CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the background of the study, problem identification, research questions, objectives of the study, the scope of the study, and the significances of study.

1.1. Background of the study

Every human being can learn when tools of success are provided. In the learning process, everybody may have choices to learn what best based on their preferences. Exploring the ways learners learn may have been a gap neglected by another previous study, including; accepting information, processing, and applying what has already been learned in a classroom. In the education area, those preferences called learning styles or various natural, habitual and preferred ways of an individual for absorbing, processing and retaining new information and skills (Reid, 1995, p. 8). In the same way, Dunn and Dunn (in Association for Psychological Science 2009: 107) also defined that learning styles are the way in which each learner begins to concentrate on, processing, absorbing, and retaining new and difficult information.

The interaction of these elements happens differently in every learner, particularly in the process of learning. According to Neil Fleming Mills (1992), learning styles divided into four types; they are Visual, Aural, Reading, and Kinesthetic (VARK). Visual learners prefer to use materials such as charts, graphs, and other symbols to take in and give out information. Aural learners

prefer to learn best from lectures, group discussions, radio, using mobile phones, speaking, web-chat and talking things through. Reading learners are often addicted to PowerPoint, the Internet, lists, diaries, dictionaries, thesauri, quotations and words. Kinesthetic learners are connected to reality, "either through actual personal experiences, examples, practice or simulation (Fleming & Mills, 1992).

The characteristics of learning styles that appeared in one learner are different from the other learners because learning styles can affect learners' understanding of teaching material. Some learners are difficult to concentrate when the teacher is delivering the material in which appropriate way to the learners' learning styles. In this case, learners who have a visual learning style will pay more attention to the teacher who explains the material with the picture. Learners who have an aural learning style, they will tend to listen to the sound of music in the learning activity. Meanwhile, the students with kinesthetic learning style will be focus if the teacher explains the material by making movements such as dancing or direct practice, Nurul Fadhilah (2018).

Every student has different styles in the way they learn. They come from different backgrounds and conditions when they come to the classroom. Consequently, learners' confidence will increase, and teachers' control over learners will lessen. At this point, learners become the center of the learning process and control their learning while teachers act as facilitators (Gilakjani and Ahmadi, 2011). Then, it can help learners to build a better understanding of the teaching material which had delivered.

Regarding this matter, some previous studies have investigated learners' learning styles. The first study conducted by Afsaneh Effatdokht Ramezani (2015) entitled an exploratory study of the language learning style preferences of Iranian EFL high school students. This study has investigated the learning style preferences of 40 Iranian students at Marefat Iranian high school in Kuala Lumpur of which, 20 are females and 20 are males. To this end, this study used a structured interview to elicit in-depth information from the students. The results of the study showed that the learning style preferences of Iranian students were different according to their gender. Female students preferred auditory learning as their primary learning style, while male students preferred kinesthetic more. Moreover, the findings revealed that Kinesthetic learning was the least preferred learning style of the most female students, whereas the least preferred learning style of male students was tactile learning.

The second study conducted by Huda Suliaman Alqunayeer and Sadia Zamir (2015) entitled identifying learning styles in the EFL classroom. The study also gives the comparative analysis between the male and the female students studying at the same level. The data analysis highlights a considerable difference between the boys and girls learning preferences. It concludes that female students are found to be Aural learners (i.e. prefer to explain new ideas to others, discuss topics with other students and their teachers, attend lectures, and discussion groups). Whereas, Boys are found to be Kinesthetic learners (i.e. prefer field trips, doing things to learn them, hands-on approaches, using their senses). The study asks for better teaching methods and strategies, keeping in view students' unique ways

of learning. The study suggests that teachers should modify their teaching strategies following their students learning preferences. The awareness about students learning preferences increases the teachers' efficiency of their classroom orientation.

The third study conducted by K. Karthigeyan * & Dr. K. Nirmala (2013) entitled the learning style preference of English language learners. The purpose of the present study is to identify the predominant learning style preference of English language learners in higher secondary schools concerning demographic variables like gender, locality, nature of school board and class in which they are studying. The Perceptual Learning Style Preference Questionnaire (PLSPQ) developed by Joy Reid was adopted by the researcher and the reliability of the questionnaire was established. The questionnaire was administered to 582 students. The data were analyzed using descriptive and percentage analysis. Data analysis showed that the primary and secondary learning styles of the students were visual and auditory learning styles.

The similarity of the research above with this research is in the focus of the study. Those 3 previous studies have investigated the most dominant learning styles based on the gender of the learners, and most of their level is senior learners. While the difference of this current study has focused on looking at how the various learning styles applied by junior learners. This study certainly applies the theoretical framework proposed by Neil Fleming Mills, 1992, and compared with Afsaneh Effatdokht Ramezani (2015) used Joy M Reid 1987, K. Karthigeyan * & Dr. K. Nirmala (2013) used Joy M Reid 1995, Huda Suliaman Alqunayeer and

Sadia Zamir (2015) used the same theory proposed by Neil Fleming. Then, students need to know the learning styles that help them in the learning process and is expected to have a good impact on their learning.

Learners in which applied with various learning styles could possibly determine how they accept the materials based on students' learning styles in order to determine academic achievement. They recognize how to adapt to the learning process. According to Nolting (2002) emphasized that students' academic achievement will positively increase if they are aware of their learning styles and how they learn best. Unless they are aware of knowing the appropriate learning style applied in their learning, the learners' learning outcomes will optimally achieve, Etin Solihatin (2011). In other words, learning styles define how the learners recognize their performances, as well as the teachers, who need to flexibly deal with the learner's learning styles by deciding teaching methods that appropriate to their learners in every learning process.

When the researcher came to the Eighth Graders English classroom at SMPN 97 Jakarta on Monday 29 April 2019, the researcher found that some of the learners in that class like to write down the information delivered by their teacher on their textbook. They also marked the essential words that exist in their book by coloring lighter. During the learning process, some learners were looking seriously at their teacher when the teacher was explaining the material and the other leaners could not focus on their teacher and they did many interactions with their friend. Besides, some students need to play and touch something around them when they listened to teacher explanations, such as play a pen and finger motion. Also,

according to the result of the learner is a daily test, most of them got lower than the minimum criteria of mastery learning (henceforth, KKM). Then, the researcher believes that learners provided with and suitable learning styles during the teaching and learning process can get the better academic achievement. In this case, the teacher did not recognize for sure the learners' learning styles, as well as the learners, did not recognize exactly what their learning styles are. Then it should be considered that this study is essential to be explored. The reason why the researcher decided to choose SMPN 97 Jakarta is because some of the learners are less interested in English lessons, difficult to understand the materials delivered by the teacher, have different learning styles, and got the low academic achievement, even lower than KKM. The researcher would like to explore how eight graders at SMPN 97 Jakarta learn English in the classroom by conducting this research entitled **Exploring Eighth Graders' Learning Styles in English Classroom at SMPN 97 Jakarta.**

1.2. Problem Identification

Based on interview and the result of learners' daily test, the researcher identified several problems :

1. The learners often have difficulty in understanding the English lesson in which they do not know for sure what their learning styles are
2. In accordance to the first problem, it could result in the students' academic achievement which is below the minimum criteria of mastery learning (KKM). This situation in accordance with Masthohatul Aziza (2016) statement that learning styles also could possibly determine learners' academic achievement

1.3. Research Question

The area of exploration have formulated in the following research question:

1. What learning styles are identified in English classroom at SMPN 97 Jakarta?

1.4. The Objective of the Study

This study has a purpose as follows:

1. To find out what learning styles are identified in English classroom at SMPN 97 Jakarta.

1.5. The Scope of the Study

This research is limited only to find out what learning styles are identified in English classroom at SMPN 97 Jakarta. This research has taken the learning

styles according to Neil Fleming Mills (1992), such as visual, aural, reading and kinesthetic. Then, this research also has aimed to concern about what learning styles identified in the English classroom at SMPN 97 Jakarta.

1.6. The Significances of the Study

This study has importantly considered to cover the usefulness for the students, the teachers, and the researchers. For students, this research will be a great benefit to those who recognize how they are learning in order to create a pleasant atmosphere in the English language learning process. For teachers, it hopes to inspire them more on how to apply the various teaching styles in English classrooms, in order to deliver the material based on learners' learning styles to improve their performances. Besides, for other researchers, the results of this study can broaden the knowledge and experience of researchers, especially about learners' learning styles applied by eight graders' in the English classrooms. Moreover, the results of this study hopefully can be used as a reference for those who conduct the study related to learning style in the English classroom.