

# ***PERCEPTUAL LEARNING STYLE PREFERENCES OF ENGLISH DEPARTMENT STUDENTS AT UNIVERSITAS RIAU***

**Tiffany Soraya<sup>1</sup>, Erni<sup>2</sup>, Masyhur<sup>3</sup>**

Email: tiffany.soraya5018@student.unri.ac.id, erni@lecturer.unri.ac.id, masyhur@lecturer.unri.ac.id

Phone Number: +6282387020643

*English Education Study Program  
Department of Language and Art Education  
Faculty of Teacher Training and Education  
Riau University*

***Abstract:*** *The method each student chooses to pay attention to, receive, and retain new information is known as learning style. The student's learning style is one of the aspects that will influence the student's performance in learning activities. The purpose of this study is to ascertain the learning style preferences of English Department students at Universitas Riau. The participants in this study were forty English Study Program four-semester students. The research data was collected using Reid's (1987) Perceptual Learning Style Preferences (PLSP). Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the quantitative data, which was collected using Perceptual Learning Style Preferences Questionnaire (PLSPQ). The results showed that the four- semester English Study Program students of FKIP Universitas Riau had a variety of learning styles, with visual, auditory and individual learning style being the preferred followed with tactile, kinesthetic and group learning style being the least preferred.*

***Key Words:*** *Learning Style, Perceptual Learning Style Preferences, English Students.*

# **PREFERENSI GAYA BELAJAR PERSEPTUAL MAHASISWA JURUSAN BAHASA INGGRIS UNIVERSITAS RIAU**

**Tiffany Soraya<sup>1</sup>, Erni<sup>2</sup>, Masyhur<sup>3</sup>**

Email: tiffannysry@gmail.com, erni@lecturer.unri.ac.id, masyhur@lecturer.unri.ac.id

Nomor HP: +6282387020643

Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris  
Jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa dan Seni  
Fakultas Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan  
Universitas Riau

**Abstrak:** Metode yang dipilih setiap siswa untuk memperhatikan, menerima, dan menyimpan informasi baru dikenal sebagai gaya belajar. Gaya belajar siswa merupakan salah satu aspek yang akan mempengaruhi kinerja siswa dalam kegiatan belajar. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui preferensi gaya belajar mahasiswa Bahasa Inggris di Universitas Riau. Partisipan dalam penelitian ini adalah empat puluh mahasiswa Bahasa Inggris semester empat. Data penelitian dikumpulkan dengan menggunakan Preferensi Gaya Belajar Perseptual (PLSP) dari Reid (1987). Statistik deskriptif digunakan untuk menganalisis data kuantitatif, yang dikumpulkan menggunakan Kuesioner Preferensi Gaya Belajar Perseptual (PLSPQ). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa mahasiswa Program Studi Bahasa Inggris semester empat FKIP Universitas Riau memiliki gaya belajar yang beragam dengan gaya belajar visual, auditori dan individu menjadi favorit dan diikuti dengan gaya belajar taktil, kinestetik dan kelompok menjadi yang kurang diminati.

**Kata Kunci:** Gaya belajar, Preferensi Gaya Belajar Perseptual, Mahasiswa Bahasa Inggris.

## INTRODUCTION

Learning styles mean different processes and methods of learning or understanding information. In other words, every individual has a different approach to learning new information (Hoffner, 1991 as cited in Pelegrin, 2020). The classification of learning styles differs between researchers and other researchers. According to Hall and Moseley (2005), there are almost seventy-one different learning style models, which is such a broad field. For instance, there are four types of learners identified by David Kolb: (1984) divergers, convergers, assimilators, and accommodators (Tritsch, 2020). Willing (1988) identified four types of learning styles: concrete, analytical, communicative, and authority-oriented learners (Vaseghi et al., 2012). Dunn and Dunn's learning style (2005 cited from Dunn et al., 2009) is based on five areas: environmental, sociological, emotional, physiological, and psychological. According to Keefe (1985), learning style is characterized by cognitive, emotional, and psychological traits that are comparatively stable markers of how students view and respond to the learning environment (Gabriel, 2023). According to Gencha (2024), Reid's (1987) Perceptual Learning Style Preferences (PLSP) is a learning style consisting of visual, auditory, kinesthetic, tactile, individual, and group learners. The enchantment of our senses - what we see, hears, feel, taste, or smell - depends on our perceptual learning. These changes are either permanent or semi-permanent, in contrast to mechanisms that take place over a shorter period of time, such as sensory adaptation or habituation.

Furthermore, students may prefer to get and process one learning style to another when doing particular work. According to Honey and Mumford (1992) as cited in Halif et al. (2020), many students are still unaware of their preferences in performing specific tasks in terms of learning style preferences. Finding out a student's preferred learning style is the first step towards understanding how to approach and modify the structure and productivity of education (Isemonger & Sheppard, 2003). Teachers should connect such strategies or procedures with students' learning styles to support their capacity to acquire a new language or foreign language (Guy as cited in Hilyatun, 2017). Research proved, learners perform better when their learning style is accommodated and instructional tactics match their perceptual strengths (Khonamri & Pavlikova, 2020). Moreover, for learning to be effective, educators must be adaptable and innovative in order to meet the distinctive requirements of every student.

Some issues that some students experience in studying English as an English foreign language is that they do not only have to comprehend the meaning of the context but also the unawareness of their learning styles in order to enhance their academic performance (Dunn et al., 2009). Furthermore, in most EFL contexts, English language education is still dominated by a teacher-centered approach, resulting in a lack of understanding of learners' distinctive styles of teaching (Ghwela et al., 2017). In this case, Indonesia is one of the countries that use English as a foreign language. A variety of factors, from classroom instruction to curriculum design, determine the effectiveness of English as a foreign language is learned in Indonesia (Jamulia, 2018). According to Decree Number 096 of 1967, published by the Minister of Education and Culture, English as foreign language has been taught in schools constitutionally since 1967 (Yonata, 2021). In addition, Silalahi (2017) discovered that despite having studied English for at least six years in school, many graduates of one of universities in Indonesia (909 out of 944) were unable to demonstrate a sufficient level of English proficiency. Furthermore, according to several experts, lecturers have neglected the

primary reason why students fail, reject, or refuse to participate in classes. It is crucial for lecturers to investigate the underlying reasons behind students' failure, resistance, and rejection even though their acts may not have been intentional in order to stop similar incidents from happening again (Mulalic et al., 2009). However, lecturers are unlikely to deliver successful education unless they are aware of their students' learning style preferences (Hamed & Almagbruk, 2021).

Among all the aspects relating to the learning style of learning English as a foreign language listed above, this study focused on the perceptual learning style preferences in higher education and students who have been studying at the English Department at Language and Arts Departments Students, Teachers Training and Education Faculty of Universitas Riau will be identified through learning style preferences, specifically Reid's Perceptual Learning Style Preferences in order to enrich the teaching and learning English as foreign language in Indonesia. In addition, the PLSPQ is particularly developed for learners of foreign languages (Mulalic et al., 2009). For these reasons, Reid's Perceptual Learning Style Preferences are chosen as a reference to guide the direction of this research.

Based on the background of the research above, the researcher conducted research entitled "Perceptual Learning Style Preferences of English Department Students at Universitas Riau".

## METHODOLOGY

This study is a descriptive quantitative research. The population of this research was the four-semester students of the English Study Program of FKIP Universitas Riau. The participants were 40 students. Furthermore, the researcher used a questionnaire as an instrument to collect data. A Likert scale with five possible answers—one (strongly disagree), two (disagree), three (neutral), four (agree), and five (strongly agree)—was used for the questionnaire's thirty items. There are six indications in the questionnaire. Questions 6, 10, 12, 24, 29 visual learning styles; questions 1, 7, 9, 17, 20 auditory learning styles; questions 2, 8, 15, 19, 26 kinesthetic learning styles; questions 11, 14, 16, 22, 25 tactile learning styles; questions 3, 4, 5, 21, 23 group learning.

In analyzing data, the researcher calculated the total score of the self-scoring sheet developed by Reid (1987); mean to categorize the major and minor learning style preferences. The interpretation of the self-scoring scales of the Reid's (1987) PLSPQ, as shown in Table 1.

## SELF-SCORING SHEET

This questionnaire consists of five questions for every learning area. Each learning type is taken into account while grouping the questions below. Every response to each question has a numerical value:

SA	A	U	D	SD
5	4	3	2	1

For instance, mark a number 4 (A) in the blank under question 11 below if your response to the tactile question 11 was Agree (A).

Tactile

11 -   4  

Add the numbers once you have finished entering all of the Tactile numerical values. After multiplying the response by two, enter the total in the corresponding blank.

#### **TACTILE**

11 -         

14 -         

16 -         

22 -         

25 -         

Total          x 2 =          (Score)

Table 1. The interpretation of the self- scoring scales of the Reid's (1987) PLSPQ.

Major Learning Style Preference	Score: 38-50
Minor Learning Style Preference	Score: 25-37
Negligible Learning Style Preference	Score: 0-24

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Result**

This study aims to ascertain the perceptual learning style preferences of four-semester English Study Program students of FKIP Universitas Riau. Their learning style preferences were examined using six indicators of Reid's (1987) learning style preferences: visual, auditory, kinesthetic, tactile, group and individual learning style. Result of each indicators is summarized on the following table:

Table 2. Students' Perceptual Learning Style Preferences.

Category	N	X-Min	X-Max	$\sum X$	Mean
Visual Learning Style	40	30.00	50.00	1616	40.4
Auditory Learning Style	40	24.00	50.00	1600	40.0
Kinesthetic Learning Style	40	16.00	50.00	1464	36.6

Tactile Learning Style	40	22.00	50.00	1494	37.3
Group Learning Style	40	16.00	50.00	1368	34.2
Individual Learning Style	40	26.00	50.00	1584	39.6

Table 2 shows the students' perceptual learning style preferences of each of the six learning style preferences. It can be seen that the participants consist of 40 students. In addition, the 40 students in visual learning style indicator got 1616 total score with 40.4 mean score, in auditory learning style got 1600 total score with 40. Mean score in kinesthetic learning style got 1464 total score with 36.6 mean score, in tactile learning style got 1494 total score with 37.3 mean score, individual learning style got 1584 total score with 39.6 mean score and group learning style got 1368 total score with 34.2 mean score. It can be concluded that the major learning style preferences of the four-semester students in the FKIP Universitas Riau English Study Program are Visual, Auditory, and Individual learning styles and minor learning style preferences are Group, Kinesthetic, and Tactile learning style.

## Discussion

The present study aims at the perceptual learning style preferences of 40 English Department students at Universitas Riau. The aim was achieved by the usage of perceptual learning style preferences questionnaire (PLSPQ). There were two research questions; firstly, what are the major perceptual learning style preferences of English Department Students at Universitas Riau? And secondly, what are the minor perceptual learning style preferences of English Department Students at Universitas Riau?

The self-scoring sheet that goes with the PLSPQ was used along with descriptive statistics to examine the data that was gathered. The results indicated that the participants' preferred major learning style preferences are the visual, auditory and individual categories. Results also revealed a minor preference towards kinesthetic, tactile and group learning style. However, the result revealed no negligible preferences. This is under previous research conducted by Geleta et al. (2022) which also shows that visual learning style is most preferred.

Visual learners, for those who learn best visually, words in books, whiteboards, and workbooks are best seen. If they read instructions and information, they usually retain and comprehend it better. As a result, educators are free to create any new approaches to visual learning activities, such as practicing extended reading using media technology. Auditory, the preferred method of learning for auditory learners is verbal, spoken, and oral explanations. Educators can create instructional tactics, such as recording audiobooks, generating tapes to listen to, singing along to a song, and comprehending any words. Individual learners, working alone is the greatest way for individual learners to learn. When working independently, individuals are better able to comprehend the subject. Kinesthetic learners favor hands-on learning and participating

in classroom activities. The lecturer needs to take into account experiential learning, which includes practical tasks via learning, theater performances, and role-playing in the classroom. Tactile, when presented with the chance to engage in "hands-on" activities with the materials, tactile learners tend to learn better. For example, manipulating or building models, learning with actual objects (e.g., vocabulary and pronunciation using cards), and working on any creative endeavors. They get the best learning opportunities while working with "hands-on" activities. Group learners: studying with at least one other student facilitates learning. When they collaborate with others, they will be more effective in doing their assignment on time.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Conclusion**

Based on the data analysis, the four-semester English students at FKIP Universitas Riau had the following perceptual learning style preferences: visual (mean 40.4), auditory (mean 40.), and individual (mean 39.6). Furthermore, the most popular learning method is visual. Students that prefer a visual learning style should be given visual media accompaniment in order to maximize their knowledge of the course material and learning process. Furthermore, minor perceptual learning style preferences include group learning (mean 34.2), kinesthetic learning (36.6), and tactile learning (37.3). Finally, the findings indicated that it is important to identify students' learning styles since they have a significant impact on their progress and success.

### **Recommendations**

In terms of preferences for perceptual learning styles, the researcher would like to provide a few suggestions. The long-term objective of the research was to raise the bar for teaching and learning methodologies. Thus, through the task and the situation of various learning styles, students can identify their preferred learning approaches and adjust to a new setting.

A teacher or educator must be able to identify and maximize learning activities. In order to accommodate students' diverse learning preferences and create a setting that is more inspiring and compatible to learning, they must also go beyond traditional teaching approaches and integrate teachings.

In order to provide students greater autonomy in their education, curriculum designers ought to involve the application of several learning styles into their curricula.

Furthermore, based on the findings, the study recommends that future research be expanded to a broader area and undertaken from a different perspective with a larger sample population. Moreover, the findings of this study are expected to have significant implications for teaching pedagogies that accommodate learners' diverse learning styles.



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