

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background of the study, statements of problems, aims of study and scope of study. This chapter also contains the significance of the study including the research methodology preview and instruments used in collecting and analyzing data. It contains the terms used in the study and the organization of the paper.

### 1.1 Background of the study

Learning is an active process of perceiving knowledge, information, and ideas that involves cognitive development from stage to stage (Piaget, in Hutchinson and Waters 1987). Each student has his or her own learning characteristics. As a result, the learning output varies among them. In relation to that, learning requires appropriate ways where students can acquire information effectively; in this case, the role of teachers as the learning facilitator can help students to reach the learning objectives. Based on the researcher's observation of the study, one of the problems in the teaching and learning process is that teachers sometimes do not realize the differences of students' characteristics, especially in their learning styles. Students

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may have different ways in acquiring information and processing materials. Unfortunately, the learning tasks given by the teachers sometimes do not accommodate the students' needs. If teachers consider the students' different learning styles, they should design effective learning tasks that will accommodate the students' needs; for examples, activities involving physical movement for kinesthetic learners, pictures or movies for visual learners, and lecture, music or songs for auditory learners (DePorter, 2008).

“Learning style, according to Sims (1995) is the characteristic of cognitive, affective, and physiological behaviors that become indicators of how learners perceive, interact with, and respond to the learning environment”. In other words, learning styles may vary from individual to individual. Dunn and Dunn in DePorter (2007) suggested that learning styles are categorized as visual, auditory, and kinesthetic (VAK). The simple example of VAK concept is a student who could not easily learn computer program by reading the instructions (visually) might learn more easily by using the computer program directly (kinesthetic). When considering preferred styles of learning, each student has a full range of learning strength; however, there are students who have mixed and balanced in learning styles (Bandler and Grinder 1981 in DePorter, 2007).

Considering the fact that students learn in different ways, teachers need to be sensitive toward these differences in order to make students feel successful in learning. Consequently, teachers should make a lot of efforts in designing an effective

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learning environment for students. In this context, Shavelson (in Dick and Reiser 1996) stated, “Decisions made during planning have a profound influence on teachers’ classroom behavior and on the outcomes of language learning”. Since teachers know the needs and characteristics of their students, they will consider setting the learning objectives where students’ different learning styles can be accommodated through effective learning tasks including methods, media and activities given in the classroom (Harmer, 2007).

Research indicates that considering students’ learning styles and strategies plays an important role in the successful of learning. Jones (1996:30), for example, said that applying instruction based on the students’ learning styles could improve the academic environment for both the teacher and the students. Therefore, this study aims at giving the pictures about the significance of considering the students’ different learning styles in planning the instruction and investigates the implementation of learning tasks that accommodate students’ learning styles at SMA Plus Muthahhari Bandung.

## 1.2 Statement of Problem

The study investigated the problems that are formulated in the following questions:

1. How do the teachers accommodate students' learning styles in designing and implementing the learning tasks?
2. What barriers do the teachers find in accommodating the students' different learning styles?
3. What are students' responses toward the learning tasks that are designed to accommodate their learning styles?

## 1.3 The Aims of Study

The study is expected to:

1. find out how the teachers accommodate students' learning styles in designing and implementing the learning tasks
2. find out the barriers do the teachers find in accommodating the students' different learning styles
3. find out students' responses toward the learning tasks that are designed to accommodate their learning styles

## 1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is significant to give a description of how the learning tasks that accommodate students' learning styles are implemented in the classroom. It is

expected to give contribution to the meet of improving teacher's understanding on students' different learning styles and improving teachers' awareness in designing learning tasks that accommodate students' learning styles.

### **1.5 Scope of Study**

The study was focused on investigating the implementation of learning tasks that accommodated the different learning styles in the classroom. The study also investigated the barriers faced by the teachers in accommodating the students' different learning styles and explored students' responses toward the learning tasks. Three teachers and twenty-five students of 11<sup>th</sup> grade at SMA Plus Muthahhari were participants of the study.

### **1.6 Method for Collecting, Presenting, and Analyzing the Data**

This study used a qualitative method and the data gained from the study were analyzed by means of descriptive-analysis technique. Whereby, the data were collected, classified, presented, analyzed, and interpreted into a coherent description. The qualitative data were obtained from observation and interview. Meanwhile, the quantitative data were gained by questionnaire.

#### **1.6.1 Sites and Participants**

This study was conducted at SMA Plus Muthahhari Bandung and the participants were three English teachers and twenty-five of 11<sup>th</sup> grade students. SMA

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Plus Muthahhari was selected because this school has applied Quantum Learning and the learning styles approach is applied in designing and implementing the learning tasks.

### **1.6.2 Data Collection**

In this study, the data were collected by means of interview, class observation, and questionnaire.

#### **1.6.2.1 Interview**

The first interview was conducted with three English teachers to reveal particular information related to the study. The interview was structured, in which the agenda and lists of questions were in predetermined order (Nunan, 1992). It was held before the teaching and learning process and involved twelve questions for each teacher (see AppendixI). In conducting the interview, the researcher used a video tape recorder, so that the data could be verified, transcribed and organized.

The second interview was conducted with three students of a class selected based on their different learning style tendencies. The interview was held in order to gain in-depth information about their responses toward the learning tasks that were designed to accommodate their learning styles. The students' interview was structured and consisted of five questions for each student. It was held in informal conversation in order to minimize students' anxiety of being interviewed and five structured questions were used in this interview.

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#### **1.6.2.2 Observation**

Observation was conducted in six meetings consisted of four meetings of regular English class and two meetings of “English khas” class. During the observation, the data were noted and recorded in order to monitor the teachers’ and the students’ activities in the teaching and learning process.

#### **1.6.2.4 Questionnaire**

The questionnaires were used to gain the data about teachers’ perception on learning styles approach, the students’ learning styles tests, and the students’ responses toward the learning tasks that were designed to accommodate their learning styles. The questionnaires were distributed to teachers consisted of five questions and the students’ learning styles questionnaires were consisted of fifteen questions and they were distributed before the teaching and learning process; meanwhile, students’ responses questionnaires were consisted of ten closed-ended questions and they were distributed after six meetings of the teaching and learning process. The results gained from questionnaire were analyzed and organized through tables or graphs. In this study, the questionnaire items were modified by Likert-type style, in which each statement was ranged for strongly agree, agree, uncertain, disagree, and strongly disagree.

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### 1.6.3 Procedures for Collecting and Analyzing the Data

The procedures of data collection were as follows:

1. finding out some theories and concepts related to the study through literary review
2. carrying out an interview with teachers to gain the information needed
3. distributing questionnaires to teachers
4. distributing questionnaires of students' learning styles test to students
5. conducting class observation to investigate whether the implementation worked
6. distributing the students' responses questionnaires and interpreting the data by means of tables or graphs
7. organizing, summarizing, and analyzing the data gained into a coherent description

### 1.7 Clarification of the Terms

To avoid misunderstanding in this study, the researcher clarified some key terms as follows:

1. This school has applied Quantum Learning since 1999, in which the learning styles approach is used to understand the students' learning characteristics and to design learning tasks that accommodate the students' learning styles.
2. English "khas" class is one of English meeting that focused on the school-based curriculum (*Kurikulum Yayasan*) and emphasized on applying the



Multiple Intelligences theory and Learning Styles approach. In the English “khas” meetings, a teacher designs fun and meaningful learning activities i.e. simulations, games, hands-on learning, presentations and discussions, projects etc.

3. Learning styles: a method of learning particular to an individual that is presumed to allow that individual to learn best. An individual might have three styles of learning (visual, auditory, and kinesthetic), but he or she tends to have learning dominant or learning strength; for example, he or she tends to prefer a visual learning.
  4. Visual (learners): processing information principally through sight, usually enjoys educational activities where he or she may take notes, read or watch videos.
  5. Auditory (learners): processing information principally through hearing, usually enjoys educational activities where he or she may do active listening, communicating, listening to music or narration.
  6. Kinesthetic (learners): processing information principally through the body and personal experiences usually enjoys educational activities where he or she may build, manipulate, or do experiments.
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## **1.8 Organization of the Paper**

### **Chapter I Introduction**

This chapter provided information about the background of the study, scope of the study, research questions, aims of the study, research method, significance of the study, clarification of key terms, and organization of the paper.

### **Chapter II Theoretical Foundations**

This chapter presented the review of literature and detail theories that are relevant to the study.

### **Chapter III Methodology**

This chapter discussed the methodology of the study related to the research questions as mentioned in chapter one.

### **Chapter IV Analysis and Discussions**

The data gained from interview, observation and questionnaire are presented and discussed in this chapter.

### **Chapter V Conclusions and Suggestions**

In this chapter, the conclusions and suggestions of the study are served for further research.