



# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of six main discussions. They are background of study, research question, objective of the study, significance of study, scope and limit of the study, and definition of key term.

### **A. Background of Study**

Every learning environment may try to raise successful students, but will not reach the desired results if several essential elements are not considered in the instructional design process. These elements can be classified into interior and exterior conditions. Learner characteristics, items of the interior conditions such as learning style, age, maturity level, interest are essential in designing learning environments process.<sup>1</sup> Preferences for thinking, processing thoughts, and approaching work determine how students learn, because learning preferences and instructional activities can range from simple to complex and it is important to consider levels of thinking within different learning styles.

According to Keefe and Ferrell, learning problems are frequently not related to the difficulty of the subject matter but rather to the type and level of the

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<sup>1</sup> Meyer, Buket, The Effect of Learning Style on Achievement in Different learning environments, The Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology – TOJET October 2009 ISSN: 1303-6521 volume 8 Issue 4 Article 4, p, 1



cognitive processes required to learn the material.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, Dunn finds an impressive improvement in students' achievement in cases where learning styles have been taken into account show that the way things are taught had a greater impact than the content covered in a course of study.<sup>3</sup> It is believed that when teachers are able to analyze the differences and needs of their students, the educational process is likely to be more optimal for both students and teachers.<sup>4</sup>

It is commonly seen that many teachers in an institution like regular school (School which applied curriculum from the Government) has tiny consideration of what students' preference in learning compared to vocational school (course). In recent years, there has been a transformed interest in the dichotomy of vocational education versus general education. This has become a political announcement in many countries and has adopted knowledge and skills as the key focus to improve education at all levels.<sup>5</sup> It seems quite unfair if only vocational school has very good treatment toward students' learning styles, and this research will try to ease teacher in accommodating their learning styles by knowing their learning styles first.

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<sup>2</sup> Keefe, J. W. & Ferrel, B. Developing a defensible learning style paradigm. *Educational Leadership*, (1990) 10, 57-61.

<sup>3</sup> Dunn, R. Learning style and its relation to exceptionally at both ends of the spectrum. *Exceptional Children*, (1983). 4(6), 496-506.

<sup>4</sup> Fairhurst, A. M. & Fairhurst, L. L. *Effective teaching, effective learning*. California: Davies-Black Publishing. (1995).

<sup>5</sup> Oketch, M. To vocationalise or not to vocationalise? Perspectives on current trends and issues in technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in Africa. *International Journal of Educational Development*, (2007). 27(2), 220-234.



The Visual-Auditory-Kinesthetic (VAK) learning styles model has evolved since the 1920s and been adapted to suit a wide range of learning, behavior and assessment situations.<sup>6</sup> VAK model is one of the simplest and is based on observation channels vision, hearing, and feeling. In other words the Visual-Auditory-Kinesthetic (VAK) model is based on the basic observation channels of human. The VAK model is different from other learning style models. It is not developed by any specific person or persons. The model is anyway a foundation for several learning style models including the Dunn and Dunn learning style model and the Gregorc's Mind Styles Model and Style Delineator.<sup>7</sup>

The seventh graders are entering a period of physical and emotional change. They are on their way to becoming teenagers. They will become more critical of their own appearance and show seemingly exaggerated emotions. At this age they are learning how to be independent. They are also trying to determine who they are and what they can do on their own. They will look to everyone for information, guidance, and understanding.<sup>8</sup> English teacher should take some benefits from those characteristics by reinforcing behavior that provides a greater sense of responsibility for their behavior and decisions. Helping them to identify and develop their personal interests, abilities, develop interpersonal skills, and discover their preference of learning styles they want.

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<sup>6</sup> Source: Manitoba Education, Training and Youth. 310-800 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, MB, Canada R3G ON4.

<sup>7</sup> Essi Kanninen, Learning styles in virtual learning environments, Learning Styles and E-Learning, Master of Science Thesis, Tampere University of Technology, 2009, p. 15

<sup>8</sup> Albuquerque Public Schools Professional School Counselors, 7th Grade Student & Family Guide Everything You Need to Know For Success in 7th Grade,p,4



This research is done in the English learning process which has some difficulties to face especially for the students having English as their foreign language. It must be harder for them to sit on their chairs listening to the teachers' explanation of something they might be known or not. According to Harley, B. and Wang, B. learners in foreign language contexts have very limited exposure to the language and typically have non-native teachers and no communicative need to use the foreign language outside the classroom. These specific conditions are different from those of learners absorbed in a second language context from a very early age who generally achieve native-like competence in the second language.<sup>9</sup> So, it is necessary for the teachers to accommodate their learning style in a proper way in order to ease them in acquiring English as foreign language.

The research is conducted at MTsN 1 Munjungan. This school is special since it is the only one which has special class in Munjungan. It means that the special class should have very good concern to make good result and have different treatment as well, and one of the ways is by knowing their learning styles and accommodating them. According to Mr. Kamas Tantowi S.Pd. one of the English teacher at MTsN 1 Munjungan it is a must to facilitate the students with very good treatment and accommodate their needs in a proper way, since the special class has some differences compared to another regular classes. It consists of 30 students who are classified as the best thirty in passing the first

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<sup>9</sup> Harley, B. and Wang, B. The critical period hypothesis: Where are we now? In A.M.B. de Groot and J.F. Kroll (eds) *Tutorials in Bilingualism: Psycholinguistic Perspectives*, (1997), pp. 19–51. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.



qualification. It has more expensive school fee than the regular class; also it has longer time in learning process.<sup>10</sup>

Only knowing the seventh graders' VAK learning styles will be meaningless, since analyzing and knowing the teachers' way will be more beneficial. Both of students and teacher can take advantages from each other, so that the teaching process will run effectively. By looking at those reasons above it is really urgent to put high awareness either to the students' learning styles or to English teachers' strategies in accommodating them.

## **B. Statement of the problem**

This proposed study is focusing on the following research questions:

1. What are the learning styles of the seventh graders of MTsN 1 Munjungan ?
2. How does the English teacher accommodate the learning styles of the seventh graders of MTsN 1 Munjungan ?
3. How do the students respond to the way English teacher accommodates the students' learning styles?

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<sup>10</sup> Tantowi, Kamas, English teacher of Mts.N 1 Munjungan, interview held during the speech contest in Mts.N Munjungan, March, 3 2013



### **C. Significance of Study**

Hopefully this research can be useful for:

#### 1. The English Teachers

Knowing students' learning styles can help in many ways to improve learning and teaching. First, teachers can take the benefits by getting information about how their students are used to learn, which provides them with a deeper understanding and might help when explaining or preparing learning material. Furthermore, making students aware of their learning styles and showing them their individual strengths and weaknesses can help students understand why learning is sometimes difficult for them and is the basis for developing their weaknesses. In addition, students can be supported by matching the teaching style with their learning style. Providing students with learning material and activities that fit their preferred ways of learning can make learning easier for them.

#### 2. The students

One of the most significant issues of learning style is students' taking the responsibility for their own learning. The students should know what their own learning styles are and what characteristics the certain style has and they should behave according to the style. So, they can acquire the information and material given without needing for the assistance of others. When the learners take the responsibility of their own learning, they develop an understanding of their own form of learning style and become more satisfied with the



environment they interact with. Every opportunity for learning is a chance for them.

#### **D. Objectives of Study**

This study is proposed at:

1. Knowing the learning styles of the seventh graders of MTs.N 1 Munjungan.
2. Describing the strategies used by the English teacher in accommodating the learning styles of the seventh graders of MTs.N 1 Munjungan.
3. Knowing whether the English teachers are able to accommodate all the students' VAK learning styles or not.

#### **E. Scope and the Limit of Study**

This research limits to the seventh graders of A class which consists of 30 students of MTs.N 1 Munjungan, Trenggalek in Academic Year 20012-20013. It focuses only in what the seventh graders' learning styles are. It focuses on the perceptual theory including, kinesthetic, auditory and visual. It also concerns with how English teacher accommodates the students' learning styles (VAK) in English learning process. In addition, it also discusses whether the English teacher able to accommodate all their learning styles or not.



## **F. Definition of Key Term**

### 1. Learning style

The learning style in this discussion is related to the students' learning style preference, it focuses on the perceptual side of Gardner's theory, and they are visual, auditory and kinesthetic learning styles.

### 2. Teaching strategies

Teaching strategies which are discussed here do not reflect the general theory of teaching strategies, but it concerns with the strategies or ways originally used and applied by English teachers in accommodating and facilitating the students' learning styles.

### 3. Accommodate

According to Cambridge dictionary accommodate means to give what is needed by someone. In this research the word accommodates can be more broadly explained. Giving what is needed by students not only talking about the practical things that teachers will do to the students inside the English learning process, but also relates to the plan which has written by the teacher in their lesson plan.

### 4. Response

This term is dealing with the responses of the students after knowing the strategies applied by the English teacher, whether the English teacher has already accommodated their learning styles or not.