

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

In this digital era, some studies have highly suggested the use of technology in education (e.g. Burston, 2015; Colpaert, 2015; Kulkuska-Hulme, Lee & Norris, 2017). Previous research has shown that by involving technology in their learning process, students got positive improvements, both on their language skills or non-skills. Students had improved their speaking (Hwang, Shih, Shadieff & Chen, 2016; Sun, Lin, You, Shen, Qi & Luo, 2017), writing (Foulger & Silva, 2007; Warren, Dondlinger & Barab, 2008, Vikneswaran & Krish, 2016), reading comprehension (Dreyer & Nel, 2003; Ortlieb, Sargent & Moreland, 2014), and listening comprehension (Rahimi & Katal, 2012) by the use of technology-based learning.

The aspects outside the language skill also showed the positive improvements in the use of technology on students learning process. Students increased their motivation and interest in learning by using technology (Su & Cheng, 2015;; Lee, Cheung & Chen, 2005). Technology also helped students on remembering learning material (Blackburn & Hakel, 2006; Golonka, Bowles, Frank, Richardson & Freynik, 2014) and on their self-directed learning when they were not completely depend on the teacher (Malouf, 1998; Papastergio, 2009), in other words, with learners who can arrange their own learning curriculum, learning process becomes more flexible. Other than that, learning process becomes more interactive and makes students communicate well in electronic

discussion by making their own social interactions with peers online (Reinders & Wattana, 2015).

Although the learning process takes place in online environment, student engagement also must be considered by the teacher for the success of learning process (Henrie, Halverson & Graham, 2015). Study from Fonseca, Martí, Redondo, Navarro, and Sanchez (2014) stated that the high level of student engagement in learning by using technology can increase student achievement. The statement was also supported by the research from Rashid & Asghar (2016) that the use of technology had a direct effect on student engagement, then self-directed learning, and academic performance. So it can be said that student engagement also plays a role in the success of technology-based learning.

Besides the students' learning engagement, the way how the students learn or familiar with students learning style, also influence the success of learning process. Pedagogic procedures that performed appropriately with individual differences could be the efficient way to reach the goals of the study (Federico, 1991). The research was done by Wang, Wang, Wang, & Huang (2006) revealed that learning style has significant effect on students' achievement in technology-based learning. So, it is important to consider students' learning style in learning using technology, as has been described in other previous studies (e.g. Rasmussen & Davidson-Shivers, 1998 & Terrell, 2002).

The previous study from Andujar & Salaberri-Ramiro (2019) that explored about technology-based-learning made students' learning engagement the only subject matters of the studies. A study from Huang, Lin, and Huang (2012) showed that learning style can affect students' online learning performance. Study

from Rashid & Asghar (2016) also evaluated students engagement in technology-based-learning without investigate the involvement of students' learning style.

Until now, no research has been found that discusses about students' learning styles towards students' learning engagement in technology-based-learning. So that the researcher is interested to explore students engagement as well as the students learning style in technology-based-learning, especially in the EFL class.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Based on the background of this study, the following are the research questions:

1. Do students' learning styles influence EFL students' learning engagement in technology-based learning?
2. Which type of learning styles most engages EFL students in technology-based learning?

## **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

The purpose of the study are to investigate the influence of students' learning style to EFL students' learning engagement using technology-based learning in online environment and also to identify what type of students' learning style that matters in EFL students' learning engagement using technology-based learning in online environment.

#### **1.4 Hypothesis**

H<sub>1</sub> : Learning style is positively related to students' learning engagement of EFL students in technology-based learning.

H<sub>2</sub> : Type of learning styles most engages EFL students in technology-based learning is tactile.

#### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

Through this study, the author hopes the results of this study can be useful for students and English teachers in conducting efficient English learning using technology so that students engage in learning by paying attention to the diversity of students' learning styles. The author hopes the teachers know the important role of students' learning engagement and learning style and pay more attention on students' learning engagement and learning style to achieve the success of learning process. The researcher hopes the students aware of their individual learning style so that they can engage in learning process using technology.

#### **1.6 Scope and Limitation**

This study focuses on the students' learning engagement in EFL class that use technology in the learning process and pay attention to the diversity of students' learning style. The respondents of this study is undergraduate students from English Education Department in the University of Muhammadiyah in Gresik who experience online learning using technology.

Limitation of this study is the number and scope of respondents. The results of this research will be generalized and extended to all undergraduate EFL students in University of Muhammadiyah Gresik and surrounding.

### **1.7 Definition of Key Terms**

To get obvious explanation, the author tries to clarify the key terms as follows:

#### **1. Students' Learning Engagement in Technology-based Learning**

Students' engagement is the participation (Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges & Hayek, 2007) and involvement of the student (Astin, 1984; Pekrun & Linnenbrink-Garcia, 2012; Reschly & Christenson, 2012) in learning process. Technology-based engagement is the interaction between students, teacher, and learning material in technology-based learning (Henrie, Halverson, & Graham, 2015).

#### **2. Learning style**

The definition of learning style is the different ways of individuals to receive information or learn abilities (Dunn & Dunn, 1978). James and Blank (1993) defined learning style as the complex way how the students can understand, process, store, and remember what they learn in the most efficient and effective way.