INVESTIGATING THE LANGUAGE LEARNING STYLES
OF MALAYSIAN ESL LEARNERS: ARE THE
LECTURERS AWARE OF THESE PREFERENCES?

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DECLARATION

“I hereby declare that the work of this dissertation is produced on my own. The resources that are used to complete this dissertation are fully acknowledged in quotations and referred to in references”.

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PENGAKUAN

“Saya akui bahawa karya ini adalah karya saya sendiri, kecuali nukilan dan ringkasan yang setiap satunya telah saya nyatakan sumbernya”.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

“In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious and Most Merciful”

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This research aimed to investigate the preferred language learning styles of pre-university ESL learners in Malaysia, as well as the extent to which the lecturers are aware of these preferences. A total of 136 learners were involved in this study, along with six language lecturers. A 13-item language learning preference questionnaire adopted from Brindley’s (1984) research was employed to elicit information from the respondents. The results obtained from the questionnaire revealed that an overwhelming number of learners preferred a more communicative type of learning, and appreciated being given the freedom to learn by listening and interacting with their fellow peers. They could also be categorized as being both auditory and visual learners. Moreover, the findings indicated that the lecturers were positively aware of the learners’ learning preferences in most instances. Therefore, it is highlighted that cooperation from lecturers and learners in identifying the latter’s preferred learning styles is imperative to ensure more beneficial learning outcomes.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background of the Study

The recent movement that is taking place in the language teaching and learning world; from practicing the teacher-centered approach to a more student-centered one, calls for the crucial need for educators to understand the ways in which their learners prefer to learn. It is now essentially important for them to realize that their learners are each their own individual, who have different preferences when acquiring a particular language. It is without a doubt that learners learn and comprehend knowledge in various ways. Some might prefer learning on their own, while others might enjoy studying in groups and getting themselves involved in discussions. Some learners might also like to merely listen to class lectures more than they do carrying out hands-on activities or experimentations. These different methods of gaining knowledge and information are better referred to as learning preferences or learning styles.

To be considered as an effective teacher, one should always be able to provide teaching activities and interventions that suit the needs of their learners, whether it is in the learning of languages or any other subjects for that matter. There is an extremely