

## **DIVERSITY OF LEARNING: THE BASIS FOR FURTHER INSTRUCTION IN TEACHING MODALITY**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This research deals with the diversity of learning as part the development of Interstate New Teachers Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC Standards) teaching model in teaching Modality. Regarding the use of modalities in English as foreign language for students in Indonesia, it cannot be denied that to most of the students particularly where this research is being carried out, the students awareness of the of modality limits up to the use of those modal verbs in text ignoring the context. In other words, the ignorance of cultural use occurs in which in contrast, language use must take tense and aspect into consideration. By that reason, the need of teaching modalities further is the main concern as the aim of this research. 80 students of the English Department of IKIP Mataram were involved as the subject of the research where formative assessment were found by applying “learning style” topic. It was implemented by means of preparing the questionnaire consisting of 1-10 with three-color-box (a,b,c) in which the students were asked to color the box with question mark inside where eventually it was found that the students’ diversity can be seen from their hobbies which they use as their learning styles. Most of students love to do sport exercise, watch movie, listening to the music, travelling, reading novel, and singing. Besides, it is also found that students are different in their learning style where some students prefer to learn by discussing, in peer, move around, learn in quiet, or even to some of them, any situation things that can distract their concentration. In short, it can be concluded that the students are categorized as visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learners.

**Keywords:** *Diversity of Learning, Modality, InTASC Standards*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Teaching English needs to consider both linguistic and cultural elements of the target language. It then becomes problem among learners of the target language where, in this case, English, is the target language and it is not spoken as the first language among learners.

Consequently, linguistic element might be achieved a lot easier by the learners compared to the cultural elements, or even the problem faced to most learners is as they have to understand cultural element within linguistic elements.

This research deals with a problem that modality competence

needs learners to understand the use of modal verbs within appropriate context because modality considers appropriate meaning from both speaker and hearer within appropriate usage as Fasold and Linton (2006) state that Modality is generally defined by speaker's attitude in expressing opinion about the world such as certainty, possibility, willingness, obligation, necessity and ability by using modal verbs and other expressions. While in linguistics, modality is considered as the structure that examine the state of matter which refers to the aspects of meaning that cause sentences to be about the fictional about the alternative possibilities for how things could be.

Hymes (1972, 1974) as quoted by Krashen, et al (1990) also explains that the ability to speak competently not only requires knowing the grammatical rules of a language, but also what and how to say it in certain circumstances. In relation to this idea, it can be noted that modality also deals with what has been stated by Hymes that is quoted by Krashen, saying that modality concerns not only with the tense; how to construct the sentence using particular modal particles, but also the circumstances and to whom the sentence is written.

This is also supported by Bonyadi (2011) as quoted from Palmer (2007) that as a semantic-grammatical category, modality concerns with the "status of the proposition that describes the event" expressed by an utterance.

Next to that, semantic and pragmatic considerations are also can be called as the terms having close relation to circumstances and to whom the sentence is delivered. Due to the problem, various instructions in teaching Modality needs to consider the need of the students in terms of their diversity of learning.

Eventually, Diversity of learning needs to consider as the basis of creating further instruction regarding the learners' learning style in which it is expected that the level of learning can be raised as Angus and Olivera (2012) state that learners' diversity is aimed at getting to know learners' need and strengths in which it can be utilized to differentiate instruction by carefully recognizing and drawing on students' knowledge and skill.

This research is aimed at knowing the students' diversity of learning to achieved teaching and learning Modality goal of making the class enjoyable for the students by considering their need and strength particularly their style of learning. By doing so, it is expected that students' Modality competence regarding the use of tense and aspect in their writing can be achieved. Furthermore, it is also expected that by understanding the students' learning styles, teachers will also keep on eyes thinking of their teaching styles as Damrongpanit (2013) states that the teachers should understand the teaching styles of themselves and should receive the proportion of students' learning styles in the

classroom for designing their teaching process.

Regarding diversity of learning in this research, it belongs to the second standard core of Interstate New Teachers Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC Standards) core developed by CCSSO team (2011) in which knowing the students' diversity of learning as the basis for creating further instructions is one of the standard cores.

Basically, INTASC has ten standard cores in which the cores are arranged in well-sequenced arrangement starting from finding the prior knowledge of the learners and finding the diversity of learning among learners before the cores are developed into the content knowledge and finished with the summative assessment and reflection for the enhancement of the teaching and processes. Furthermore, students in the implementation of the whole standard cores are assigned to work collaboratively in group.

By that reason, diversity of learning needs to take into account as the basis of knowing students' diversity of learning from where collaborative learning will start regarding the learning style of the learners as Angus and Olivera (2012) state that learners' diversity is aimed at getting to know learners' need and strengths in which it can be utilized to differentiate instruction by carefully recognizing and drawing on students' knowledge and skill. Besides, "learning styles play an important role in the lives of learners. When

students recognize their own learning style, they will be able to integrate it into their learning process.

As a result, learning process will be enjoyable, faster, and more effective" (Hawkar, 2014, p.242). Moreover, teachers should try to adjust their teaching styles so. Okur and Bahar (2010) also state the importance of investigating students' learning styles before teaching as they state that Concepts of learning styles were seriously investigated and tested.

Many years later, the learning styles for many theorists were proved in different context of education and continuously discussed. However, the educators and the researchers intended to keep an eye on learning styles and teaching styles on behalf of the key factors to indicate the success or failure of student's learning. Thus, there have been many research carried on understanding students' learning diversity as it needs to take into account to get proper teaching styles in which consequently will lead both teachers and students to achieve the success of teaching process.

Regarding learning styles as part of students' diversity in learning, there are three main learning styles; visual, auditory, and kinesthetic as elaborated by Gilakjani (2012) as follow:

Visual learners think in pictures and learn best in visual images. They depend on the instructor's or facilitator's non-verbal cues such as body language to help with understanding. Sometimes, visual

learners favor sitting in the front of the classroom.

These individuals discover information through listening and interpreting information by the means of pitch, emphasis and speed. These individuals gain knowledge from reading out loud in the classroom and may not have a full understanding of information that is written. Individuals that are kinesthetic learn best with and active “hands-on” approach. These learners favour interaction with the physical world.

Most of the time kinesthetic learners have a difficult time staying on target and can become unfocused effortlessly (p. 105-106).

As one of the skills to improve in teaching and learning English, the concern of the appropriateness of a sentence in writing is considered to be the major concern. Considering the appropriateness of a sentence as Swann (2005) state that the linguistic and cultural elements of English must be taken into account in which this is also called as aspect of writing in which it constitutes register, including degree of formality, the personal voice and linguistic accuracy. Next to that, the aspects of writing to consider in this research is closely related to the linguistic accuracy of a sentence.

Concerning linguistic accuracy, the sentence must consider syntactical, semantic, and also the pragmatic (cultural) aspect of its form. It will not be limited up to its syntactical construction in which Chomsky proposed on his theory. It deals with modern syntactical

construction in which all aspects mentioned are included. To be noted, writing in this research does not deal with the style and other aspects, but it deals with the competence of the students to write a good sentence.

Furthermore, writing class is taken based on the consideration that as a starting point of applying INTASC model, writing is one of the skills in which the students will have more time to think about the correctness of their sentences instead of Speaking class in which they have to speak directly without having time to think about a correctness of a sentence.

INTASC model is a model of teaching and learning English which stands for Interstate New Teachers Assessment and Support Consortium developed by The Council of Chief State School Officers is a nonpartisan, nationwide, non-profit organization of public officials who are working in developing teaching standards aiming at raising the level of learning in the classroom which consequently will improve the competence of the students. On the article written by Henson (2009), it was stated that this model of teaching was established to provide support to new teachers and raise the levels of learning in U.S classroom.

Gilakjani (2012) carried his research on students’ learning styles in which it was expected that diversity of the students could be determined by their learning styles to increase faculty awareness and understanding of the effect of

learning styles on the teaching process. By providing the questionnaire to determine if their learning styles are auditory, visual or kinesthetic. The finding showed that Iranian EFL university students preferred learning style was visual.

Next to that, Riazi and Riasati (2007) conducted research on learning styles of Iranian EFL learners, they found that these students preferred to be actively engaged in class activities. They tended to have interactions with other students in the class.

Another research was also carried out by Kassaian (2007) investigating the effect of two types of teaching

methods on the retention of unfamiliar. Sixty-six university students having either auditory or visual learning styles participated in teaching method environments which were either visual or aural. From the data analyses, it was found that: 1) the subjects with visual style of learning retained vocabulary items they had learned visually better than the items they had learned aurally, but the subjects with aural style of learning did not show better retention for items they had learned aurally, 2) all the subjects retained visually presented items better than aurally presented items in the immediate and delayed tests..

## **METHOD**

This research deals with the implementation of standard 2 of InTASC where this standard is aimed at getting more elaboration about personal information about students' diversity in learning particularly it goes to deal further with students' learning styles. In getting the clear picture of the students' diversity in terms of their learning styles, "My learning Styles" or which is also called as "BrainBox" instrument was provided to 80 students of English.

Furthermore, the standard was implemented by means of preparing 10 questions in the form of

"brainbox" questionnaire where the students were assigned to color the box. When coloring the box, the students were free to color more than one box.

The result of the questionnaire is used as the basis to get clear elaboration of the students' diversity of learning regarding their learning styles in which it is expected that the learning styles concerning on auditory, visual, and kinesthetic styles can be elaborated in details as one ways to create various proper instructions in teaching.

## **FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

By having 80 students involved, the students' learning styles to show how they differ in learning regarding

the three types of learning style can be elaborated as follow:

Most of students prefer to learn by discussing things and get involved in learning process where they do not

just sit on their chair. It means that teachers should find teaching instructions that can give more chances for the students to be more active where the students are the center of teaching-learning process (student center).

When learning a new knowledge, students like to learn when the teacher explains how to do it and see the example. Only a small number of students who prefer learning by getting on to the new skill learned. This result means that students have to be a facilitator and model for the students. They must be able to give the example for students and facilitate them in practicing the new skill/knowledge they learn.

Students who like to learn by acting out the story is more than them who prefer to learn by listening to or see a comic strip of a story. There are 46% of students who like to act out the story, while listen and see a comic strip are 26% and 28%.

More than half of students (51%) are good at learning language, while 25% of them are very good. This data means that 76% of students will understand the language learned easily. This fact means that teachers should be more focus on 24% students who claimed themselves as not good at learning language. The result of this analysis tells the teachers that they will not find significant difficulty in teaching language.

There are 43% students prefer teachers who use media to show them things they learn, 43% students prefer

to learn when their teacher have them do things in class which means that students will be more active. This result means that when teaching, teachers can use media to give example to students and then have them do the activity based on the topic learned that day. Explaining too much is not needed since the students do not prefer learning by listening to the explanation which can make students feel bored and not interested in learning.

34% students get trouble in talking, 28% in memorizing, and 38% in writing. This percentage means that students have different problems in learning. Some students have more than one problem in learning. It means teachers should be able to find various instructions that can enhance students' speaking, memorizing and writing at the same time. Creative teaching instructions are much needed that students could reduce their problem in learning.

This question asked students to tell the things that they like to do in their spare time. It is found that 36% of students like to watch television/movie, 42% like to listen to the music and chat, while 22% of students like to go travelling and shopping. This result gives information for the teachers that when making teaching material, they can use song lyric, movie script, or the other things related to what students like to do at their spare time. It helps teacher to make students enjoy the learning process since they can do their hobby

while learning. So, the students will not get bored in learning.

In learning process, 33% of students prefer learning alone, 26% learning in peer, and 41% learning in group. It means not all students like to learn in group. This percentage informs the teachers that knowing students' different learning style is very important that they can use different approach to students based on their learning style. Teachers can use more than one teaching approach in class depends on the diversity among students found.

14% students can learn when it is noisy, 44% learn when it is quite, and 42% learn in any situation. Since students have different learning style in terms of situation, teachers should be able to create teaching atmosphere that is effective for all students without disturbing each other.

27% of students get distracted when someone come in to the class, 45% students get distracted when they hear something happening outside, and 28% students lose their concentration when they sit for a long time. This result means that teachers must be able to find ways to keep students focus on their learning process without feeling distracted by anything that can lose their concentration in learning.

This research is in line to what Gilakjani (2012) carried on his

research in which both Galakjani's and this research deal with learning styles where questionnaire was provided as the instrument. Over 100 students completed a questionnaire to determine if their learning styles are auditory, visual or kinesthetic and he found:

"Iranian EFL university students preferred learning style was visual. The purpose of this study is to increase faculty awareness and understanding of the effect of learning styles on the teaching process. A review of the literature will determine how learning styles affect the teaching process" (p. 104)

This research is also in line to what Riazi and Riasati (2007) and Kassaian (2007). In short, it can be noted that there are some current research carried regarding the urgent need of concerning on students' diversity regarding their learning styles as the step to understand more about the students' need and preference in learning to get clear and details media of teaching as supported by Kabayadi (2007) that alike students, each teacher could express many ways for their teaching, but the only way or style always employed and helped their students to achieve the learning target effectively.

## **CONCLUSION**

Various learning styles were elaborated regarding the learning style of the learners and it can be

concluded that from "my learning style" as the instructions provided, it was found that the students' diversity of learning can be seen from both the

instruments they prefer to learn and also from the way they prefer to learn.

Once again, it needs to point out that the writing of this article does not aim to do the assessment of students' competence, but it is one of the very crucial ways to assist teachers in creating various further instructions aiming at enhancing the teaching of learning processes particularly to assist the students to get their modality competence, in which eventually can assist them to get their communicative competence of English regarding both tense and

aspect of the language as the target language.

It is also expected that teachers could take an advantage from this research to consider the importance of having to know more about diversity of learning of their students. In other words, it can be noted that future teachers can take benefit by means of getting more information about the students before they even step foot inside their classroom, which can lead them vary their instruction to meet best teaching strategy or even particularly their teaching materials.

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