

Improving Students' Ability In English Based On Learning Style of Private Higher Education Institutions

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Improving Students' Ability In English Based On Learning Style of Private Higher Education Institutions

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Abstract: The objectives of the present research are firstly to find out whether there is any significant effect of students' learning styles on their achievement of English at higher private institutions in Bandar Lampung. Secondly it tries to find out which students' learning is more superior than the other students. The research was conducted at 5 private higher education institutions in Lampung Province. The results showed that there was a significant effect of learning styles toward the students' English Achievement. The students with communicative learning style were more dominant than students with other learning styles. Furthermore, the study also found out that students with authority oriented learning style gained the lowest achievement compared to other students.

Keywords: Achievement of English, learning styles, language abilities

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I. BACKGROUND OF PROBLEM

This study exposed a comparison of students' English learning achievement among students with four different learning styles. This study is a part of long term planning to find out the most effective ways for improving the quality of English teaching and learning at higher education institutions in Indonesia. The first step in improving the quality of English teaching at higher education institutions has been done by applying a method called The development of English Teaching on the Basis of Learning style on English Subject at Higher Education Institutions in Bandar Lampung. Attempts to improve the quality of English teaching was done by modifying teaching materials and its approaches. (Septarina et al 2007, 2018)

On the previous study Septarina dkk (2017, 2018) found out that students' learning styles have significant influence toward their learning achievement. Septarina et al stated that students have communication purposes students with communicative and concrete learning styles are more dominating than students with other learning styles.

This research was undertaken in order to improve the quality of English teaching as of the compulsory subjects in higher education institutions in Indonesia. English is one of the international languages used by many people in the world in all aspects of life, such as in technology, economy, social and politics. Therefore, mastering the language is very crucial. English is one of the solutions to face globalisation era in which the language is used a communication tool by people all over the world.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Educational institutions are moving towards more emphasis on students' preferences in learning. Research shows that if teachers can give students instructions relevant to their learning styles, the performances are usually better (Dunn and Price, 1979; O'Brien, 1989; Oxford and Ehrman, 1993). When the learners' learning styles are matched congenial with the instructional styles, their motivation, performances, and attainments will be enhanced (Brown 1994). This notion is similar to what Felder and Henriques (1995) propose, i.e. that learning style deal with the ways in which an individual characteristically acquires, retains and retrieves information. These preferred ways are individual differences that may be attributed to cognitive, emotional and sensory factors (Willing, 1998)

Learning styles may be defined in multiple ways, depending upon one's perspective. Here are a few definitions of learning styles. Brown (2000) defines learning styles as the manner in which individuals perceive and process information in learning situations. He argues that learning style preference is one aspect of learning style, and refers to the choice of one learning situation or condition over another. Celcia-Marcia (2001) defines learning styles as the general approaches—for example, global or analytic, auditory or visual—that students use in acquiring a new language or in learning any other subject. The manner in which a learner perceives, interacts

with, and responds to the learning environment. Each learner has his or her own learning style(s) that is (are) employed when doing a specific task. They learn in different ways; some tend to learn by seeing, others by hearing and some desire to learn on their own, while others prefer to learn by interacting with their peers (Riasi & Riasati, 2007).

A learning style is a student's consistent way of responding to and using stimuli in the context of learning. Keefe (1979) defines learning styles as the "composite of characteristic cognitive, affective, and physiological factors that serve as relatively stable indicators of how a learner perceives, interacts with, and responds to the learning environment. While according to Willing (1988), learning style is inherent and pervasive and is a blend of cognitive, affective, and behavioral elements. He stressed that an individual's learning style is an intrinsic and innate behavior that individual has in him which is influenced by several factors in their life that has caused them to have a particular learning style or preferences. Thus, learning styles are not really concerned with *what* learners learn, but rather *how* they prefer to learn.

Many people recognize that each person prefers different learning styles and techniques. Learning styles group common ways that people learn. Everyone has a mix of learning styles. Some people may find that they have a dominant style of learning, with far less use of the other styles. Others may find that they use different styles in different circumstances. There is no right mix. Nor are your styles fixed. You can develop ability in less dominant styles, as well as further develop styles that you already use well.

Learning styles in education refers to the contested hypothesis of systematic differences in individuals' natural or habitual pattern of acquiring and processing information in learning situations. A core concept is that individuals differ in how they learn. The idea of individualized learning styles originated in the 1970s, and has greatly influenced education. In fact, there is a stunning variety of learning styles. Most people possess a dominant or preferred learning style. Learning styles may also prove useful for helping students with mastering meta learning (being aware of and taking control of one's learning). However, one or more of these styles is usually dominant. This dominant style defines the best way for a person to learn new information. This style may not always be the same for all tasks. Learners may prefer one style of learning for one task, and a combination of others for another task.

All these definitions of learning styles are directed towards the notion of the preferred ways applied by individuals to concentrate on, process, internalize and retain new information; a preferred way implies that it will be effective for those who prefer it, and less effective for those who prefer another learning style. However, non-preferred styles are not necessarily exclusive; they can be learned, although it would be probably hard, especially for those who have strong or extreme preferred styles.

Yufrizal (2007) provides one example of research on learning style by applying Willing's model of learning categorizes. This studies has at least shown how Willing's model which has been adapted by him could be applied to categories second/ foreign language learner's learning style preference.

That is why the researcher is going to adopt Yufrizal's questionnaire which also has adapted from Willing's learning style categories, since this categories can be applied to foreign language learner especially in Indonesian context. Beside that, Willing's questionnaire is also chosen as the instrument because it is a rather updated one among the very few questionnaires" (Kolb 1976) that examined learner types, which were of great "practical usefulness" to teachers (Willing 1988:67). Compared with other learning style constructs such as being field dependent and field independent (Witkin 1976), reflective versus impulsive (Kagan 1965), or deep-elaborative and shallow-reiterative (Schmeck 1983), which are more general and educationally oriented, the learner types identified by Willing and the learning methods mentioned in the questionnaire seem more comprehensive, applicable and relevant to language learning contexts.

Individual cognitive ability to gain knowledge through long term socialization process is called "learning styles" (Reynolds, 1997). Learning style can be defined as individual ways of getting information and knowledge in learning situation in which can be used to influence the decision and behavior of the person. According to Willing (2008), learning style is cohesive and can be absorbed. This is cohesive ties of the combination between cognitive, affective, and behavior elements. Which was influenced by

Willing (2008) stressed that a person's learning styles is an absolute born reward of a person which was influenced by some factors that make the person have a tendency toward certain behavior.

Researchers have tried many ways to prove that learning style could give great influence to the class. Two researchers such as Dunn and Dunn (2008) wrote that students are influenced by

(1) their environment directly, such as noise, light, and temperature. (2) their inner feelings such as motivation, fear, and responsibility, (3) the needs to socialize, such as matching, to be friends, feeling alone and grouping, to be friend, to be alone, and many other variations. (4) physical needs such as food, strength, time and mobility.

They assume that if students are taught in accordance with their wish and learning styles that they like, then they could get high score in a test, better behavior and the teaching time could be more efficient.

Therefore, it is more advantages for educators if we can teach our students in their learning styles. (Dunn & Dunn, 2008).

Students have their own approach in learning that perhaps become more important than just merely using certain strategies or technique in studying (Mariani, 2006). During the experience and process of learning, every individual will be shaped in different ways which later results in achievement. Learning styles had become one that distinguish individual in one learning process beside that other variables such as age, talents, intelligent, motivation, and other social factors (Skehan, 2009).

The dominant role of students' learning style had become evidence if they realize what learning style they have, then students and teachers could find out the most effective way of learning. (Coffield et al., 2004). It is important for teachers to identify students' learning style differences because it can help them the most appropriate way in teaching students based on their own learning styles.

The types of assignment given by teachers is also part of the activities in class. If teachers are capable of assigning tasks suitable with their students' learning style, then the results will be better. When students' learning styles are parallel with the learning students want then motivation and learning outcomes will automatically increase. (Brown 2000).

Speaking task is one of the activities that require students to take part actively without making them afraid, one which stress on the meaning of learning, one which sees the results of the students' involvement in learning processes. Task is not a good topic for learning but it can increase students' motivation and involvement. Task is a frame and learning activities in the class.

Pindu (2007), in the results of his study found out that there was a significant interaction between the model of teaching writing in groups and individual in their learning style of writing in English. Style. While Nonetis (2007) who also focused her research on students' learning style found that there is a significant difference in students' ability in English among students with concrete, and students with communicative, analytic, and mixed learning styles.

Claxton and Murrell (2007:52) in their studies also found out that students who were taught in accordance with their learning styles were proved to have better achievement in reading and that their learning experiences are more positive.

III. RESEARCH METHOD

This research was done by qualitative and quantitative paradigm of quasi experimental, that is 'a design with a primary purpose of testing the existence of causal relationship among two or more variables and which the data were collected from two or more nonequivalent groups' (Hedrick et al., 1993, p.58-59). A research plan which study experts' judgment on the object being studied.

This study requires a number of relevant data for the study. There are two kinds of data needed for the study. Both types of data are primary data. According to Cooper and Emory (1996) primary data are directly coming from direct resources collected specifically with the research done. Primary data resources in this research were gained through the distribution questionnaires to the experts. In this case the expert judgement on the quality of learning materials designed by the researcher.

Resource persons consist of experts on English learning from private and public higher education institutions in Lampung Province. The total number of resource people are 9 people from various background.

The method used in this research is expert judgment. A method that uses experts judgement on a research judgement. In this case expert judgment on the research object.

Data collection method used in this research is expert judgement, a method which take expert as the decision maker on the research planning.

This research was undertaken in 7 private and public higher education institutions in Bandar Lampung, i.e. IBI Dharma Jaya, Akper Panca Bhakti, A2L, Universitas Saburai, STKIP PGRI, dan Universitas Tulang Bawang (UTB). While the research was undertaken during the odd semester of 2017/2018

Data collecting techniques is the most strategic in research, because the main objective of a research is getting the data. Data collection can be done in various settings and from various sources. For data of expert judgment, a set of questionnaires in the form of expert evaluation on learning material design of English.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, the number of respondents recruited for this study is 350 people from 6 higher institutions in Bandar Lampung.

Table 1 Distribution of sample from 6 higher education institutions

No	University	N	%
1.	A2L	31	8,1
2.	Akper Panca Bakti	34	9,0
3.	STKIP PGRI	29	7, 6
4.	Darma Jaya	56	14, 8
5.	USBRJ	165	43,4
6.	UTB	65	17,1
	Jumlah	380	100%

After the implementation of the tasks, a set of test was given to the participants. The tests are vocabulary test as a compatible task for students with concrete learning style; speaking test as a compatible task for students with communicative learning style; grammar test as a compatible task for students with authority-oriented learning style; and a writing task as a compatible task for students with analytic learning style.

Table2 below summarizes the descriptive statistics of students' score on the four tests based their learning styles.

Table 2 Descriptive statistics of students' score based on their learning styles

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Minimum	Maximum
Lab work	1,00	24	63,3750	11,35136	2,31709	41,00	78,00
	2,00	24	66,8333	7,83896	1,60012	50,00	76,00
	3,00	24	68,7917	6,82692	1,39354	50,00	78,00
	4,00	24	64,5417	7,92343	1,61736	41,00	75,00
	Total	96	65,8854	8,77301	,89539	41,00	78,00
Speaking	1,00	24	64,0556	11,04128	2,25379	41,67	78,67
	2,00	24	67,0000	7,32015	1,49422	50,00	77,33
	3,00	24	69,5000	6,03212	1,23130	52,33	78,67
	4,00	24	57,9903	21,15558	4,31836	6,33	74,33
	Total	96	64,6365	13,35235	1,36277	6,33	78,67
Grammar	1,00	24	63,0833	11,57928	2,36361	41,00	78,00
	2,00	24	66,0417	7,68103	1,56788	50,00	78,00
	3,00	24	68,3750	6,42558	1,31162	52,00	78,00
	4,00	24	65,4583	8,53626	1,74246	44,00	80,00
	Total	96	65,7396	8,82967	,90117	41,00	80,00
Writing	1,00	24	73,7500	9,51086	1,94140	53,00	85,00
	2,00	24	71,6667	4,72428	,96434	62,00	78,00
	3,00	24	71,5417	8,25664	1,68538	52,00	83,00
	4,00	24	68,5000	9,39473	1,91769	52,00	85,00
	Total	96	71,3646	8,28965	,84606	52,00	85,00

The following table summarizes the result of Anlysis of Variance (ANOVA) of students' scores on vocabulary test, speaking test, grammar test, and writing test.

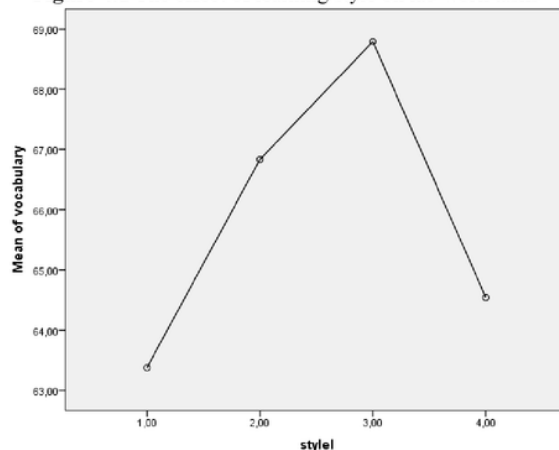
Table 3 ANOVA of four test based on students' learning styles

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Lab work Between Groups	418,865	3	139,622	1,864	,141
Within Groups	6892,875	92	74,923		
Total	7311,740	95			
Speaking Between Groups	1769,989	3	589,996	3,579	,017
Within Groups	15167,107	92	164,860		
Total	16937,096	95			
Grammar Between Groups	340,115	3	113,372	1,476	,226

Within Groups		7066,375	92	76,808		
Total		7406,490	95			
Writing	Between Groups	336,448	3	112,149	1,666	,180
	Within Groups	6191,792	92	67,302		
	Total	6528,240	95			

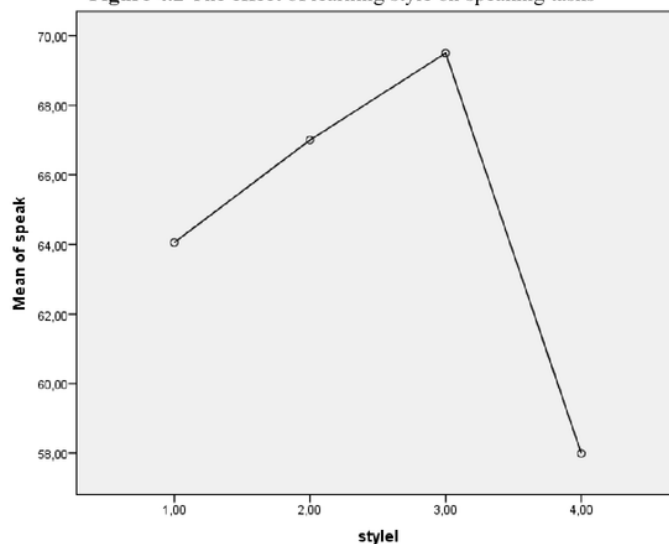
Based on the ANOVA results, it was found that there is no significant significant difference among students with different learning styles on the four learning tasks designed for this study. However, a scheffe post hoc design showed there are relative differences among tasks based on students' learning style.

Figure 4.1 The effect of learning style on lab work tasks



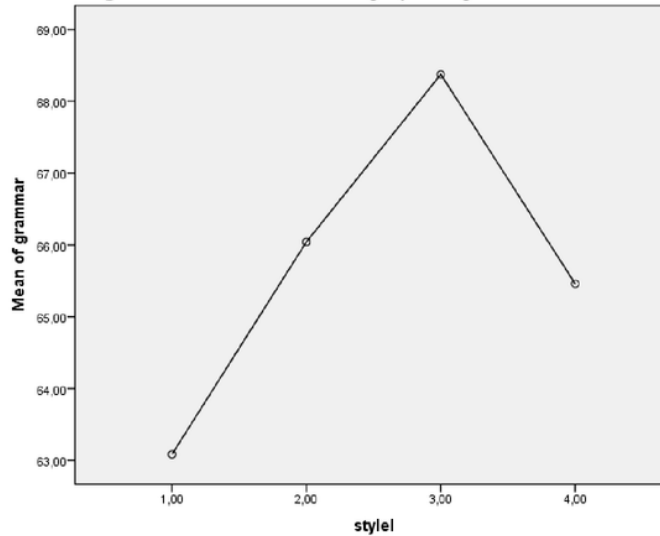
The graph shows that in terms of lab work task which represents the type of task preferred by students with concrete learning style, it was found that there is no relationship between learning styles on the type of task. The highest score was achieved by the students with authority-oriented learning style and the lowest score achieved by students with concrete learning style

Figure 4.2 The effect of learning style on speaking tasks



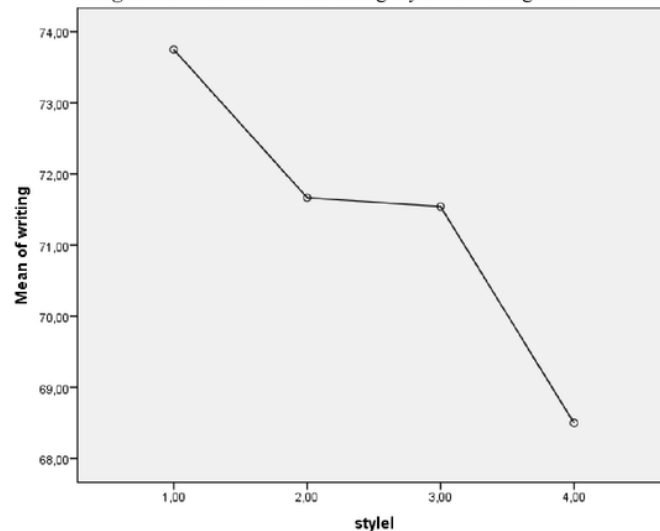
The graph shows that in terms of speaking task which represents the type of task preferred by students with communicative learning style, it was found that there is no relationship between learning styles on the type of task. The highest score was achieved by the students with authority-oriented learning style and the lowest score achieved by students with analytic learning style

Figure 4.3 The effect of learning style on grammar tasks



The graph shows that in terms of grammar task which represents the type of task preferred by students with concrete learning style, it was found that there is a matched relationship between learning styles on the type of task. The highest score was achieved by the students with authority-oriented learning style and the lowest score achieved by students with concrete learning style

Figure 4.4 The effect of learning style on writing tasks



The graph shows that in terms of writing task which represents the type of task preferred by students with analytic learning style, it was found that there is no relationship between learning styles on the type of task. The highest score was achieved by the students with concrete learning style and the lowest score achieved by students with analytic learning style

V. DISCUSSION

The most important finding of this study is that although there is no significant effect of learning style toward the learning tasks, there is a relative difference in achievements of tasks by students with different learning style. The most dominant students in performing the tasks were the students with concrete and communicative. This is in line with the previous findings by Yufrizal (2007) and Nonetis'ah (2010) who found that the most dominant types of learning style in learning language were the students with concrete and communicative learning styles. This might be due to the fact that the sample recruited for the current study was the students who learning English as a general subject not as specific purpose subject.

The result of this finding supported the previous research by Dunn and Price (1979) in Jhaish, M.A (2010) who said that if teachers can give students a kind of task that is relevant to their learning styles, the performances are usually better. When the learners' learning styles are matched congenial with the instructional styles, their motivation, performances, and attainments will be enhanced. In line with Ho (1999) in Bidabadi, F.S and Yamat, H (2012) who suggested that identifying the students' learning style preferences at the beginning of each course can assist their teachers in making adjustments in the proportion of task types to facilitate the learning of the students.

VI. CONCLUSION

From the discussion of the results of the study, it can be concluded that that there was a positive effect of learning styles toward the students' English Achievement. Furthermore, the study also found out that students with communicative learning style gained better achievement in English communication than students with other learning styles.

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