

**A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON THE LEARNING STYLES OF SECOND YEAR
EDUCATION (LIVING SKILLS) STUDENTS ANDS THE TEACHING STYLES
OF THEIR LECTURER.**

NOR HIDAYAH BINTI RAMLI

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MALAYSIA

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MALAYSIA

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JUDUL : A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON THE LEARNING STYLES OF
SECOND YEAR EDUCATION (LIVING SKILLS) STUDENTS AND
THE TEACHING STYLES OF THEIR LECTURERS.

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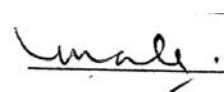
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NOR HIDAYAH BINTI RAMLI

This Project Report is Prepared as a Requirement for
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30th APRIL 2008

I admit that this project entitled “A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON THE LEARNING STYLES OF SECOND YEAR EDUCATION (LIVING SKILLS) STUDENTS AND THE TEACHING STYLES OF THEIR LECTURERS” is my own research except for, the citation and summary which the resources of each has been stated.

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Name

: NOR HIDAYAH BINTI RAMLI

Date

: 30th APRIL 2008

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I love you all.

ABSTRACT

Learners' learning styles are the most important factors in determining how well they learn second language. The success however is very much dependent not only on learner's learning style but also teacher's teaching style. However there has always been a mismatch between learners' learning styles and teacher's teaching style and therefore language learners do not learn effectively. This research was set out to investigate on the issue and to reveal the learning styles of University Technology Malaysia second year students from Faculty of Education who are majoring in Living Skills as well as the social and surrounding factors that influence their language learning styles and preferences. This study also investigated on the students' view on their lecturer's teaching style and consequently the problems that they encountered during the implementation of Advanced English for Academic Communication (UHB 2422) class due to the mismatch of their learning styles and lecturer's teaching style. A number of 50 UTM students who are majoring in Education (Living Skills) became the respondents and the research instrument used was questionnaire. This research found out that the most preferred learning styles of the students is kinesthetic style while the major factor that influence their learning style is their course and major of study. Most of their lecturers are perceived as having visual teaching style. Out of 50 students, only 6 students have their learning styles matched with their lecturers' teaching styles. The main problem encountered by the students is they felt drowsy during the class. This study recommended teacher or language instructor to vary their teaching style and match their teaching styles with their learners' learning styles in order to ensure an effective teaching and learning.

ABSTRAK

Stail pembelajaran pelajar adalah merupakan faktor paling penting dalam menentukan keberkesanan pembelajaran bahasa kedua. Kejayaan mereka walaubagaimanapun bergantung tidak sepenuhnya hanya kepada stail pembelajaran pelajar tetapi juga stail pengajaran guru. Walaubagaimanapun, ketidaksepadanan diantara stail pembelajaran pelajar dan stail pengajaran guru sentiasa berlaku dan oleh sebab ini pelajar-pelajar bahasa kedua tidak belajar dengan berkesan. Kajian ini bertujuan telah dijalankan untuk menyiasat tentang isu ini dan untuk mendedahkan stail-stail pembelajaran pelajar-pelajar tahun dua Universiti Teknologi Malaysia yang mengambil major dalam jurusan Kemahiran Hidup dan juga turut mengkaji tentang faktor sosial dan persekitaran yang mempengaruhi stail pembelajaran mereka. Kajian ini juga turut mengkaji tentang persepsi mereka terhadap stail pengajaran pensyarah mereka dan secara tak langsung turut mengkaji masalah-masalah yang dihadapi oleh para pelajar sewaktu perjalanan kelas *Advanced English for Academic Communication (UHB 2422)* sehubungan dengan ketidaksepadanan yang berlaku diantara stail pembelajaran pelajar dan stail pengajaran pensyarah mereka. Seramai 50 orang pelajar-pelajar UTM yang mengambil major dalam bidang Kemahiran Hidup telah menjadi responden dan alat kajian yang telah digunakan ialah borang soal selidik. Kajian ini mendapati bahawa stail pembelajaran yang paling diminati oleh pelajar-pelajar tersebut ialah stail kinestetik manakala faktor utama yang mempengaruhi stail pembelajaran mereka ialah faktor jurusan dan bidang pelajaran yang diambil. Kebanyakan daripada pensyarah mereka dianggap mempunyai stail pengajaran visual. Daripada sejumlah 50 orang pelajar, hanya 6 orang sahaja yang didapati mempunyai kesepadananan diantara stail pembelajaran mereka dan stail pengajaran pensyarah mereka. Manakala masalah utama yang dihadapi oleh pelajar-pelajar tersebut ialah mereka selalu menghadapi masalah mengantuk di dalam kelas. Kajian ini telah mencadangkan agar para guru atau pengajar bahasa supaya mempelbagaikan stail pengajaran dan menyepadankan stail pengajaran mereka dengan stail pembelajaran para pelajar untuk memastikan pengajaran dan pembelajaran yang berkesan.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ESL - English Second Language

IQ - Intelligence Quotient

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Learners' learning styles are one of the most important factors in determining how well they learn second language. Learning style is defined as the unique collection of individual skills and preferences that affect the students' way of perceiving, gathering, and processing information in their learning processes. The term learning style is used to encompass four aspects of the person: cognitive style such as preferred or habitual patterns of mental functioning; patterns of attitudes and interests that affect what an individual will pay most attention to in a learning situation; a tendency to seek situations well-matched with one's own learning patterns; and a tendency to use certain learning strategies and avoid others (Lawrence, 1984). Knowing self-learning preferences will also help students to plan their learning especially language learning such as, in choosing the appropriate activities and techniques as well as the approach to their learning in order to make their learning more meaningful and effective. Furthermore, learning style will also affect how students act in a group, participate in classroom activities, relate to others, solve problems, and as well as learn the language.

Learners are probably visual, auditory, or kinesthetic learners depending on several factors in their life. Findings gained from VARK (visual-auditory-read/write-

kinesthetic) questionnaires conducted through the VARK online website from the year 2001 to 2006 on the factors influencing learners' learning styles and preferences found that the most common factors that influenced learners' learning styles are, the learners' different disciplines and field of study, educational background, gender, culture and society they live in. Based on a research conducted by David P. Diaz and Ryan P. Carnal in Cuesta Community College (1989), learning preferences are likely to change as learners experience and encounter new life and educational experiences. Grasha (1996) and Dowdall (1991), believe that teaching style encourages the learners to adopt certain learning style.

Learners' learning styles have an impact on their academic performance [Curry, 1990 ; Ellis, 1985 ; Cassidy & Eachus, 2000 ; Griggs, 1985; Kolb, 1985; Palmer and Goetz, 1988; Sarasin, 1999; Ellis, 1985] However, a study carried out in three technical schools in Malaysia by Nafisah @ Kamariah Md Kamaruddin and Nurhaiza Abd Wahab in 2002 found that there is no relation between students' learning styles and their academic performance. Eventhough the students have similar learning styles, but they have different academic performance. This might be due to other factors such as their intelligence quotient (IQ) level, the teachers, and the students' educational experiences. Another recent study conducted by Yazici (2005) in University of Winconsin, USA, however, reported that learning styles influence individual's motivation in learning especially when their preferences do not match with the teaching style of the teachers which may then lead to the change in behavior and affect the students' level of motivation as well as their interest in learning English. This will then resulted in bad performance in the subject. The research found that the situation is resulted by the mismatched between learners' learning preferences and the activities or techniques used in their learning processes. Yacizi (2005) also stated that, when learners and teachers do not choose the appropriate activities and techniques that match their learning styles and preferences, this will then affect their performance in the subject. The research also found that, the students learn better when they choose the appropriate activities based on their preferences.

Apart from the studies conducted on language learning styles, factors influencing learners' learning styles and preferences and learners' view on their lecturer's teaching style, there is also a growing need to determine the most common problems occur due to the mismatched between learners' learning styles and teacher's teaching style.

1.2 Statement of Problem

Second language teachers as well as learners do not seem to realise the importance of taking into consideration learners' learning styles and preferences factors in designing and planning for the approaches and learning activities to be conducted in the classroom. This has resulted in the students feeling demotivated to learn since the learning approaches do not match with their preferences. This is because teaching and learning process plays an important role in determining the learners' understanding and their motivation to learn the subject. This is supported by the research conducted by Hodges (1982) to a group of secondary ESL students where it has demonstrated that approximately 90% of traditional classroom instruction is geared to the auditory learner. Teachers talk to their students, ask questions, and discuss facts. However, only 20% to 30% of any large group could remember 75% of what was presented through discussion. This situation has resulted in the mismatched of the teacher's teaching styles with the learners' learning styles and preferences which have caused difficulties for them to understand what they are learning. To solve this problem, some learning style theorists suggest matching teachers' and students' styles. In this way, students will be exposed to the teaching styles that are consistent with their learning styles (Barbe, Swassing, & Milone, 1979; Dunn, 1984; Dunn & Dunn, 1979; Dunn, & Price, 1978; Hunt, 1979). Another researcher, G.Gonzalez (1977) urges teachers in bilingual classrooms to identify individual variables and determine various approaches to achieve interaction because if the mismatch problems continues to exist between learning styles of most students in a class and the teaching style of the teacher, they may lead to more serious problems such as the students will get discouraged about

the courses, the curriculum, and themselves, do poorly in tests and examination and in some cases they change to other curricula or drop out of school.

Based on the research, it is clearly seen that this mismatched may effect negatively to the students especially on their learning process as well as their attitude in learning English. As a result from this problem, they will perform poorly in the subject. This situation somehow can be claim as one of the main reason of poor achievement in academic performance for English subject and yet, the teachers still do not take any attempt to improve their teaching approaches and techniques by taking into consideration the students' learning styles factor in their lesson planning. Teachers do not realise that this is one of the major factors of their teaching failure in which may then lead to more serious problems in the future.

Given the situation, it is the time for teachers as well as learners to put an effort in studying about the possible problems and implications of the mismatch to the teaching and learning process. There is a very important need to carry out a study on these problems and for the teachers to investigate this issue in order to ensure that the teaching and learning process is conducted effectively and benefits both the teacher and the learners.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

Knowing the problems occur due to the mismatched between students' learning styles and teacher's teaching style and its impact towards the learner's level of motivation, interest, as well as their behavior will help teachers to be aware of the importance of taking into consideration learner's learning style when choosing the appropriate techniques and tasks for their lesson. Most learners seem not to realise that the mismatched may have an impact over their motivation and interest level in learning English and also towards their behavior. This may somehow affect their performance

and grades in the subject. There may also be corresponding increase in the probability of mismatched between learners' language learning styles and techniques used and implemented in their learning processes. This situation could also lead to other serious problems if it is not handled and solved by the teacher themselves and it is the teacher's responsibility to pay more serious attention by taking into consideration their students' learning styles in order to ensure that students will perform their best in the subject taught.

In response to this situation, a special research is set up to investigate the issue further. The purpose of this study is to investigate on the most preferred learning styles of Universiti Teknologi Malaysia's second year undergraduates of Faculty of Education majoring in Living Skills, the factors that influence their language learning styles, their views on their English lecturer's teaching style and finally to investigate on the problems that may occur due to the mismatched of the student's learning style and the teaching style of the lecturer which may then affect their level of motivation, interest as well as behavior in learning English. This study will also give an account on the appropriate language learning activities and techniques that match with learners' language learning styles and preferences.

1.4 Objective of the Study

The objectives of this study are :

1. to identify the language learning styles of UTM second year undergraduates of Faculty of Education who are majoring in Living Skills.
2. to investigate the factors that influence the language learning styles of this students in learning English.
3. to investigate the students' view on their English lecturer's teaching style.
4. to investigate on the problems faced by these students in UHB 2422 class based on their learning styles and teaching styles of their lecturer.

1.5 Research Questions

This study will provide answers to the following questions:

1. What are the language learning styles of UTM second year undergraduates of Faculty of Education majoring in Living Skills?
2. What are the students' views on the teaching style of their English lecturer?
3. What are the factors that influence these students' language learning styles and preferences?
4. What are the problems faced by these students in the UHB 2422 class?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study may help in raising awareness among UTM second year undergraduates of Faculty of Education who are majoring in Living Skills on the implications of the mismatched that exist between their learning styles and teaching style of their language instructor towards their learning and performance of English subject. The findings also help ESL teachers and practitioners to be aware of the importance of taking into consideration the learners' learning style factors when planning for the activities and approaches to be conducted in the ESL classroom. Moreover, UTM second year undergraduates of Faculty of Education can identify their types of learning styles and preferences based on the criteria of every style discussed in this study. This study will also help UTM second year Living Skills undergraduates of Faculty of Education and other ESL learners and teachers to be aware of the problems that may occur due to the mismatched between learners language learning styles and their teachers' teaching style where it may result to many serious problems related to the students motivation and behavior which can be considered as the main reason of the poor performance in English subject. The problems occur when the learners' learning styles do not match with the teaching and learning approaches or techniques employed by the language instructor. ESL teachers can also use the findings and

information gathered through this study as a reference and guideline in order to improve their teaching approaches and techniques in promoting better understanding of lessons conducted.

1.7 Scope of the Study

This study on language learning styles involved the participation of 50 UTM's second year undergraduates of Faculty of Education. The respondents were the second year Faculty of Education students majoring in Living Skills who are currently taking Advanced English for Academic Communication (UHB2422) which is an English course offered by the university. The questionnaires was distributed to the respondents within the scope of study in all places in UTM including the Faculty of Education.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Definition of learning style

Every student has different ways of perceiving, analyzing, processing information and as well as applying the information in his learning processes. Every student is different depending on how he prefers to learn. Some may prefer to learn through reading, some may be able to understand their learning simply by listening to lectures while others may need to put on actions or practical work in order to gain a better understanding on what they learn. Every learner has different preference and learning style that will help him in learning more effectively and yet promote a better understanding on the information perceived throughout the learning processes. This will automatically lead to a more meaningful learning.

There are many opinions on the learning style concept among researchers and each opinion focuses on different areas such as psychology (Jung, 1971), personality (Jung, 1971; McCarthy, 1987 ; Kolb, 1984), brain hemisphere domain (McCarthy, 1987), brain function (Sperry, 1972), surrounding (Dunn, 1986), modality (Dunn, 1980) and experiential learning (Kolb, 1984). According to Willing (1988), learning style is inherent and pervasive and is a blend of cognitive, affective, and behavioral elements (Oxford & Ehrman, 1988). Willing (1988) 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. Learning style is broadly described as cognitive, affective, and physiological traits that are relatively stable indicators of how learners perceive, interact with, and respond to the learning environment (Keefe, 1979). Some researchers defined learning style as a learner's pattern of behavior in approaching a learning experience such as in perceiving, conceptualizing, organizing and recalling information (Kolb, 1985; Palmer and Goetz, 1988; Sarasin, 1999; Ellis, 1985). The learner's pattern of behavior may affect how a person perceives, gathers, and processes information during their learning processes. Furthermore, it will also determine and affect how a person acts in group, learn, participates in activities, relates to others, solve problems, and as well as how they work (Erichson, 1989).

To sum up, learning style can be defined as learners' pattern of behaviour that will help them to learn better and yet determine and affect learners' ways of gaining, perceiving and processing information. It will then affect and determine learners' understanding of what they learn.

2.2 Types of Learning Styles

There are various types of learning styles which are classified under three main styles which are visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learners. Based on research carried out with United States school children by Dunn in 1983, he has finally developed a classification system of learning styles where he has demonstrated that learners have three basic perceptual learning channels or modalities : visual, auditory, and kinesthetic.

2.2.1 Visual

Those who prefer a visual or seeing learning style will learn best when they see what they are learning. They will learn effectively through activity or task that involves

visual approach such as reading notes, books, looking at wall displays, reading lists to organize thoughts and etc. Visual learners will usually recall information by remembering how it was set out in a page and they often recognize words by sight where they will remember words that they see through reading rather than words they listened through hearing. Visual learners usually rely more on reading to gain information for example by taking notes on lecture and they will need to do outline for the notes in order to reinforce ideas (Melton, 1990). Johnston & Orwig (1999) stated that, visual learners enjoy image and they are good at visualizing events and imagining situations. Visual learners will remember information if they use visual strategies. Moreover they will learn better and have pleasure from learning that involved visual and creative skills. This type of learners will also see the whole picture when discussing or working on a problem or task. Based on a study conducted in the year 2004 by Dr. Linda Kreger Silverman to a group of 750 of fourth, fifth and sixth Morris S. Smith Foundation undergraduates students which belong to different races, socio-economic backgrounds, and intellectual ranges found that, more than 60% of the students in a regular classroom learn best with visual-spatial presentations and the rest learn best with auditory methods. Silverman also stated that among the students, the proportion of visual-spatial learners may be much higher compared to the other types of learners. In another sample conducted within the same study, more than three-fourths of the students preferred visual-spatial methods.

2.2.2 Auditory

As for auditory or listening learners, they will learn effectively when they can listen to what they are learning. They understand their learning better through listening tasks and approach such as listening to lectures, audiotapes. The auditory learners will prefer the teacher to provide verbal instructions in order to gain information in the classroom during the teaching and learning process. The teaching and learning activities that are effective for this group and can be implemented by teacher in teaching this type of learners are dialogues, discussions and plays. Other than that,

problem-based learning games, and group research are another effective tasks to be implemented to this type of learner. Bandler & Grinder (1987) stated that, auditory learners solve problems by talking about them. Thus, the problem-solving tasks that involves group or class discussion is one of a good teaching and learning activity to be implemented by teacher to this type of learner. An auditory learner use rhythm and sounds as memory aids since they have strong preferences of listening. In the same study mentioned earlier which was conducted by Dr. Linda Kreger Silverman in the year 2004 to a group of 750 Morris S. Smith Foundation's undergraduates found that, only one-fifth of the students are auditory learners while the rest are mostly visual-spatial and the combination of both learning styles.

2.2.3 Kinesthetic

Those who are kinesthetic or experiential learners learn best by doing or when learning involves their hands or other parts of their body. They like experiential learning that is, a learning which put total physical involvement to a learning situation (Bandler & Grinder, 1987) Kinesthetic learners learn best when they are involved or active in their learning. They will find it difficult to sit listening to lectures or reading a book or notes for long periods. Thus, teacher may need to implement active teaching and learning approaches in the classroom to satisfy the needs of this type of learners for example, by conducting hands-on tasks and activities that require the students to move and demonstrate what they learn such as building models or doing experiments. Kinesthetic types of learners use movement as memory aids in their learning processes. Johnston & Orwig (1999) stated that kinesthetic learners learn well in hands-on activities like projects and demonstrations. They enjoy learning through doing, and this active type of learning preferences is useful for assembling and making products and they are more likely to find it easy to demonstrate how to do something since they have strong preferences of hands-on and experiential types of learning which involves movement and physical activity. Other teaching and learning activities that is effective for this group is giving new experiences, problem-based learning, games, and group

research. In the year 2002, Nafisah @ Kamariah Md Kamaruddin and Nurhaiza Abd Wahab have conducted a study to identify the most preferred learning styles of form four electrical engineering students in three technical schools in Malaysia. The study has found out that out of 126 respondents, 70 or 55.55% of them are kinesthetic learners. This is due to their major field of study that requires them to involve with many physical activities and movements since they are learning mostly through practical work and laboratory activities. This has somehow influenced their learning styles and preferences.

To sum up, there are three most common learning styles of a person which are, visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. However, there is no proof that one style is better than the other is or likewise (Hamachek, 1995). It depends on whether the learning style is suitable and comfortable to the students.

2.3 Factors Influencing Language Learning Style and Preferences

However, learning styles and preferences of the learners may be influenced by several factors in their life. Their preferences are influenced by their genetic make-up, their previous learning experiences, their culture and as well as the society they live in. Learners' learning styles can also be determined by their physical, behavioral, thinking styles, interaction styles, method of learning, rate of learning, and also the cognitive styles that the students choose when receiving new knowledge (Curry, 1990 ; Dunn, 1992 & Keefe, 1987).

Another researcher, Cortazzi (1990) and Jordan (1997) also stated that the origin of learner styles as what has been suggested, are often the students' educational background (school experiences), or popular wisdom as well as their cultural and L1 background. As a conclusion, learners' surroundings and backgrounds definitely have an effect over their preferences in learning.

As for the study conducted by Fleming in 2006, some students report that when they were younger, their VARK profile would have been different and that it is their exposure to different life experiences (travel, recreation, work, and relationships) that would have made a change in how they prefer to learn. However, sufficient longitudinal studies have not been done to be sure about that.

2.4 Teaching Styles

Just as the students, the teacher or language instructor also have their own preferences in terms of the teaching styles that they may want to practice and call upon throughout the lesson in order to enhance group movement and learning. Therefore, according to Hofstede (1986), the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process depends on the excellence of the teacher in class which means that, teacher is the one who is responsible in ensuring and determining the success of their teaching and in ensuring that the students understand their lesson well.

There is also a need to alter the educational conditions in order to meet learning style preferences of the students, and according to Beaudry and Klavis (1989), this action could produce statistically significant improvements in grades and attitudes of the students. By expanding and varying the teaching style, language instructors can provide opportunities for students with different learning styles to increase their learning (Friedman & Alley, 1984). Gregorc and Ward (1977) made a recommendation to the instructors to identify the learning styles of the students as well as their teaching styles and then vary their teaching methods to meet the range of learners' preferences. Another researchers Hyman and Rosoff (1985) also stressed that when teacher matched their learners' learning styles with their teaching style, it may help in supplementing achievement to their students. According to Henson and Borthwick (1984), learners have their own preferred learning styles and it is the

instructor's responsibility to gear up their teaching styles to fit the learning style of the learners.

Most researchers agree that further study is needed in the area of identifying learning styles, teaching styles, and the significance of a match and mismatched between the two as well as its implications towards learners' learning and performance. However, less has been written about teaching styles and learning styles. Reid (1995) suggests that all teachers have their own teaching styles. She hypothesised that 90% of secondary school teaching is geared to auditory learners only and this has being the proportion of teacher of talk and discussion teaching style. Reid also suggests that teacher should move away from the idea that our way of our learning or teaching is the best (1995) and to try to vary their teaching styles so that it will fit the learners' learning styles and preferences. On the origin of teaching styles, it has been proposed that teachers teach in the way they were taught or learned best or imitate the teaching styles of teachers they admired (Kinsella ,1995 & Jordan, 1997)

2.2 The Problems Occur Due to The Mismatched between Students' Learning Styles and Teacher's Teaching Style.

Students who are allowed to choose among learning activities that they prefer based on their preferences, they will learn better (Lewis and Hayward, 2003). Therefore, teachers should play their role in ensuring that their teaching approaches and techniques match with the learner's preference and style of learning to ensure effective learning. This is because when there is differences and mismatched of learning styles and teaching styles between students and teachers, this will consistently and negatively affect students' learning and performance (Wallace and Oxford, 1992). On the other hand, when learners' learning styles are matched with appropriate approaches in teaching that their motivation, performances, and achievements will increase and be enhanced (Brown, 1994).

A research carried out by Cassidy & Eachus (2000) investigated on the relationship between students' evaluation of their own academic proficiency, learning style and academic achievement. The study has proved that learners proficiency were positively correlated with a strategic learning approach, and negatively correlated with an apathetic learning approach. Teacher needs to take into consideration the learners' learning styles while choosing the teaching and learning approaches as well as the techniques to be implemented in the teaching and learning process. If teachers accept and consider the suitable students' learning styles in the teaching approaches implemented, this will somehow help in increasing the students' attitude toward learning, productivity, academic performance and creativity (Griggs, 1985).

A number of authors (e.g. Reid 1987, Cortazzi 1990, Felder 1995, Jones 1997, and Littlewood, Liu and Yu 1996) propose that when mismatches often occur, it can have bad effects on students' learning and attitude to class and to the English learning itself. Felder adds that students may get bored and may quit the course. Many researchers have also claimed that matching teaching and learning style can improve learners performance (Willing (1988), Felder(1995), and Kinsella (1995)). Reid (1996) adds that matching teaching style with learning styles gives all learners an equal chance in the classroom, and could build students' self-awareness.

Based on a research carried out by Domino (1979), it was found that college students taught in preferred learning styles scored higher on tests, fact knowledge, attitude, and efficiency than those taught in instructional styles different from their preferred styles. Recent research (Ehrman & Oxford, 1988, 1989; Oxford & Ehrman, 1988) also suggests that learning style has a significant influence on students' choice of learning strategies, and that both styles and strategies affect learning outcomes. Language learning styles was found to be among the most important variables influencing performance in a second language. (Oxford, Rebecca, 1989). This is supported by Curry's taxonomy (1990) which he suggested that learning style and achievement are associated to one another. Curry's taxonomy also states that the

concept of learning style is a combination of motivation, engagement, and cognitive processing habits, which then influence the use of metacognitive skills such as situation analysis, self-pacing, and self-evaluation to produce a learning outcome.

To sum up, the right choice and implementation of teaching and learning activities in the classroom may result positively on the students' academic achievement, this is when they feel motivated to learn that they will perform a positive behavior towards the learning process. However, if mismatched occurs between teachers and learners teaching and learning styles, it may then influence the learners performance in English. The significance is that when student and teacher styles are better matched, students are likely to work harder both in and outside the classroom, and also to benefit much more from their ESL classes.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this section is to discuss the methodology of the research. The main purpose of this research is to investigate the most preferred language learning styles of UTM second year undergraduates from the Faculty of Education (majoring in Living Skills) , The research is also to identify the factors that influence the students' learning preferences and to investigate the students views on their lecturer's teaching style. The problems encountered by these students during their Advanced English for Academic Communication class will also be investigated. A group of UTM second year undergraduates of Faculty of Education majoring in Living Skills was chosen as the respondents of the study. Data for the research was collected through questionnaires.

3.2 Research Instruments

This research utilised quantitative research methodology in collecting data. The instrument used in collecting data was questionnaire.

3.2.1 Questionnaire (Appendix A)

A set of questionnaire containing 15 questions was developed based on the questionnaire designed by Solomon & Felder (2002), and Jester (2002). Different question-types, such as category questions, listing/choice questions, likert-scale questions, and open-ended questions were used in the questionnaire. The questionnaire comprised of seven different sections ; i) respondents' particular, ii) respondents' preferred learning style, iii) factors influencing language learning style, iv) student's view on lecturer's teaching style, and v) problems encountered by students during the implementation of UHB 2422 class. The last section is an open-ended section on student's perception towards their lecturer's teaching style and the problems that they encounter during the class. To ensure its reliability, the questionnaire was piloted on five second year UTM undergraduates of Faculty of Education who are majoring in Living Skills. After the analysis on the pilot study was done, the questionnaires was revised and distributed to 70 respondents from the targeted group.

3.3 Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the study were the second year UTM undergraduates of Faculty of Education majoring in Living Skills. A total of 70 questionnaires was distributed to the sample who are currently taking Advanced English for Academic Communication (UHB 2422) offered by UTM during their undergraduate study and 50 questionnaires were returned. The questionnaire was distributed during their second semester while they are taking the UHB 2422 subject. Out of the 50 respondents, 17 of them are male students while the rest are female students. Four of them were found to have good English qualifications where they scored 1A for they SPM English 1119 and Band 4 for their MUET. Two students scored 2A while the rest about 3 students scored 3B, 6 students scored 4B while the rest that is another 24 students have an average English qualifications where they have credited their SPM English with 5C and 6C and

an average of Band 3 and 2 for their MUET. However there are also students which is about 11 students who have a very poor performance in their SPM English as well as in MUET. These students scored 7E and 8E in their SPM English and Band 1 for their MUET.

3.4 Research Procedure

The pilot study was carried out before the actual data collection period in order to assess the validity of the questionnaire designed. A total of three UTM second year undergraduates of Faculty of Education majoring in Living Skill were chosen randomly to be involved in the pilot study at various places in the university.

During the actual study, the questionnaires was distributed at various locations in the campus, such as at the hostels, cafeterias, library, and as well as Faculty of Education. Before the questionnaires were distributed to them, the respondents, first of all, was approached with questions regarding their courses and year of study in order to confirm that they belong to the scope of study. The questionnaire was collected right after the respondents answered the questionnaire.

3.5 Data Analysis

In analysing the data, four variables were used which are, learning styles and preferences, factors influencing students' language learning styles, lecturer's teaching style, and problems that occur due to the mismatched between students' learning styles and the teaching style of the lecturer. Data was analysed manually and using other descriptive statistics. The first section in the questionnaire was on the learning style test where there are 18 statements arranged randomly and each statement is classified under three different categories of learning styles which are the visual, auditory and

kinesthetic styles. There are 18 statements altogether divided into three categories as mentioned above and each category comprised of six statements. Each respondent was categorized under the visual, auditory, and kinesthetic styles when they chose at least four out of the six statements provided from each category. As for the second section of the questionnaire, it investigated on the factors influencing respondents learning style and it was divided into five factors which are the factors of friends, family members, learning experiences in previous school, learning experience in university, and their major or course of study. This section was then analysed by counting the number of respondents out of 50 that chose each factors as the factors influencing their learning style and preferences. The data was presented through percentage.

The next section investigated on the respondents' views on the teaching style of their lecturers where the procedure of data analysis for this section was the same as the data analysis procedure on the respondents learning style test. This section comprised of 15 statements altogether and the students will have to choose at least four out of five statements in each category that they feel suited and matched with their lecturer's teaching style as what they viewed in the UHB 2422 class. The statements were categorized into three types of teaching styles ; visual, auditory, and kinesthetic styles and each category comprised of 5 statements. Their lecturer teaching styles may fall under three categories of teaching styles either visual, auditory, or the kinesthetic style where the respondents will need to choose at least four out of five statements from each category in order to place their lecturer in either one of the three teaching styles.

Next, the learning style of each student was compared with the teaching style of their lecturers to see whether there is a match or mismatch between these two styles and the problems encountered by the students during the implementation of UHB 2422 subject was identified based on the comparison made.