

# EFL Students' Learning Styles and Their Effect on Listening Performance: A Study at *SMAN 2 Watansoppeng*

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**Abstract:-** Learning styles has revolved around EFL contexts and has gained wider attention from teachers and teaching practitioners as well as researchers in Indonesia and around the world. The primary purpose of this research is to figure out if the learning style has a major impact on the listening performance of the students. The design of the present research is a quantitative research design that incorporates statistical tools. The study design employs causal comparative of ex post facto design. The research's population was the second-grade students of SMAN 2 Watansoppeng with a total of 150 students taking only 27 students as the sample. The instruments or tools were in the form of questionnaires on learning style and listening comprehension assessments. The data were analyzed by using One-Way ANOVA in IBM SPSS 25.0. The result of the research showed that F-table score of learning style on students' listening performance is 0.159 and the significant value is 0.923. The values confirm that there is no significant effect of learning style on students' listening performance. Moreover, it was found that auditory tend to be the most dominant learning style. The finding generates pedagogical concerns that teachers should not worry about the differences of students learning styles since effective and productive teaching may be achieved regardless of style variables.

**Keywords:-** EFL Students; Learning Styles And Effect; Listening Performance.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The government of Indonesia demands its people to obtain a high standard of English in listening and other skills [1]. The government has become well aware of the need for literacy skills to establish political and economic engagement with other countries. More recently, over the Department of Education and Culture, the government of Indonesia has urged its people worldwide to strengthen their literacy skills in order to know how to encounter the globalization era's dynamic growth.

Whitehead [2] settles that this mission is important to the need for language skills as a necessary condition for people to have a resilient survival in this fast-changing community. Furthermore, in a large part of the world, English creates a space that enables communication and debates to take place.

English has developed the international language and used by most people all over the world. English is important to learn for people, especially in the modern era [3]. It has been taught in many countries either as a second language or foreign language. Yufrietal et al [4] argue that learning success is measured by learning achievement and mastering language and language skill. In order to succeed in language learning, the student is necessary to use their strategies. It can be shown that, in the sense of learning, each student has a different way of reacting to new knowledge. Therefore, many people named learning style as a student's trait coping with strengths and deficiencies in taking and processing information. Naming and Hayati [5] stated that there are three kinds of learning styles, visual learning style, auditory learning style, and kinesthetic learning style. Visual student means learning by seeing or hearing, auditory student means learning by listening, and kinesthetic student means learning by touching or experiencing, working, and moving.

For both students and teachers, acquiring an understanding of the learning habits of students may be very useful. Involving students in the constructive learning process involves knowing and respecting the learning patterns of learners and the instructional styles of teachers. It is either possible to balance or mismatch the two. Studying the bond between them is vital. Many research on matching and mismatching cognitive patterns and instructional styles have been done [6] [7]. Most of the research point to matching the two as having a positive effect on the success of the students and show that mismatching is the reverse.

Learning style is not about intelligence or skills [8]. It is about the way the brain of a human works to effectively understand and get knowledge. Specifically, learning styles are found to affect the learning habits of the learners are

impaired in acquiring information. Speaking about information, students get much information from listening. In language instruction, listening also plays a major part. In order to accomplish the purpose of the program, it ensures that teaching listening becomes an essential activity for English teachers to do.

In assessing the success of students in learning environments, listening is also an important aspect. To assist them in the teaching and learning process, they require strong communication skills. Daweesh in Afriani [9] stated that The value of listening comprehension in instructional environments should be understood by teachers and students. A clear listening understanding, particularly for senior high school students, will help the students understand the content and get so much new feedback. As a result, possessing strong skills in listening comprehension will improve the academic performance of students. It is impossible for certain students to develop listening because students have to pay a lot of attention, focus, and often feel asleep while listening.

In order to improve listening achievement, the student should know their learning style. According to Hilliard in Naning and Hayati [5], learning styles are the distinctive ways in which information is received, interpreted, and processed by a person. Students with different tastes in the learning style will behave differently in the way they interpret, engage with, and respond to the learning environment. This applies to certain variables, one of which is their distinct way of interpreting data from their listening.

There are some reviews of related research findings from the previous researchers, Afriani [9], in the same scope with learning style. Her research found that there is no essential connection between the learning style of students and their success in listening skills. Each of the students who succeed in learning comes from the capability to deliver various learning styles.

In contrast, in his research, Jowkar [10] found a relationship between learning styles and listening comprehension. The student chooses a form of kinesthetic learning that incorporates techniques such as using physical reaction or feeling, recalling, bringing fresh words into meaning, using analogy, using keywords, and communicating specifically with the subject matter being taught. In spite of any kinds in learning style, the students feel free to choose their own way in learning. They also could be affected by the condition, knowledge and so forth. Hence, Students with strong comprehension and successful use of their learning style will not ensure better-listening performance, and students with low understanding and inefficient use of their learning style will not guarantee a bad listening performance.

Another study on learning style came out with a different focus skill of analysis. Ghofur [11] conducted research about the effect of learning style on speaking skill; he found that learning styles can help students get new information, but not really good to apply in the activities of speaking in English. Rachma et al. [12] found that there was no significant effect of learning style on students' reading comprehension

achievement, but kinesthetic seems to be the better among other learning styles in reading comprehension achievement. Furthermore, Hanafi [13] stated no significant difference between students' learning style on their writing achievement. However, little has been done on revealing the effect of learning style on listening skill. More compact research on this matter will give us a clearer idea on how learning style affects language skill. This present study purposes to determine whether there is any effect of learning style on the students' listening performance.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. *The Concept of Learning Style*

In the mid-70s, the concept of multiple learning types began to gain traction, and since then, the notion has affected the understanding of schooling and learning. Just as there are numerous training methods, people often feel that there are various ways to learn and comprehend new knowledge. Despite criticism, many individuals began to look at the multiple learning approaches and determine the favorite learning methods of their own pupils. Many parents of disadvantaged students who for the first time look at homeschooling as an instructional option typically continue by learning more about the forms of modes of learning and how children learn better.

Learning style analysis has become a major concern in most sector of education over the past fifteen years [14]. In several different forms, learning styles can be defined, categorized, and described. According to Hilliard [15], learning styles are the characteristic ways individuals acquire, perceive, and process information. It can be defined as a collection of causes, behaviors, and attitudes that promote learning in any situation. How the teachers teach and the students learn and how different learning styles influence the two interact with each other. Each person is born with certain preferences toward a particular style, and these biological characteristics are influenced by external factors such as: cultures, personal experiences, and developments [16] [17]. There are clear preferred modes of interpretation, structure and retention for each learner. The measures of how learners interpret, communicate with, and react to learning environments are these learning types. Students have different cognitive patterns, and they learn from one another accordingly. Ahmed [18], there are various variables that impact the performance of studying a foreign language, one of which is the learning style of the student. Classification of perceived learning patterns for students will allow students to easily access knowledge in line with their own modalities.

Ahmadi [19] stated that teachers should help students analyze in style and consciously help students identify their own learning styles and cultures that they can consciously change for different learning tasks and adjust their learning style capabilities. Teachers should then use the learning patterns of the students in the classroom by recognizing each student's ways of learning, then adapting teaching styles to learning styles for the supply of challenging or simple assignments, then modifying learning methods for a combination of learning styles for the student.

Nasmilah [20] stated that general learning styles relate specifically to process the second language learning. Rachma [12] said that students of varying sensory learning types have distinct forms where they like to study and environments where learning can be challenging.

The VARK learning style model, which has been changed from the VAK model to the VARK learning style, is one of the most prevalent and commonly used categorizations of the different learning styles. Referring to what Fleming has read and observed, it seems clear that some students obviously have their preference for written words while others prefer symbolic information or pictures such as maps, diagrams, and graphics. Both preferences are not always found in the same person. Since then, the Fleming model's learning style has four modalities of preference: Visual, Aural, Read / Write, and Kinesthetic, formerly abbreviated as VARK [21].

Students typically have a favorite form of learning that may be a combination of all senses. Some students have a rather clear choice, while others have two or three types of an even combination. They can appreciate the method of learning that best serves them because the student learns their desired learning style(s). It will cause the learning styles that perform best to be chosen. In a mixture of three or four types of learning styles, most students perform better, but everyone is different. While students have a combination of styles of learning, they typically have a dominant style of learning or a chosen style of their own.

### *B. The Concept of Listening*

Listening is the capacity to recognize what people are doing and appreciate it. It includes understanding the dialect or pronunciation of a person, grammar, terminology, and comprehending the context. According to Tyagi [22], listening skill is a key to receiving messages effectively. Students listen to oral speech, divide sounds, organize them into units of lexicity and syntax, and grasp the message [23]. It is a blend of hearing what someone else says and psychological interaction with the one who speaks. A sender, a message and a recipient are included. It is the neurological mechanism of receiving, reacting to and listening to nonverbal and/or spoken signals to create meaning. Kutlu et al [24], Listening skills not only play an important part in conversation, but also in interpersonal relationships, one of those skills that is sadly provided the least value in school education. Teachers normally assume that, much as breathing, the listening capacity develops naturally in time. Listening skills, though, can only be developed by hard work and practice, as is the case for reading skills.

Brown [25] states that listening is not a one way street; it is not merely the processes of a unidirectional receiving of audible symbols. The psychomotor mechanism of absorbing sound waves from the ear and sending nerve impulses to the brain is the first stage of listening comprehension. It can be inferred that listening performance is the process of interpreting the speaker's aural message and balancing it with the knowledge of the listener. Pourhossein Gilakjani and Ahmadi [26] stated that Listening means listening to feelings,

emotions and goals, and this entails constructive attention, commitment, and practice. To achieve contact goals, teachers and learners should pay appropriate attention. Learners can develop their listening ability with instruction and practice. Thus, Rivers in Hasyuni [27] says that Listening is an innovative talent. This implies that we grasp the sound that falls on our ears, take the raw content of language, the arrangements of words, and the speech that rises and falls, and we create a meaning from this material. Listeners must contend with the option of terminology, arrangement, and delivery rate of the transmitters.

Russel cited in Hasyuni [27] has confirmed that listening skills are listening with understanding, concentration and respect. Listening also involves the incorporation of language skills, such as grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, reading, listening, and writing [28]. Numerous factors guide the students into misunderstanding in listening activities, for example: speed-rate, native speakers' volume, listening strategies, intonation, pronunciation, and accents. Another aspect that can affect students' desire to listen is their ability to know each word correctly since the conversation process cannot be isolated from the practices of pronunciation of terms, phrases and phrases. It is also important that students continue to develop their basic language skills in order to assist them in listening practices.

Listening skill mean as the willingness to pay attention or hear something. Yet listening is not the same thing as hearing. Hearing is simply an involuntary, passive operation. It's easy to detect sounds without actively intervening in the process. When listening to the brain does not immediately translate the words into the meaning they express. That's basically what listening is about assessing the context and the message of sounds or phrases. It is an active method that requires a lot more than simply attaching names to sounds or words. As mentioned in Nunan [29] "Listening is an active, purposeful process of making sense of what we hear." It means that we can interpret the context of what we hear, so listening is an active ability. Anderson and Lynch in Siegel [30] stated that Listening requires listening to acoustic sounds that are emitted by a speaker via a stream of linked speech.

### **III. METHODOLOGY**

The design of this research is in line with what previous researchers have documented in the area of language teaching in order to resolve the problems of language learning in high school especially in EFL context. This study aims to find the influence of learning style on student listening performance. The study used the causal analogy of the ex-post-facto design to perform the analysis. This study design is looking at the phenomena that have arisen. The goal is to expose potential causal interactions between variables without manipulating variables.

The researcher only conducted the questionnaire to learn the academic pattern of the students and the listening exam. There was no procedure or experiment of any sort on participants. The researcher first submitted the questionnaire, followed by a listening exam. After that, the data collected

from the questionnaire and the evaluation were evaluated to see whether or not learning style has a major influence on student listening results. In order to address these aims, this analysis used a quantitative approach.

**IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

*A. Findings*

The learning style questionnaire used in this study was the VARK Questionnaire version 8.01 (<http://vark-learn.com>). This questionnaire contains 16 statements that contain daily events that will be carried out and equipped with 4 choices of actions to be taken that describe the Visual, Aural, Read/Write, or Kinesthetic learning styles. Referring to the previous research (Robertson, Smellie, Wilson, & Cox [31]), the VARK Questionnaire version 8.01 provides researchers with some advantages at least in two aspects i.e. the scores that can be calculated quickly and the help sheets to articulate students' learning styles. Moreover, Fit-kovNorris, & Yeghiazarian [32] have validated the VARK Questionnaire using Rasch analysis and the results show that this instrument has the potentials to predict students' learning orientation preferences.

Meanwhile, the researcher used old song to measure the students' listening performance on the advice from teacher and based on syllabus from the school.

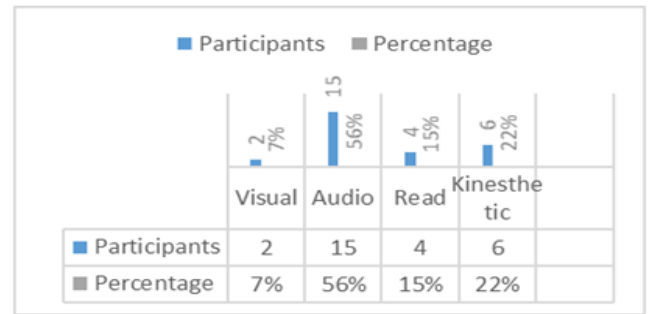
Table 1. The Profile of Students' Learning Style at SMAN 2 Watansoppeng

N	Visual		Auditory		Read		Kinesthetic	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
27	2	7%	15	56%	4	15%	6	22%

From the results, it may be inferred that among four learning styles, that consist of visual, auditory, read/write, and kinesthetic. There were 7% (2 students) are visual learners, 56% (15 students) are auditory learners, and 15% (4 students) are read/write learners, and 22% (6 students) are kinesthetic learners.

No.	Types of learning style	Score Mean	Percentage %
1	Visual	75	7
2	Auditory	79	56
3	Read/write	77	15
4	Kinesthetic	74	22

Table 2. Student Most Preferred Learning Style



Based on the data above, the result showed students of the second grade of SMAN 2 Watansoppeng in the academic year 2020/ 2021 tend to learn with auditory learning styles.

➤ *The Descriptive Statistics from the Result of Students Listening Performance*

The table showed that the students' mean score in listening performance according to their types of learning style were 75 of visual learning style, 79 of auditory learning style, 77 of read/write learning style and 74 of kinesthetic learning style, while their percentages were 7% of visual learning style, 56% of auditory learning style, 15% of read/write learning style and 22% kinesthetic learning style. Based on the result, it showed that the students who used auditory learning style obtained the highest score in listening performance test.

➤ *Prerequisite Test*

Before continuing to the anova analysis, the prerequisite was applied first. The test of the normality and homogeneity of the data in question is a prerequisite; it is meant to assess the methodological techniques used to interpret the analysis data.

➤ *Normality testing*

Normality testing was applied to discover whether the data were normally distributed. In doing the statistical analysis, the data were analyzed using Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) non-parametric analysis. The data were normally distributed if the Asymp. sig. (2-tailed) the value was greater than a (0.05). If this condition happened, H<sub>0</sub> was accepted, and H<sub>1</sub> was rejected. The summary of statistical analysis was shown in table as follow:

		Unstandardized Residual
N		27
Normal Parameters b	Mean	.0000000
	Std. Deviation	10.74903293
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.166
	Positive	.122
	Negative	-.166
Test Statistic		.166
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.053c
a. Test distribution is Normal.		

The value of Test Statistic Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z was 0.166. Meanwhile, the value of Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) was 0.053. Because of the value of Asymp. Sig. was greater than a (0.053 > 0.05), which meant that H<sub>0</sub> was accepted and H<sub>1</sub> was rejected. It could be concluded that the data were normally distributed.

➤ *Homogeneity testing*

Testing the homogeneity of variance specimens in this analysis on learning results for students listening to the output. Homogeneity testing is also used to prove that two or even more groups of sample data originate from a population with the same variation. Testing the homogeneity of the sample variation using the test of Levene with a significance level of 0.05. Criteria for the assessment of the homogeneity of the variance test samples will be made by comparing the count of effects to the significance level of 0.05 for learning outcomes. If the significance value is less than 0.05, then the survey data is extracted from samples with variances that are not equal or heterogeneous. On the contrary, if the significance value > 0.05 then said to the sample data comes from populations having the same variance or homogeneous. The summary of Homogeneity testing statistical analysis was displayed in the following table:

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Listening Score	Based on Mean	.645	1	52	.425
	Based on Median	.555	1	52	.460

Based on the data displayed, it can be seen that the value of signification (sig.) was 0.425 which greater than 0.05, it means that the sample variances were homogeneous.

➤ *Inferential Statistics*

The next inquiry was to perform the inferential statistics since all requirement analysis was applied and filled the requirements. It was done to investigate the hypothesis. In this research, there was a hypothesis that was analyzed by one-way ANOVA because the data were normally distributed and homogenous., the result can be seen in the following table:

Listening Score					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	48.119	3	16.040	.159	.923
Within Groups	2315.067	23	100.655		
Total	2363.185	26			

Based on the calculation, it was found that the F-table score of learning style on students' listening performance is 0.159, and the significant value is 0.923. In other words, the effect of learning style on students listening performance will be said significant at the level of 0.05, if the significant

coefficient score was lower than 0.05. But, it can be seen from the table above that the significant coefficient score is 0.923, which means that the score was higher than the coefficient significant at the 0.05 level (0.923 > 0.05), then H<sub>0</sub> is accepted, and H<sub>1</sub> is rejected.

It is apparent from the results that there is no significant effect of learning style on students' listening performance. It means that there is no significant difference among visual, auditory, read/write, and kinesthetic in achieving students' listening performance.

*B. Discussion*

From the results, it may be inferred that among four learning styles, that consist of visual, auditory, read/write, and kinesthetic. There were 7% (2 students) are visual learners, 56% (15 students) are auditory learners, and 15% (4 students) are read/write learners, and 22% (6 students) are kinesthetic learners.

With respect to the finding, the chosen dominant student was the auditory learning form. Auditory students tended to listen to a person. Auditory learners preferred to preference for learning through hearing and listening to words [33]. According to Montemayor et al. [34], auditory learners easily “Interpret the underlying meaning of speech through listening to the tone of voice, pitch, speed, and other nuances”. In short, auditory learners learnt to listen and to themselves or to others by hearing. Gilakjani [26] states these students find out information through pitch, emphasis, and speed. They are enthusiastic to master the lesson by listening and talking to others, Xu [35]. Similarly with Wulandari et al [36], they also found that the most dominant learning style used by students in comprehending listening was auditory learning style with total percentage 46% students from the samples. The result of this research also supported by Faridah [37], she got auditory as dominant learning style with percentage 82.2% from the total samples.

The result of the present research showed that there was no significant effect of learning style on students' listening performance as can be seen the result of learning style in previous explanation. Hence, From the listening test results, the students' mean score in listening performance according to their types of learning style were 75 of visual learning style, 79 of auditory learning style, 77 of read/write learning style and 74 of kinesthetic learning style, while their percentages were 7% of visual learning style, 56% of auditory learning style, 15 of read/write learning style and 22% kinesthetic learning style, based on the data it was known that the category of students' listening performance was in good category.

After Anova test, the researcher found in the hypothesis testing, the value is greater than the level significance (0.923 > 0.05), which meant that the H<sub>0</sub> is accepted and H<sub>1</sub> is rejected. In other words, It meant that there is no significant difference among visual, auditory, read/write, and kinesthetic in achieving students' listening performance.

Accordingly, the researcher proposed that, at least for this sample of students from SMAN 2 Watansoppeng, learning style variable may not be a strong predictor for students' listening performance. As such, the results are reliable with the findings of other studies: Ehrman & Oxford; Daley, Onwuegbuzie & Bailey in Tabatabaei & Mashayekhi [38], which preserved that variables in learning style and/or disposition were only linked to foreign language attainment weakly or indirectly. Furthermore, related results have been recorded in studies conducted by Deniz, Bahar and Sulun in Okay [39]. With regards to the chosen learning types of the research subjects, they did not notice a substantial difference in the academic output of their samples. Also the research from Gohar & Sadeghi [40], the goal of their analysis is to compare the variation between learners' learning styles in the students' final term score, finding that there is really no statistically significant difference.

## V. CONCLUSION

There seemed to be an overwhelming of research that has been undertaken within EFL context with reference to learning styles. Therefore, the current study confirm the results which were drawn from data obtained through instruments. Firstly, the profile of the students learning style were 7% (2 students) are visual, 56% (15 students) are auditory, and 15% (4 students) are read/write, and 22% (6 students) are kinesthetic. Secondly, current research has found that auditory tends to be the most dominant learning style in students' listening performance. Thirdly, the result demonstrated no significant effect of learning style on students' listening performance as with reference to mean scores. It meant that there is no significant difference among visual, auditory, read/write, and kinesthetic in achieving students' listening performance.

It is essential that teachers take account of various teaching materials that can bring diversity to the classroom. Teachers should be aware of the student preference, where students have different ways of processing information or learning in the class. Teachers should also help their students consider their expectations for learning styles and make use of them to improve learners for life.

Meanwhile, it is important for students to remain focused on existing learning and teaching processes to ensure productive learning outcomes as stipulated in the pedagogical curriculum in secondary contexts. Students need to identify and optimize their learning style; therefore, they can find the appropriate learning method.

In order to ensure valid and reliable research results of this kind, it is essential to conduct future research with the greater number of samples to obtain more convincing findings. Further studies need to be done in different perspectives to better understand, such as skill, gender, and age. Also, the further researcher should focus on analytical or global learning style.

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