

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### A. Background of the Research

The curriculum which is now implemented in English Education Department Teacher Training and Education Faculty the University of Muria Kudus (hereafter EED UMK) is the Competency-Based Curriculum 2010 (KBK 2010). It was first officially launched and implemented in 2010. However, the shift from the former one which is content-based to KBK 2010, began in 2007, when EED UMK did a curriculum review. The change from the older to the new one was based on the decrees (SK) of the Ministry of National Education No. 232/U/2000 and No. 045/U/2002 and the government regulation (PP) No. 19/2005. The result of the review in 2007 was Curriculum 2007, which was not yet labeled KBK in spite of the fact that the term *competence* had been used, i.e. *standard of competence* and *basic competence*. In 2009, after 2 years of implementation, curriculum 2007 was reviewed, especially with reference to *Buku Panduan Pengembangan Kurikulum Berbasis Kompetensi Pendidikan Tinggi* published by *Direktorat Akademik, Direktorat Jendral Pendidikan Tinggi* and was guided by an expert behind the compilation of the book. The result was Competency-Based Curriculum 2010 which is now implemented in EED UMK.

The implementation of competency-based curriculum brings logical consequences such that:

1. Learning should be student-centered (SCL) and directed towards the acquisition of a method of of inquiry and discovery (Departemen

Pendidikan Nasional, 2005: 15).

2. Learning is individual in nature.
3. Learning materials and learning processes are designed and oriented to the achievements of the intended competences and focus on the interest of the students (Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, 2005: 18).

In SCL, the issue is not “how well teachers teach” but “how well teachers make the students learn” and “how well the students learn and learn throughout of life.” Therefore, student’s autonomy is very crucial in SCL. Student becomes the central component in the learning system. The role of teacher in this learning approach is facilitating and motivating the students to learn. Hence, there must be synergy between the mind set of the teacher and that of the students.

Now that the curriculum implemented in EED UMK is competency-based, in which the learning approach must be student-centered, understanding students and their characteristics becomes very important. One aspect of student component which is very important to understand is *learning styles*. Researches have shown that there is a relationship between learning styles and sex variable (Reid, 1987: 1), learning styles and students’ learning, such as influencing the ways different students learn grammar (Oxford and Lee, 2007: 124), and the students’ listening behavior (Macaro, *et.al.*, 2007: 173).

The benefits of knowing our learning styles are described by Summer Institute of Linguistics International (1999) as follow.

1. Knowing our learning style will help us plan for learning tasks such as language learning.

2. When learning activities in our plan match our learning style preferences, we will find them satisfying and motivational. If possible, try to choose these kinds of activities.
3. When learning activities do not match our preferences, we are less likely to persevere. If we cannot avoid certain activities that do not match up well with our preferences, look for ways to modify the activities to take advantage of your preferences.  
(*SIL International*, 1999)

By understanding the learning styles of the students, it is hoped that teachers can give the best facilitation and motivation to promote their learning. The information about the learning styles of the students will make it easier for the teacher to guide the students to use the best possible *method of inquiry and discovery*. Method of inquiry and discovery is:

1. *suatu metode pembelajaran yang menumbuhkan hasrat besar untuk ingin tahu, meningkatkan kemampuan untuk menggunakan atribut kompetensi guna menentukan pilihan jalan berkehidupan di masyarakat, meningkatkan cara belajar sepanjang hayat (learning to learn dan learning throughout of life)* (Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, 2005: 18).  
(a learning method which enables students in encouraging their intellectual curiosity, increasing their ability to use the competences to choose the way to learning to learn and learning throughout of life)
2. *strategi belajar yang memungkinkan mahasiswa (bersama dosen) memilih, menemukan, dan menyusun pengetahuan serta cara mengembangkan ketrampilannya* (Direktorat Jendral Pendidikan Tinggi, 2008: 23).  
(learning strategy that enables students (together with the lecturer) to choose, invent, and construct knowledge and the way to develop their skills)

The importance of understanding the learning styles of the students in SCL, triggers the researchers to conduct a research on learning styles of the students of EED UMK. In addition, research on learning styles of the students of EED UMK has never been conducted.

## **B. Problem Formulation**

Based on the description of the background, the substantial questions that

must be revealed through this research are:

1. What are the learning styles of the students of EED UMK?
2. Does gender become one of the determinants of learning style dimensions preference?
2. Do learning styles dimension become one of the determinants of preference for certain subject?

### **C. Objective of the Research**

The main objective of this research is to identify the learning styles of the students of EED UMK. The result of identification is used to describe:

1. the general learning styles profile of the students of EED UMK.
2. the dependency relationship between learning styles dimensions and gender.
3. the dependency relationship between learning styles and subject preference.

### **D. Significance of the Research**

This research is important to conduct because the results can be used as baseline data for further research on learning styles and because so far there is no research on the learning styles of the students of EED UMK. This research is beneficial for students, lecturers, and the department, because the information about the learning styles of the students can be used as:

1. a means of understanding the profile of the students of EED UMK in terms of learning styles.
2. a basis of predicting the strategic competence of the students of EED UMK in language use.

3. a basis for the lecturers and the department to choose the most appropriate teaching strategies or teaching styles that will facilitate the students of EED UMK to master the intended competence in the learning process.