

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains background of the problem, questions of the research, objective of the study, theoretical framework and hypothesis of the research. It also discusses assumptions of the research, scope and limitation of the research, significance of the research, and definition of key terms.

1.1 Background

In English, there are four basic language skills that teachers have to teach and students have to learn; they are reading, listening, writing, and speaking. Those skills are important in teaching and learning English. Those skills cannot be separated and related each other to acquire English language. It is impossible if we talk to people without listening to their speaking and also it is impossible to write without reading what we write. That is why, reading and listening play an important role in language teaching. Reading and listening are receptive skills that teachers have to teach.

Burnes and Page (1985:25) state that reading is the art of reconstructing from the printed page the writer's idea, feelings, moods and sensory impressions. It means that the reader will try to construct the writer's idea, feelings and imagine the visual images during reading the text in understanding the meaning of the text. Thus, the major goal of reading for English students is comprehension. Readers'

ability to understand the author's message is influenced by their background knowledge to the topic given in the text. In addition, Burnes and Page (1985:46) state that comprehension is the process where background knowledge or the world knowledge of the reader interacts with the message encoded in the text to generate an understanding of an author's message. Comparing with listening, listening is also an essential skill which develops faster than speaking and often affects the development of reading and writing abilities in learning a new language. Listening is defined as a "receptive skill" where people get the idea according to what they heard (Harmer, 2001: 16). While, listening comprehension as a highly complex problem-solving activity than can be broken down into a set of distinct sub-skills Byrnes in Osada (2004: 5). Thus, listening is also not an easy skill to be acquired because it requires listeners to make meaning from the oral input by drawing upon their background knowledge of the world and of the second language and produce information in their long term memory and make their own interpretations of the spoken passages.

For many students, listening is a difficult skill to improve because in listening, students have to pay much attention, they have to concentrate, and sometimes they feel asleep (Bingol et al, 2014: 4). It also needs a quiet situation without any noise to do because when there are a lot of noise, listening in English will be hard to do. This problem also encounter in reading area, reading difficulties is also a common problem of students (Saadi, 2012:4). He stated that there are many students encounter difficulties in reading. Likewise, Indonesian students, many students still get difficulties in comprehending reading materials because teachers probably do not consider with students' learning styles in learning English. Then, students

sometimes have less motivation and interests if the teacher uses the method of teaching which is not suitable with their learning styles. While, they are supposed to master reading skill because they will find a lot of reading materials in English subject. However, acquiring reading skill is not easy for students. Thus, both reading and listening become a common problem among students. In this case, reading and listening problems are considered as a general problem which has motivated the researcher to explore the phenomenon.

Regarding with this phenomenon, one of the dominant objectives in foreign language learning settings is to raise awareness about students' personal differences and their potential effects on the learning process and subsequently, on learning outcomes (Gilakjani, 2012: 105). According to Ellis (1985:99), language learners vary on a number of dimensions to do with personality, learning style, motivation, aptitude and also age. These dimensions are assumed to be significant contributors that determine the success or failure in acquiring English language learning. One of these dimensions is learning styles, Wang (2007: 409) defines "learning style as an individual's preferred or habitual ways of processing the knowledge and transforming the knowledge into personal knowledge". It is an educational condition under which a student is most likely to learn. Thus, learning style is not really concerned with what the learners learn, but rather how they prefer to learn the materials. Furthermore, each person has his or her own best way to learn, governing how they prefer to receive and process the knowledge. Some learners may rely on visual image or presentation, others prefer listening to the music while learning, others may respond better to hands-on activities. Learning styles are found to affect the students' learning behaviors. Students who have different learning style

preferences would behave differently in the way they perceive, interact with, and respond to the learning environment. Since the learners differ in their preferences to the certain learning styles, it will be important for an educator to know the variations of students on the features of their learning styles because the information about students' learning style preference can help the teachers or lecturers become aware to the students' differences bring to the classroom (Wang, 2007: 410). In fact, there are many teachers who do not pay attention to learning styles of their students. Moreover, many students also do not pay attention to their own learning style whereas knowing it can help them to learn language easily

Some previous studies which are related to the students' learning style have been conducted by Bhatti and Bart (2013), the study was designed to explore the influence of learning styles on scholastic achievement levels. The participants in this study were undergraduate students studying social sciences at a Division 1 research university, the instruments used in the study were the Kolb learning style inventory and a demographic form. The major findings of the study are that the dominant learning style was Assimilator and that learning style and gender influenced academic achievement. Next, Kassaian (2007), he examined the effect of two types of teaching methods on the retention of unfamiliar words, 66 EFL learners having either auditory or visual learning styles participated in teaching method environments which were either visual or aural. The result of the study revealed that while the subjects with aural style of learning did not show better retention for items they had learned aurally, visual learners performed better in recognition test for visually-presented items. And then, Rahmatullah (2009), he conducted the research which comparing between visual and auditory learning style

through students' achievement in English and found out the significant difference on students' English learning achievement based on their visual and auditory learning style in the second grade of SMAN 1 Sepatan. As a result, his study revealed that there is a significance difference between students' visual and auditory style in English achievement. Another study was conducted by Gilakjani (2012). He investigated the effect of learning styles on the teaching process among EFL students at the Islamic Azad University of Lahijan, Iran. It was found that students with visual learning style had the greatest academic achievement in their educational major. It is the responsibility of the teacher and the student to be aware of learning style preferences to improve their teaching and learning. Thus, it is important for learners to be educated in areas appropriate for their learning styles. If the learners are educated in suitable mode of their learning style, they will have great confidence in learning and may be more successful to develop their skill in reading and listening.

Learning styles seem to play a major role in academic achievement as well as in reading and listening comprehension skill (Saadi, 2012:1). Reading and listening comprehension which can be seen from students' achievement relates to English acquisition. One of factors affected language acquisition is learning styles. Learning styles relates to reading and listening achievement because the ways students prefer to learn determine their comprehension. She or he feels comfortable in absorbing, acquiring, perceiving, and processing the information with her or his own way. Those factors make learning styles relate to reading and listening comprehension. Despite of the students have the combination of learning styles, they usually have a dominant learning style or their own preference style. As the result, the

comparison of learning style; visual and auditory learning styles need to be investigated. It is considered and believed that if every student has different preferred ways of absorbing information or knowledge, it means that they have different achievement.

Based on reading and listening problems amongst English students, and the presumed influence learning style especially visual learning style which is assumed has a good achievement in reading comprehension as well as auditory learning style to the listening comprehension skill. That is why, in this research, the researcher focuses on these two learning style of the students as one of the some dimensions to be considered as determinant to the students' reading and listening comprehension. Departing from this, it is important to examine whether students' learning styles; visual and auditory affect their reading and listening comprehension. In other words, to find the difference performance of reading and listening comprehension based on the students' learning styles.

1.2 Research Questions

The study tries to find out the difference between students' visual learning style and auditory learning style toward their reading and listening comprehension. In accordance with the background of the problem above, the formulated questions as follows:

1. Is there any difference on reading comprehension between visual and auditory learning style?

2. Is there any difference on listening comprehension between visual and auditory learning style?

1.3 The Objective of the Study

The objective of this study is to find the difference of reading and listening comprehension based on the students' learning styles (visual and auditory learning styles).

1.4 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework used in this study is Learning Styles theory as proposed by Richards et al (1992). Richards et al (1992:61) define learning style as the particular way in which a learner tries to learn something. Barbe and Milone (1981:378) divide learning style into three types; visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. Visual learners rely on image or visual presentation, auditory learners learn best through listening, and kinesthetic learners learn something by doing. Students' learning style can be measured by using learning style questionnaire (Reid, 1987:92). Next, Reading and Listening comprehension theory. Reading comprehension is a reading, thinking activity and as such relies for its success upon the level of intelligence of the reader, his or her speed of thinking ability and the relationship (Burnes and Page, 1991:46). Then, Listening comprehension is a rational phenomenon listeners try to establish a meaning when they obtain the information from the listening source (Goss, 1982:6). Meanwhile Barrett's

Taxonomy of comprehension will be used to examine students' reading and listening comprehension skill.

1.5 The Hypothesis

Based on the theories provided above, it is formulated a hypothesis as follows:

1. H_a (Alternative Hypothesis)

RQ 1: There is significant difference of reading comprehension between visual and auditory learning styles.

RQ 2: There is significant difference of listening comprehension between visual and auditory learning styles.

2. H_0 (Null Hypothesis)

RQ 1: There is no difference of reading comprehension between visual and auditory learning styles.

RQ 2: There is no difference of listening comprehension between visual and auditory learning style.

1.6 The Assumptions

This study is based on these following assumptions:

1. The learning styles questionnaire is considered to be valid and reliable since the test has been validated by many EFL and ESL contexts.

2. Each student has his/her own learning style that may tend to be stronger than the other learning styles.

1.7 Scope and Limitation of the Study

This research is focused on the difference between students' learning styles toward their listening and reading comprehension. The researcher focuses only on two learning styles; visual and auditory, considering that these two learning styles are the most frequently used in reading and listening activities. As stated by Gilakjani (2012:105), the visual learners learn by seeing and visualizing and they prefer for information to be displayed in writing, such as lists of ideas. The auditory learners tend to be natural listeners and they prefer to have things explained to them verbally rather than to read written information and they learn by listening and verbalizing. Then, the kinesthetic learners learn something by doing or get involved in a certain activities. From those different learning styles preferences in absorbing a new information, that is why, in this study the researcher only focuses on visual and auditory learning styles that might be closely related to the reading comprehension (visual) and listening comprehension (auditory). In this case, kinesthetic learning style is omitted in order to more clearly observe the difference of reading and listening comprehension based on visual and auditory learning styles without interference from another learning style. Though, to determine the students' learning style, this research uses learning style questionnaire which based on the three characteristics of learning styles: visual, auditory and kinesthetic learning styles. Whereas, reading comprehension test consists of reading pictures such as table, comic strip, and storyboard. The test is assumed to represent the students who have visual learning style by providing reading comprehension test with pictures.

While listening comprehension test contains some short conversations which is also assumed as a representation for auditory learners.

1.8 Significance of the Research

The research finding is expected to broaden the writer's perception of the students' learning style in particular and the readers in general. This study is also expected to give more insight for diagnostic purposes. Teachers can diagnose their students' learning styles. This study will also be useful for teachers to assess and measure the students' listening and reading comprehension and to select teaching materials which meet their students' learning styles preferences. In addition, the research finding can be used as reference for further research focusing on the same research.

1.9 Definition of Key Term

According to Richards et al (1992:61) learning style is the particular way in which a learner tries to learn something. In second or foreign language learning, different learners may prefer different solution to learning problems. Some may feel writing down words or sentences helps them to remember them. Others may find they remember things better if they are associated with pictures. There are three major different types of learning styles commonly recognized amongst learners (Barbe and Milone, 1981: 378). The first is visual learners or better known as the lookers. The second is auditory learners or better known as the listeners and the

third is kinesthetic learners or better known as the movers.

Reading comprehension is a reading, thinking activity and as such relies for its success upon the level of intelligence of the reader, his or her speed of thinking ability and the relationship (Burnes and Page, 1991:46). It means that in reading comprehension, the readers have to involve their intelligence or background knowledge because it can influence their ability in comprehending what they read.

As stated by Goss (1982:6) that listening comprehension is a rational phenomenon where listeners try to establish a meaning when they obtain the information from the listening source. In order to comprehend a spoken message, listeners may need to integrate information from a range of sources of the linguistic features of a text (e.g., phonology, stress, intonation, word meanings, syntax and discourse) and incorporate that linguistic processing into the context of the situation to reach the intended meaning.