



The Contribution of EFL Students' Learning Styles and Strategies toward Their Achievement

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the students' learning styles and strategies and determined the statistically significant contribution of students' learning styles and learning strategies toward their achievement. The research was conducted for Bachelor Students in English Language Education at UNY in the academic years 2019, 2020, and 2021. The population was 705 students, and the sample was 250, which was revealed through stratified random sampling approaches. This study was a quantitative survey using the Learning Styles Questionnaire developed by (Mercede, 2006) and the Learning Strategies Questionnaire by (Bessai, 2018). The result indicated that the EFL students' Bachelor in English Language Education was Visual learning style and Metacognitive learning strategies. Moreover, this study showed that the students' learning styles and strategies have contributed significantly to their achievement. In future research, the study may provide better results if it uses mixed methods by combining both qualitative and quantitative methods.

Keywords: *Learning Styles; Learning Strategies; Students' Achievement*

Introduction

Learner differences have attracted considerable attention in language learning and other fields of education. The process of acquiring a foreign language is impacted in part by age, gender, and culture, as well as learning procedures, styles, and learning strategies (Parnrod et al., 2014). Based on these characteristics, learning styles and strategies may be regarded as the most significant learner differences currently being studied and investigated in contemporary literature on language acquisition. This contrasts with all other learner distinctions. In addition, Oxford, cited in (Balci, 2017), highlights the significance of varied language learning styles and learning strategies in establishing a student's competency in second and foreign languages.

Awareness of preferred learning styles is vital since it influences the achievement of English language learners. According to Honey and Mumford (Pritchard, 2008), the inability or unwillingness to embrace a particular style might hinder English learners' ability to learn efficiently. Therefore, English learners must be close to the learning styles that facilitate successful learning. In addition, teachers may actively aid students in broadening their learning styles by encouraging them to experiment with

strategies outside of their primary style preferences. This might be accomplished through strategy education.

Learning styles affect the strategies students choose to use for their education (Parnrod et al., 2014). Selecting the most appropriate instructional strategy will considerably impact whether or not the designated educational goals will be attained. According to (Gu, 2012), a learning strategy is more of a sample than a definite concept. As a result, selecting a sample core and detailing the amount to which there is variance would be an effective alternative. Despite the significant advancements that have been made, there still needs to be significant gaps in our understanding of learning strategies and styles. According to Cohen, which Gu cites as a source, learning strategies and styles should not be examined to measure students' achievement accurately.

A student's educational achievement, denoted by a numeric or letter grade, is evaluated using a point system by the teaching staff. Everyone involved in the education system, including students, parents, and educators, recognizes high levels of learning achievement as one of the critical performance markers of a successful educational experience. According to the findings of earlier studies, students' academic performance suffered when their instructors did not effectively accommodate their individual learning preferences and strategies. Students typically have poor methods and are quick to give up when faced with difficulty.

Students' achievement with regard to language acquisition processes is represented in the curriculum as subject-specific competencies. The capacity to behave, think, and act consistently based on the information, attitudes, and abilities that learners already possess can be defined as competence. To successfully learn English as a foreign language, one has to be proficient in four vital linguistic skills (Angelianawati, 2017) (Anaktototy, 2021). However, some students need help with listening, speaking, reading, or writing. These difficulties occur because they need to understand their learning styles and strategies better. This causes students to be unable to optimize the learning process to the knowledge obtained less meaningful and the learning outcomes could be more satisfactory.

In addition, English lecturers nowadays focus the majority of their attention on the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. However, there are additional aspects that influence the process of language acquisition that must be addressed. Most teachers have not yet investigated these elements to their fullest extent; these factors include the underlying attitudes, learning styles, and learning strategies their students employ to meet the goals of English education and become effective language learners.

It is widely accepted that the aforementioned elements positively affect language learners. The role of lecturers as mentors in the learning process is not running smoothly because the lecturers need help to identify their students' learning styles and strategies. This means that the development of competencies linked to emotional competence (attitudes), cognitive competence (knowledge), and psychomotor competence (skills) of the learners themselves should occur within the context of the process of language acquisition and evaluation (Angelianawati, 2017).

Consequently, to conduct studies appropriately, English learners try to find ways to face the problems. To attain that achievement, learners should have better learning activities, a systematic attitude, and learning strategies. Good learning strategies are qualifications that every student has with practice until they become a style that strengthens them. If learners have a good learning style and learning strategies, their effort will give a good result.

The research conducted by (Salam, Urai; Sukarti, Zainal, 2020) was intended to explain how the learning styles that students opted to utilize assisted them in determining effective methods for learning the English language. It was discovered by (Li & Qin, 2006) that learners' preferred learning styles considerably impact the learning technique options available to them. It suggests that when learners are aware of both the strengths and limitations of their own unique learning, they are in a better position to

engage in practical learning activities because they better understand their overall learning profile. Similarly, a significant amount of empirical research reveals that the different types of learning strategies used by students were typically compatible with the various types of learning styles employed by students. Students who use learning strategies may improve their chances of success in learning a foreign language. Students can select specific learning strategies based on the learning style that best suits them (Feng et al., 2019).

The previous findings investigated the relationship between learning styles and learning strategies toward academic achievement. This study tried to determine the contribution of EFL students' learning styles and strategies toward student achievement. However, the results of the findings were still not conclusive. Therefore, the researchers need to conduct the research in more depth. In addition, there are also differences in the sample of this study. This study used three academic years of EFL students (2019, 2020, and 2021). The results obtained are expected to be more accurate and applicable to the EFL student population.

Methodology

This study was a quantitative survey. The survey method was used to describe the opinions, behaviors, attitudes, or characteristics of a sample or the entire population (Creswell John W., 2012). It was conducted in Yogyakarta State University (UNY) from October to November 2022. The population in this study was English Department Students of the State University of Yogyakarta in the academic years 2019, 2020, and 2021. Thus, this research, with 705 populations, required 250 minimum samples. The variables are Independent Variables (Learning Styles and Learning Strategies), and Dependent Variable (Students' Achievement /IPK). The researchers adopted two questionnaires, Learning Styles Questionnaire adopted from University of Texas Learning Center (Merce, 2006), and Oxford's Strategy Inventory of Language Learning (SILL) Questionnaire (Bessai, 2018). According to the validity calculation of 5% significance of 250 students with correlation table 0.124. Thus, it can be concluded Learning styles and language learning strategies questionnaires were considered valid to be used ($r_{count} > r_{table}$). The reliability of the instrument in this study had been tested with Cronbach's Alpha value. The value was 0.935. It meant a very highly reliable category. Then, the data analysis was Linear Regression.

Results and Discussion

This section responded to the first study question about the description of EFL students' learning styles. To offer more detailed responses to the first research question, descriptive and inferential statistics are analyzed to yield descriptive and inferential statistics. In order to determine the mean, standard deviation, Range, Minimum, Maximum, Sum, and Variance of EFL students' learning styles, descriptive statistics were given. In the accompanying Table 1, descriptive statistics tests are described in detail.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of EFL Students' Learning Styles

Component	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
VISUAL	20	12	32	6310	25.24	4.573	20.914
AUDITORY	22	10	32	5902	23.61	4.684	21.942
KINESTHETIC	21	11	32	5703	22.81	4.403	19.382

From Table 1 above, it is known the highest style of Bachelor Students of English Language Education was the Visual learning style ($M = 25.24$). The second was the Auditory learning style ($M = 23.61$). In contrast, the lowest was the Kinesthetic learning style ($M = 22.81$). Therefore, it can be inferred that the determination of student learning styles was obtained by seeing the mean scores in the results of the learning styles questionnaire.

The second research question related to the EFL Students' Learning Strategies description. A detail description of descriptive statistics test was presented in the following table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of EFL Students' Learning Strategies

Component	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
MEMORY	2.89	1.11	4.00	2.7982	.67176	.451
COGNITIVE	2.71	1.29	4.00	2.9414	.64461	.416
COMPENSATION	3.00	1.00	4.00	3.0407	.69309	.480
METACOGNITIVE	2.56	1.44	4.00	3.2102	.66197	.438
AFFECTIVE	3.00	1.00	4.00	2.8807	.68473	.469
SOCIAL	3.00	1.00	4.00	2.9700	.73578	.541

Based on the outcomes of each component provided in Table 2, the data showed that the Metacognitive learning strategy ($M = 3.2102$) was obtained as the highest learning strategy for Bachelor Students of English Language Education. The second strategy that got a higher mean score was the Compensation learning strategy ($M = 3.0407$), following the Social learning strategy ($M = 2.9700$), Cognitive learning strategy ($M = 2.9414$), Affective learning strategy ($M = 2.8807$), and the lowest learning strategy was Memory learning strategy ($M = 2.7982$). Therefore, it can be inferred that the determination of student learning strategies was obtained by seeing the mean scores in the results of the learning strategies questionnaire.

The third study questions EFL students' learning styles' contribution to student achievement. Furthermore, multiple linear regression analysis was run to examine the statistically significant contribution of EFL students' learning styles toward students' achievement. Based on the result, it was found that there are statistically significant contributions of EFL students' learning styles toward their achievement ($R = 0.218$, $df = 249$; $p = 0.007 < 0.05$). A detailed description of the analysis is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Regression of Students' Learning Styles toward Students' Achievement

Independent Variable (Learning Styles)	Dependent Variable	sig (p)
Visual	GPA	.016
Auditory		.016
Kinesthetic		.381

Table 3 suggests that there are statistically significant contributions of visual learning style ($R = 0.218$, $df = 249$; $p = 0.016 < 0.05$), auditory learning style ($R = 0.218$, $df = 249$; $p = 0.016 < 0.05$) to students' achievement. Kinesthetic learning style does not statistically contribute to students' learning

achievement ($R = 0.218$, $df = 249$; $p = 0.381 > 0.05$). This means that findings on the contribution of visual and auditory learning to this sample will also be found in the population. On the other hand, findings about the contribution of Kinesthetic learning style in this sample will not be found in the population. The closeness of the contribution between the two variables shows the coefficient (r^2) = 0.048 (4,8%) means the variables' correlation level is very weak. Therefore, the first hypothesis stating that there is a statistically significant contribution of EFL students' learning styles toward students' achievement is accepted.

The fourth research question related to the contribution of EFL students' learning strategies to their achievement. Based on the multiple linear regression analysis, there was no statistically significant contribution of EFL students' learning strategies to their achievement ($R = 0.198$, $df = 249$; $p = 0.133 > 0.05$). Table 4 presents a detailed description of the analysis.

Table 4. Regression of Students' Learning Strategies toward Students Achievement

Independent Variable (Learning Strategies)	Dependent Variable	sig (<i>p</i>)
Memory	GPA	.709
Cognitive		.034
Compensation		.123
Metacognitive		.283
Affective		.684
Social		.855

Table 4 suggests that there is no statistically significant contribution of Memory learning strategies ($R = 0.198$, $df = 249$; $p = 0.709 > 0.05$), Compensation learning strategies ($R = 0.198$, $df = 249$; $p = 0.123 > 0.05$), Metacognitive learning strategies ($R = 0.198$, $df = 249$; $p = 0.283 > 0.05$), Affective learning strategies ($R = 0.198$, $df = 249$; $p = 0.684 > 0.05$) and Social learning strategies ($R = 0.198$, $df = 249$; $p = 0.855 > 0.05$). However, there is a statistically significant contribution of Cognitive learning strategies toward their achievement ($R = 0.198$, $df = 249$; $p = 0.034 < 0.05$). It means that findings on the contribution of Cognitive learning strategies with this sample will also be found in the population. On the other hand, the population will not find findings about the contribution of Memory, Metacognitive, Compensation, Affective, and Social learning strategies in this sample. In addition, the closeness of the contribution between learning strategies toward students' achievement showed the coefficient (r squared = 0.039 (3.9%)), which means the level of correlation of the variables in the "very weak" category. Therefore, the second hypothesis stating that there is a statistically significant contribution of EFL students' learning strategies toward students' achievement is rejected.

The fifth research question concerns the contribution of EFL Students' learning styles and strategies to their achievement. Table 5 presents a detailed description of the multiple linear regression analysis.

Table 5. Regression of Students' Learning Styles and Strategies toward Students' Achievement

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	sig (<i>p</i>)
Learning Styles	GPA	0.47
Learning Strategies		

Table 5 suggests a statistically significant contribution of EFL students' learning styles and strategies toward their achievement ($R = 0.157$, $df = 249$; $p = 0.133 > 0.05$). The closeness of the contribution between learning styles and strategies toward students' achievement showed the coefficient (r^2) = 0.024 (2.4%) means the level of correlation of the variables in the "very weak" category. Therefore, the third hypothesis stating that there is a statistically significant contribution of EFL students' learning styles and strategies toward students' achievement is accepted.

Derived from the findings of research above, there are several things can be discussed, including (1) The description of students' learning styles in Bachelor students of English Language Education; (2) The description of students' learning strategies in Bachelor students of English Language Education; (3) The contribution of EFL students' learning styles toward their achievement; (4) The contribution of EFL students' learning strategies toward their achievement; and (5) The contribution of EFL students' learning styles and strategies toward their achievement.

The Description of Students' Learning Styles in Bachelor Students of English Language Education

This finding revealed that Bachelor students in English Language Education use visual learning style as the significant students learning style, followed by auditory learning style, and kinesthetic is the most minor learning style. This finding matches previous evidence such as that conducted by (Tabatabaei & Mashayekhi, 2012). They pointed out that Iranian pre-university EFL learners preferred visual learning styles. It indicated that students support their learning process using graphs, images, and other structures. Similar results were investigated by (Ariastuti & Wahyudin, 2022). They concluded that the students majoring in English Education preferred to visual learning style. There is 49% visual learning style, 20% auditory learning style, and 31% kinesthetic learning style.

These studies are inconsistent with the findings of previous studies (Mulalic et al., 2009). The outcome of this study conveys that the Kinesthetic style was a dominant learning style among English learners. They claimed students' minor preference for visual and auditory learning styles. English learners tend to be involved in physical activities in class. To remember the material, the learners write notes in class and prefer to learn with hands-on experience.

The Description of Students' Learning Strategies in Bachelor Students of English Language Education

Based on table 4.8, it can be deduced that the most frequently used strategy by students was the Metacognitive learning strategy, followed by the Compensation learning strategy, Social learning strategy, Cognitive learning strategy, and Affective learning strategy. The lowest strategy was the memory learning strategy. Similarly, the results presented that Hungarian students mainly engaged in metacognitive strategies (Habók & Magyar, 2018). Some research studies were also explored by (Rustam et al., 2016). The most predominant language-learning strategy was the metacognitive strategy, followed by social, memory, compensation, cognitive, and affective, which was the least used.

The study results are not aligned with the research findings (Ying-Chun, 2009). He discovered that EFL learners in Taiwan used the compensation strategies most dominant and effective strategies minor strategy. When using English, EFL learners in Taiwan rely heavily on strategies that can assist them in coping with shortages in knowledge. This finding matched with previous evidence from (Mulyani, 2020). She revealed that the Cognitive strategy was the most frequently used learning strategy by EFL learners, while metacognitive, memory and the rest were compensation strategies.

The Contribution of EFL Students' Learning Styles Toward Their Achievement

This finding clearly described the statistically significant contribution of EFL students' learning styles toward their achievement. However, it revealed that EFL Students' learning styles only contribute 4,8% to their achievement. This means that there are still many factors that can impact students' achievement. This conclusion was reinforced by prior studies (Ganji et al., 2022). This study determined that learning styles considerably impacted and differentiated the CGPAs of the participants. Additionally, (Tahmina, 2022) is insistent about locating. She assumed that identifying one's preferred learning style can lead to more remarkable achievement. Moreover, it may be essential for teachers to have this information to match the proper teaching method with suitable lesson plans.

Some researchers (Ghaffari et al., 2013) stated that there was no association between students' learning styles and medical students' academic achievement, contradicting the result. A parallel explanation from experts (ALQahtani & Al-Gahtani, 2014) observed no correlation between the preferred learning strategies and the cumulative gross point scale (CGPA). This might have been caused by the GPA being the primary metric of academic achievement. A similar research (Gohar & Sadeghi, 2015) found that learning style is not a reliable predictor of success in a foreign language, at least for this sample of Iranian EFL learners. The aforementioned study's findings back this conclusion. They suggested that learning styles and personality factors had a minor or indirect impact on predicting foreign language proficiency. They were unable to identify any changes in the academic performance of their sample groups due to the learning styles selected by the participants.

The Contribution of EFL Students' Learning Strategies toward Their Achievement

The study revealed no statistically significant contribution of EFL Students' learning strategies toward their achievement. The study found that Cognitive learning strategy significantly contributed to students' achievement. Memory, Metacognitive, Compensation, Affective, and Social learning strategies did not contribute substantially to students' achievement. This may be attributable to the cognitive learning strategy, which has the propensity to recall linguistic knowledge quickly, such as through practice and imitation, and this may be the basis of the problem (Bessai, 2018).

Other findings were not aligned with the conclusion of this analysis, such as (Al-Qahtani, 2013). He argues that there is a considerable and positive association between the academic achievement of EFL students and their use of self-designed learning strategies. Similarly, Gharbavi, Mousavi, and Pei-Shi discovered that the bigger the variety of learning strategies, the better their probability of success. This topic was covered by (Taheri et al., 2019). In a similar vein, (Ghonchepour & Moghaddam, 2018) have demonstrated that the usage of learning strategies is both an integral part of the manner of learning a foreign language and a reliable indicator of one's level of linguistic competence. The idea is that the choice of the method is based on a range of variables, including the learning environment, the learners' abilities, and their language proficiency level.

The Contribution of EFL Students' Learning Styles and Strategies toward Their Achievement

Based on table 5 interprets that there is a statistically significant contribution of EFL students' learning styles and strategies toward their achievement. A research study was also explored by (Angelianawati, 2017). She investigated the significant contribution of learning styles and strategies simultaneously to the student's achievement. However, the researchers revealed that the students still required other factors to enhance their English achievement. Another study from (Pratiwi, 2022) also was found. She implied that there was a correlation between learning styles and strategies together in reading comprehension.

This finding is consistent with a study from (Celce-Murcia, Marianne, Brinton, Donna M., Snow, 2013). He concluded that learning styles and strategies simultaneously can impact the learners' proficiency in particular instruction. It implied that the more students used learning styles and strategies together, the more student proficiency increased. (Khademi et al., 2013) Also claimed that the learning styles and learning strategies in common are significant factors in influencing students' achievement. It represented a summary that using learning styles and strategies simultaneously can affect learning achievement.

Conclusion

Based on the research findings about the significance of EFL students' learning styles and strategies to their achievement, the following can be concluded: (1) Based on the results of this study, the Type of learning is the most prevalent, followed by the Auditory learning style, and the Kinesthetic learning style makes up the remainder. Metacognitive is the most prominent learning technique, followed by Compensatory, Social, Cognitive, Affective, and Memory learning processes. (2) Based on the learning styles adopted by Merced (2006), it was determined that EFL Students' Learning Styles contribute statistically significantly to Students' Success. However, Bessai, N., A. (2018) found that the contribution of EFL Students' language learning practices to student accomplishment is not statistically significant. In addition, there is a statistically significant correlation between EFL students' learning styles and tactics and their achievement.

Moreover, not all students had optimal learning styles and strategies to facilitate their English language development. Teachers or lecturers of English as a foreign language (EFL) must make students aware of their learning styles and the most effective strategies for improving English proficiency.

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