

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

#### 5.0 Introduction

This chapter sums up the entire study by describing briefly on the findings. In addition, it draws a number of conclusions and implications from the findings of the study. Finally, some recommendations are suggested concerning to the application of the study and also suggestions for further research.

#### 5.1 Summary of Reviews and Findings

One of the major challenges facing English language teachers is how to engage the interest of the learners and assist them in their educational goals. The problem would be especially acute when gender difference would be a factor influencing their choice of learning style and strategies.

The aim of this study is to identify the preferred learning style and strategies of Form 2 male and female students of a secondary school. Two sets of self-scoring questionnaire based on Reid's (1987) Perceptual Learning Style Preference (PLSP) Questionnaire was used to identify their learning style preferences and Oxford's (1986) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) was used to identify the students' preferences on learning strategies. There were a total of 90 subjects with the equal number of male and female students. Generally, the subjects had a very positive attitude towards learning English

subject in school.

### **5.1.1 Discussion of Research Questions**

Research Question 1:

*What are the perceptual learning style preferences (PLSP) of secondary students in a classroom situation?*

The findings from Reid's (1987) The Perceptual Learning Style Preferences Questionnaire revealed that both male and female students had major preferences for Kinaesthetic and Auditory Learning Style, minor preferences for Visual and Tactile learning styles and negligible or negative preference towards Individual learning style. Social learning style reported a higher percentage of the preference in the female students compared to the males.

Research Question 2:

*What are the learning strategies used by secondary students?*

In terms of the learning strategies, findings from Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) showed that both the male and female subjects were found to be high level users of Compensation and Metacognitive learning strategies. However, there was a difference in the Social learning strategy where the female students were high level users compared to the male students who were medium level users. Both male and female students in this study were reported to be medium level users of the Memory, Cognitive and Affective learning strategies. They were therefore able to use both direct and indirect

strategies. The implication is that they were not only able to work with the language but were able to control their learning situations. This result is surprisingly good as the subjects were still at the secondary school level yet they had reported to be able to take control of their whole learning process.

Research Question 3:

*How similar or different are the male and female students in terms of their perceptual learning style preferences and strategies based on gender differences?*

After the findings from Reid's (1987) Perceptual Learning Style Preferences questionnaire and Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning were compared there were similarities and differences found between the male and female subjects. For learning style preferences, they are similar in many ways. The only difference which can be seen is that female subjects are inclined towards both Group learning style and Social learning strategy. The results mean that female subjects prefer to work and communicate with bigger group while the male subjects were found to differ from their female counterpart.

## **5.2 Implications**

Two implications can be drawn from the research findings of this study of different gender for English language teaching and learning. These implications are discussed in relation to the subjects' preferred learning styles, learning strategies, and topics of interests, and development of curricular materials.

## 1. Implications of learning style preferences and strategies on teaching and learning.

- (a) The findings of the research on perceptual learning style preferences and learning strategies have both curricular and instructional implications.
- (b) In the case of learning styles, it could start with assessing the teachers' and learners' learning style preferences and accepting the gender factor which then can be used in learner activities, and for preparing suitable learning environment.
- (c) As with learning styles discussed, the implication for learning strategies concern assessing the learning strategies of the male and female students.
- (d) Language teachers could therefore make conscious efforts to improve this teaching/learning situation in the following situations:
  - i. Teachers could become aware of the male and female students' learning styles as well as their own learning/teaching styles. In the event the students' learning styles do not match the teacher's, both the students and teacher should be aware of the differences and the possible consequences of those differences.
  - ii. Language learners should be aware of their dominant perceptual learning style(s) and their learning strategies in order for them to participate more actively and effectively in their own language development.
  - iii. Language teachers must be aware of their own learning style preferences to enable them to accommodate the diversity of learning styles in their classrooms. Teachers who teach exclusively in a manner that is compatible with their own learning style but in conflict with that of the learners can inhibit learning. However, the teachers' knowledge of their own learning

style(s) will enable them to develop a more flexible and varied approach to teaching the language and towards creating a classroom open to different styles of teaching and learning.

- iv. Teachers have a responsibility to provide multiple opportunities for their students to investigate, identify and use their learning styles and strategies.
- v. Teachers need to integrate as many teaching styles as possible into their class preparation even though they may not feel entirely comfortable using some of them.
- vi. Teachers should encourage their students to “stretch” their learning styles and learning strategies in order to become more empowered in a variety of learning situations. This involves allowing students to experience various alternative learning styles and strategies, even mismatches to better challenge and stimulate students. For example, male students who are comfortable working alone could be encouraged to work in groups with mixture of male and female students, including emphasis on group discussion skills, role play with group roles, practice in observing group processes and so on.
- vii. Students should also learn to become more tolerant of different situations in ESL learning. Such tolerance will enable them to adjust to different learning styles and strategies and will allow them to work to strengthen their weaker learning styles and strategy preferences.

## 2. Implications for development of curricular materials.

From this research too it is hoped that the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) of the Malaysian Ministry of Education would be sensitive to the needs of the learners. The topics as well as the activities they would include in the English Language textbooks must be culturally acceptable to both male and female students so that they would benefit most from each topic they learn hence to be able to master the language.

### **5.3 Suggestions for Further Research**

Given the findings of this study, further research in the following areas is suggested.

This study focused on the gender differences in the learning style preference and strategies. Since the subjects of this study were limited 90 male and female students of a secondary school, a similar study should be carried out with a bigger number of male and female students and students from other major groups such as secondary school students of different areas and also students from the higher learning institutions. Thus, the validity and generalisability of the current study may be further strengthened if similar results are obtained by future studies.

## 5.4 Conclusion

The learning style preferences and learning strategies of the male and female students have been found to have impact on their academic and social achievements in their learning environments. Therefore, every teacher concerned with issues of access and equity has to give serious consideration to both these student variables in their classroom. A teacher who creates a learner-centered classroom understands and respects the diversity of learning strengths within any group, and offers choices on how information and skills will be acquired. A genuinely student-centered classroom is democratic educational environment and student-life with increased confidence and competence. The ultimate goal is learner autonomy where the learners are able to completely manage their own learning.

*If a man does not keep pace  
with his companion,  
perhaps, it is because  
he hears a different drummer.  
Let him keep step  
to the music which he hears  
however measured or far away.*

*Anonymous*