

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter reveals the background of the study, research questions, purpose of the study, scope of the study, and significance of the study.

1.1 Background

Pedagogy, described as the practice of teaching, emphasizes how knowledge and skills are conveyed in a learning environment. When it comes to teaching and learning, teachers must be able to adjust their teaching when it comes to going into a different environment and create a positive learning atmosphere so that students can develop their potential actively. Teachers must also concentrate on implementing effective strategies that make the learning process easier by determining the best way for students to learn (Afzaal et al., 2019).

There are two factors that can influence the students' learning process (Rosyana et al., 2022). The first one is the things within themselves, which are their personal traits and their development as an individual. The second one is the things from the outer side, which are the learning environment and facilities. Learning styles can be considered as an essential aspect in a learning process, as they influence how students learn in class and have the ability to promote learning for students.

Every student has individual differences in observing a situation, receiving, processing, and interpreting information, calculating the effects, and making decisions (Putri et al., 2019). As a matter of fact, many students neglect to consider their preferred learning styles, and a lot of teachers are

also unaware of their students' preferred learning styles (Magfirah, 2018). Hence, both teachers and students need to be aware that students have individual differences and have their own preference in learning. Students will have a better understanding of how they could learn more effectively when they are aware of their learning styles.

By being aware of the students' individual differences and considering their learning styles, teachers should also be able to fulfill students' needs by designing various learning strategies and activities as ways to meet the teaching objectives and to promote an effective and engaging teaching and learning process with appropriate learning environments and materials. This is because students learn best by the materials that are interested and understandable and they will have difficulty and less desire to learn when the materials are hard to process in their mind (Payaprom & Payaprom, 2020; Şen, 2018; Cimermanová, 2018).

Being aware of the students' individual differences is also very relevant and needed in this modern era where technology and educational programs are developing immensely and rapidly, especially relating to the current educational system that uses *Kurikulum Merdeka* in Indonesia where differentiated learning is demanded to be applied. Being able to understand and use English is also necessary in this modern and global era, especially when entering the workforce. However, because of the short amount of time allotted for learning English and English subject is not taught entirely in English, it may be said that students receive little exposure to the language

(Farhani et al., 2020; Samudro & Amin, 2023). Thus, it is necessary for teachers to create and promote pedagogy that prioritizes effective teaching and learning process with a learning environment that is stimulating and interactive by understanding the strengths and weaknesses of various students and determining what is most likely to capture each student's attention for positive impacts on learning outcomes, especially in teaching English as a foreign language. It is assumed that one of the key elements that affect how well students learn a second or foreign language and improve their abilities is from their preferred learning style (Oxford, 2003).

It is also necessary for students to acknowledge their preferred learning styles. However, as each learning style offers distinct benefits, one learning style cannot be superior to another (Nurkhofifah, 2021), and teachers should not neglect the learning styles that students have and appreciate every learning style available by creating a variety of learning activities so that every student can study effectively.

Learning processes are greatly influenced by many factors that could determine students' success in learning, and one of them can be seen from their active participation in the learning process. It is expected that students can comprehend information better when they actively participate in the classroom. Students' active participation in the classroom is crucial and essential that every teacher needs to comprehend, acknowledge, and encourage it. It has been illustrated to be linked to positive outcomes to students like a high level of interaction with teachers, increased happiness,

improved attendance, higher overall grades, retention, and persistence (Zaeni & Hidayah, 2017; Burke & Fedorek, 2017). The students' active participation could create a conducive learning atmosphere, allowing each student to learn productively that will lead to increased performance. Students participating actively during the learning process is an indicator of whether a student is dedicated to their learning and has the motivation to learn (Zhang & Hyland, 2018). A way for students to participate actively in the learning process is none other than to develop their own knowledge. They should actively build a comprehension of all the issues or challenges they experience during the learning process. (Putra et al., 2018)

Various studies in regard to learning styles and the active participation or engagement of students in class have been conducted prior to this present study. The first study talks about the relationship between learning styles and students' active participation towards the learning outcomes in a mathematics class at a junior high school (Putri et al., 2019). The study found that there were positive and significant relationships between learning styles and learning outcomes, active participation and learning outcomes, as well as learning styles and active participation in class. Then, the second study talks about the relationship between learning styles and students' active participation towards the learning outcomes in a social studies class at a primary school. The result of the study is similar to the first study mentioned. It was found that there were positive and significant relationships between learning styles and learning outcomes,

active participation and learning outcomes, as well as learning styles and active participation in class (Rohmi, 2017).

The third study talks about fifth grader students' agility based on the students' learning styles. The study found that there were different levels of agility analyzed from their learning styles (Rosyana, 2022). The fourth study discusses the effect of learning styles on the activeness of high school students in learning physics, using interviews as the method of data collection. It was found that the level of activeness was mostly described as low (Steviana, 2022). The fifth study explores the impact of VAK learning styles on teenager level language learners in Indonesia by administering pre and post-tests to evaluate the students' prior speaking skills through the learning styles (Bakri, 2019).

Even though the previous studies (Putri, 2019; Rohmi, 2017; Rosyana, 2022; Steviana, 2022; Bakri, 2019) have contributed significantly to the understanding of the general relationship between learning styles and students' activeness, active participation, or engagement in learning, they often lack the specificity of addressing the intricacies of active participation in an English class at a vocational high school, considering the variety of majors there. By narrowing the focus to this specific educational setting, this study endeavors to bridge the gap of addressing enough detail to cover the students' active participation according to their learning styles' characteristics in an English class at a vocational high school and provide more knowledge and practical implications for educators in vocational high

schools in this current situation and era, especially through applying the differentiated learning that is demanded in *Kurikulum Merdeka*.

Understanding the students' active participation based on the learning styles' characteristics within this context could contribute to valuable comprehension for designing effective teaching strategies and enhancing students' active participation in vocational education. Thus, the present study attempts to give insight on how the students participate actively based on the learning styles' characteristics in an English class at a vocational high school in Jakarta, Indonesia.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the problems illustrated in the background, this study concentrates on gaining insight for these questions:

1. What are the students' learning styles?
2. How is the students' active participation based on their learning styles' characteristics in an English class at SMKN 17 Jakarta?

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to recognize the students' learning styles and their active participation based on the learning styles' characteristics in an English class at SMKN 17 Jakarta, a vocational high school in West Jakarta, Indonesia.

1.4 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on the students' learning styles and their active participation based on the learning styles' characteristics in an English class at SMKN 17 Jakarta, which is a vocational high school located in West Jakarta, Indonesia.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is anticipated to contribute greatly to the field of learning styles. In a theoretical way, it can serve as a guide for next studies on students' active participation based on the learning styles. Education stakeholders and fellow university students majoring in English education can also use the characteristics of various learning styles and the indicators of students' active participation compiled by the researcher to learn and understand the students' characteristics, individual differences and needs in learning.

In a practical way, it is expected that the existence of this study would increase the awareness of how necessary students' preferred learning styles are and how it could contribute to their active participation in the learning process to both teachers and students, especially relating to the current era and the current educational system that uses *Kurikulum Merdeka* in Indonesia where differentiated learning is demanded to be applied to accommodate the students' individual differences and needs in learning .