

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background of the study and the formulation of the research question. It is also followed by the purpose of the study, formulation of hypothesis, significance of the study, scope and limitation of the study, and definition of key terms.

A. Background of Study

Learning is one of the most inseparable parts of human life. Learning is the process of collecting new information or knowledge, understanding the information, and implementing the information for a certain purpose. By learning, people can get more information and deepen their comprehension of several things that they have learned. Commonly, people need to learn something for a certain purpose. For example, in order to achieve academic purposes, students learn some subjects given by teachers at school. According to Harmer (2007), learning is the movement of an individual because of interaction with a new environment, which requires a process and effort to understand the nature of learning activities. Learning becomes the main key to survival, sustainability, and competitive benefit with others at the level of social interaction (Gold & Smith, 2003). It means that learning is an absolute thing that should be done by each person around the world. That is why learning is a crucial part of human life to upgrade knowledge and its relationship with recent issues. Each person has their way of comprehending what

they are learning about. This reflection of learning is called learning style. Learning style allows people or students to find and enjoy their learning process based on their psychological learning or their personality characteristics. Felder & Henriques (1995) pointed out that learning styles are when people or students find their characteristics to get new information, keep the new information, or deepen their information. Students do their learning styles as individuals with changeable habits (Duff et al., 2004). In addition, Pritchard (2009) comments that individuals decide their styles in the process of learning based on the best way they feel comfortable with. It means that learning styles are the way to find and decide the best way for students to collect, understand, and keep information in the learning process. In terms of English language learning, learning styles also have a great effect on teaching and learning activities. Students are unique in their learning styles. Thus, the teacher acts as the facilitator to give the material, monitor, and control the students' progress in learning. In conclusion, teachers can decide the suitable method for teaching learning activities dealing with their students' learning styles in better learning circumstances.

A result of a study shows that the preferred learning styles are driven by motivation. It puts the red line that learning styles also relate to motivation. Essentially, humans learn something for a certain purpose. In other words, humans have to learn a certain thing to achieve a certain goal. This term is called motivation. In 1973, Lepper et al. wrote that a factor that drives and stimulates the behavior of humans and other creatures" is called motivation. Santrock (2006) claims that motivation covers steps that encourage, order, and maintain actions. A desire or

craving that inspires and guides behavior is referred to as motivation (Myers & David, 2001). In line with that, Tranquillo et al. (2016) discovered that motivation is the inner mechanism that can't be seen but that activates, guides, and maintains overt behavior. It can be said that motivation is a conscious or unconscious desire to act purposefully that develops in a person. Motivation is a driving force in language learning, influencing a student's readiness for communication. It combines effort, interest, and positive attitudes toward language acquisition. Motivation for learning English is crucial for academic and nonacademic success.

Based on language learning theory, the success of language learning is driven by learning styles and motivation. Saville and Troike (2006) supported that motivation, gender, learning style, aptitude, age, personality and learning strategies are the variations of learners that affecting the output of language learning. In recent years, numerous results of studies have proven that there is a correlation between learning style, learning motivation, and English achievement (Srichanyachon, 2012; Sulistyowati, 2018; Husna, 2019; Kamiluddin, 2019; Syafrizal et al., 2020; Subagio, 2020; Catingub, 2020; Saswandi et al., 2023; Maming et al., 2023). Regarding that, writing is an achievement in the English language. Sulistyowati (2018) discovered that students master English writing when they adopt their preferred learning style and enhance their motivation, thereby enhancing the learning experience and facilitating faster, more enjoyable learning. Writing serves as a means of concept expression in addition to interpersonal communication. Tarigan (2008) stated that writing is an ability that requires indirect interaction rather than face-to-face with someone else. The way to express ideas, thoughts, and

feelings to other people in written symbols to make other people or readers understand the ideas conveyed is called writing (Morris, 1999). Thus, writing ability involves expressing thoughts or ideas in an understandable format, aiming to provide knowledge and accurately convey ideas or concepts. Mastering writing paragraphs is crucial for language learners to effectively communicate ideas, desires, intentions, sentiments, and information in a globalized world (Pamella, 1991; Shanorra et al., 2021).

Some recent studies have highlighted the correlation between learning style, learning motivation, and success in learning English. Setyowati (2018), entitled *The Contribution of Learning Style, Learning Motivation, and Teacher's Classroom Management Toward Students's English Writing Achievement*. She proposed that there were significant and positive contributions from learning styles, motivation, and teachers' classroom management toward writing achievement. In the following year, Kamiluddin (2019), entitled *Motivation and Learning Style: Do They Correlate with Language Proficiency?* yielded that motivation and learning style correlate with English proficiency. Besides, Catingub (2020) conducted a study entitled *Learning Styles, Motivation to Learn, and Academic Performance of Grade Five Pupils*. He avowed that learning styles and learning motivation are needed to increase academic performance. The newest one comes from Saswandi et al.'s (2023) study entitled *The Correlation Among Students' Learning Styles and Students' Motivation in Learning English with Their Vocabulary Mastery*. Their study revealed that there was a significant correlation among learning styles, motivation, and vocabulary mastery.

Addressing gaps in previous studies, this research emphasized several cultural differences. Majority of the previous studies explored various learning styles, including visual, auditory, verbal, kinesthetic, analytic, communicative, concrete, and teacher-oriented. On the other hand, there are other types of learning styles which need to be further investigated. As Oxford (2003) statements that there is personality learning style as one branch of learning style category. In this category, there are closure-oriented learners and open-oriented learners. These two learning styles deal with how a learner handles tasks and the level of clarity they require. Those who closure-oriented learners tend to finish their task as soon as possible to avoid last minute stresses. While open-oriented learners prefer to finish their task if it has already close with deadline. In addition, this research explored the writing performance of undergraduate students in English language education department. The creative writing course was considered as the complex English language skill and was highlighted the need to be further investigated. Thus, the researcher observed the correlation among those two kinds of learning styles, learning motivation, and writing performance of undergraduate EFL learners.

B. Formulation of Research Question

Based on those descriptions, the research question is formulated as: is there any correlation among learning styles, learning motivation, and writing performance of undergraduate EFL learners??"

C. Purpose of the Study

Based on the research questions above, this study aims to investigate whether there is a correlation among learning styles, learning motivation, and writing performance of undergraduate EFL learners.

D. Formulation of Hypothesis

There are two kinds of hypotheses used in this research, those are :

1. Null Hypothesis (H₀)

There is no correlation among learning style, learning motivation, and writing performance of undergraduate EFL learners.

2. Alternative Hypothesis (H_a)

There is a correlation among learning style, learning motivation, and writing performance of undergraduate EFL learners.

E. Significance of the Study

The results of this study are expected to useful for :

1. The learners

From the result of this study, are expected to recognize their goals in learning English. When they realize what their purpose in learning English, they can choose their preferred way when learning it. Choosing the appropriate method of learning refers to the learning style, hopefully, they can get better results in writing performance.

2. The lecturers

The lecturers are expected to be able to apply the appropriate English methods in teaching and learning activities. Of the various types of students' learning styles, the lecturers can facilitate and support them in some particular ways, for example giving several interesting games or various writing activities to expose and enhance students' writing performance. Moreover, the lecturers can act as friends of the students, getting closer to them and motivating them periodically to build their spirit in learning English and writing performance.

3. Other next researchers

Hoping that other researchers can take advantage of this research and that the outcomes of this research may be used as a benchmark for upcoming similar studies on the development of English language learning.

F. Scope and Limitation of the Study

In order to restrain misconceptions that appear in this study, scope and limitations were given by the researcher. The scope of this study covers the correlation among learning styles, learning motivation, and writing performance.

Then, several limitations of this study include:

1. The researcher focused on personality learning styles by Oxford (2003) covering closure-oriented learners and open-oriented learners.
2. The researcher focused on integrative and instrumental motivation by Gardner (1985)

3. This study focused on the writing performance of undergraduate EFL learners and the researcher used creative writing as the writing genre. The researcher specifically observed the fifth-semester undergraduate students of the English Language Education Department at UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung.

G. Definition of Key Terms

1. Learning Styles

Learning styles can be defined as the preferred way of learning that the students feel more easily understand the learning material based on their personality characteristics. In this case, learning styles cover closure-oriented learners and open-oriented learners. These two learning styles deal with the ability of learners in handing assignment based on its deadline.

2. Learning Motivation

Learning motivation is the reasons of a student interested to learn English language in terms or integrative motivation and instrumental motivation. Integrative motivation concerns with the reason or desire of the students to learn English for a certain purpose. While instrumental motivation deals with the truly desire or goals of the students to learn English and to integrate English itself toward their daily activities or their lifestyle.

3. Writing performance

Writing can be described as the conveying ideas, sentiments, values, emotions, and attitudes through writing, which acts as an indirect communication method. In this research, writing performance refers to students' writing performance at creative writing course on writing short story.

4. Undergraduate EFL Learners

Undergraduate EFL learners are those who learn English as a foreign language at the level of an S1 degree or Bachelor's degree. In this research, undergraduate EFL learners refer to English Language Education students of S1 degree at UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung.