

EFL Junior High School Students' Learning Style

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ABSTRACT

The current study investigated EFL students' learning style. The study was a survey study followed by 30 junior high school students in Singaraja Bali. In identifying students' learning style, the updated Index of Learning Styles (ILS) developed by Felder and Silverman (1988) was used. The result of data analysis found that the majority of students prefer visual (76.7%), active (66.7%), sensing (60%), and global (53.3%). The result of this study implied that teachers should adjust their way of teaching to accommodate students' learning style. They can apply various learning media such as video, animated pictures to motivate the students in learning.

Keywords: *EFL, Learning style, Silverman & Felder*

INTRODUCTION

In a teaching process, the teacher deals with students who have different characteristics. This difference in character is a unique thing where students have different ways to receive, process and understand the material given by the teacher (Alqunayeer & Zamir, 2015). The characteristics of multiple students will be related to learning styles in the classroom. It is important for teachers to know students' learning styles to be able to choose the right teaching strategy (Awang et al., 2017). By using a strategy that is appropriate to the learning style, students' learning motivation will increase which of course will affect student achievement (Gohar & Sadeghi, 2015).

Many experts have provided a definition of learning style. According to Brown (2004) learning style is a person's choice to process information. Accordingly, learning style is defined as the preferred way to obtain and organize ideas and inputs received (Ph'ng et al., 2015). Learning styles are strongly related to a person's cognitive, affective, social and psychological processes (Pashler et al., 2008). It can be said that learning style is one way that a person likes to receive information and process that information. It can be stated that students' learning style is the way students process and understand information.

In EFL setting, English teachers are encouraged to be able to identify students' learning style and adjust their teaching style (Al Tale', 2016). Students' preferred learning style has been studied as a motivating and influencing factor of mastering English (Tabatabaei & Mashayekhi, 2013). Several studies had been conducted in ASEAN to identify preferred learning style by EFL students. Shuib and Azizan (2015) found that majority EFL students in Malaysia preferred visual and auditory learning style. (Supalak, 2016) found that EFL students in Thailand and Vietnam prefer active learning style. In Indonesia, Manipuspika (2020) identified that above 50% students preferred visual learning styles. In short, from the literature review it can be said that ASEAN students mostly preferred visual learning style.

From the results of initial observations at public schools in Singaraja, Bali, it was found that teachers never identified or sought information about students' preferred learning styles. In the learning process, they only use strategies that they have often used and have been listed in the lesson plan. This is an obstacle where there is a possibility of a mismatch between teaching style and learning style. Therefore, this study aims to identify EFL students learning styles so that later teachers will receive information about how students learn and are expected to be able to adjust their teaching styles.

METHOD

The current study was descriptive study with survey to identify EFL students' learning style. This study was followed by 30 EFL students of one public high school in Singaraja, Bali.

In collecting data on EFL students' learning style, this study used updated Index of Learning Style developed by (R. Felder & Silverman, 1988). The dimensions of ILS are active and a reflective, sensing and intuitive, visual-verbal, and sequential and global learning style. Graf et al., (2007) furthermore presents elaboration on each type of learning style as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Elaboration of ILS

Learning Style	Elaboration
Active-Reflective	Active learner prefers active working with collaboration or group work. While reflective learner prefers to work individually or in small group
Sensing-Intuitive	Sensing learner prefers to learn facts and something concrete, they also have more patience. While intuitive learners prefers something that is abstract, creative and innovative
Visual-Verbal	Visual learner prefers to learn from something that can be seen such as picture, video, while verbal learner is textual-based learner
Sequential-Global	Sequential learner prefer to learn logically by following steps or stages whole global learners more interested in broad view

The procedures of collecting the data were

1. The students were asked if they want to be the participant of the study
2. The students answer the questions of ILS available in <https://www.webtools.ncsu.edu/learningstyles/>
3. After giving answer, the web will generate students' learning style automatically
4. The students shared their result on google form

Validity and Reliability of ILS

Felder and Spurlin (2005) presented the result of validity and reliability of ILS that has been conducted by several experts. They summarized the correlation coefficients among four scales of ILS are varied between 0.7 and 0.9. The

Cronbach Alpha for reliability testing showed the values that are greater than 0.5 which indicated a reliability instrument.

FINDINGS & DISCUSSIONS

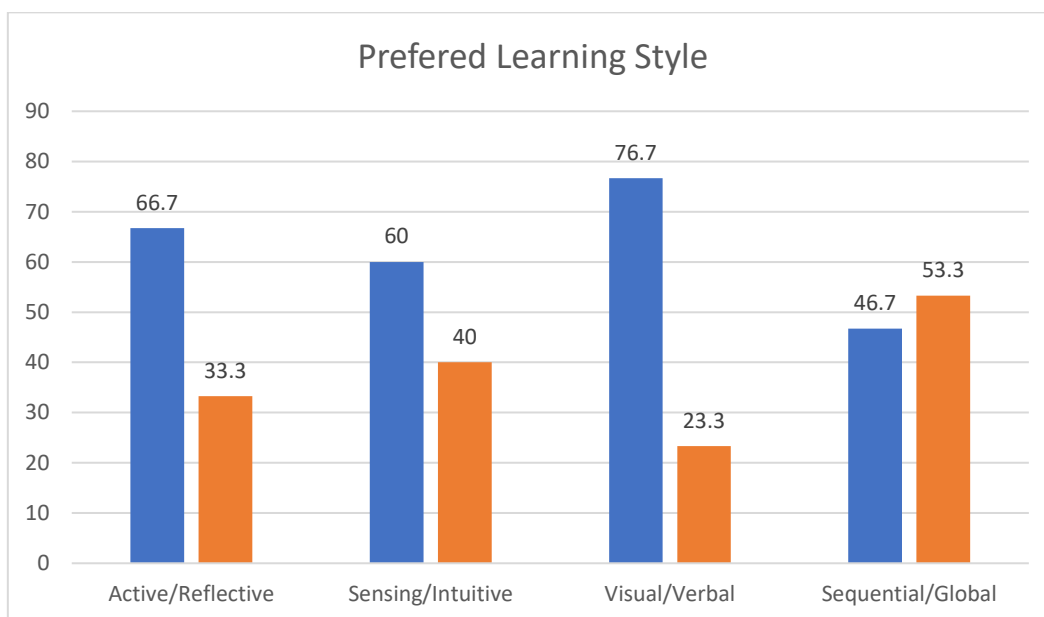
The Data of students' preferred learning style is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Students' Preferred Learning Style

N	Grade	Active-Reflective	Sensing-Intuitive	Visual-Verbal	Sequential-Global
1	7	Active	Sensing	Visual	Sequential
2	7	Reflective	Sensing	Visual	Sequential
3	7	Reflective	Intuitive	Visual	Global
4	8	Reflective	Sensing	Visual	Global
5	8	Active	Intuitive	Visual	Sequential
6	7	Active	Sensing	Verbal	Global
7	7	Active	Sensing	Visual	Sequential
8	8	Reflective	Intuitive	Visual	Global
9	9	Active	Sensing	Visual	Sequential
10	7	Active	Sensing	Verbal	Global
11	8	Active	Intuitive	Verbal	Sequential
12	8	Active	Sensing	Visual	Sequential
13	8	Reflective	Sensing	Verbal	Global
14	7	Active	Intuitive	Visual	Sequential
15	7	Active	Intuitive	Visual	Global
16	8	Active	Sensing	Visual	Global
17	7	Reflective	Sensing	Visual	Sequential
18	7	Reflective	Intuitive	Visual	Global
19	8	Active	Sensing	Verbal	Global
20	9	Active	Sensing	Visual	Global
21	7	Active	Intuitive	Visual	Sequential
22	6	Reflective	Intuitive	Visual	Global
23	7	Active	Sensing	Visual	Global
24	8	Active	Sensing	Visual	Global
25	9	Reflective	Intuitive	Verbal	Global
26	8	Active	Intuitive	Visual	Sequential
27	7	Active	Sensing	Visual	Sequential
28	8	Active	Sensing	Visual	Sequential
29	7	Active	Sensing	Visual	Global
30	7	Reflective	Intuitive	Verbal	Sequential

To get a clearer picture, the frequency of student learning styles can be seen in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Students' Preferred Learning Style (%)



Looking at students' preferred learning styles in Figure 1, it can be seen that EFL students preferred visual (76.7%), active (66.7%), sensing (60%), and global (53.3%). It can be said that the most preferred learning style by EFL students is visual learning style. Visual learner best learn when they are accompanied by the presents of image (Philominraj et al., 2017). Visual learners use their eyes to process, acquire, comprehend information (Pashler et al., 2008). The result of the current study was in line with several previous studies who found that EFL students tend to prefer visual learning style (Manipuspika, 2020; Shuib & Azizan, 2015). By using different questionnaire of learning style, Prystiananta (2018) also found that visual learning was the most preferred learning style by EFL undergraduate students.

In fact, students do not know their own learning style (Muluk et al., 2020). The result of the current study stressed that it is important to understand students' learning style. Teachers should be able to design learning instruction that suits with students' learning style (El-Bishouty et al., 2019). Gilakjani (2017) stated that the learning objective can be achieved if teachers understand students' learning style and make adjustment of their teaching style. This was also supported by (Bhattacharyya & Shariff, 2014) who state that teachers' awareness of students' learning style will lead to a successful learning and the objectives of learning can be achieved.

Sakulprasertsri (2020) suggested that the teachers can use visual media in teaching English such as picture, video, or audio-visual based media. Those visual media are highly motivating for students to learn English and helping them to understand the content of teaching more easily (Philippe et al., 2020). When the students are motivated in learning, it is believed that they can show their best potential (Manipuspika, 2020).

From the findings and discussions above, it can be stated that EFL students mostly preferred visual learning style followed with active, sensing, and global. The results of the current study is hoped to be beneficial for language

teachers in managing their classroom by adjusting their teaching style with students' learning style.

CONCLUSIONS

The current study investigated EFL junior high school students' learning style. It was found that students mostly preferred visual learning style. The visual learning style students should be supported with visual media in order to comprehend the teaching material maximally. Since this study is limited to number of participants, further study is suggested to explore students' learning style in larger participants. Further study is also encouraged to explore the difference between teachers' teaching style and students' learning style and how it affects the teaching and learning situations.

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