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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.

ABSTRAK

Komponen Sastera Bahasa Inggeris telah diterapkan di dalam sukatan pelajaran Bahasa Inggeris pada Mac 2000 bagi meningkatkan penguasaan Bahasa Inggeris di kalangan pelajar yang mempelajari bahasa tersebut sebagai bahasa kedua. Namun, terdapat kebimbangan mengenai kejayaan dan kegagalan pembelajaran pelajar. Faktor-faktor yang boleh mempengaruhi pencapaian pembelajaran pelajar telah dikenalpasti. Salah satu faktor adalah stail pembelajaran pelajar. Beberapa model stail pembelajaran telah diperkenalkan dan salah satunya adalah 'Perceptual Learning Style Preferences' (PLSP) yang mengetengahkan enam mod pembelajaran: visual, audio, tektail, kinestetik, berkumpulan dan individu. Kajian ini dibuat bertujuan untuk 1) mengenalpasti pilihan stail pembelajaran pelajar untuk pembelajaran sastera Bahasa Inggeris, 2) mendapatkan persepsi guru mengenai pilihan stail pembelajaran pelajar untuk pembelajaran sastera Bahasa Inggeris, 3) mengetahui samada pilihan stail pembelajaran pelajar untuk pembelajaran sastera Bahasa Inggeris sepadan dengan persepsi guru mereka terhadap pilihan stail pembelajaran mereka, 4) mengetahui kesedaran guru mengenai pilihan stail pembelajaran pelajar mereka untuk pembelajaran sastera Bahasa Inggeris, dan 5) mengetahui strategi pengajaran guru semasa mengajar sastera Bahasa Inggeris. Kajian ini melibatkan 207 peserta (204 pelajar Tingkatan Lima dan tiga orang guru Bahasa Inggeris) daripada sebuah sekolah menengah di bahagian Betong. Data diperoleh melalui dua kaedah: soal selidik yang diubahsuai daripada 'Perceptual Learning Style Preferences Questionnaire' (PLSPQ) yang dihasilkan oleh Reid (1987) dan temubual separa berstruktur. Data kuantitatif dianalisis menggunakan 'Statistical Package of Social Sciences' (SPSS) versi 21, dan data kualitatif dianalisis menggunakan analisis bertema. Daripada enam stail pembelajaran, dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa untuk pembelajaran sastera Bahasa Inggeris, pembelajaran secara berkumpulan merupakan pilihan utama pelajar dan pembelajaran secara individu adalah pilihan yang paling rendah. Dapatan ini selari dengan dapatan daripada para guru yang terlibat. Para guru sedar mengenai pilihan stail pembelajaran pelajar dan strategi pengajaran yang mereka amalkan adalah sejajar dengan stail pembelajaran pelajar. Implikasi utama yang boleh diperolehi daripada dapatan kajian adalah kesedaran dan memadankan strategi pengajaran guru dengan stail pembelajaran pelajar adalah penting dalam memastikan keberkesanan proses pengajaran dan pembelajaran sastera Bahasa Inggeris.

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

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