

Identifying Students' Learning Styles in English Language Education

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Abstract

In the context of rapid educational development, understanding students' learning styles has become increasingly important for improving the effectiveness of English language teaching, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) setting where exposure to the language is limited. This research investigates the learning style preferences of EFL students in the English Education Program at Universitas Esa Unggul. The study was motivated by the fact that many students are not fully aware of their own learning styles, which may influence the effectiveness of their English language learning. Using a descriptive qualitative method, data were collected from 10 participants through questionnaires and interviews based on the VARK framework (Visual, Auditory, Read/Write, and Kinesthetic). The findings revealed that students demonstrated varied preferences across the four categories, with some showing a dominant single style and others displaying multimodal tendencies by combining two or more styles. These results indicate that identifying students' learning styles can provide valuable insights for improving teaching strategies in EFL classrooms. The study contributes to learner-centered English language education by encouraging teachers to integrate diverse instructional methods that address different learning preferences.

INTRODUCTION

Understanding students' learning styles is essential for improving the effectiveness of language education. Learning styles, defined as individuals' preferred ways of processing and retaining information, influence how students engage with material, develop strategies, and achieve academic success (Fleming & Mills, 1992). In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context, awareness of learning styles becomes especially important because students must process input across listening, speaking, reading, and writing, while often lacking real-world exposure to English.

Despite its importance, many students remain unaware of their learning preferences. This lack of awareness leads to ineffective study habits, lower engagement, and limited performance (Wong & Nunan, 2011). Teachers also face difficulties in designing lessons that address diverse needs, which restricts opportunities for learner-centered instruction (Felder & Spurlin, 2005).

The VARK model offers a practical way to identify learning preferences by classifying learners as Visual, Auditory, Read/Write, or Kinesthetic (Fleming, 2012). Previous studies in Indonesia have confirmed its usefulness, but findings vary across institutions. For instance, Triananda (2022) found multimodal preferences among English majors at Ganesha University,

while Manipuspika (2020) identified different distributions among the first-year students of English Program students at Universitas Brawijaya Malang.

However, little is known about the specific learning style profiles of English Language Education students at other universities. Mapping their preferences is therefore important for both teachers and students. Such information can help lecturers design more inclusive pedagogy and support students in becoming more self-aware and autonomous learners, which strengthens learner-centered education in Indonesian higher education.

Given this gap, the present study seeks to map the learning styles of English Language Education students at other university. Such insights will not only help lecturers design more inclusive and responsive pedagogy but also support students in becoming more self-aware and autonomous in their learning. Addressing this issue contributes to strengthening learner-centered approaches in Indonesian higher education, particularly in the context of EFL instruction.

The research question of this study is: What are the learning styles of students in the English Education Program? In line with this question, the objective of the study is to identify and describe the learning styles of students in the English Language Education Program, including whether they tend to be visual, auditory, read/write, kinesthetic, or multimodal learners. This study is expected to contribute theoretically by enriching the body of research on learning styles in EFL contexts. By focusing specifically on English Language Education students at a private university with three campuses in different locations, namely Jakarta, Tangerang, and Bekasi, the study provides program-based data that can serve as a reference for future research. It also supports the ongoing academic discussion on learner-centered pedagogy in higher education by highlighting the role of VARK-based learning styles in shaping effective teaching and learning practices.

From a practical perspective, the findings of this study are valuable for lecturers. Understanding students' learning preferences will help lecturers design lesson plans that integrate multiple modalities such as visual aids, classroom discussions, reading and writing tasks, and practice-based activities. In doing so, lecturers can create a more inclusive and engaging classroom environment that supports diverse learning needs and maximizes students' comprehension and participation.

The study also offers practical benefits for students. By becoming more aware of their own learning style preferences, students can choose study strategies that align with their strengths and adjust methods when facing learning difficulties. This self-awareness can foster greater self-regulation, motivation, and autonomy, which in turn enhances overall academic performance in English language learning.

Learning styles are known as the preferred ways in which individuals receive, process, and retain information during the learning process (Fleming & Mills, 1992). The concept has become central to learner-centered education because it emphasizes that students approach knowledge in different ways. Recognizing these preferences allows educators to design instruction that better matches students' needs, which can lead to improved comprehension, motivation, and achievement. In the context of language learning, this becomes especially important since learners are required to process input across multiple modalities such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Among the frameworks of learning styles, Fleming's VARK model is among the most practical for classroom use. It categorizes learning into four modalities: Visual, Auditory, Read/Write, and Kinesthetic (Fleming, 2012). The model is valued because of its clarity and applicability. Teachers can identify students' tendencies through a questionnaire and then adapt teaching strategies accordingly. For example, visual learners may understand better with diagrams, while kinesthetic learners prefer role-plays and interactive activities.

Gardner's (1993) Theory of Multiple Intelligences presents a broader perspective on learner differences. Rather than focusing only on sensory modalities, Gardner emphasizes a range of intelligences such as linguistic, spatial, and bodily-kinesthetic. This model expands the understanding of learner diversity but is less straightforward for classroom application compared to VARK, as it does not directly guide specific instructional techniques.

Moreover, Oxford's (1990) framework focuses on language learning strategies, such as memory, cognitive, and metacognitive strategies. It explains the conscious actions learners take to succeed in language learning, such as summarizing or practicing with peers. While this approach highlights how learners manage their studies, it does not emphasize sensory preferences as clearly as VARK does.

These models reveal different dimensions of how students learn. Gardner highlights overall abilities, Oxford examines conscious strategies, and Fleming specifies sensory modalities. For the purposes of this study, VARK provides the most suitable framework because it directly addresses how students engage with language input in the classroom and offers practical guidance for both learners and teachers.

Understanding the characteristics of different learning styles is important because it provides a foundation for recognizing how students approach information. Each style reflects a unique preference for processing knowledge, which influences how learners understand, remember, and apply what they study (Fleming & Mills, 1992). Describing these characteristics helps clarify the distinctions among learners and highlights the diversity that exists in every classroom (Oxford, 2003; Reid, 1995).

Visual learners tend to favor spatial organization, symbols, and imagery to make sense of material. They are often drawn to diagrams, charts, and graphic representations that make relationships among ideas clearer. Such learners are generally strong at recognizing visual patterns and recalling details that are represented graphically (Fleming, 2012).

Auditory learners rely more on spoken input. They are more likely to retain information when it is explained through discussion, conversation, or verbal repetition. These learners typically excel in situations where oral communication is emphasized, since they learn by listening and speaking (Gilakjani, 2011).

Read/Write learners show a preference for text-based materials. They are comfortable working with lists, notes, and written explanations, often transforming new information into written form to aid their understanding. Learners in this group usually value organization through writing and prefer to process knowledge by reading extensively and recording their ideas in writing (Yotta, 2023).

Kinesthetic learners differ from the other three categories in that they rely more on physical experience and practical involvement. They learn best when tasks involve movement, action, or tangible application. Their learning is most effective when it is tied to real or simulated experiences that engage their senses beyond sight and sound (Delgado et al., 2023).

Although these categories describe distinct tendencies, they are not mutually exclusive. Many learners draw from more than one style depending on the context or task. For example, a primarily visual learner may still take notes or prefer discussions when appropriate. This overlap reflects the flexibility of learning styles and shows that students benefit most from instruction that acknowledges multiple ways of learning.

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is generally defined as the study of English in contexts where it is not used as the primary means of communication (Richards & Schmidt, 2013). In the Indonesian context, English is typically taught as part of the school and university curriculum, yet opportunities for authentic exposure outside the classroom remain limited. Consequently, students' development of English proficiency relies heavily on formal instruction rather than natural interaction with the language (Kirkpatrick, 2008; Manipuspika, 2020).

The lack of authentic exposure presents several challenges for Indonesian learners of English. Without sufficient practice in real-life contexts, students frequently encounter difficulties in achieving fluency, accurate pronunciation, and communicative confidence (Kirkpatrick, 2008). Furthermore, limited familiarity with idiomatic expressions and cultural references restricts their ability to transfer classroom knowledge into effective communication (Cortazzi, 1996; Thi & Nguyen, 2011). These constraints highlight the need for instructional approaches that can compensate for the absence of an immersive English environment.

In order to address these challenges, EFL instruction should incorporate pedagogical strategies that provide learners with diverse opportunities for meaningful language practice. Integrating the four macro-skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing enables students to engage with English more holistically and develop balanced communicative competence (Brown, 2006; Harmer, 2007). Furthermore, the implementation of interactive tasks, collaborative group work, and technology-enhanced materials has been found to foster a more engaging learning environment, thereby supporting both language development and learner motivation (Oxford, 1990; Wong & Nunan, 2011).

Within this context, learning styles represent an important consideration in EFL pedagogy. By identifying whether students prefer visual, auditory, read/write, or kinesthetic modalities, lecturers are able to design learning experiences that align with students' strengths and preferences. Such alignment not only increases classroom engagement but also enhances the overall effectiveness of instruction. Linking EFL learning with the principles of learning styles therefore provides a more inclusive and responsive framework for addressing the diverse needs of Indonesian learners.

Applying frameworks such as the VARK model provides a structured approach to developing the core skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking in EFL contexts by recognizing that students differ in how they process information. Identifying students' preferences allows teachers to design lessons that align with learners' strengths, resulting in more inclusive classrooms and greater engagement, participation, and achievement (Fleming, 2012; Gilakjani, 2011).

To address learner diversity, teaching methods must cater to different styles. For example, auditory learners benefit from listening activities such as discussions and debates, while visual learners often rely on diagrams and graphic organizers to make information clearer (Manipuspika, 2020; Triananda, 2022). Read/write learners prefer text-based tasks, including

extensive reading and written assignments, whereas kinesthetic learners thrive in experiential tasks such as role-plays and hands-on simulations (Isnawati et al., 2024; Kaninya et al., 2023). A balanced use of these approaches ensures that instruction responds to a range of preferences, supporting better comprehension and retention.

In the Indonesian EFL context, incorporating learning styles is particularly relevant. English is often taught through textbook-based and teacher-centered approaches, which may not suit all learners (Isda et al., 2016; Manipuspika, 2020). Students who rely solely on these methods can become disengaged, especially when they lack opportunities for authentic English use outside the classroom. By integrating strategies from the VARK model, lecturers can combine text-based instruction with visual, auditory, and kinesthetic activities, creating a more dynamic and motivating learning environment (Noviska & Anastasia, 2023).

The use of varied learning style-based instruction is also important for addressing common issues in Indonesian universities such as large class sizes and mixed-ability groups. Multimodal instruction allows lecturers to reach students at different levels of proficiency and with different habits of learning (Noviska & Anastasia, 2023; Triananda, 2022). For instance, multimedia presentations can support visual learners with lower proficiency, while collaborative discussions give auditory learners the chance to practice communicative competence.

Finally, focusing on learning styles can foster learner autonomy and motivation. When students are aware of their preferences, they are better equipped to choose effective study strategies and manage their own learning progress. This awareness encourages independent learning beyond the classroom, which is crucial in Indonesia where opportunities for authentic communication in English are limited (Isnawati et al., 2024; Triananda, 2022). As a result, integrating learning styles into EFL teaching not only improves language acquisition but also empowers students to become more responsible and self-regulated learners.

Research on learning styles in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context has underlined the importance of identifying learner preferences, although existing studies also reveal several limitations. Hardiyanto (2023) examined the application of VARK-based instruction in university classrooms and found that it assisted teachers in guiding students through complex language tasks by providing a wider variety of instructional methods. While the study confirmed the practical benefits of VARK for teaching, it primarily emphasized teacher practices and did not investigate the extent to which students were aware of or applied their own learning style preferences.

Manipuspika (2020) conducted a study on EFL students' learning style preferences by distributing the BLSI questionnaire to 73 participants, which classified responses into visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and bimodal categories. The findings revealed that the majority of students preferred visual learning (61.7%), followed by auditory (24.6%), bimodal (8.2%), and kinesthetic (5.5%). Visual learners reported that they understood English content more effectively through reading materials, while auditory learners benefited from repetition and oral explanation. Although kinesthetic learners were fewer in number, they showed a preference for hands-on tasks, and bimodal learners displayed a balance between visual and auditory styles. These results suggest that EFL teachers should consider applying varied strategies such as visual aids, discussions, and practical tasks to accommodate different learning preferences in the classroom.

In a different institutional context, Triananda (2022) investigated the learning styles of English Language Education students at Ganesha University of Education using the VARK framework. The study revealed a predominance of multimodal preferences, particularly in read/write and kinesthetic modalities. This research is highly relevant as it focused on English majors and applied the same framework as the present study. However, its scope was restricted to Ganesha University, and therefore its findings cannot be generalized to English Language Education students at another university.

Other Indonesian research, such as the study by (Isda et al. (2016) at Samudra University, also highlighted the diversity of learning styles among EFL students, with kinesthetic preferences emerging as dominant. While this study reinforces the importance of acknowledging student learning preferences in EFL classrooms, it was conducted in a different institutional setting and does not provide a program-specific understanding of English Language Education students at other university.

Based on the reviewed literature, it demonstrates that learning styles are an important aspect of EFL education. Nevertheless, existing research has frequently emphasized teacher-centered practices rather than student self-awareness, and the VARK framework has not always been applied specifically within English Language Education program at Esa Unggul University. More importantly, there has been no study that investigates how English Language Education students identify, understand, and apply their learning style preferences. The present study is designed to address this gap by providing a descriptive account of these preferences, thereby contributing program-specific evidence that can inform both learner development and curriculum design at the university level.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design to investigate the learning styles of students in the English Language Education Program a private university. A qualitative descriptive design was considered appropriate because it provides a comprehensive and straightforward account of participants' experiences without imposing extensive theoretical interpretation (Lambert & Lambert, 2012; Sandelowski, 2000). This design suited the purpose of the study, which was to describe how students identify and apply their preferred learning styles in the context of English as a foreign language.

The descriptive orientation enabled the study to capture both the distribution of students' learning style preferences through the VARK questionnaire and detailed accounts of their experiences through interviews. This methodological combination offered a systematic yet contextualized understanding of learning styles among English majors.

This research was conducted within the English Language Education Program a private university with three campuses in different locations, namely Universitas Esa Unggul Jakarta, Tangerang, and Bekasi, an academic setting for teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The institution is selected purposively because there is a lack of existing research exploring how students in this specific program identify and apply their learning styles in their EFL learning process. Data collection is scheduled on August 2025, depending on institutional access and participant availability.

The participants of this study were 10 undergraduate students purposively selected from the 4th to 6th semesters of the English Language Education Program. These semesters were

chosen because students at this stage had completed several core courses, making them able to reflect meaningfully on their learning processes.

Although the sample size was relatively small, it was sufficient for qualitative descriptive research. The emphasis in such research is not on generalization but on depth and richness of data. Guest et al. (2020) argue that meaningful themes in qualitative research can often be identified with as few as six to twelve participants, particularly when the research focus is narrow and the participant group is relatively homogeneous. The inclusion of students from three campuses added variation, which strengthened the transferability of the findings.

Participants were required to be actively enrolled in English courses, to provide informed consent to participate, and to be willing to respond honestly to both the questionnaire and the interview.

Two instruments were used in this study. The first was the VARK Questionnaire Version 8.01 developed by Fleming (2012) which identified participants' learning preferences across four modalities: Visual, Auditory, Read/Write, and Kinesthetic. The questionnaire consisted of 16 multiple-choice items, and participants were permitted to select more than one option per item, allowing the identification of both dominant and multimodal learning styles. The full questionnaire and scoring procedure are presented in the Appendix.

The second instrument was a structured interview guide designed to explore students' reflections on their learning experiences in relation to their preferred styles. The guide contained four open-ended questions; each aligned with one of the four VARK modalities. This ensured consistency while also encouraging participants to describe their experiences in their own words. The guide was reviewed by two experts, one in instructional design and the other in qualitative methodology, to ensure validity and clarity before being used in the field.

Table 1. Interview Questions Based on VARK Modalities

Source	Aspect	Indicators	Question
(Fleming, 2012)	Visual Learning Style	Students understand better using diagrams, charts, or visual materials.	Can you describe a time when a diagram or image helped you understand something in English classes or courses?
	Auditory Learning Style	Students learn effectively through listening to spoken information like lectures, discussions, or audio input.	Do you feel you learn more when listening to your lecturer explain a topic in English classes or courses? Why or why not?"
	Read/Write Learning Style	Students prefer to read and write to process information, such as using textbooks, taking notes, or writing assignments.	How do reading materials or note-taking help you understand English content?
	Kinesthetic Learning Style	Students understand through hands-on experiences, movement, or physical involvement in tasks.	Have you ever found that acting out a conversation or doing a role-play helped you

Source: Adapted from Fleming (2012) and developed by the researcher

All instruments are developed based on the theoretical framework and reviewed by experts in instructional design and qualitative methodology to ensure validity and clarity.

Data collection was carried out in three stages. First, a registration form was distributed through Google Forms to recruit participants. The form contained information about the purpose of the study, the procedures involved, the voluntary nature of participation, and assurances of confidentiality. It also outlined the inclusion criteria, namely that participants had to be active students in the English Language Education Program, be in the 5th to 7th semester, be willing to complete the VARK questionnaire and interview, and provide honest responses. By completing this form, participants formally indicated their consent to participate.

In the second stage, students who registered and provided consent completed the VARK Questionnaire Version 8.01, which was also administered via Google Forms. Responses were automatically recorded and categorized according to the official VARK scoring procedure to identify dominant or multimodal learning styles.

In the third stage, structured interviews were conducted individually with the participants. Each interview lasted approximately five to ten minutes, was audio-recorded with consent, and transcribed for analysis.

The data analysis in this study followed a qualitative descriptive approach. Two main sources of data were examined: the VARK questionnaire and the interview transcripts. The questionnaire was used to provide an initial categorization of students' learning style preferences into four modalities—Visual (V), Auditory (A), Read/Write (R), and Kinesthetic (K). These modalities, as outlined by Fleming (2012), functioned as the categories for the preliminary stage of analysis. The questionnaire results were tabulated, and simple descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages were calculated to describe the distribution of learning styles among participants.

To gain deeper insights into students' preferences, the interview transcripts were analyzed using thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2022) six-phase framework. The analysis began with a close reading of the transcripts and coding of responses according to the VARK categories. However, rather than stopping at categorization, the process moved toward identifying patterns of meaning that revealed how and why students used particular learning styles in their English language learning. For instance, while "Kinesthetic" is a category, the interview data produced a theme of Kinesthetic learning as the dominant preference, with role-plays and hands-on activities increasing students' speaking confidence. Similarly, the Auditory category developed into a theme highlighting the role of listening to lecturers as a way of improving pronunciation and comprehension.

Finally, the questionnaire and interview findings were integrated to create a fuller picture of learning style preferences. The questionnaire provided a descriptive overview of the distribution of learning styles, while the thematic analysis of the interviews offered interpretive depth by uncovering students' reflections and experiences. Together, this approach allowed the study to combine categorical information with thematic interpretation, ensuring that the

findings reflect not only the distribution of learning styles but also their pedagogical significance in the Indonesian EFL context.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data Description

The data were collected from ten students enrolled in the English Language Education Program at a private university with three campuses in different locations, representing the Jakarta, Tangerang, and Bekasi campuses. Each participant completed the VARK questionnaire and later took part in a structured interview to provide deeper insights into their learning preferences.

Table 2. Participants' demographic and academic backgrounds

Participant code	Gender	Students' semester	Campus
P1	Male	4	Tangerang Campus
P2	Male	6	Jakarta Campus
P3	Female	6	Jakarta Campus
P4	Female	4	Tangerang Campus
P5	Female	4	Tangerang Campus
P6	Female	4	Tangerang Campus
P7	Male	4	Bekasi Campus
P8	Male	6	Jakarta Campus
P9	Male	6	Tangerang Campus
P10	Male	6	Jakarta Campus

Source: Primary data collected by the researcher, 2025

All participants confirmed that they were actively enrolled in the English Language Education Program and regularly participated in English learning activities, making them suitable for the study's focus on learning style preferences.

Types of Data Collected

- **Interview Data:** Structured interviews were conducted individually with each participant. Interviews lasted approximately 4–7 minutes and focused on students' reflections about their identified learning styles, their application in English learning, and their perceptions of how these styles supported or challenged their learning process.
- **Questionnaire Data:** used to identify each participant's preferred learning modality: Visual (V), Auditory (A), Read/Write (R), or Kinesthetic (K).

The data collected provided a solid foundation for thematic analysis, as discussed in Section 4.2, with the goal of identifying recurring patterns in students' learning preferences and their implications for instructional practice in higher education.

Research Findings

This study was guided by one research question:

What are the learning styles of Students in English Language Education Program?

The findings are organized using Fleming's (2012) VARK framework: Visual, Auditory, Read/Write, and Kinesthetic. The results are drawn from both the VARK questionnaire and

structured interviews to capture not only the distribution of learning style preferences but also students' reflections on how these preferences influenced their English language learning.

Table 3. Distribution of Students' dominant learning styles

Learning Style	Number of Student (Questionnaire Only)	Number of Student Combined (Questionnaire + Interview)	Notes
Kinesthetic (K)	7 Students (70%)	6 students (60%)	Dominant style
Auditory (A)	2 students (20%)	2 students (20%)	Focus on listening & pronunciation
Multimodal	1 student (10%)	2 students (20%)	P1: Read/Write + Auditory P8: Kinesthetic + Auditory
Visual (V)	0 students (0%)	0 students (0%)	Not dominant
Read/Write (R)	0 students (0%)	0 students (0%)	Not dominant

Source: Primary data processed by the researcher from VARK questionnaire and interview results, 2025

The results of the VARK questionnaire and interviews showed that Kinesthetic learning emerged as the dominant preference among students. As indicated in Table 3, seven participants (70%) identified kinesthetic as their primary style, and this was confirmed by six students (60%) after triangulation with interview data. Students consistently emphasized that active learning strategies, such as role-plays and hands-on practice, improved their English skills and confidence. One participant explained, "Role-playing is a fun and effective way to practice speaking" (P6). Similarly, another noted, "Acting out a conversation helped me learn better in English class" (P10). These responses highlight the importance of experiential, practice-oriented methods in EFL classrooms.

The second theme was Auditory learning, reported by two participants (20%). These students valued listening to lecturers' explanations, examples, and discussions, particularly for improving pronunciation and intonation. As one student stated, "I can pick up the correct pronunciation and intonation from my lecturer" (P2). Another emphasized that, "I can focus better when I listen to the lecturer" (P1). The interviews suggested that listening not only supported comprehension but also reinforced the lecturer's position as a central knowledge source in the Indonesian classroom context.

A smaller group of students demonstrated Multimodal preferences. One participant (10%) was initially classified as multimodal, but interview analysis revealed that two students (20%) combined learning strategies. For example, P1 described using Read/Write and Auditory styles, while P8 combined Kinesthetic and Auditory. P1 explained, "Reading helps me to learn new words, but I also need to listen carefully". Likewise, P8 reflected, "I learn best when I can listen first and then try to practice it myself". These findings indicate that some learners adapt flexibly, engaging multiple modalities depending on the task and learning context.

Interestingly, no participants were classified as purely Visual or Read/Write learners. However, both strategies played a supportive role in students' learning experiences. Visual aids such as diagrams, charts, and timelines helped clarify abstract concepts (P1, P3, P4, P7, P10),

while note-taking and reading facilitated vocabulary retention (P3, P4, P9, P10). One participant recalled, “A mind map helped me see the connections in a reading text” (P3), while another noted, “I always take notes to remember new vocabulary” (P9). These modalities functioned as scaffolds rather than dominant preferences, reinforcing kinesthetic and auditory learning.

Overall, the findings indicate that students in this English Language Education Program strongly favor Kinesthetic learning, supported by Auditory strategies, while Multimodal flexibility enhances adaptability across tasks. Visual and Read/Write styles, though not dominant, remain valuable as supplementary supports. These findings imply that English instruction should prioritize interactive, practice-based, and auditory-rich activities while integrating visual and written resources to address diverse learner needs and promote inclusive classroom practices.

This chapter discusses the findings of the study in relation to the theoretical framework, previous research, and the research objective. The discussion emphasizes the significance of identifying learning styles among English Language Education Program students at a private university with three campuses in different locations a private university with three campuses in different locations, how the results support pedagogical implications for EFL instruction.

The Identification of Students’ Learning Styles in the English Language Education Program

The findings revealed that kinesthetic learning emerged as the most dominant preference among students, followed by auditory and multimodal styles, while no participants showed purely visual or read/write dominance. This pattern supports the relevance of Fleming's (2012) VARK model but requires closer examination of why these preferences appeared in a Esa Unggul University with three campuses in different locations, namely Jakarta, Tangerang, and Bekasi of English Language Education Program context and how they compare with previous studies.

The predominance of kinesthetic learning, selected by 60 percent of participants, suggests that students benefit most from practice-based activities such as role-plays, simulations, and group projects. This emphasis reflects the limited exposure to English in everyday Indonesian contexts, which makes classroom-based active learning a substitute for authentic interaction (Kirkpatrick, 2008). The result aligns with Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning Theory, which highlights active experimentation and concrete experience as critical for knowledge retention. Similar findings have been reported by (Aprianto & Sutarman, 2025), who demonstrated that kinesthetic strategies improved speaking fluency among Indonesian EFL learners. In contrast, Triananda (2022) found multimodal styles to be dominant among English majors at Ganesha University, suggesting that institutional differences in curriculum design and teaching strategies may influence learning preferences. Whereas Ganesha promotes blended and text-supported learning, a private university with three campuses in different locations appears to place more emphasis on practice-oriented classroom engagement.

Auditory learning was the second most frequent preference, reported by 20 percent of participants. These learners valued listening to lecturers’ explanations, oral examples, and discussions as essential for acquiring pronunciation and intonation. This reliance may reflect the cultural position of lecturers in Indonesian classrooms as authoritative knowledge sources

(Cortazzi, 1996). Oxford's (2003) framework on learning strategies supports this, emphasizing the importance of listening and interaction for language acquisition. Likewise, Isnawati et al. (2024) noted that auditory learners in Indonesian EFL classrooms performed better in pronunciation and listening comprehension tasks. Compared with private university with three campuses in different locations, where auditory preferences supplement kinesthetic practices, Isnawati et al. (2024) findings show that in some contexts auditory strategies may be equally or more central.

Multimodal preferences, also identified by 20 percent of participants, demonstrate adaptability in combining strategies. For instance, one student reported listening to explanations while simultaneously taking notes, while another described practicing role-play after listening to a lecturer. Fleming (2012) argued that multimodal learners benefit by engaging multiple sensory channels to adjust strategies according to task demands. This finding, however, differs from Triananda's (2022) results, which showed multimodality as the dominant preference among English majors. A possible explanation is that private university with three campuses in different locations participants, mostly in their middle semesters, perceive immediate practice as more urgent, while students in other institutions may develop broader strategy use over time. Similarly, a recent study by Noviska and Anastasia (2023) revealed that multimodal approaches increased student motivation in blended learning settings, suggesting that technology integration may encourage multiple modality use—an element less emphasized in Esa Unggul University.

While no students identified as purely visual or read/write learners, both strategies were acknowledged as supportive. Diagrams, timelines, and mind maps helped clarify grammatical concepts, while note-taking and reading aided vocabulary retention. These strategies functioned as scaffolds rather than dominant preferences. Compared with Manipuspika's (2020) study on EFL students at Universitas Brawijaya, Malang, which reported a clear dominance of visual learning (61.7%) followed by auditory and bimodal preferences, the present study shows a different distribution that highlights the specific demands of English majors, whose coursework emphasizes spoken interaction and practical engagement rather than reliance on visual input alone.

Overall findings indicate that lecturers in the English Education program at Esa Unggul University should design lessons that prioritize experiential methods such as role-plays, group projects, and performance-based assessments to address students' strong kinesthetic orientation. However, auditory elements should remain central, with lecturers modeling pronunciation and intonation through explanations, discussions, and audio input. Visual and text-based resources should be maintained as supplementary tools, particularly for grammar and vocabulary consolidation. Finally, since some students demonstrated multimodal tendencies, lecturers are encouraged to integrate multiple modalities within lessons. For example, combining lecture input with visual aids and practice tasks. Such an approach reflects principles of universal design for learning, ensuring inclusivity and equipping students with flexible strategies applicable beyond the classroom (Noviska & Anastasia, 2023).

The students' learning style profile reflect a strong kinesthetic preference, shaped by the realities of Indonesian EFL education where authentic exposure to English is limited. While consistent with theories of experiential and social learning, the profile diverges from findings at other institutions that emphasize multimodal or visual learning. These differences highlight

the importance of contextual factors, including curriculum, instructional methods, and cultural traditions, in shaping student preferences. For English lecturers at Esa Unggul University the findings reinforce the need to embed experiential, auditory, and multimodal strategies into classroom practice, ensuring that instruction is both responsive to dominant preferences and supportive of learners' development of flexible, adaptive strategies.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the learning style preferences of students in an English Language Education Program using the VARK model, aiming to identify dominant modalities and their reflection in classroom experiences through questionnaire and interview data analyzed descriptively and thematically. The findings showed that kinesthetic learning was the most dominant preference, with students favoring hands-on activities such as role-plays and group projects, followed by auditory learning, which supported listening, pronunciation, and comprehension skills. Some students demonstrated multimodal flexibility by combining strategies, while visual and read/write styles functioned mainly as supportive approaches for clarifying concepts and retaining vocabulary. Overall, the results indicate a strong tendency toward experiential and auditory learning, suggesting that English instruction should emphasize interactive, practice-based, and auditory-rich methods while still incorporating visual and text-based resources for inclusivity. Future research is recommended to involve a larger and more diverse sample and to explore the relationship between learning styles and students' academic performance or language proficiency outcomes.

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