

Students' VARK Learning Style in Digital Content Writing

Nur Rosita

Universitas Negeri Padang
nurrosita@fbs.unp.ac.id

Nora Fudhla

Universitas Negeri Padang
norafudhla@gmail.com



Abstract

This study aims to investigate students' learning style by administrating VARK model to see its crucial factor in students' dominant learning style for digital content writing. There are 38 junior high school students who fill questionnaire using online google form. The students are randomly chosen from 5 classes to fill VARK questionnaire since they are taking digital content writing class. There are 16 domain questions in the questionnaire with 4 options. The total data are 608 data. Aside from questionnaire, the students was also given forum group discussion and practical training to create multimodal digital writing in this study. It is found that the students tend to use multimodal learning style in creating digital content writing. It is assumed that creating digital modes in content writing need more than one domains in VARK, though they dominantly do writing and reading activities. The students need further training to be more applicative in creating digital content writing.

Keywords: VARK, Learning style, Digital Content Writing

A. INTRODUCTION

Education in Industrial Revolution (iR 4.0) which has been characterized by creativity, leadership and entrepreneurship, English language skills, and IoT (Internet of Things) in improving human resources is associated with digital resources. This era is considered as social phenomenon that changes education from human resources to digital device resources. Besides, education will be connected with mobile devices that have the ability to process, store, and access knowledge via the internet from a computer or smartphone with the needs of English as international language.

Unfortunately, English at the secondary school level in Indonesia is taught only through the compulsory curriculum with general teaching. There are no activities that combine English language skills with digital skills. Learning is only focused on reading with various genres and grammar rules. In fact, if it is added with project-based activities with digital tools, the output is expected to be more leverage. Saiful (2015) stated that the rapid growth of digital media in classroom becomes more prolific and fruitful. So, reining in on the introduction of digital literacy skills must be carried out. It is hoped that this activity can be integrated with English competencies such as writing. Thus, this activity promotes the improvement of students' abilities, especially at the level of digital content writing.

Furthermore, students must prepare themselves optimally by highlighting the uniqueness and added value in digital literacy skills that are balanced with English language skills. It is believed that mastery of English can provide opportunities for students to be more competitive globally. However, problem often faced by students is the difficulty of applying the benefits of learning outcomes to real life. They focus on achieving passive proficiency

curriculum standards based only. This is proven by the National Examination which only focuses on reading and listening. In fact, active skills (speaking and writing) are also important, so, when students are asked to create dialogue texts or monologues, they stutter. Another problem is the limitation of human resources/trainers and knowledge to implement them. These matters are caused since digital content writing is the newest domain in the iR 4.0 era. The first thing to do is ask students to write the type of writing they like. Then, they are given a VARK questionnaire to see the tendency of the modality they choose, and finally they will become the real agent. The target is the ability to create digital written content in English such as blogs, vlogs, YouTube, and even memes. With this training, students are expected to have additional skills that can be used to create their own jobs, such as becoming a social media specialist, youtuber, vlogger, blogger, celebgram, graphic designer, and even a social media traveller.

B. REVIEW LITERATURE

The phenomenon of iR 4.0 has created a new human generation called generation Z. Generation Z who was born and raised in the digital era are smart and fluent users of technology. Furthermore, (Fox, 2014) defines generation Z as digital natives whose daily life cannot be separated from the use of internet-connected gadgets in cyberspace for social interaction. Every day, they use mobile gadgets such as tablets and smartphones both in school and home. Then, they do not distinguish the offline and online world because they stay online all the time through all their gadgets, even when they are in a learning environment (Hawkins, 2015). In learning, Generation Z tend to like things that are applicable and fun (Prensky, 2001). In summary, it is a crucial to facilitate gen Z learning style by adapting a current trend of digital era in education.

Some researchers identify the Gen Z phenomenon in the digital era as two different sides of a coin. Gadgets can interfere with the learning process, on the other hand, the use of gadgets can make learning easier (Ghareb and Mohammed, 2016) for both educators and students themselves. This innovation is expected to help educators to prepare their students to face the millennial era with 5C as a basic competency needed by students today which includes: creative, critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and confidence can be accommodated. Therefore, this challenge must be responded quickly and accurately without any barriers between one another in order to increase the competitiveness in the midst of global competition.

Furthermore, in order to keep pace with the flow of technological developments in the era of technological disruption, it is believed that educator should always be one step ahead in recognizing trends that are currently popular in education. They need to make innovations that have a positive impact for the advancement of the education. Therefore, education as one of the mediators and facilitators of civil society must swiftly provide 21st-century skills to its graduates and anticipate the extinction of conventional learning methods by preparing a learning approach that integrates human resources with device resources. In the end, digitalization is needed which leads students to digital literacy added by English language skills. These two skills must be combined properly so that students do not stutter and are ready to face the challenges of the times.

A survey in 2013 from the Advanced Placement and National Writing Project showed that a majority of teachers said digital tools encourage students to be more creative in their writing by encouraging freedom of expression and providing a wider audience. Most teachers also say that digital tools make teaching writing easier (Buckingham, 2006) although there is an increasingly ambiguous line between formal and informal writing and students' poor understanding of issues such as plagiarism (Purcell, Buchanan, & Friedrich, 2013). The ability to communicate through digital writing is very important to make information can be organized globally (Lang, 2015) as well as collaboration between users (Jonsson & Gjedde,

2009). However, if schools want digital learning to be evaluated and run well, then all school components must take part in it (Badran, 2017). In the end, the need to hold an activity program that can fulfil all English learning skills, both passive and active abilities is very crucial.

C. METHOD

Survey design by administrating VARK questionnaire was used in this study with the help of Google forms. There were 16 domain questions need to be answered by the respondents. Every question distributed four items to measure students' sensory modals – visual, aural/auditory, read/write, and kinesthetics. Thus, there were 64 items offered to the respondents. The respondents were 38 junior high school students who had been chosen randomly from 5 classes. Then, there would be 608 data over all. They were selected since they had learned and trained to create digital content writing before.

D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The first thing to do in this study was to distribute VARK questionnaires to see the multimodal tendencies of students in learning so that digital writing content would be in line with student needs. From the results of the VARK questionnaire analysis of students, it can be found that they tend to have an interest in learning in the form of multimodal (audio, visual, audio-visual, kinesthetic) which was certainly in line with this multimodal writing learning since they fill all modes.

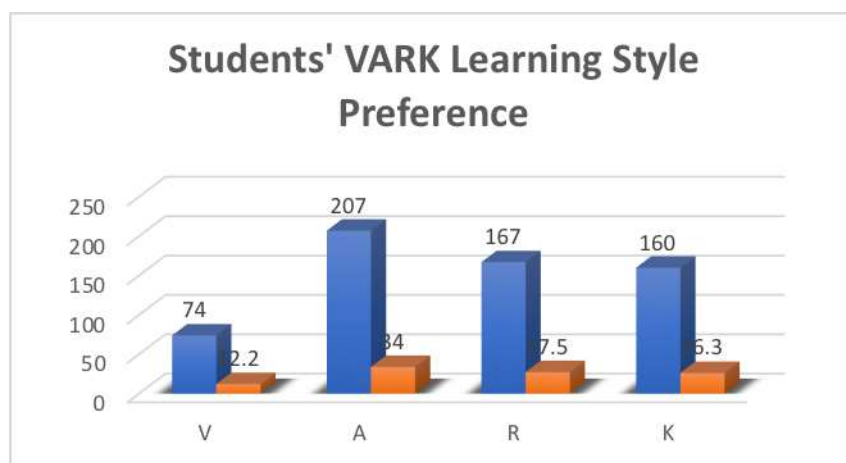


Fig. 1 Students' VARK learning style preference

It can be seen from the diagram that the most typical mode used in students' learning was auditory 34% followed by read mode 27.5%, kinesthetics mode 26.3%, and the less mode used was visual 12.2%. Next, students were asked to write the type of writing or genre they were studying based on the existing material. They chose the type of genre they liked the most. However, the focus of this activity was to write narrative and recount texts with the aim of balancing the digital story telling material provided.

The steps of this learning follow a series of steps or activities that had been carried out, including:

1. Building Knowledge of the Field (BKOF)

Giving activities to write narrative and recount texts independently to see students' initial knowledge in applying examples of narrative texts based on everyday contexts. The topics given to students were past experiences or fairy tales and stories from the past. The students were free to choose what theme they want to develop for their text writing.

2. Modelling Text

After that, the prepared narrative and recount text materials were given to discuss the generic structure and language features contained in the two texts. Discussion in the arrangement of paragraphs and what language components in the text were carried out. In addition, raw text was also given and discussed together. The students were asked to identify and analyze paragraph structure and language content in the text.

3. Collaborative Writing

After the collaborative discussion was carried out, the students analyzed the initial errors in writing the text in the first step. They were asked to write collaboratively about the topics that had been provided earlier. They might choose one of them.

4. Editing

The students edited their writing independently and in groups. It was conducted to provide input on their writing results in order to be better in terms of grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, even coherence and cohesion.

5. Revising

From the results of editing, their texts were revised together again (peer revising) either by classmates or other participants.

6. Independent Writing

After the students were able to analyze the components in the text, the next step was to write independently. This stage was done after the students had been able to understand the concept and apply their writing.

7. Verbalize Digital Content Writing

The final stage of this series was to digitize their writings in the form of videos and upload them to their respective YouTube accounts.

The main goal of these activities was the improvement of students' writing skills in various genres in learning English, especially writing in the form of digital content that combines audio, visual, and audio-visual (multimodal) multimedia. In addition, the implementation of this digital content writing service succeeded in making writing learning breakthroughs more interesting for students by meeting the learning objectives that exist in learning writing in the digital era.

However, before entering the digital writing learning stage, students were given material on how to make a mind map and how to put their ideas in writing. The concept of mind mapping was very helpful for students in exploring their writing in a structured manner by referring to the generic structure of the genre they write. Mind mapping was done by grouping noble stories from themes, characters, settings, plots, conflicts, to the final solution of the conflict. They were given sticky notes to share their mind mapping plots in groups. Mind mapping also helped students to keep referring to the coherence and cohesion of the writings they write. In addition, they were also given the opportunity to do this individually in their respective homes as an additional task.



Fig 2. mind mapping concept learning



Fig 3. Students create mind mapping story



Fig 4. Students are doing collaborative writing



Fig 5. Students performed their story

Furthermore, after they were able to write down their writing ideas in a structured manner in the form of mind mapping, the students were given material about compiling story boards for digital story telling. This activity included how to align the writings they made in the mind mapping process with modes in the form of images, motion, and sound. The supporting media used was storyboard.com. They also drew manually on story board paper first so that the results of content writing were directed. Students poured their writing in the form of pictures on each storyboard box. This activity helped the imagination and creativity of students having also involved motor and kinesthetic activities. It was found that there was a relationship between the results of the VARK test that students who tended to have a multimodal learning style were quick to complete this activity and produced imaginative and creative images compared to students who only had a single mode learning style.



Fig. 6 Storyboard planning



Fig. 7 Digitalized storyboard



Fig. 8 Storyboard drawing

The next stage was to prepare a digital storybook. This activity began with providing material on the stages of making a digital book by integrating multimodal images, audio, and motion. The media used to support this digital storybook is a book creator. They were trained how to download, install and use this application. Then, they were also trained on how to insert text, visual images, moving images, and audio into digital books. In this implementation stage, the students found keywords for moving pictures, png images, and templates that can be used to support the stories they compose starting from mind mapping activities, storyboard preparation, storyboard drawing, to digital production books. It could be seen that students were quick to respond to any instructions given. They were also active in asking questions when they found difficulties in applying digital writing.

After a series of training implementations, these three stages were carried out, namely the preparation of mind mapping, storybooks, and digitizing their writings. The last stage was verbalized digital content writing. In this stage, the students were guided to integrate 2 active language skills, namely writing and speaking. As a result, stories were composed, then videotaped and finally published. This activity was carried out as a series of closing activities for multimodal English-based digital content writing activities.



Fig. 8 and 9 Students verbalized their multimodal digital writing in front of class

E. SUGGESTION

From the series activities that have been carried out, two main points can be concluded:

- 1) Students still have minimal knowledge related to the trend of learning to write in the 21st century which is integrated with digital skills. However, basically they have tried to practice it in everyday life such as making short statuses on Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp in the form of single text mode. However, they have never tried to write English text in multimodal digital form. Therefore, training activities, workshops, and Forum Group Discussions related to this matter really need to be done so that all students know and are able to follow the development of 21st century learning patterns by integrating digital literacy skills in learning activities.
- 2) Learning to write with a multimodal-based digital content writing model, hereinafter known as digital multimodal composition, really helps students in self-actualization critically, creatively, communicatively, and collaboratively. Students are more flexible in writing and describing the idea clearly with various modes, namely text, audio, images, and moving images.

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Biodata :

Nur Rosita holds a M.A from English Linguistics, Osmania University, Hyderabad, India. She is currently becoming an English lecturer in English Language and Literature Department, Universitas Negeri Padang Indonesia. Her research interests are macro linguistics and applied linguistics.