

**THE CORRELATION BETWEEN LEARNING STYLES AND
DESCRIPTIVE WRITING ACHIEVEMENT OF THE ELEVENTH
GRADE STUDENTS OF SMA NEGERI 9 PALEMBANG**

A Thesis by

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FACULTY OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION

SRIWIJAYA UNIVERSITY

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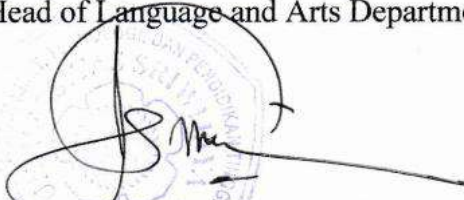
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Indralaya, July 2016
The Undersigned,



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DEDICATION AND MOTTO

This thesis is dedicated to:

- ♥ Allah SWT, thanks for everything that You have given to me.
- ♥ My beloved parents, Bujang and Waslah. Thanks for your love, patience, support, prayer, and so on that I cannot describe. I love you so much.
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Motto:

~Always cherish the people who were there for you when no one else was~

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ABSTRACT

The objectives of this study were to find out (1) what learning style was mostly used by the students and (2) whether or not there was any significant correlation between the students' learning styles and students' descriptive writing achievement. Correlational research design was used in this study. The writer applied convenience sampling and 124 eleventh grade students of SMA Negeri 9 Palembang in the academic year of 2015/2016 were chosen as the sample. The 'Barsch Learning Style Inventory' and writing test were used to collect the data. Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was used in analyzing the data by using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 22. The results showed that (1) visual learning style was mostly used by the students (64 out of 124 students), followed by auditory learning style and kinesthetic learning style respectively and (2) there was a weak significant correlation between the students' learning styles and students' descriptive writing achievement ($r= 0.314$ and sig. value= 0.000).

Keywords: *Learning Styles, Descriptive Writing Achievement*

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

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

1.1 Background

Communication is a purposeful activity of information exchange between two or more participants to convey or receive the intended meaning. In having a communication, people have to know at least one language. Language distinguishes humans from animals. According to Fromkin, Rodman, and Hyams (2011, p. 284), language is the source of human life and power. Therefore, learning a language is very important in order the people can understand each other.

Knowing a language does not mean that someone only can speak the language, but what he/she says should be understood by the others who know that language. In a language, there are some aspects and skills that should be learnt. The language aspects are grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, and culture. The language skills are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Hence, to master a language, people have to master the elements and the basic skills of the language first.

There are many languages in this world, one of them is English. English is an international language which is spoken by many countries both as a native and as a second or foreign language. As a global language, it has important role in this world. It is used as a means of communication both spoken and written language in every field of human life. Because of its essential function, many people are interested in learning this language.

In Indonesia, English is as a foreign language. It is taught as a subject from elementary school up to university level. It has been an important part of teaching and learning activities at school. The objectives of teaching language at school are helping students to know themselves, their cultures, English cultures, making them able to deliver ideas, feelings, and participating in society (Depdiknas,

2006). To reach the objectives, especially making the students participate in society, the teachers have to help them develop their communication ability through comprehension of English language skills.

Among the four language skills, writing is one of the most important skills in learning English as a foreign language. Harmer (2001) says, "Writing is a basic language skill, as important as speaking, listening, and reading skills." It is one of the productive skills that should be mastered in using a language. Oshima and Hogue (1998) state, "Writing, particularly academic writing is not easy. It takes study and practice to develop this skill." To strengthen this idea, Hartfiel, Hughey, Wormuth, and Jacobs (1985) state that the students should consider some aspects of writing such as grammar, mechanics, content, vocabulary, and organization when they write. That is, writing is a complicated skill.

In writing, there are many kinds of texts that students should learn. For senior high school, according to Curriculum 2006, the students are required to learn about text of recount, narrative, procedure, descriptive, news items, report, analytical exposition, spoof, hortatory exposition, and review. One of the texts that students still find it difficult to master is descriptive text. Descriptive text is a text which is intended to describe a particular person, place, or thing. The fact that according to research done by Adiyansyah (2006), involving the eleventh grade students at SMA Negeri 18 Palembang as sample, showed that students still have many difficulties in writing descriptive paragraph. The difficulties are in grammar, 93.3% of students were in the unsatisfactory level and 6.7% were in average level, in organization 91.7% of students were in the unsatisfactory level and 8.3% in average level, in diction 80% of students were in the unsatisfactory level and 20% were in average level, and the last in mechanic 86.7% of students were in the unsatisfactory level and 13.3% were in average level. Then, research done by Mardiyah, Saun, and Refnaldi (2013) which involved the second grade students of SMP N 1 Canduang Padang found that from 24 of the students, 10 of the students got difficulties in developing their ideas. Another problem that students face according to research conducted by Hami (2011), they have difficulties in writing descriptive texts because descriptive text requires the

students to recall and describe the things in systematic order. Therefore, from those problems, writing descriptive text is not easy for the students.

The characteristic of good descriptive writing is it includes many vivid sensory details that paint a picture and appeals to all of the reader's senses of sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste when appropriate. It can be said that when the students are asked to describe something, it means they are required to remember all the details of the thing whether they have ever seen, heard, or touched. Every student has his/her own style in remembering the details of the thing. It means they have their styles in learning. Stewart and Felicetti (1992) state that learning styles are those educational condition under which a student is most likely to learn. Learning style is the way how person prefers to learn and process the information in which he/she will learn best when dealing with him/her styles. Moreover, some students tend to learn by seeing, some others tend to learn by listening, and the others tend to learn by touching.

According to Fleming (2001), learning styles can be divided into 3 types: visual learning style, auditory learning style, and kinesthetic learning style. Visual learners remember best what they see: pictures, diagrams, flow charts, time lines, films, and demonstrations. Auditory learners learn best through hearing things such as listening to lectures. Then, the kinesthetic learners are those who learn best through experiencing or doing things.

Learning style is one of the aspects that influences someone in learning a language. According to the research done by A'lalia (2011), involving the students of English Education Study Program at Sriwijaya University as the sample, there was a significant correlation between learning styles and speaking achievement. The visual learners had better speaking achievement than the other learning styles. Next, the research done by Karlina (2015) which got involved the eleventh grade students of SMA Negeri 4 OKU as the population revealed that there was a very weak relationship among learning styles, learning strategies, and reading achievement. The other research was done by Mohammadi and Talebinejad (2015). This research, taking the Iranian EFL freshman students in Payam Noor University as the sample, found that students' style of learning has

impact on the students' way of thinking and writing performance. Unfortunately, it was in contrast with the study conducted by Alkubaidi (2014). The result revealed that there was no significant difference among language learning style preference categories in relation to writing performance. It happened because the English department does not strengthen the language itself, but rather focuses on literature subjects.

Many teachers claim that it is important to know their students' learning styles. Arends (2012) states that teachers should familiarize the background of their students to try to understand their points of view, one of the efforts is by paying attention to their learning styles. In line with this idea, Brahmakasikara (2013) gave a suggestion to teachers to encourage the group of learners to take charge of their learning by expanding their preferred learning style to accommodate the teaching methods used in class. By knowing their styles of learning, the teachers can design the materials that are appropriate for their students. Many researchers also have done some experiments which showed that by having media related to the way how the students enjoy their learning and increase their achievement. Therefore, learning styles should be considered by teachers to make the students' performance better.

In this study, the writer was interested in doing a research at SMA Negeri 9 Palembang in order to know whether or not there was a significant correlation between learning styles and descriptive writing achievement. This school was chosen because when the writer had field teaching practice for about 2 months in the tenth grade students of SMA Negeri 9 Palembang, she found that the students had their own styles in learning. For example, some students were interested in learning when the writer gave them pictures as the teaching materials. Some other students preferred to learn when the writer taught by using video and audio. Then, the other students liked to learn when the writer invited them to do something in the classroom. Usually when they were interested in the media that the writer used, their scores were better. Looking at the way how they learnt, it made the writer interested in doing the study related to learning style. Since the writer had

the writing descriptive text as the criterion variable, the eleventh grade students became the sample of the study because they have learnt about descriptive text.

Based on the description above, the writer would like to conduct a research entitled: “**The Correlation between Learning Styles and Descriptive Writing Achievement of the Eleventh Grade Students of SMA Negeri 9 Palembang**”.

1.2 The Problems of the Study

In this study, the problems were formulated in the following questions.

- 1) What learning style was mostly used by the eleventh grade students of SMA Negeri 9 Palembang?
- 2) Was there any significant correlation between learning styles and descriptive writing achievement of the eleventh grade students of SMA Negeri 9 Palembang?

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

Based on the problems above, the objectives of the study were to find out (1) what learning style was mostly used by the eleventh grade students of SMA Negeri 9 Palembang, (2) whether or not there was a significant correlation between learning styles and descriptive writing achievement of the eleventh grade students of SMA Negeri 9 Palembang.

1.4 The Significance of the Study

It was hoped that the result of this study would be a meaningful contribution to the English teachers to know the correlation between students' learning styles and descriptive writing achievement. Hopefully, this study could help teachers improve their students' descriptive writing achievement by leading their students to be aware of their learning styles. For the students, it was hoped that this study will make them aware of the importance of understanding their style in learning in order they can find out the way how to improve their English achievement. For the next writers, hopefully it can be used as one of references which can help them conduct the similar studies. For the writer herself, this study

would be a valuable experience which could help her improve the ability in teaching English by understanding students' learning styles in the future.

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