UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

LANGUAGE LEARNING STYLES OF ESL LEARNERS IN ENGLISH CLASSROOMS IN TECHNOLOGY COLLEGE OF SARAWAK, KUCHING

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CANDIDATE'S DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of Universiti Teknologi MARA. This thesis is original and the result of my own work, unless otherwise indicated or acknowledged as reference work. This topic has not been submitted to any other academic institution for any other degree or qualification.

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Abstract

Learners' proficiency levels and its relationship with the preferred learning styles are unique and can influence the way the individual deal with the second language and it can become a successful factor of the language acquisition. This study investigated on the learners' preferred learning styles according to their proficiency levels based on the grades obtained in SPM (Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia) for English language subject. Besides that, it also investigated the relationship between learners' proficiency levels in English subject with the choice of the preferred learning styles. The study was participated by 200 Semester 2 students of Technology College of Sarawak (TCS) who are currently taking subject of English for Academic Study ULAB 1022). Data was gathered using a modified questionnaire adapted from Ehrman & Leaver Self-Questionnaire (2002) on *Ectenic* and *Synoptic* Language Learning Theory. The results indicated a weak and negative relationship between learners' proficiency levels and the choice of the learning styles. The findings revealed that both factors were isolated factors which did not affect one another. On a further analysis, it was found that majority of learners were classified under *Synoptic* category, followed by *Ectenic* category and finally category of learners that possessed both characteristics of *Ectenic* and *Synoptic*. In terms of the pedagogical methods and learning materials, educators should redesign and implement new methods to suit with learners' learning styles.

Keywords: Learners' proficiency levels, language learning styles, *Ectenic* and *Synoptic,* pedagogical method

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1   INTRODUCTION

English as a Second Language has great importance in the Malaysian educational context. The language issues always revolve around the acquisition of the second and foreign language. Oxford (2003), indicates second language as a language learned when it becomes the medium of instruction in all documentation and instructional texts for all walks of life, whereas the foreign language is studied in a condition where it is not the focal language for the daily usage and the knowledge regarding it is scarce. Second language learners (ESL or L2) in Malaysia, are struggling to acquire knowledge in English as it is the language of science and technology and has been used extensively for some years even though *Bahasa Malaysia* is a national language. Language learning for the non-native speakers can be difficult when the language is ultimately foreign for them and they have little or no knowledge with the words of the language rules. The need to learn English language is rising up due to the changes in many aspects of socio-economics, politics, social-demands, and surroundings which require them to learn (Thang, 2005; Latifah Abdol Latif et al., 2011). Therefore, students need to be competent in English language. For the non-native speakers of English, the problems that mostly hinder them to be successful in learning the language is they are not able to recognise