

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

English as an international language plays an important role in various aspects of life, from education, technology, to the world of work. Good English language skills are the key to opening up access to information, educational opportunities, and wider careers. According to Crystal (2003), English has become the lingua franca of the modern world, allowing people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds to interact effectively. Good English language skills are not only needed to enter the formal education system, but are also an important skill to compete in today's world. Therefore, English language proficiency is one of the important goals in education in Indonesia, especially at Junior High School (SMP) level.

Effective learning strategies are determining factors in students' success in mastering English. Good learning strategies are not always the only cause of students' success in learning English, but they have a significant impact on the learning process. Language learning strategies are a series of instructions, methods, or techniques used by students to help them understand and use target language. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) explained that language learning strategies include three main categories, namely metacognitive, cognitive, and socio-affective strategies. These strategies involve activities such as scheduling study time, utilizing learning materials, and interacting with the learning environment to improve understanding and vocabulary.

Language learning strategies help students improve their learning efficiency

by optimally utilizing available resources. For example, metacognitive strategies, such as planning, monitoring, and evaluating, help students recognize their strengths and weaknesses during learning process. Social strategies, such as discussing with friends or asking for feedback from teachers, not only help improving communication skills but also build students' self-confidence, Oxford (1990). However, based on the results of initial observations, it was found that students at SMP Negeri 14 Kupang also face challenges in learning English. Some students still have difficulty understanding material, less motivated in learning, and show less than optimal learning outcomes. This shows the need to identify factors that influence the effectiveness of English learning, including learning strategies applied and students' thinking styles.

Students' thinking styles, as way individuals process and understand information, believed to have a significant influence on how students learn and respond to the learning strategies applied. Students with different thinking styles may respond differently to the same learning strategy. According to Sternberg (1985), thinking style reflects individual preferences in processing information, solving problems, and making decisions. Each student has a unique thinking style, such as analytical, creative, or practical, which affects the way they receive and utilize the learning strategies provided. Therefore, it is important to understand how students' thinking styles interact with the learning strategies used by teachers.

This study aims to examine the relationship between English learning strategies and thinking styles of grade IX students at SMP Negeri 14 Kupang. The results of this study are expected to provide a more comprehensive picture of how

appropriate learning strategies can be adjusted to students' thinking styles, so as to improve the effectiveness of English learning and overall student achievement. This study is expected to provide useful contributions for teachers, students, and schools in efforts to improve the quality of English learning.

Based on initial observations conducted by the researcher at SMP Negeri 14 Kupang, it was found that grade IX students showed various thinking styles that affected their learning outcomes. Teachers who use learning strategies that do not pay attention to students' thinking styles tend to face challenges in improving learning achievement. Therefore, the researcher feels it is important to examine how the relationship between English learning strategies applied with students' thinking styles in class IX of SMP Negeri 14 Kupang. This study aims to analyze the extent to which the learning strategies used by teachers can support student success based on students' thinking styles with research title: A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ENGLISH LEARNING STRATEGIES AND THINKING STYLES OF GRADE IX STUDENTS OF SMP NEGERI 14 KUPANG

1.2. Research problem

Based on the background above, the researcher formulated the research problem, namely:

1. How is the relationship between English Learning Strategies and students thinking styles?
2. What learning strategies mostly used by students with their thinking styles?

1.3. Aims of study

1. To analyze the relationship between English learning strategies and students' thinking styles of grade IX students of SMP Negeri 14 Kupang.
2. To identify the most frequently used learning strategies based on students' thinking styles.

1.4. Significance of study

The relationship between English learning strategies and thinking styles of grade IX Students of SMP Negeri 14 Kupang" lies in its potential to provide valuable insights into how different learning strategies can align with students' thinking styles, there by influencing their English language learning. Understanding the relationship between cognitive styles and learning strategies can help educators tailor teaching methods that accommodate diverse learning preferences, there by improving students' overall performance. By examining this relationship, this study can inform the development of curricula and pedagogical approaches that meet the needs of students with different thinking styles, enhancing their engagement, motivation, and academic success. Furthermore, these findings can contribute to broader educational practice by emphasizing the importance of individualized learning approaches in language education.

1.4.1. Implication

This study is expected to support the theory of correlation between language learning strategies and students' thinking styles by Wati (2022).

1.4.2. Application

The benefits of this research can be useful:

1. For Students

The results of this study help students to better understand how to learn English that suits their thinking style with appropriate learning strategies, students will feel more comfortable and confident when learning English. This will also increase their motivation in developing English skills, such as reading, speaking, writing, and listening.

2. For English Teacher

This study provides a guide to understand and identify students' thinking styles, so that they can apply more effective and relevant learning strategies. Thus, teachers can create a more interesting learning atmosphere and encourage students to actively participate in learning.