

## THE LEARNING STYLE OF MILLENIAL STUDENTS AT ENGLISH EDUCATION DEPARTMENT OF IAIN BUKITTINGGI

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**Abstract:** University students have their own style in learning which lead them to get a better understanding. This research was conducted based on some problems found in the classroom interaction. Most of the students did not follow the instructions given by the lecturer when working on assignment. Therefore, analysing milenial learning style is needed in order to find out some appropriate styles and strategies in teaching. This research was qualitative research with 93 EFL students-participants of English education department of an Islamic state university in Bukit Tinggi. The instruments used in this research were observation which was done during the classroom instruction and one-on-one interview. The result showed that there were three categories of millennial learning styles namely; team learning, experiencing, and technology use in learning. Most of the students-participants applied team learning and used technologies as learning styles during classroom interaction. They did not like the style of experiencing, while in the language classroom, experiencing, should be the crucial factor to help the students mastering the target language. In conclusion, millennial learning styles of the students-participants were needed to improve.

**Keywords:** *Learning Style, Millennial, classroom interaction.*

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### INTRODUCTION

The millennial generations are fond of technology and almost all of their daily activities are accompanied by gadget. This generation are also considered special because it was very different from the previous generations' characteristics, namely they were born when the television produce in various size and colourful, cell phones and the internet were introduced, so they were very proficient in using technology both on learning and daily activity.

Millennial generation is a situation where development and growth in life are influenced by environmental conditions, so that changes are very fast and able to respond to their needs by following the use of technology (Arum, 2018). In the

process of learning English, the students demanded to develop their creativity and skill by using various types of technology where the students learn not only to use books but also use technology in learning. (Kardena, 2017) explains that for achieving this goal in learning process, English lecturer should work collaboratively with the students. So, technology can change their habits, characters, speech, way of thinking, and learning style of students.

Learning style describes as students way in the process of learning (Renandya, 2020). The students usually had their own learning style as preferences way of organizing and thinking about information in learning process (Lismay & Zubaidah, 2019). The students should know what their own learning styles to solve some problems related to their own learning process (Oxford, 2003). It will be more helpful for them if they understand their preferences in learning, especially on consideration of what teachers expect from learners in the classroom.

The millennial students also have the characteristics of their own learning styles. According to Arum, "Learning style of millennial generation seems to prefer some activities like learning in groups, learning that comes from experience and using technology when learning". Furthermore, millennial students like the learning gained from their experiences and use all technology for retrieve the required information (Arum, 2018).

Moreover, learning style of millennial generation can be explained as how students understand and experience the information given in order to think critically. It was so important for students if they are aware of their particular learning preferences so that they can use an appropriate learning style to suit the particular learning (Nunan, 2003). As teachers, they should achieve a match between teaching strategies and the students unique learning styles to improve students's millennial overall learning result.

Millennial generation is new generation who are very proficient in using technology to meet their daily needs. According to Strauss and Howe in Arum (2018), millennial generation is a condition in which the development of life is influenced by the environment so it changes very quickly and they are also very proficient at using technology. In addition, it is explained that millennial generation is the generation that moves forward to technology. It means that millennial generation is a group who are the drivers of the future through the use of technology to achieve a change (MarComm, 2018).

Besides, millennial generation also can be seen from the year of birth. According to Sumardianta and Kris that millennial generation is generation born in the late 1980s until the early 2000s, those aged 18 to 30 years and very familiar and proficient with digital and internet based technology (Sumardianta & Kris, 2018). It means that someone born in 1980 to 2000 is categorized as millennial. From the opinions of the experts above, It was concluded that millennial generation is a group of people born around 1980s to 2000s where the development of their life is affected by the environmental conditions, besides that they also have fluency in using digital and internet-based technology. It means that these generations never separated from the gadget. For example, millennial generation always carry their cellphone wherever they go.

In the current of globalization era, many generational terms that appears in the environment around us. Like X generations, digital generations, millennial generations and etc. In these generations, it can be seen different in term, but generally it have the same meaning and the same purpose. According to Ryder in

(Budianti, 2018), generation is a group of people who experience the same event and same time too. In addition, the grouping of generations can also be seen from the year of birth then generation is a group of people who identify their groups based on the same year of birth, age, locations and the same event that affected their lives. It means that the division of generations can be seen from the same birth year or age and events experienced by a group of people at the same time.

Djiwandono found that students learning style consist of visual, kinesthetic, and lacking interpersonal skill (2017). Thus, there is no significant correlation is evident between their learning style and their achievements in language and content course. While the Iranian EFL University students preferred the visual learning style (Gilakjani, 2012). Furthermore Cimermanova (2018) described that learning styles and forms of teaching had no effect on academic achievement. Those previous researches analyse learning styles of related to their achievement and ability to recognize the information from the learning materials given by the teacher. The objective of this study was to find out the millennial students' learning style in order to find a better strategy and technique in the classroom interaction.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Subjects**

The subjects of this research were 93 fourth semester students of English Education of IAIN Bukittinggi in academic year 2020/2021. It was chosen by purposive sampling techniques because the students had the same characteristics, levels, and conditions. For instance, the students were difficult to obtain and less discipline in learning process (Creswell, 2012).

The researcher conducted the observation of the classroom to see the learning style of millennial students. The observation was done four times in various subjects in the classroom interaction. In addition, the researchers also conducted interviews with some students and lecturers. Ten students and three lecturers were interviewed to find out about the students' learning style. There were eleven questions given to the participant in form of one-on-one interview. The researcher asks questions and records answers from one participant in the study at a time (Creswell, 2012) The researcher first asked the interviewees based on the guided questions and then followed by some related questions. To analyse the process, the interview was recorded and transcribed.

### **Design and Procedures**

This research applied qualitative design. According to Tohirin, qualitative research is a process to understand the phenomenon of what is observed by the subject of research such as behavior, perception, motivation and action (Tohirin, 2012) It means that the learning style include on qualitative research. Therefore, Sugiyono states that qualitative research can say as naturalistic research because this research done in natural condition (natural setting) (Sugiyono, 2016). It means that in qualitative research the research do not give the treatment to the object of the research and describe it.

Then, descriptive research is purposed to describe the phenomena (M.E, 2013). Phenomena description is treated systematically which concerns on the data due to the field finding. It also explained that qualitative data cannot be accurately measured and counted, and are generally expressed in words rather than numbers (Nicholas, 2011). Therefore in descriptive qualitative research, the researcher expresses an

argument related to the finding obtained from the field. It means that this study is not needed to present numeric data. The researcher came to the class to observe the classroom interaction by using observation sheet that has already prepared. This observation was done four times in various subjects. Then the interview had done in order to clarify the result of the observation.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

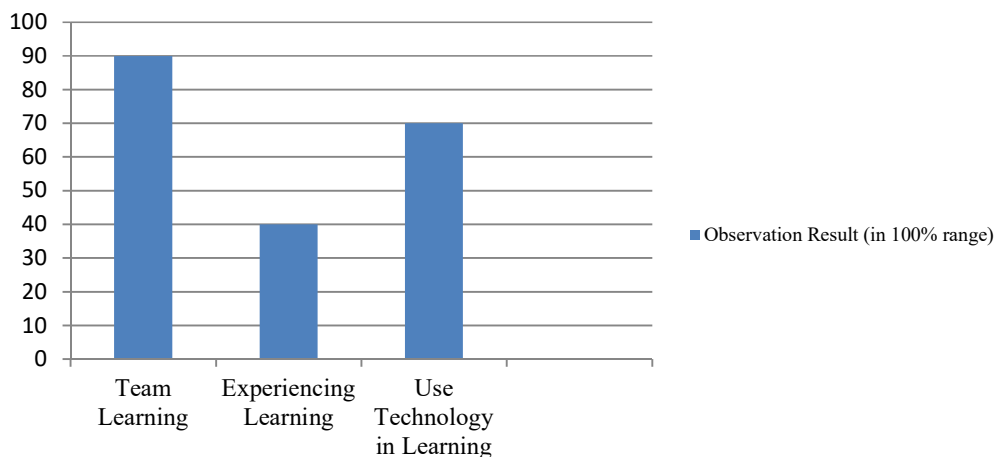
The researcher used observation and interview in collecting the data. Observation was used to answer the research question about learning style of millennial students in the fourth semester of English education of IAIN Bukit Tinggi. Technique of data collection by using observation was done if the research related to human attitude, process of work, natures of phenomenon, and respondent who was observed or not observe (Creswell, 2012). The result of the data was analysed, narrated, and conducted. Furthermore, to verify to data, the researcher asked to two raters to analyse the data by using millennial generation learning style theory. The researcher used the analysis result of two raters to get more information about learning style of millennial students' analysis.

Interview was a conversation between two persons; it is between interviewer and interviewee in getting information through some questions and responses. The purpose of interview was to get some information from the interviewee. According to Gay, an interview is a purposeful interaction in which one person obtains information from another (Gay, 2000). This research used interview to know learning style of millennial students in the fourth semester of English education department of IAIN Bukit Tinggi.

In this research, analysing the data becomes important process in order to get a valid finding. The researcher would analyse the data of observation and interview to get the research result after the data was collected. In analysing the data, the research would use some procedures proposed by Miles and Huberman in (Sugiyono, 2016), (1) Data collection in which data was collected, (2) Data reduction, a process to analyse the data where the researcher summarized the data, chose the important thing, focused on the research aspects, and found the theme and the pattern of data. (3) Data display, a process that arranged data based on the category or necessary groupings. Data display in qualitative research could be used in the form of chart, flowchart, and narrative text. (4) Conclusions, a process where the researcher made the conclusion from all of the data.

### **FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

The data of this research were taken by doing the observation and interview. The observation was done four times during classroom interaction in the fourth semester class where the researcher came to the class as an observer. Furthermore, the researcher interviewed some students of fourth semester of English Education in collecting the data. The students were interviewed about what kind of learning style they used in classroom when learning process happened. The researcher asked some questions based on the research guidelines. Based on the finding of the observation, from three indicators proposed by Arum, it showed that English Department students mostly like team learning in the classroom interaction. The result of the observation can be seen in the following table:.



*Figure 1.* The result of the observation during the classroom interaction

The result showed that almost all of the students use team learning as their learning style. In the classroom, the students gave their opinions during discussions. They actively involved in the discussion by giving comment and questions related to the material discussed at that time. Sometimes, some students seemed to have more ideas about the material given but they were afraid of speaking. Seeing this condition, usually the lecturer would help the situation by calling the students' name and asked her or him to speak. The lecturer has divided the students into several groups at the first meeting of the class. So, they have discussed the material given in groups before coming to the class discussion. There was one group presented the material every weeks. At first, the member of the group would present the summary of the material that they have discussed in the classroom, and then they invited the other team to give their opinion about what they have already presented. This condition created a lively classroom interaction where many students got a chance to be participated in the discussion.

From three classes that were observed, two classes showed a good team learning where most of the students gave their opinion in the class discussion. However, the other class seemed to be less enthusiastic. This class was the passive one. They did not have or give any opinion during the classroom discussion. It assumed that they were busy with their own mind. When a group presented a summary of the material, the other team only listens to the presentation without giving any comment or idea. This condition showed that this class did not really like team learning as their learning style.

Related to the second indicator of millennial learning style proposed by Arum, experiencing learning, the fourth semester students of English department pretended that they did not really use experiencing learning in the classroom. The observation result showed that during the class interaction, the students only presented the summary of the material from the books given by the lecturer. They did not try to find other related books that would help them to understand the material more. During a group presentation, the member of the group only focused to present the material that they have discussed before. They did not present any example from their life experience to make the material understandable. The reason of this

condition seemed to be because they were still at the second year of their study, so they did not have enough experience in their English. They needed to learn more to master the skills in English that will help them in their learning.

Finally, the observation result showed that the use of technology helped the students in the classroom interaction. More than half of the students use technology as their style in learning. They preferred to use online dictionary rather than manual dictionary. During the class interaction, the lecturer allowed the students to use their mobile phone to help them clarified some information given by the other students. At the end of the class meeting, the lecturer concludes the material by giving a clear explanation about the material discussed on that day. In this kind of learning style, mostly all the students like this style of learning. The problem seemed to be limited on the internet access and devices. Sometimes, there were no Wi-Fi connections in the class, so the students were difficult to use their mobile in learning. They came to the computer laboratories for several subject like listening and CALL class.

From the interview, the result showed that there are three indicators related to the millennial students learning styles:

### **Team Learning**

There were some reasons why most of the students like working in a group. They said that it helped them to understand the material given by the lecturer; they can share their opinion in the team. It also helped them to clarify unclear statement they found in the book. They supported the other member of the group to speak. This statement was supported by interview of student 1.

*"I think if the group member doesn't give an opinion during the discussion, I will reprimand him, and if he has been reprimanded and the member doesn't express his opinion too, I will report to the speaker so that the speaker invites members to participate, and if the member doesn't want to express his opinion too, I will report directly to the lecturer."*

Furthermore, during the interview, students 5 said that it was necessary to prepare and discuss the material outside the classroom before the class begin. She explained that her group would have some discussion at the library to discuss some opinion about the material given by the lecturer. This activity helped them to be actively involved in the discussion. In addition, student 3 said that when his group has a different opinion among the members of the group, they will discuss the material intensively. They found it was interesting to share their opinion in order to help them use their English actively. They could practice their English more during the discussion.

However, student 6 said that sometimes he did not really understand about what actually discussed by the team. It seemed that when the members of the group presented their opinion about the material given, the discussion directed to anything else. Most of the students only try to speak without really understand about what they were talking about. He assumed that this kind of activity made him boring and it caused him to be confused about the material. The lecturer would make the situation clear by giving an understandable statement at the end of the meeting. It helped him clarify the information given on that day.

### **Experiencing Learning**

This kind of learning style was not really applied by the students in the classroom interaction because it seemed that they did not have sufficient knowledge to experience their English. Based on the interview to the participants, student 3 said that she recalled some material from what has been learned before. But she found many materials that she did not experience yet, so it makes her difficult to understand the material. She would ask the opinion of the other friends to help her understand some information. The other participant also explained that they learning English at the university is really different from what they have been learn in their high school. They found many new interesting media and materials. They would ask many questions during the classroom interaction.

### **Technology Use in Learning**

Technology has a great impact on students in learning. It is also one of the learning styles applied by the millennial students in the classroom. The second year students of English department in IAIN Bukitt Tinggi used technology in the classroom interaction. They said that technology helped them to understand the material well. They can find many useful resources by using technology. As student 1 said that technology is important in learning process. She said that the lecturer allowed them to use their mobile phone during the learning process, even sometimes the lecturer use internet based games to help them interested in the learning process. The other students agree that technology is useful for them but they also complained about the limited internet access in the classroom. They suggest that the staff provide them with the good wifi connection so that they can find many useful resources from the internet.

### **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

The result of this study showed that the learning style of millennial students at the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of English education department of IAIN Bukittinggi varied based on their learning preferences. Based on the analysis of the learning style of millennial students, they like to apply various learning style in the classroom. Most of them applied team learning as they style. They did not applied experiencing learning in the classroom because they did not have enough knowledge in learning English. They need to gain more knowledge to help them mastering English well. Furthermore, the application of technology encourages them to participate actively in the classroom. They tend to use their mobile phone during the learning process.

Based on the conclusions above, there are three recommendations in this study namely; for students, lecturer and the next researcher. First, students, the researcher hopes that the research result will give benefit for the students to give the description of the learning style of millennial students. Second, lecturer, the researcher hopes that the research result will give benefit for the lecturers to choose the appropriate strategy, methods, media or material which is suitable with the millennial students learning style. Third, researcher can support sources for the next researcher and some references for another research to be conducted in this area. Another perspective about learning style and learning strategies related to millennial students need to be analyzing more.

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