities and little differences in learning styles. This also proved as the researcher analyzed the data using an independent t-test, that the results showed there is no significant difference of learning styles between high achievers and low achievers.

There is an implication of this study, which is the possibility that both groups of students tended to have the same learning strategy preferences because they had the same learning style preferences. Moreover, the results of this study also indicated that students' learning style did not affect students' achievement as the results showed that all students have almost the same learning styles but they have different achievements.

1.2 Suggestion

According to the conclusion above, the researcher had some suggestions related to the study.

1. Teachers/Lecturers

As the results showed that there was no big difference in learning styles between high achievers and low achievers, teachers could apply the same teaching strategy for all students. However, it is highly suggested that teachers could do a learning style analysis for students before starting a new subject. This will help teachers to decide the best teaching strategy to use. By knowing the students' learning style, teachers could match the students' learning style with their teaching style. Considering what kind of treatment that fits well to students' learning style, teachers could design the lesson plan that matches with students' preferences.

2. Learners

Although there was an indication that learning styles did not affect students' achievement, learners should still be aware of what kind of learning styles they belong to, because this can lead students to decide what the best learning strategy to use for them. And students also must be responsive with their background attitudes and principles towards the subject they learned especially listening skill.

3. Future Researchers

Unfortunately, this study was conducted online, as the researcher could not assess the participants when filling out the questionnaire. It is highly recommended for further researchers to do the learning style assessment intensively. Future researcher can conduct the same research topic but with different subject level and use a different instrument.



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