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**PERCEPTUAL LEARNING STYLE  
PREFERENCES FOR LEARNING  
ENGLISH LITERATURE**

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## ABSTRACT

*English Literature Component was incorporated into the English Language syllabus in March 2000 with the intention to enhance English acquisition among ESL students. Yet, there are concerns over students' learning success and failure. Factors that may influence students' learning achievement have been identified. One of the factors is the students' learning styles. Several models of learning styles have been introduced and one of them is Perceptual Learning Style Preferences (PLSP) which proposes six modes of learning; visual, auditory, kinesthetic, tactile, group and individual. This research was designed to 1) identify the perceptual learning styles preferences for learning the English literature among Form Five students in Betong, 2) seek the teachers' perceptions of their students' perceptual learning style preferences for learning the English literature, 3) find out whether the students' perceptual learning style preferences for learning the English literature match with their teachers' perceptions of the students' perceptual learning style preferences, 4) find out the teachers' awareness of their students' perceptual learning preferences for learning the English literature, and 5) find out the teachers' teaching strategies in teaching the English literature. The study involved 207 participants (204 Form Five students and three English language teachers) of a secondary school in Betong. Data were obtained through two methods: questionnaires adapted from Perceptual Learning Style Preferences Questionnaire (PLSPQ) developed by Reid (1987) and semi-structured interviews. The quantitative data were analysed using Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21, and the qualitative data were analysed using thematic analysis. Among the six perceptual learning styles, the findings show that when learning the English literature, the students prefer group learning style the most and individual learning style the least, in which are concurrent with their teachers' perceptions of the same matters. The teachers are aware of their students' preferences and their teaching strategies are geared towards catering to the students' preferences. The major implication that can be derived from the findings is that being aware and matching up with students' learning styles in learning the English literature is very important in ensuring an effective literature teaching and learning process.*

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

Learning style is viewed as one of the key factors in determining students' learning success. According to Ibrahim (2009), Nurul Amilin, Mazni, Sulia Masturina, Norhayati and Nor Zaitolakma (2011) and Wen (2011), each student is different in many aspects, such as attitude, personality, background knowledge, motivation, needs, ability, proficiency, and not to forget, their own styles of learning. In every class, each and every one of the students is bringing in their individual differences that add to the diversity amongst the students. Too (2009) stated that learning styles vary among individual learners. Weng (2012) further claimed that individual preferred learning styles play an important role in second language acquisition. Appropriate learning styles, according to Weng (2012), help to explain the performance of good language learners, while inappropriate learning styles would add to the misunderstanding of the poor language learners. She also stated that, the more students make use of their preferred learning styles, the more knowledge and skills that they can learn.

Within the Malaysian context, local scholars have studied the learning styles of the students (Atef & Munir, 2009; Adi Afzal, 2011; Nurul Amilin et al., 2011). From the various studies, it came to light that each student has different learning approach and mode on how to learn the subjects being offered in schools. As English is learned as the second language in our Malaysian education system, and with the inclusion of the literature

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

Chapter 2 outlines the learning theories which act as the framework for this study. Then, the variable used are defined, explained and elaborated. Further reviews were done on the English Literature Component, on the importance of knowing students' PLSP and lastly on a few previous local studies conducted to identify ESL learners' PLSP for learning the English literature.

#### **2.2 Theoretical Framework**

##### **2.2.1 Learning Theories; Cognitivism and Constructivism**

The two learning theories that underpin this study are cognitivism and constructivism. Based on the cognitivism theory, learners are treated as thinking beings and they are the focus of the teaching and learning process. They can acquire and retain information for future use if the learning is constructed by the learners, relevant and built upon their prior knowledge (Almasa Mulalic, Parilah Mohd. Shah & Fauziah Ahmad, 2009). Cognitivism theory emphasises on student-centred teaching approach and the learning will only become effective if the learning is meaningful to the students and match with their interests and needs. One of the ways to suit the students' interests and needs is to understand the students' learning preferences (Atef & Munir, 2009). Therefore,