

CHAPTER II

LITERAURE REVIEW

This chapter provides an overview of theories, concepts, and previous studies related to this research.

A. Theoretical Review

This section gives the theoretical background for the current investigation. The theories addressed in this chapter are utilized to improve comprehension of the research's two key variables: learning style preference and student participation. These theories also serve as the foundation for developing the conceptual framework of the study. This section discusses the description and classification of learning styles, the idea of student involvement, the factors that influence participation, and the relationship between learning style preferences and student engagement in General English classes.

A.1 Definition of Learning Style Preferences

Learning style preferences refer to the specific ways in which learners choose to receive, process, and understand information during learning activities (Amelia & Hikmah, 2025). Each learner naturally favors certain modes of learning that match their personal characteristics and sensory tendencies, which influence how effectively they comprehend and retain new information. According to (Fleming & Mills, 2021), learning preferences are identified based on sensory modalities that individuals use to process information most efficiently (Fleming & Mills, 2021).

The VARK model classifies learning preferences into four categories: Visual, Auditory, Read/Write, and Kinesthetic. Visual learners prefer diagrams, charts, maps, and other visual representations to help them understand ideas more clearly (Subagja & Rubini, 2023). Auditory learners learn best through listening, such as lectures, discussions, and

spoken explanations. Meanwhile, Read/Write learners rely heavily on reading texts, writing notes, and interacting with written materials. Kinesthetic learners prefer hands-on experiences, real-life examples, experiments, and movements as part of the learning process (Fleming & Mills, 2021).

Understanding learning style preferences is essential because it allows both students and educators to adjust their strategies accordingly (Indrayani et al., 2024). Students who recognize their preferred learning style can adopt techniques that help them maximize their learning potential. Similarly, teachers who understand their students' VARK preferences can design instruction that incorporates multiple modalities, allowing lessons to be more inclusive and engaging. Research indicates that aligning instruction with VARK preferences increases students' participation and learning motivation (Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan, 2025).

Based on the explanation above, learning styles not only describe students' preferences in learning but also influence how they process information and engage in classroom activities. Each student tends to have a dominant learning style that affects how they understand, receive, and respond to learning materials (Nancekivell et al., 2020).

Furthermore, learning styles play an important role in supporting the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process (Emma, 2024). When students learn through methods that match their preferences, they are more likely to understand the material better and participate more actively in class (Deslauriers et al., 2019). This shows that learning styles are closely related to students' learning outcomes and classroom engagement.

In addition, understanding students' learning styles can help lecturers design more appropriate and varied teaching strategies. For example, visual learners may benefit from the use of images, charts, and written texts, while auditory learners tend to learn better through listening

activities such as discussions and explanations. Meanwhile, kinesthetic learners prefer learning through direct practice and physical involvement. By applying different teaching methods, lecturers can create a more inclusive and effective learning environment.

Moreover, learning styles are not fixed and can develop over time depending on students' experiences and learning situations. Students may use more than one learning style depending on the task or subject they are learning. Therefore, learning styles should be understood as flexible preferences that help students optimize their learning process.

In the context of English language learning, learning styles become highly important because language learning involves various skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Different learning styles may support different language skills. For instance, auditory learners may perform better in listening and speaking activities, while read/write learners may be more comfortable with reading and writing tasks. This indicates that learning styles can influence how students participate in different types of classroom activities.

A.2 Types of Learning Styles

The VARK model, developed by Fleming and Mills, identifies four primary types of learning style preferences that describe how individuals best receive and process information (*VARK Modalities : What Do Visual , Aural , Visual (V): Multimodality (MM)*);, 1992). These types include Visual, Auditory, Read/Write, and Kinesthetic.

1. Visual Learners

Visual learners prefer information presented through visual formats such as diagrams, charts, graphs, maps, and symbolic representations. They benefit from seeing relationships between ideas and understanding patterns through imagery.

2. Auditory Learners

Auditory learners learn most effectively through listening. They rely on spoken explanations such as lectures, class discussions, conversations, audio recordings, and verbal feedback. This group processes information best when it is delivered in auditory form.

3. Read/Write Learners

Read/Write learners prefer learning through written words. They understand information better when interacting with texts, such as reading books, writing notes, analyzing lists, and composing written summaries. They naturally gravitate toward written materials in both digital and printed formats.

4. Kinesthetic Learners

Kinesthetic learners acquire knowledge most effectively through physical involvement and hands-on activities. They prefer real-life examples, demonstrations, experiments, role-plays, and activities that require movement or manipulation of objects. Learning is strengthened when they can interact with materials directly.

In addition to the VARK model, several classifications exist. (Teori et al., n.d.) created the Experiential Learning Theory, which has four learning modes Concrete Experience, Reflective Observation, Abstract Conceptualization, and Active Experimentation that combine to generate four learning types: Diverging, Assimilating, Converging, and Accommodating. This paradigm highlights that effective learning happens when people go through a cycle of experience, reflection, conceptualization, and experimenting.

Understanding the various learning styles enables teachers to develop more inclusive and diverse educational tactics (Putri, 2025). In the context of General English courses, adopting various approaches that correspond to students' learning preferences such as visual aids, audio resources, reading tasks, and interactive activities can increase student participation and make the learning process more efficient and fun (*Efl Students' Learning Styles Preference And*

Problems Encountered In Critical Reading Course _ Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran, n.d.). Recognizing and accommodating these variances not only improves student learning, but also fosters a more dynamic and engaging classroom environment.

Each type of learning style has its own strengths and limitations. Visual learners, for instance, are effective in understanding structured information but may struggle with purely verbal explanations. Auditory learners are strong in listening and communication but may find it difficult to process information presented only in written form. Read/write learners excel in organizing ideas through text, while kinesthetic learners are highly effective in experiential learning but may face challenges in passive learning situations.

Because of these differences, relying on a single teaching method may not be sufficient to support all students. A combination of instructional strategies is needed to ensure that all learners have equal opportunities to understand the material. For example, a lesson can include visual presentations, oral explanations, written tasks, and hands-on activities simultaneously.

Furthermore, modern educational approaches emphasize student-centered learning, where students are actively involved in constructing knowledge. In this context, understanding learning styles helps teachers design more flexible and adaptive learning experiences. This approach not only improves comprehension but also increases students' participation and engagement in the classroom.

A.3 Definition of Student Participation

Student participation is an essential component of the teaching and learning process, particularly in language learning contexts where interaction plays a central role. In this study, student participation is examined within the theoretical framework of student engagement, which

provides a comprehensive basis for understanding students' involvement in learning.

According to Jennifer Fredricks et al. (2004), student engagement consists of three interrelated dimensions: behavioral, cognitive, and emotional engagement. This study adopts this theory as the main theoretical foundation to explain student participation. Behavioral engagement refers to students' observable actions in academic activities, such as attending class, participating in discussions, asking and answering questions, completing assignments, and following classroom rules. Cognitive engagement relates to students' psychological investment in learning, while emotional engagement involves students' affective responses toward learning activities.

Although student engagement is multidimensional, this study specifically focuses on behavioral engagement as the core indicator of student participation. This emphasis is directly derived from the framework proposed by Jennifer Fredricks et al. (2004), where behavioral engagement represents observable student involvement in classroom activities.

Furthermore, the concept of participation in this study is strengthened by the perspective of Paris & Blumenthal (2004), who state that participation reflects students' active involvement in constructing knowledge through interaction and classroom activities. This view reinforces the idea that learning requires active engagement rather than passive reception of information.

Therefore, combining the engagement theory by Jennifer Fredricks et al. (2004) and the participation concept by Paris & Blumenthal (2004), this study defines student participation as observable behavioral involvement in classroom activities. This definition highlights that participation is not only about being present in class, but also about actively engaging in meaningful learning interactions.

Behavioral participation is considered the most appropriate focus because it can be directly measured through structured questionnaires and classroom observation. Observable behaviors such as asking questions, responding to the lecturer, participating in discussions, completing assignments, contributing to group work, and using English during classroom interaction serve as concrete indicators of participation.

In the context of General English courses, participation plays a crucial role because language learning requires active practice and interaction. Students who actively engage in classroom activities are more likely to develop their language skills effectively. Thus, behavioral participation, as conceptualized in the engagement theory by Jennifer Fredricks et al. (2004), becomes the primary focus of this study.

A.4 Factors Influencing Student Participation

Student participation in classroom activities is shaped by a combination of internal and external factors that influence how actively learners engage in discussions, complete tasks, and respond to teacher instructions. These factors can be categorized into several major components supported by previous research.

1. Psychological Factors

Psychological conditions such as self-confidence, anxiety, and motivation play a crucial role in determining students' willingness to participate. Students with higher confidence tend to contribute more actively, while those who experience fear of making mistakes or anxiety often avoid speaking. Motivation both intrinsic and extrinsic also drives students to engage more fully in classroom tasks (Atma et al., n.d.)

2. Linguistic Ability

A student's level of English proficiency directly affects participation, especially in General English courses. Learners with adequate vocabulary, grammar mastery, and speaking ability feel more capable of joining discussions. On the other

hand, limited proficiency causes students to remain silent to avoid embarrassment or negative evaluation.

3. Classroom Environment

Environmental conditions such as class size, seating arrangement, noise level, and overall classroom comfort significantly influence participation. Large classes often reduce opportunities for students to speak, whereas supportive and comfortable environments encourage more active engagement (Pradestina & Agustin, 2020).

4. Teacher-Related Factors

Teachers play a central role in shaping participation. Teaching style, feedback approach, clarity of instruction, and teacher personality determine whether students feel encouraged or discouraged from participating. Teachers who use interactive, student-centered methods and provide positive feedback tend to increase student engagement (Atma et al., n.d.).

5. Peer Influence

Students' interactions with their classmates also affect participation. Supportive peers can increase confidence, while fear of judgment or dominance from certain classmates may reduce willingness to speak. Group dynamics and peer pressure are therefore important considerations in participation studies .

6. Teaching Materials and Task Types

The characteristics of teaching materials and tasks such as their relevance, difficulty level, originality, and connection to real-life situations also influence how actively students participate. Tasks that are meaningful and engaging stimulate higher interaction, while overly complex or uninteresting activities reduce participation.

7. Time Allocation

Participation is also affected by the amount of time students are given to think and respond. When teachers move too quickly or

provide limited wait time, students especially those who need more processing time may withdraw from participation. Adequate response time increases students' comfort and readiness to participate.

In addition to the factors mentioned above, technological aspects also play an important role in influencing student participation, especially in modern classrooms. The use of digital media, interactive platforms, and online resources can increase students' interest and provide more opportunities for engagement. Technology can also support different learning styles by offering various formats such as videos, audio recordings, and interactive simulations.

Cultural background is another factor that may influence participation. In some educational cultures, students are encouraged to speak actively, while in others, students may be more reserved and prefer to listen. These cultural differences can affect how students perceive participation and how comfortable they feel in expressing their ideas.

Therefore, understanding participation requires a comprehensive perspective that considers multiple dimensions. Teachers need to be aware that students' participation is shaped by a complex interaction of personal, social, and contextual factors.

A.5 Learning Style Preferences as Reflected in Students' Participation

Learning style preferences refer to the ways in which students receive, process, and respond to information during the learning process. In the context of General English courses, these preferences can be reflected in how students participate in classroom activities. Learning styles are commonly categorized into four modalities: visual, auditory, read/write, and kinesthetic (Fleming & Mills, 1992).

Students tend to demonstrate different participation patterns depending on their preferred learning styles. When instructional activities align with these preferences, students are more likely to engage actively in the learning process. For instance, students with a visual learning preference tend to be more attentive and engaged when learning materials are presented through images, diagrams, slides, or videos. Auditory

learners, on the other hand, are more likely to participate actively in listening-based activities such as lectures, discussions, and oral explanations.

In addition, students with a read/write learning preference usually show greater engagement in activities involving reading texts, taking notes, and completing written tasks. Meanwhile, kinesthetic learners tend to be more actively involved in hands-on activities such as role plays, simulations, and practice-based tasks, as these activities allow them to learn through direct experience.

Previous studies have indicated that when learning activities are aligned with students' learning preferences, students tend to feel more comfortable and motivated to engage in the learning process (Fredricks et al., 2004). This sense of comfort and motivation can be observed through various forms of participation, such as asking questions, responding to the lecturer, participating in discussions, and contributing to group work. In contrast, when there is a mismatch between instructional methods and students' learning preferences, students may show lower levels of participation or become more passive during classroom activities.

Therefore, learning style preferences can be descriptively identified through patterns of students' participation in classroom activities. This research did not aim to examine statistical relationships or causal effects between learning styles and participation. Instead, it focused on describing how students' learning style preferences were reflected in their participation during General English learning activities.

The reflection of learning styles in student participation can be observed through consistent patterns of behavior during classroom activities. For example, students who prefer auditory learning are more likely to engage in discussions and respond to verbal instructions, while visual learners tend to focus more on visual materials and written explanations.

These patterns provide valuable insights for teachers in identifying students' learning tendencies without the need for complex measurement. By observing students' participation, teachers can adjust their teaching strategies to better match students' needs.

It is important to emphasize that this study does not aim to establish cause-and-effect relationships, but rather to describe observable tendencies. The focus is on understanding how learning styles and participation appear together in real classroom situations.

This descriptive approach allows for a more practical understanding of classroom dynamics, which can be directly applied in teaching practice.

A.6 English Course in the Management Study Program at UMB

The English course at UMB's Management Study Program aims to develop students' oral and written communication abilities for academic and professional settings. The course is normally assigned 2 credit hours (2 SKS) and offers weekly face-to-face instruction. It serves as a basic component preparing students for management studies with global or business-oriented demands. The learning objectives include helping students understand English texts, developing their ability to convey thoughts, opinions, and facts precisely, and preparing them for professional communication in commercial and academic settings. Instruction focuses on four fundamental language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. This aligns with communicative and student centered language teaching approaches, which have been proven to effectively enhance communicative competence (Ilmiah et al., 2024) The teaching emphasizes mastery of vocabulary and grammar for business and management communication, as well as independent learning strategies using digital media, ESP-oriented materials, and academic literature. This approach aligns with the recognized need to integrate English for Specific Purposes (ESP) into higher education curricula to meet professional needs in a globalized world (Nabung, 2024).

In the context of non-English major students, such as those in the Management Study Program, English is often perceived as a supporting subject rather than a primary focus. This perception may influence students' motivation and participation in the classroom. Therefore, it is important for lecturers to design learning activities that are relevant to students' academic and professional needs.

Integrating real-life contexts, such as business communication, presentations, and case studies, can make learning more meaningful and engaging. When students see the relevance of English to their future careers, they are more likely to participate actively in the learning process. This also highlights the importance of aligning teaching methods with both learning styles and students' field of study to create a more effective learning experience.

A.7 Student Learning Style Preference

Learning style preference is the way that a person likes to get, process, and understand information while they are learning. Every student has a main sensory preference: visual, Auditory, reading/writing, or kinesthetic that affects how they engage with classroom activities and learning materials (Fleming & Mills, 1992). By knowing what students like, teachers can change how they teach so that students can learn in ways that are natural and comfortable to them.

Fleming and Mills (1992) say that the VARK model finds four main ways that people learn:

1. Visual learners who prefer images, diagrams, and spatial understanding.
2. Auditory learners learn best by hearing and talking about things.
3. Reading and writing learners who like written words and texts.
4. Kinesthetic learners learn by moving, touching, and doing things.

When the way teachers teach matches how students want to learn, the classroom becomes more interesting and important. Students are more likely to participate in classroom activities when the manner

material is presented fits with how they naturally learn . When students feel comfortable learning, they are more likely to be confident, and when they are motivated, they are more likely to want to participate . stress that learning styles influence not only the acquisition of knowledge by students but also their emotional responses to educational contexts. When the way a teacher teaches doesn't match the way a student learns, the student may get bored, frustrated, or even leave the class. On the other hand, when the two styles fit, the student is more likely to be excited and involved. So, knowing how students want to learn helps teachers create learning experiences that spark curiosity, make students feel at ease, and, in the end, get them to participate more.

In General English classes, where communication and interaction are important, making sure that lessons fit with how students learn can make a big difference in how many people participate. For instance, charts and slides help visual learners, listening and conversation tasks help auditory learners, text-based exercises help reading and writing learners, and role-plays or interactive language games help kinesthetic learners. When teachers pay attention to how their pupils learn, they feel more supported and confident to talk, ask questions, and work together in class. a student's preferred learning style has a big effect on how engaged they are in the classroom. The more similar the learning and teaching styles are, the more comfortable and motivated students will be. These good sensations make people more likely to participate and be engaged in learning activities, especially in English lessons.

Learning style preference is not only related to how students learn, but also how they interact with the learning environment. It influences their attention, motivation, and level of participation in classroom activities. Students who learn in ways that match their preferences tend to show higher levels of engagement and satisfaction in the learning process.

In addition, learning style preferences can also affect students' confidence. When students feel comfortable with the way information is presented, they are more likely to express their ideas, ask questions, and participate in discussions. This is particularly important in language learning, where confidence plays a crucial role in communication.

On the other hand, when teaching methods do not align with students' preferences, students may become passive, less motivated, and less engaged. This does not necessarily mean that they lack ability, but rather that the learning process does not match their preferred way of understanding information.

Therefore, recognizing learning style preferences is essential for creating a more inclusive and effective learning environment. Teachers are expected to adopt flexible teaching strategies that accommodate different learning styles, so that all students have equal opportunities to participate and succeed.

In the context of this research, learning style preferences are used as a basis for understanding variations in student participation. By identifying how students prefer to learn, it becomes possible to describe how they engage in classroom activities and how their participation is reflected in different learning situations.

B. Review Of Previous Studies

Previous Studies

No	Name	Title	Result
1	Manipuspika, Y. S. (2020)	Learning Styles of Indonesian EFL Students: Culture and Learning.	The study revealed that more than 50% of Indonesian EFL students preferred the visual learning style, while the rest showed auditory, kinesthetic, or bimodal/multimodal preferences. The findings also indicated that the Indonesian learning culture, which emphasizes reading and listening activities, strongly influenced these learning style preferences. This highlights the role of cultural and educational context in shaping students' learning tendencies.
2	Mozaffari, H., Ghodratnama, A., & Khoshsima, H. (2020)	The Relationship Between the VARK Learning Styles and Academic Achievement.	The study found that there was no consistent relationship between VARK learning styles and students' academic achievement. In some cases, a weak correlation was observed between certain learning styles and higher grades, but overall, learning style preferences could not be

			considered a strong predictor of academic success. The findings suggest that other factors, such as motivation, learning strategies, and teaching methods, may play a more significant role in determining students' performance.
3	Helena Tada, Chairil Anwar Korompot, Geminastiti Sakkir (2025)	The Level of Participation Among Non- English Major Students in English Classroom Activities	The study revealed that the majority of non-English major students actively participated in English classroom activities. About 65% were active and 15% were very active, while 20% were neutral and none were passive. The average participation score was 50 points, which falls into the active category. The most common forms of participation included asking questions, sharing opinions, and engaging in discussions.

Table 1. Previous Studies

C.Theoretical Framework

This study is guided by the idea that students' learning style preferences influence their engagement in classroom activities. Learning styles include visual, auditory, reading/writing, and kinesthetic modalities

(Fleming & Mills, 2021). Student engagement refers to active participation in learning, including behavioral, emotional, and cognitive involvement (*Introducing Our 2030 Strategy Working with You to Transform Higher Education* ., n.d.). These concepts provide a basic framework for examining how teaching methods can be aligned with students' preferences to improve learning outcomes.

C.1 Theoretical Basis

This study is grounded in multiple theoretical frameworks concerning students' learning preferences and classroom engagement. (Fleming & Mills, 2021) define learning styles as the preferred ways individuals process and understand information. Their VARK model identifies four primary modalities: visual, auditory, reading/writing, and kinesthetic, which help educators recognize the diversity of learning preferences among students.

Student engagement, on the other hand, refers to the degree of active involvement, participation, and contribution of students during learning activities, encompassing both verbal and non-verbal behaviors. emphasize that engagement is multidimensional, including behavioral, emotional, and cognitive aspects, and is critical for academic achievement and learning outcomes.

These theoretical perspectives provide a framework for examining how students' learning styles influence their engagement in General English courses, highlighting the importance of aligning instructional strategies with individual preferences to optimize learning effectiveness.

C.2 Description of Variables

a. Preference for Learning Style

Refers to the individual's preferred sensory mode of learning - visual, aural, read/write, or kinesthetic that determines how pupils receive, organize, and apply knowledge in English learning activities.

(To be filled in with a brief remark on how you measure it, such as a questionnaire with a star rating scale)

b. Students' participation

Refers to how involved and engaged kids are in classroom activities including answering questions, sharing their thoughts, paying attention, doing assignments, and talking to other students and teachers.

(should be filled in with how participation is measured, such as a rating scale or an observation checklist)

C.3 Learning Style Preferences and Student Participation

Learning style preferences and student participation are two important aspects of the learning process that can be observed during classroom activities. Learning style preferences refer to students' preferred ways of receiving, processing, and understanding information, while student participation refers to students' active involvement in learning activities, such as asking questions, responding to explanations, participating in discussions, completing tasks, and interacting with both teachers and peers.

In the learning process, each student brings different characteristics, including their preferred learning styles, which may influence how they engage in classroom activities. These differences can be seen in how students respond to various teaching methods and learning situations. Some students may feel more comfortable and confident when participating in activities that match their learning preferences, while others may show less engagement when the activities do not align with their preferred ways of learning.

Furthermore, student participation is not only limited to verbal interaction but also includes non-verbal behaviors such as paying attention, taking notes, and following instructions. This means that participation can be expressed in various forms depending on the students' learning styles. For example, students with auditory

preferences may actively engage in discussions and verbal communication, while students with visual or read/write preferences may participate more through reading, writing, and observing learning materials. Meanwhile, kinesthetic learners may show higher participation in activities that involve physical movement, practice, or hands-on tasks.

In the context of General English classes, where communication skills are emphasized, student participation becomes a key indicator of the learning process. Different types of classroom activities, such as group discussions, presentations, reading exercises, and practical tasks, may encourage different forms of participation. These variations provide an opportunity to observe how students with different learning style preferences engage in the learning process.

It is important to note that this study does not aim to determine causal relationships between learning style preferences and student participation. Instead, it focuses on providing a descriptive overview of how both aspects appear together in classroom settings. The patterns observed are intended to reflect tendencies in student behavior rather than to establish direct influence or effect.

Therefore, this research aims to describe how students' learning style preferences are reflected in their participation during General English classes. By understanding these patterns, educators may gain insights into how classroom activities can accommodate diverse learning preferences and support more inclusive and engaging learning environments.

C.4 Conceptual Framework Diagram

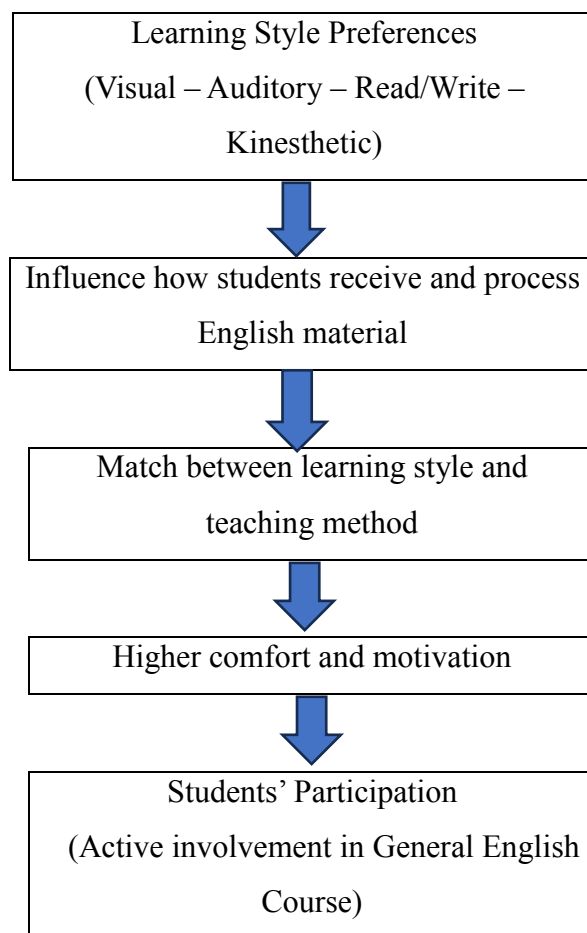


Diagram 1. Conceptual Framework

C.5 Summary

In short, the conceptual framework shows that students' preferred learning styles influence their comfort, motivation, and interest in English learning activities.

Aligning teaching approaches with students' learning preferences can help create a more engaging learning environment.

This framework serves as the basis for describing students' learning style preferences and their participation in the General English course.