CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents readers with the introduction of this study. It covers the background of study, identification, limitation of the problem, problem formulation, the objective of this study, and the significance of this study.

1.1. Background of the Study

Style as one of the individual-differences variables for people's performance attracted researchers for many years. Various studies of styles created many different named of basic word style. There were three styles term that frequently used; learning style, cognitive styles, and thinking styles (Zhang, 2002a). Thinking styles could be defined as a preference of how people think, the way they manage to perform their abilities (Stenberg, 1997). Stenberg's (1988) theory of mental self-government proposed a list of intellectual styles as a bridge between personalities and intelligence. According to the theory, it pointed out people's thinking styles with the analog of government facet: function, form, level, scope, and leaning. There were studies related to thinking styles and its correlation to other variables from any disciplines such as Betoret (2007) discussed the relationship between thinking styles and course satisfaction as well as the learning process

Based on preliminary research in some classes of students in the English Language Education, some of them were highly motivated to get better achievement by joining a course or study club. They were pretty much aware of their own ability. But, they were not aware of how they managed to perform their ability. So, the students with the same ability could have different

result of their assignment or task. One student could have a good result. Meanwhile, the other could have bad result or even failed. Unfortunately, their failure in tasks often viewed as they don't have or have less ability. This phenomenon could be explained by thinking styles theory. Actually, the student was not failed. They only had different style that was not matched to the expectation of the task or assignment. In Sternberg's concept of thinking styles, those students who could not fit or match for doing tasks or activities only had different style (Sternberg, 1997). Therefore, they should be aware of their thinking styles to meet those expectations of the task or assignment. Making the students know in which part their weakness and strength will make them have a better preparation in learning thus allowing them to get a good result. Thinking styles might help English Language Education department students realize their styles and does help them to acquire a high achievement.

1.2. Identification of the problem

Preliminary study showed that students were aware of their own ability. Instead they were not aware on how they manage to perform their ability. In short, they do not know their thinking style. This was one of the reasons to conduct this study. Then, this study intended to extend the literature of thinking style in higher education context. Next, this study also intended to fill the gap which survey study was less. Though, so many studies correlate thinking styles to another various variables such as Bernardo, Zhang & Callueng (2002). Whereas thinking style correlate to students achievement. Other studies (Zhu & Zhang, 2011; Zhang, 2002a; 2002b; Sternberg & Zhang, 2005; Garcia & Hughes, 2000). Those were the studies of thinking styles correlate to diverse variables such as concept of creativity, cognitive development, concept of effective teachers, academic achievement, etc.

Regarding the issues mentioned above, this study tries to overcome the following question: What are the thinking styles employed by undergraduate learners in higher education?

1.3. Objective of the Study

To describe the most thinking styles employed by the undergraduate learners in a higher education.

1.4. Significance of the Study

The result of this study was to give a contribution to both students and lecturers of English Language Education, for it could benefit the student to be aware of their preference for managing task performance in the class. Then the teacher could also arrange various tasks in the class to fit students' thinking styles.