

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the following subheadings: (1) background, (2) the problems the study, (3) the objectives of the study, and (4) the significance of the study.

### **1.1 Background**

English plays an important role in our everyday life. It is known that English is an international language since it has been largely spoken among foreign language speakers. Algeo (2010) states it has become the most widespread languages in the world, used by more people for more purposes than any other language on Earth. Moreover, Jackson and Stockwell argue English is used in every corner of the world as a medium to interact among people (as cited in Abrar, Mukminin, Habibi, Asyafi, Makmur. & Marzulina, 2018, p.129). In brief, the popularity of English makes English legal for every aspect in communication.

As English has become the international language, it is included as subject in Indonesian education system concerned to that language. English has been learned for along time in Indonesia. Alwasilah (1997) states that English is recognized as the most significant foreign language in Indonesia since 1980s. It has had a tremendous growth since the early 1990s (as cited in Mappiasse & Sihes, 2014, p.13). Furthermore, Komaria (1998) says that English in Indonesia has a place as the first foreign language in educational system than German, Arabic, or Japanese (as cited in Abrar, Mukminin, Habibi, Asyafi, Makmur, & Marzulina, 2018, p.130). In brief, English as one of foreign languages most often

used in Indonesia compare to other foreign languages, it becomes compulsory subject in secondary school and university.

In relation to education, English language proficiency will affect students' learning ability, which may impact their academic success. In addition, Aina, Ogundele, and Olanipekun (2013) argue when students' proficiency in English language is high, it will definitely affect and improve the academic performance of such student. Nevertheless, where the proficiency in English is lacking in any academic setting, it will definitely lower the academic performance of such students. In brief the accomplishment of learning process will be influenced by English proficiency.

The unsatisfying result of Indonesian people's proficiency can be affected by many factors; one of them is learning style (Ghofur, Nafisah, & Eryadini, 2016). Oxford (2003) believes that learning styles is one of the main factors that help determine how well the students learn a second or foreign language. It can influence their achievement in language skills, speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Learning styles are styles or individual learning technique that act with its environment, to process, interpret, and obtain information, experiences or desirable skills, speaking, writing, reading, and listening (Othman and Amiruddin, 2010). In addition, Brown (2007) states that "the enormous task of learning a second language, one so deeply involves affective factors, a study of learning style brings important variables to the forefront" (p. 120).

Everyone has different learning styles. According to Pashler, McDaniel, Rohrer, and Bjork (2009), learning style is the view that each individual learns

information in through various ways. It is because everyone has a different way of understanding and absorbing the information. It depends on how the brain works during learning. Moreover, Pritchard (2009) emphasizes that there are three styles of learning such as visual, auditory, and kinesthetic.

In order to achieve the ultimate goal of student learning, it is important to use a combination of teaching methods and to make the classroom environment as stimulating and interactive as possible. Students have their own ways to learn. Some students are visual learners, while others are auditory or kinaesthetic learners. Visual learners learn visually by means of charts, graphs, and pictures. Auditory learners learn by listening to lectures and reading. Kinaesthetic learners learn by doing. Students can prefer one, two, or three learning styles (Gilakjani, 2012). Because of these different learning styles, it is important for teachers to incorporate in their curriculum activities related to each of these learning styles so that all students are able to succeed in their classes. While we use all of our senses to take in information, we each seem to have preferences in how we learn best. In order to help all students learn, we need to teach to as many of these preferences as possible.

Based on my preliminary study, it was found that there were various problems found in English Education Study Program of UIN Raden Fatah Palembang. First of all, based my informal interview with undergraduate EFL students of UIN Raden Fatah Palembang, it was found that some of them were not satisfied with their English proficiency proven by TOEFL scores. From the score of TOEFL test for the requirements of the Seminar on research proposal, it was

found that some of the undergraduate EFL students of UIN Raden Fatah Palembang got difficulties to get the score more than 450. They admitted that they learned in different ways but they did not know what learning styles they actually used to learn. Thus, an investigation on the link between their learning styles and English proficiency was used to conduct.

This study is similar to a study conducted by Gappy (2013) who found that there was no significant effect of gender, age and academic program on the learning style preferences of the students. Based on the result of the study, there was no significant correlation between the academic achievement and the learning style preferences of the students. Furthermore, Vaishnav (2013) examined a research which objectives were to know the types of learning style prevalent among secondary school students, she found that the three variables, visual, auditory and kinesthetic, are significant on academic achievement. The findings from the previous studies take an important role in designing this research.

Based on the explanation above, it interested to conduct the study entitled The Correlation between Learning Style and English Proficiency of Undergraduate EFL Students of English Education Study Program students of UIN Raden Fatah Palembang.

## **1.2. Research Problems**

Based on the background, the research problems are formulated in the following questions:

1. Was there any significant correlation between each learning style and English proficiency of undergraduate EFL students of English education study program?
2. Did each learning style influence English proficiency of undergraduate EFL students of English education study program?

## **1.3. Research Objectives**

In accordance with the problems above, the objectives of this study are:

1. to find out if there was a significant correlation between each learning style and English proficiency of undergraduate EFL students of English education study program.
2. to know if each learning style influenced English proficiency of undergraduate EFL students of English education study program.

## **1.4 The Significance of the Study**

It is hoped that this study will be beneficial for other researcher. The result of the study may give contribution to other researchers as the basis or additional information for their further research. The next, this study would be beneficial for Lecturers of English Education Study Program of UIN Raden Fatah to get valuable information on how their students process information, plan and select the most suitable learning style to understand or solve a problem. This study hopefully useful for English Education Study Program Students in UIN Raden

Fatah Palembang in improving their language proficiency by developing and using the appropriate learning styles. In addition, this study will hopefully give contribution as an alternative style that can be applied when I become an English teacher.