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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the learning styles and approaches of 320 Indonesian students of English as a Second Language either in a higher education institution or private language course. The sample was drawn from three diverse regions, the main biographical features distinguishing the groups being language/cultural, socioeconomic, and educational background. Using both quantitative and qualitative research methods, contrasts are drawn between students' identified approaches to learning English and their preferred approaches and styles. Results indicate that there was not one characteristic learning style attributable to the sample, but there were certain tendencies and significant variation across regions. It is concluded that given individual and group differences and variation in learning conditions, teachers should assess learners' styles and approaches, paying attention to students' socioeconomic background, previous education, and sociocultural orientation. Contains 15 references. (MSE)

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Learning Styles in Transition: A Study of Indonesian students

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Learning Styles in Transition:

A Study of Indonesian students

Robert Lewis

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Introduction

This paper reports on a study that investigated the learning styles and approaches of a sample of 320 Indonesian students across three regions - urban and rural Java, and remote West Timor. Employing both quantitative and qualitative research, contrasts are drawn between students' identified approaches to learning English at school and their preferred approaches and styles. The study found that there was not one characteristic learning style attributable to the sample. There were, however, certain tendencies in students' styles and approaches, as well as significant variation across the regions. Therefore, given individual and group differences, and variation in learning conditions, it is suggested that teachers assess learners' styles and approaches accordingly, paying due attention to students' socio-economic background, previous education and socio-cultural orientation.

Research Focus & Design

The study integrated four research strategies: literature review, a cluster sample survey, interviews with teachers and students, and the collation and analysis of this data to identify recurrent themes and explain findings. The survey instrument was a questionnaire, translated into *Bahasa Indonesia*, that adapted Willings' Learning Styles Inventory (LSI) and required respondents to indicate:

i) the ways in which they learnt English at secondary school (Q2);

- ii) the approaches to learning English they valued (Q3);
- iii) their five most preferred approaches to learning English (Q3); and

Question 3 (see Table 1) provided the main source of data on students' preferred approaches and learning styles.

Table 1 - Question 3, Sample Survey: Preferred Approaches

3. How do you like to learn English?

I like to learn by : (Tick one box for each statement)	No	Good	Best
.1 reading books with pictures	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
.2 correcting my own mistakes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
.3 memorising word lists by silent repetition	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
.4 speaking English in class in pairs and groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
.5 doing exercises from my textbook	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
.6 trying to speak English with foreigners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
.7 asking and answering questions in class	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
.8 studying English grammar	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
.9 having my mistakes corrected by the teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
.10 thinking of better ways to learn English	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
.11 doing translation exercises	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
.13 watching English programs on T.V.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
.14 copying words and sentences from a book	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
.15 guessing the meaning of words I don't understand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
.16 working on problems given by the teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
.17 learning the function of different expressions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
.18 trying to say things in different ways	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
when I'm not understood the first time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
.19 reading the English newspaper	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
.20 doing pronunciation practise with the teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
.21 reading and answering comprehension questions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
.22 learning English by playing games	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
.23 doing homework with my friends, talking English	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
.24 listening to English on cassette	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
.25 learning new words - putting into conversation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
.26 learning new words by putting them into sentences	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

* Instruction: From the list above, circle the numbers of your 5 (five) favourite ways of learning English.

The questionnaire was usually administered by the author or occasionally by the classroom teacher under explicit instructions (with

a 100 per cent response rate). This data was then processed using SVS , analysed in terms of frequencies for specific approaches (instructional tasks and strategies), and then analysed for central tendencies to determine learning style orientations. Afterwards, these results were correlated with the recurrent themes and commentary from interview data, in order to describe and explain students' styles and preferred approaches to learning English.

The survey sample group consisted of 320 Indonesian students, all of whom were studying English at either a tertiary institution or a private English course. The sample was opportunistically drawn from a cluster of eight language centres, located in urban and rural Java as well as remote West Timor. It should be noted the underlying assumption with cluster sample surveys is that the sample group spread across a cluster of locations is homogenous in composition. However in this study it was clear that the three partitions of the sample were not homogenous on a range of indicators, including: language background, ethnic composition, social class and gender. The unifying factor consistent across the sample group was that all students were of "intermediate" proficiency, based on their class-level designation and self-assessment. It was therefore assumed that these students were representative of good language learners within a broader group of Indonesian learners of English.

The main biographical features that distinguished the three regional partitions of the sample group were language/cultural background, socio-economic background and educational profile. The ethnic profile of the sample was diverse. The majority of urban Javanese were Jakartans, the rural Javanese were mostly central Javanese and Sundanese, and the students at remote West Timor were from various parts of the Eastern islands. For most urban and rural Javanese,

English was a second or third language, and for remote West Timor students English was a third or fourth language (many of these students speaking two regional languages, Indonesian and English).

The majority of urban and rural Javanese students were from upper-middle class (mostly business, management, professional or semi-professional) backgrounds (over 80%), while the remote West Timor students were more or less equally divided into middle-income (professional and semi-professional) and lower-income (labourer) backgrounds.

The educational profile of the sample group also differed across the regional partitions. Students studying in Jakarta were attending private English courses to prepare for exams (Cambridge/IELTS). Most of them had previously attended other private English language classes (89%). The students studying in rural Java (Bandung and Yogyakarta) had also studied English previously (89%), and were attending general or Cambridge English courses. Whereas, the students studying in West Timor were all university students training as English teachers and only 24 per cent had previously attended private English courses. Therefore, across the three partitions of the sample group, and particularly between the Java and West Timor sections there were significant differences in the linguistic, educational and socio-economic profile of the sample group.

Findings on Learning Styles & Approaches

The designation of learning styles was based on a statistical computation of central tendencies in the survey data from Q3. Initially twenty of the 25 probes/approaches were classified according to a typology of learning styles, below.

Table 2 - Typology of Learning Styles

CONCRETE - practical / contextualised / active orientation

- reading books with pictures (1)
- watching English programs on TV (13)
- reading and answering comprehension questions (21)
- listening to English on cassette (24)
- putting words into sentences (26)

ANALYTICAL - reflective / analytical / structure focus / independent

- self correction (2)
- studying grammar (8)
- problem solving (16)
- learning the function of different expressions (17)
- reading English newspaper (19)

COMMUNICATIVE - interactive / self-directed / socially-oriented

- speaking English in class in pairs and groups (4)
- speaking English to foreigners (6)
- asking and answering questions in class (7)
- guessing the meaning of words from the context (15)
- putting new words into conversation (25)

AUTHORITY-ORIENTED - structure-seeking / depend on meta-textual support

- memorising word lists by silent repetition (3)
 - doing exercises from the textbook (5)
 - teacher correction (9)
 - pronunciation drill with the teacher (20)
 - learning the meaning of new words from the dictionary (22)
-

Central tendencies were calculated from students' selections of their (5) most preferred approaches. Counts were made of the number of selections that had been classified into four (more or less) mutually exclusive categories of learning style, following Willing's taxonomy. The frequencies of grouped selections were used to calculate mean average figures for each of the four categories. Note that the mean for the total sample was 3.912. This is below 5, the maximum number of selections made by each respondent because only 20 of the 25 items in the Learning Styles Inventory (LSI) Q.3 were classified into the four learning styles categories.

Overall there was not one typical learning style orientation attributable to the sample of Indonesian students. Students' preferences ranged across all four learning styles: concrete, analytical, communicative and authority-oriented. In other words, Indonesian students in this sample preferred various modes of learning that drew from the full complement of learning style orientations. This would seem to be an unremarkable finding except that there has been a tendency in the research literature to attribute one characteristic style to learner groups from different cultural backgrounds.

Despite the multifarious learning styles of the sample group, there were certain tendencies that ranged across the three partitions (Table 3, below). The (total) mean average for concrete modes of learning (1.406) was marginally higher than for communicative modes of learning (1.356); and, both these figures were nearly double the mean average for analytical (.872) and three times the mean average of authority-oriented modes of learning. In other words, concrete and communicative styles were preferred moreso than analytical and (to a lesser extent) authority-oriented styles.

Table 3 - Mean / Standard deviation : Most Preferred Learning Styles

Learning Styles	Urban	Rural	Remote	Total
	Mean / Standard D			
Concrete	1.406 / .8861	1.376 / .8	1.347 / .8	1.406 / .886
Communicative	1.3 / .772	1.416 / .805	1.337 / .883	1.356 / .818
Analytical	.87 / .72	.84 / .689	.916 / .808	.872 / .734
Authority-oriented	.42 / .589	.496 / .703	.442 / .614	.456 / .642
Totals	3.99 / .81	3.952 / .915	3.779 / .915	3.912 / .902

The preference for a Concrete learning style suggests a predisposition for practical and contextualised ways of learning, for direct means of

receiving and processing information, presented with contextual support (field-dependent learning). This finding was consistent with the analysis of (ungrouped selections of) preferred approaches from the LSI / Question 3 (See Appendix). Among the Concrete modes most preferred by students were: watching English on TV (50%), listening to tapes (49.2%), reading English newspapers (45.5%) and putting words into sentences (48.4%).

The tendency for these Indonesian learners to prefer Concrete (practical/field-dependent) modes more so than Communicative modes of learning could be seen as both logical and natural in terms of a progression on the learning style continuum. Communicative learners are less field-dependent, use interactions purposefully, and prefer a social learning approach. (See Willing, K 1988:p66) Once again, consistent with the analysis of the LSI (Q3), communicative approaches, such as speaking English with foreigners (65%), learning in pairs and groups (57.6%), asking/answering questions in class (39%) and playing games (31.9%) were highly rated by a significant percentage of students in the sample.

Indonesian students in this study also indicated their preference for Analytical or more autonomous and field-independent modes of learning. Approaches, such as studying grammar (43.5%) and learning functions (42.2%) also featured in the LSI data output. Authority-oriented modes (eg. teacher correction) which typically favour teacher-direction and more passive/dependent processing were identified by less students as preferred modes from the four learning style orientations.

Contrasts with Learning English at School

These findings are remarkable when compared with the profile of students' learning approaches in secondary school. At school, students learn English using the authorised textbook, *Bahasa Inggris*. While the new curriculum and textbook (vis. 1994) embraces a semi-communicative methodology, with a new emphasis on spoken proficiency, there is something of an "implementational lag", and most teaching is reportedly still more akin to the traditional Grammar-translation method, with the main focus being reading comprehension. The methodological orientation at any secondary school depends on a range of factors, such as the teacher's proficiency, their training background, class sizes and the availability of teaching resources (esp. textbooks). Based on survey and interview data students' approaches to learning English in secondary school are almost the antithesis of their preferred modes of learning (in the non-formal and post-secondary sectors).

Consistently students reported that English tuition at school was teacher-centred and text-book driven. The textbooks present units that follow a structural syllabus with graded reading passages and dialogues. Teachers typically explained new grammatical structures and required students to memorise grammar rules and new vocabulary. Lessons were taken up with 'teacher talk', as students were tested on their translation of new vocabulary and understanding of grammar. Students sometimes worked in pairs, completing the reading comprehension, vocabulary or grammar exercises. For the most part students were silent, but occasionally they would do pronunciation drills with the teacher and answer questions on the readings or grammar exercises. Many students reported that much class time was spent copying from the blackboard and translating

texts or vocabulary from English to Indonesian. In addition, many students complained that their teachers' proficiency in English was poor, and so was their own after six years of study.

Significantly many students in the sample group did not highly rate many of the approaches that typified their experience of secondary school. By way of exemplification: on the measure of most preferred approaches, the following low frequencies were recorded (in brackets): learning functions (13%), teacher pron. drill (9%), translation exercises (7%), asking and answering questions (7%), textbooks (6%), reading and answering questions (5%), memorising word lists (4%) and copying sentences (3%). In fact, some of these approaches were identified as 'negative' by a significant proportion of respondents: copying sentences (38%), memorising word lists (34%) and translating (14%).

The profile of the "Indonesian learner" that emerges from these findings is that of an individual who is familiar with a range of instructional tasks and learning strategies - but more importantly, an individual whose approaches have changed or are in transition. It would appear that while Authority-oriented modes of teaching/learning were predominant during secondary school, they are less important or residual in the contexts of private English courses and/or higher education. The emergent learning styles in these latter contexts are first and foremost concrete and communicative orientations, and to a lesser extent analytical and authority-oriented modes of learning.

Variation Across the Regions

So far we have considered findings based on convergence in the survey and interview data. There was, however, significant variation

in preferred approaches to learning across the regions. ('Significant variation' was taken to be a difference of ten or more percentage points between partitions / regions, on any item. See Appendix) The most significant cross-regional contrasts were between the Java-Timor sections/regions in relation to speaking English with foreigners, reading English newspapers, playing games, studying grammar, asking and answering questions, thinking about new ways to learn English, doing homework with friends and memorising.

Figures 1 and 2 (below) contrast regional differences in preferences in speaking English with foreigners and reading English newspapers. Noticeably fewer students in remote West Timor preferred these modes of learning. In each case variation can be attributed to the accessibility of these particular "resources".

Fig. 1 Speaking -> foreigners

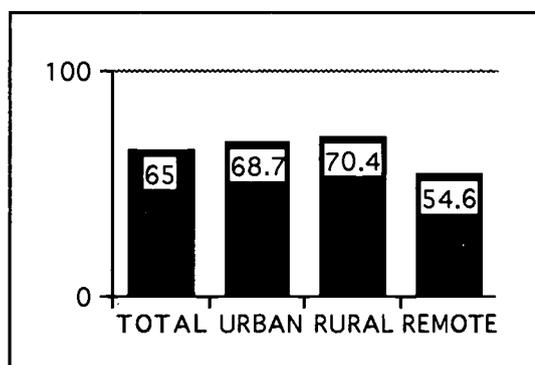
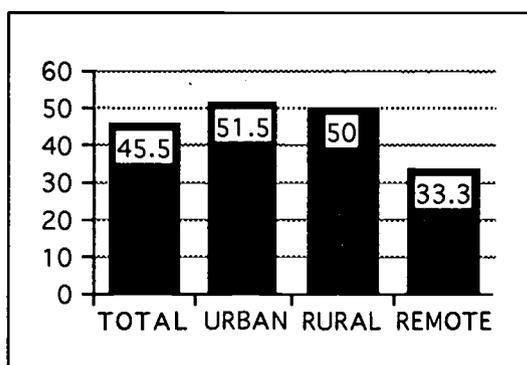


Fig. 2 Reading English newspapers



English language newspapers are difficult to obtain in West Timor, and their cost is generally prohibitive for most students in remote regions. English texts of all kinds are very difficult to obtain in the remote regions, and only available in a handful of bookstores in the major cities. This, in part, explains the "deplorable" reading habits of Indonesian students, referred to by the Minister for Education and Culture, Dr Wardiman. (Wardiman, 1995)

By contrast, over the last ten years, due to increased foreign investment and tourism, the presence of foreigners inside Indonesia has increased dramatically, and nowadays in most parts of Indonesia, it is possible for students to have contact with foreigners. The disparity in figures on speaking English with foreigners may be attributed to the uneven circulation of foreigners across the three regions. However, it is more likely that these figures reflect students' exposure to native-speaker teachers, who are similarly unevenly deployed in language institutes across the regions - also paralleling the differential distribution of other educational resources. For instance, the distribution of English language institutes evidences the regional bias, vis a vis urban versus remote regions. The Survey of English Language Institutes in Indonesia (1991) identified 53 English language institutes, of which 33 were located in Java, and 17 in Jakarta. (Yildiz, 1991)

Figures 3 and 4 (below) illustrate a different set of factors that contribute to regional variation in students' preferred approaches. For urban and rural Javanese students who are exposed to communicative language teaching in their courses, playing games is an integral part of their classroom experience and therefore more widely regarded than by students at West Timor, where playing games did not feature in their classroom experience. Playing games is typically part of a communicative method of language teaching, and depends for its success on small class sizes and photocopied materials. In the teacher training courses in West Timor, teachers had limited access to photocopying, and usually their classes were over 40 in number, mitigating against playing games for language improvement lessons.

Fig. 3 Playing games

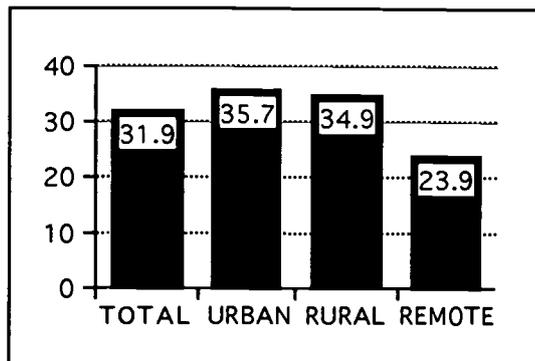
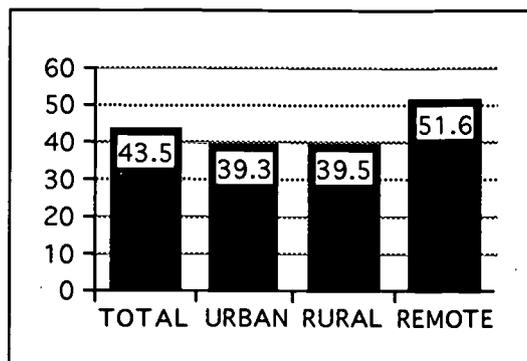


Fig. 4 Studying Grammar



By contrast, studying grammar was an integral part of learning English for West Timor university students, and this approach was preferred by over half the students surveyed. Less of an emphasis was placed on studying grammar at centres in urban and rural Java, where students were attending general or academic English courses with more of a skills focus - and it is likely, therefore, that this approach was less relevant for these students. In this way, institutional practices, such as teaching methods and course orientation have a definite bearing on students' preferred learning modalities.

Figures 5 and 6 below also illustrate how institutional practices, such as classroom management and course design, can influence students' preferred modes of learning. Throughout secondary school, at least until very recently, Indonesian students have not been encouraged to ask questions of their teachers in class. To do so is seen to challenge the teachers' authority, and demonstrate one's arrogance or ignorance - to risk the possibility of punishment or personal humiliation (loss of social face).

Fig. 5 Asking & Answering Q's

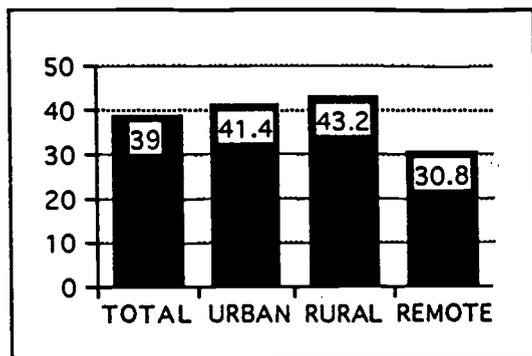
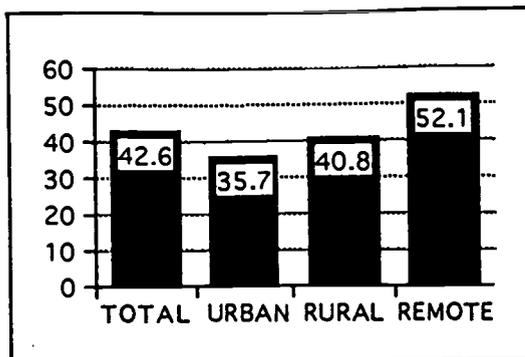


Fig-6 Thinking > learning



The traditional relationship between Indonesian teachers and students is circumscribed by their social position and beliefs about learning. The teacher is seen to be a moral authority and students are expected to defer to all their superiors, including teachers. Teachers are also viewed as the fountain of knowledge - while knowledge is viewed as a more or less a fixed set of facts to be transmitted and digested by thirsty learners, later to be regurgitated in tests (a deficit model of learning).

Depending on the relationships that teachers develop with their students, and depending on whether or not teachers encourage students to view knowledge as other than immutable, Indonesian students may not be willing to ask questions in class, even if invited to do so. In the long term, this can effect students capacity to formulate questions and develop their critical faculties.

Noticeably, less students from remote West Timor indicated a preference for asking and answering questions. This is an interesting finding, especially given that students from the Eastern islands tend to be more gregarious, more outspoken than their Javanese peers. The prevailing viewpoint among Indonesian language teachers interviewed is that certain cultural traits are operating, that inhibit individual inquiry and the expression of critical opinion. As David

Wiles, an Australian language instructor with many years experience working in Indonesia, explained:

" Indonesian students won't set themselves apart from the group or 'group culture'. In the language classroom students tend not to initiate discussion or ask questions, unless they are speaking on behalf of the group. They will however respond to closed or 'display' questions where the answers are safe or 'known', and conversely they will avoid offering opinions in response to open questions."

Recent changes in government policy, intended to encourage questioning and more critical inquiry in the classroom are also likely to impact differentially across the regions. Change is more likely to emanate from the centre to the periphery, or from Jakarta to the more remote regions, thus contributing to regional disparity in figures on this approach to learning English.

Figure 6 (above) shows students' preferences for learning English by thinking about new ways to learn, a meta-cognitive learning strategy. Almost double the number of students studying in West Timor preferred this approach compared to students in urban Java. The regional disparity in figures here is attributed to the focus of students' respective learning programs/courses. Students in the teacher training courses in West Timor are more likely to reflect on new ways of learning English compared to students in language centres in urban and rural Java doing general and academic English courses.

Figures 7 and 8 (below) also highlight socio-cultural differences between students across the regions. The preference for doing homework with friends by remote West Timor students is seen to be a cultural trait. The peoples of the Eastern islands still live in villages

and tend to identify collectively, more so than people in the cities, who tend to be more individualistic, competitive and socially divided.

Fig. 7 Homework + friends

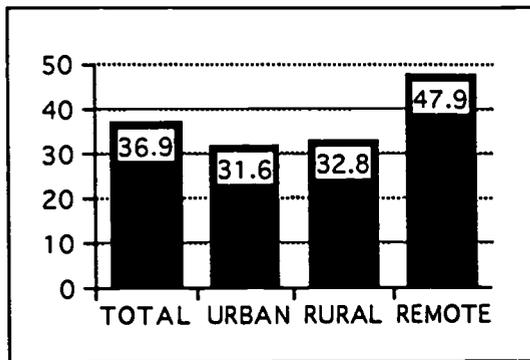
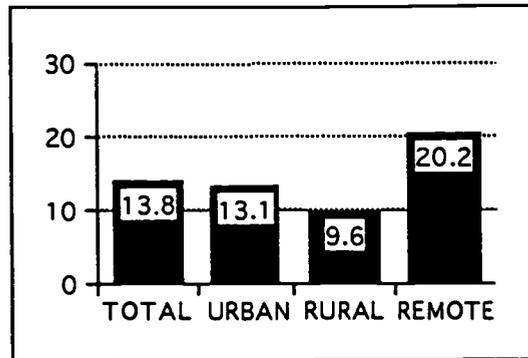


Fig. 8 Memorising lists



Almost double the percentage of remote West Timor students preferred memorising word lists by silent repetition as an approach to learning English. This may be attributed to the primacy of memorisation as a learning strategy amongst sample of students from the Eastern islands. The question that goes begging here is whether or not this learning strategy is merely one of many strategies for achieving specific goals, and whether or not it is a functional or dysfunctional mode of learning. There is much anecdotal evidence to suggest that a significant minority of Indonesian learners unduly rely on rote memorisation. While rote learning is viewed by many Western educators as a superficial and inferior learning technique, there is recent research to suggest that this is not the case. (Biggs, 1995) It is possible to differentiate between 'meaningless' rote learning, such as the memorisation of decontextualised word lists, and 'meaningful' repetitive learning of contextualised ideas/expressions on particular topics/themes - and thereby clarify the efficacy of these strategies. Sosimus Mekas, a lecturer at Undana in Kupang explains this phenomenon in the Indonesian context.

" Indonesians are not good at learning by 'doing'. Teaching activities are not popular. Ask the students to memorise rules and they can do it quickly. But they prefer to learn things 'verbally', by rote learning - i.e. silent memorisation or chanting, 'spoken out' repetition. This is particular to Indonesia, 'culturally bound', perhaps derivative of oral cultures where knowledge was transmitted in similar ways. "

At home, in the family, students learn to memorise prayers, songs, dogmas, principles of the state, or 'made-up' things, like "*Saya anak Indonesia*". Memorising for no real purpose, perhaps, accept to reinforce their identity as Indonesia, as Muslim or Catholic, or to 'show off' to/for their parents.

This is reinforced at school, when students have to memorise the state ideology, *Pancasila* and the multiplication tables in Mathematics. Whilst reinforcing the strategy of memorisation as a 'primary' learning strategy, this process also reinforces the view that knowledge is an absolute truth, there is always an 'expected answer', that is known by those who are the Authorities - parents, particularly the Father (*Bapak*) or the teacher (*Guru*). This system of learning does not encourage variation in thinking, it doesn't allow questioning or debate. For each question or issue there is seen to be only one acceptable answer. In class, this is the teachers' answer, the teacher's point of view."

What is particularly interesting about this approach is that Indonesian teachers are generally well aware of students' facility for memorisation, and indicated that they exploited this facility in the classroom. The implications here for foreign language teachers are self-evident. What seems to be crucial about the use of memorisation as a learning strategy depends, it would seem, depends on whether or not repetitive processing is meaningful or meaningless. Further

distinctions have been developed in the work of Biggs and Nunan at the University of Hong Kong. (Biggs, 1989)

Findings on both memorisation and group-study attest to the importance of socio-cultural factors and institutional practices in the formation of students' learning behaviour in general, and approaches to learning English in particular.

Conclusions

This study perhaps raises as many issues and concerns as it attempts to resolve. What is evidenced by the study is the view that learning styles can shift, as evidently the majority of this sample of Indonesian students reject the institutional approaches to learning that are intrinsic to their experience of learning English at school, in favour of approaches that converge with teaching methods and practices in universities and private language centres. (Gilbert, 1989) This also suggests that there is a serious mismatch in the teaching methods/styles and practices of many Indonesian secondary teachers and the preferred learning styles of their students.

What has not been highlighted in this paper is the common perception that most Indonesian students are passive learners, lacking autonomy, unlikely to criticise or take risks and more often than not intellectually dependent on their teachers. Sadly, this is a widely held view among Indonesian teachers and students, and as criticism of Indonesian students it is simultaneously a criticism of an education system that has failed to encourage active, independent inquiry. While it is likely that within the sample group there may have been some students who conform to this description, the vast majority of students in the sample group did not.

Indonesian teachers seem to be palpably aware of the inadequacies of language education provision, and also aware of the particular and often idiosyncratic traits and learning styles of their students. While this very problem has been identified time and again in various publications on the subject, the problems continue to plague teachers and schools. (Abas, 1989; Daroesman, 1991; Gregory, 1969; Nababan, 1982; Noss, 1985; Noss, 1970) Many teachers recognise that changes are afoot, but as mentioned time and again in interviews, without some improvement in their wages and conditions there is no incentive for change.

For teachers of Indonesian students, what is evident from this study is the importance that should be placed on developing students' learning styles and strategies through appropriate educational interventions, including strategy training. Of equal importance is the emphasis that needs to be placed on developing institutional frameworks and practices that are responsive to the particular socio-cultural orientation of learners and learner groups, cognizant of the extent to which groups are homogenous or heterogenous in composition.

Much research on learning styles tends to uncritically assume a certain homogeneity across national groupings, forwarding generalisations about "Asians" or particular nationalities. The pitfalls of such ethnic stereotyping are self-evident. Failure to attend to intra- and inter-group variation can only diminish the reliability of generalisations about learners' cultural orientation to language learning, and the significance of cultural orientation for learning styles as well as educational planning and practices. (Gilbert, 1989)

It is evident that a confluence of factors can influence students' preferred learning modalities, and by extrapolation their learning practices/strategies. Institutional frameworks, facilities and resources,

course design, teaching methodologies, cultural traits, beliefs about learning, teacher-student relations, individual motivations and goals all have some bearing on preferred styles and approaches. Additionally, educational policy, the economy and the broader social milieu, including television, the print industry and 'the national culture', all effect the learning environment and can influence learners' behaviour.

What can be gleaned from this study is that language learners, such as the Indonesian students of this study, adapt their learning behaviour to new learning environments - developing new strategies and approaches consistent with their learning goals and exposure to new modes of delivery (esp. teaching methods and resources). While there may be certain tendencies among certain groups of Indonesian learners, depending on their social class, educational background and socio-cultural orientation, it is imperative for teachers to establish what such tendencies may be and develop teaching strategies that not only engage students' existing approaches to learning but also develop new and more effective learning strategies.

Appendix

Table 3 - Preferred Approaches to learning English, by location (ungrouped)

Approaches	Total Average	Urban	Rural	Remote	
1 Speak-foreigners	65 %	68.7 %	70.4 %	54.6 %	-
2 Teacher correction	61.6 %	63.6 %	60.8 %	60.4 %	
3 Pairs & Groups	57.6 %	59.6 %	55.2 %	58.9 %	
4 Watch English-TV	50 %	48.5 %	53.6 %	46.9 %	
5 Listen cassette/ s	49.2 %	45.5 %	52.8 %	48.4 %	
6 Words->sentences	48.4 %	54.1 %	40.9 %	52.1 %	-
7 Paraphrasing	47.6 %	49.5 %	48 %	45.2 %	
8 Read English news	45.5 %	51.5 %	50 %	33.3 %	-
9 Study Grammar	43.5 %	39.3 %	39.5 %	53.1 %	-
10 Think->learning	42.6 %	35.7 %	40.8 %	52.1 %	-
11 Learn functions	42.2 %	37.1 %	39.2 %	51.6 %	-
12 Self correction	40.9 %	35.4 %	44 %	42.7 %	-
13 Words->convers	40.3 %	43.4 %	37.6 %	40.6 %	
14 Ask & answer Q's	39 %	41.4 %	43.2 %	30.8 %	-
15 H'work+ friends	36.9 %	31.6 %	32.8 %	47.9 %	-
16 Teacher-pron drill	31.9 %	28.3 %	30.4 %	37.5 %	-
17 Playing games	31.9 %	35.7 %	34.9 %	23.9 %	-
18 Textbook/ s	28.3 %	25.2 %	30.4 %	37.5 %	-
19 Translation/ s	25.5 %	27.5 %	20.3 %	30.2 %	-
20 Guess meanings	23.8 %	29.3 %	18.4 %	25.3 %	-
21 Read answer Q's	22.8 %	19.4 %	20 %	30.2 %	-
22 Solving problems	21.6 %	21.2 %	18.4 %	26.3 %	-
23 Read books+pics	16.9 %	15.2 %	14.4 %	21.9 %	-
24 Memorisation	13.8 %	13.1 %	9.6 %	20.2 %	-
25 Copying	7.5 %	7.1 %	5.6 %	10.4 %	

Note (-) indicates contrast. Note, the high number of (-)'s for Remote location (13:25), indicating less convergence on frequencies of ungrouped approaches, marking significant variation.

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