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## THE CORRELATION BETWEEN LEARNERS' PREFERENCES AND LISTENING ABILITY OF ENGLISH DEPARTMENT STUDENTS AT IAIN ANTASARI BANJARMASIN

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### Abstract

Numerous studies have investigated and explored learners' preferences. It is very essential since it has improved the understanding of the processes students' learning to develop their skills in a second or foreign language. Despite the increasing number of research on learners' preferences, there have been few studies among Indonesian students, especially Undergraduate students in Banjarmasin. This research has been conducted at English Education Department of Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teachers Training. It aimed to find out whether or not there is a significant correlation between the learners' preferences and their listening ability. This research used correlation research two variables, they are: Dependent variable (X) which is Learners' Preferences and Independent variable (Y) which is Listening Ability. The subjects of this research were 81 students of third semester of English department at IAIN Antasari Banjarmasin. The researcher used a sampling technique called cluster random sampling. The method used to measure the validity of the test is calculated with the formula of Pearson's product moment correlation and the reliability of odd even split and the formula of Pearson's product moment. The technique of data analysis used by the writer is the formula of Pearson's product moment correlation. The finding of this research showed that the level of correlation is **-0,10** it meant that the correlation between Learners' Preferences and Listening Ability is **negative**. In this research the variable Y is not influenced by the variable X, and the other way the variable X is also not influenced by the variable Y. In conclusion, null hypothesis is accepted and Ha hypothesis is rejected; there is no significant correlation study between Learners' Preferences and listening ability of third semester students of English department at IAIN Antasari Banjarmasin.

**Keywords:** Correlation, Learners' Preferences, Listening Ability

### A. INTRODUCTION

There are various ways learners use to develop their skills in a second or foreign language. They apply different kinds of learners' preferences to help them learn. Pritchard (2009: 41) gives some definitions for learners' preferences which are: (1) a particular way in which an individual learns; (2) a mode of learning; (3) an individual's preferred or best manner (s) in which to think, process information and demonstrate learning; (4) an individual's preferred means of acquiring knowledge and skills; (5) habits, strategies, or regular mental behaviors concerning learning, particularly deliberate educational learning, that an individual displays. Numerous studies have investigated and explored learners' preferences use. These studies have been conducted primarily to find out what learners' preferences use, as well as what factors (such as nationality, age, gender, motivation) affect these choices. The investigation of learners' preferences is very essential since it has improved the understanding of the processes students' uses to develop their skills in a second or foreign language.

Despite the increasing number of research on learners' preferences, there have been few studies on the use of learners' preferences among Indonesian students, especially Undergraduate students in Banjarmasin. It is a fact that teachers are generally not aware of learners' preferences (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990). They pay less attention to how their students learn and how they can guide the students to learn well. They just tend to focus on students' results in final without taking into account learners' preferences as part of their instruction. Consequently, students are asked to do many tasks in the classrooms to perform better in the exams. Therefore, there is a need to conduct research on learners' preferences to

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help teachers learn and understand how learners' preferences of their students are applied in learning a foreign language.

This research has been conducted at English Education Department of Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teachers Training. It aimed to find out whether or not there is a significant correlation between the learners' preferences and their listening ability. Through this study, it is hoped that teachers might acquire better understanding of how students learn a second or foreign language, so that they can assist their students in the language learning process by promoting awareness of the learners' preferences and encourage the students to use the learners' preferences effectively.

The research question is: is there any significant correlation between learners' preferences and their listening ability?

The result of this research is expected to have advantages, such as:

- a. It will serve as information, consideration and input for English Education Department in increasing educational quality and establishing conditions to support students' learning.
- b. It will develop awareness for English Lecturers about the importance of learners' preferences. As lecturers play important role students' academic achievement, knowing learners' preferences will affect the quality of the students and in a wider scope may contribute to the better image of English Education Department in the community.

## B. THEORETICAL APPROACH

Everyone has a different learning style and learns better through different means. Understanding particular learning style and how to best meet the needs of that learning style is essential to performing better in the classroom. Once the students have unlocked their learning style and discovered the best methods for helping them to learn through that style, it may be surprised to discover just how well they can flourish in the classroom, even in subjects that they previously found difficult.

Learning styles refers to "... an individual natural habitual, and preferred ways of absorbing, processing, and retaining new information and skills." (Kinsella, 1995: 171). These styles seem to persist regardless of the content you are trying to master or the method of instruction you are given. Whether you know it or not you also have preferred ways of absorbing, processing, and retaining new information and skills.

Therefore, learning styles refer to the variations in the ability to accumulate and assimilate information. Basically, learning style is the method that best allows students to gather and use knowledge in a specific manner. Most experts agree that there are three basic learning styles. Each individual may possess a single style or could possess a combination of different learning styles. In most cases, the characteristics of a learning style can even be observed at a relatively young age.

Connell (2005: 132) divides the learning styles into three: (1) visual learners; (2) auditory learners; (3) kinesthetic learners.

### 1. Visual Learners

Individuals who fall into this category typically learn through what they are able to see with their own eyes. Visual learners are those students who jockey for the positions at the front of the class, must have front row theater seats and love to be right up front for sporting events in order to obtain the best view.

Visual learners have a tendency to describe everything that they see in terms of appearances. These learners love visual aids such as photos, diagrams, maps and graphs. Visual learners frequently are good writers and will commonly perform quite well on written assignments.

### 2. Auditory Learners

Auditory learners are very good listeners. They tend to absorb information in a more efficient manner through sounds, music, discussions, teachings, etc. These individuals will be more likely to record lectures so that they can replay them at a later time for study purposes. Auditory learners appreciate books on tape and may find that reading aloud will help them to retain information. Rather than written reports, auditory learners tend to do better on oral presentations and reports.

### 3. Kinesthetic Learners

Kinesthetic learners are tactile learning. This means that they learn best through moving, doing, acting out and touching. Projects that are hands-on in nature are best for

kinesthetic learners. Kinesthetic learners tend to become frustrated when they must sit for long periods of time. They enjoy conducting experiments, exploring and performing tasks.

#### **4. Identify Learning Style**

Sometimes it is quite easy to determine and the students may have already had an idea that you might have a particular learning style. In other cases, it may not be quite so easy to identify. This is commonly the case if they possess characteristics from more than one learning style.

#### **5. Benefits of Understanding Learning Style**

It is important to keep in mind that student as an individual are a unique learner. No two people are exactly the same and no two people learn in exactly the same manner. There are many advantages to understanding the way in which you are able to process information most efficiently. Some of these benefits include:

#### **6. Academic Advantages**

- a. Maximizing learning potential
- b. Succeed on all educational levels
- c. Understand how to best study and score better on exams and tests
- d. Overcome limitations in the classroom Reduces frustration and stress levels
- e. Expand existing learning strategies

#### **7. Personal Advantages**

- a. Improves self-confidence and self-esteem
- b. Learn how to best use brain
- c. Gain insight into students' own strengths as well as weaknesses
- d. Learn how to enjoy learning more
- e. Develop a motivation for learning
- f. How to maximize natural abilities and skills

#### **8. Professional Advantages**

- a. Stay up to date on professional topics
- b. Gain an edge over the competition
- c. Manage teams in a more effective manner
- d. Learn how to deliver more effective presentations
- e. Improve sales skills
- f. Increasing learning power

Keep in mind that there is really no right or even no wrong way to learn. Everyone is unique and each learning style offers advantages as well as disadvantages. Understanding learning style can help to learn as well as work in a more efficient manner.

Informing the students about the different styles of learning and the most effective memory techniques can help the students to become more in tune with the most efficient and effective methods for them to personally learn. Through this insight you can learn which study techniques work best for the students and which methods are least effective. By maximizing the most effective study techniques you will be able to get more out of the classroom as well as through study sessions for improved educational success.

Many people recognize that each person prefers different learning styles and techniques. Learning styles group common ways that people learn. Everyone has a mix of learning styles. Some people may find that they have a dominant style of learning, with far less use of the other styles. Others may find that they use different styles in different circumstances. There is no right mix. Nor are the styles fixed. The students can develop ability in less dominant styles, as well as further develop styles that the students already use well.

Using learning styles for learning is a relatively new approach. This approach is one that educators have only recently started to recognize. Traditional schooling used (and continues to use) mainly linguistic and logical teaching methods. It also uses a limited range of learning and teaching techniques. Many schools still rely on classroom and book-based teaching, much repetition, and pressured exams for reinforcement and review. A result is that often label those who use these learning styles and techniques as bright. Those who use less favored learning styles often find themselves in lower classes, with various not-so-complimentary labels and sometimes lower quality teaching. This can create positive and negative spirals that reinforce the belief that one is "smart" or "dumb".

By recognizing and understanding learning styles, the students can use techniques better suited to you. This improves the speed and quality of learning.

### 9. Learning and Techniques

- a. If they are an aural learner, use sound, rhyme, and music in their learning. Focus on using aural content in their association and visualization.
- b. Use sound recordings to provide a background and help them get into visualizations. For example, use a recording of an aircraft engine running normally, playing loudly via a headset, to practice flight procedures. Use a recording of the sound of wind and water when visualizing sailing maneuvers. If they don't have these recordings, consider creating them while next out training.
- c. When creating mnemonics or acrostics, make the most of rhythm and rhyme, or set them to a jingle or part of a song.
- d. Use the anchoring technique to recall various states that music invokes in them. If they have some particular music or song that makes them want to 'take on the world,' play it back and anchor their emotions and state. When they need the boost, they can easily recall the state without needing the music.

There is a real distinction between merely hearing the words and really listening for the message. When listen effectively, listeners understand what the person is thinking and feeling from the other person's own perspective. To listen effectively, must be actively involved in the communication process, and not just listening passively.

Listening is a process of activities hearing speech symbols by full attention, understanding, appreciation, and interpretation to acquire communication meaning that delivered by the speaker through speech. Listening constitutes quite important activities in learning language. It is the basis of the learning process as a child learns language from his mother.

Listening is the very first skill and has been viewed as a primary vehicle for language acquisition process. People know and understand the meaning of something people hear by listening.

Listening is very important in foreign language classrooms because it provides input for the learners. For most people, being able to claim knowledge of a foreign language means being able to speak and listen in that language.

Listening is good for students' pronunciation because the more the students hear and understand English being spoken, the more they absorb appropriate pitch and intonation, stress and the sounds of both individual words and those which blend together in connected speech. Listening texts are good pronunciation models, and the more students listen, the better they get not only at understanding speech, but also at speaking themselves. Indeed, it is worth remembering that successful spoken communication depends not just on ability to speak but also on the effectiveness of the way of listen.

Listening is the process by which spoken language is converted to meaning in the mind (Harold, 1996). In other hand, listening is "the ability to identify and to understand what others are saying" (Thomas, 1993). Listening is the most widely used language skill and often used in conjunction with the other skills of speaking, reading, and writing.

Listening provides a foundation for all aspects of language and cognitive development, and it plays a life-long role in the processes of learning and communication essential to productive participation in life. A study by Wilt, found that people listen 45 percent of the time they spend communicating, is still widely cited. Wilt found that 30 percent of communication time was spent speaking, 16 percent reading, and 9 percent writing. That finding confirmed Rankin's findings that people spent 70 percent of their waking time communicating and those three-fourths of this time were spent listening.

Listening is the first step for the students when they want to understand language especially English. Listening is receptive skill and it is very important skill in foreign language classrooms because it provides input for the learners; by listening the students can produce language such as listening and writing by vocabulary that they obtain from listening. Listening process has both top-down listening process that involves activation of schematic knowledge and contextual knowledge and bottom-up listening process involves prior knowledge of the language system such as phonology, grammar, and vocabulary.

**C. METHOD OF THE RESEARCH**

**1. Research Design**

This research used correlation research two variables, Independent variable (X) and dependent variable (Y). Independent variable is a variable that is presumed to influence another variable. Dependent variable is a category that is influenced by another category or that is the consequent (Kerlinger, 1979:21). Dependent variable (X) is Learners' Preferences and Independent variable (Y) is Listening Ability.

**2. Research Location**

This research is conducted at English Education Department Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teachers Training IAIN Antasari Banjarmasin.

**3. Subject**

The subjects of this research were 81 students of third semester of English department at IAIN Antasari Banjarmasin. The researcher used a sampling technique called cluster random sampling.

**4. Data**

The data needed are the types of Learners' Preferences owned by English Education Department students Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teachers Training in Banjarmasin.

**5. Technique of Data collection**

The techniques of data collection that are used in this study are test, questionnaire, and documentation.

a. Test

This is used to obtain the data about Students' Listening Ability. The test used is Listening Comprehension test.

b. Questionnaire

This is used to gain the data about the types of Learners' Preferences owned by English Education Department students Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teachers Training in Banjarmasin. To collect the data for this study, the questionnaire are given in order to know the Learners' Preferences of the students.

c. Documentation

This is used to get the information about students' Learners' Preferences based on their Listening Comprehension Test.

**6. Data Analysis**

The method used to measure the validity of the test is calculated with the formula of Pearson's product moment correlation. The formula is as follows:

$$r_{xy} = \frac{N \sum XY - (\sum X)(\sum Y)}{\sqrt{\{N \sum X^2 - (\sum X)^2\} \{N \sum Y^2 - (\sum Y)^2\}}}$$

(Suharsimi, 2002:146)

If  $r_{xy} > r$  table, it means that the test is valid with the significant degree 5 %.

The researcher used the reliability of odd even split and the formula of Pearson's product moment. The formula is:

$$r_{11} = \frac{2r_{1/2/2}}{1 + r_{1/2/2}}$$

(Suharsimi, 2002:156)

Where:

R11 = reliabilities instrument.

R1/2/2 = Pearson correlation of odd and even value.

The technique of data analysis used by the researcher is the formula of Pearson's product moment correlation:

$$r_{xy} = \frac{N\sum XY - (\sum X)(\sum Y)}{\sqrt{\{N\sum X^2 - (\sum X)^2\}\{N\sum Y^2 - (\sum Y)^2\}}}$$

The above formula is very important due to finding out whether or not the (Ho) Hypothesis or (Ha) Hypothesis is accepted in this research. The result computation indicates whether there is any correlation between two variables or not.

#### D. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

There are 81 students involved in this research. The questionnaire was distributed to find out the answer of the research question. From the questionnaire, it is found out that Students of English Education Department owned various learners' preferences which consist of three types of learners' preferences; they are auditory, visual, and kinesthetic.

The results of the questionnaire indicate that a majority of the students have owned various learning styles. Auditory Learning Style 31.5% (22 students), Visual Learning style 29.9% (21 students), and Kynesthetic Learning style 38,6% (38 students).

The listening comprehension score of the third semester students of English Education Department at Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teachers Training IAIN Antasari Banjarmasin can be seen on their final results at the end of the semester which consists of middle test, exercises, and final test score.

The students learners' preferences and their score of listening comprehension

NO	NAMES	LEARNING STYLES	LISTENING SCORES
1	A	AUDITORY	82,9
2	B	AUDITORY	70,7
3	C	AUDITORY	74,3
4	D	AUDITORY	85,5
5	E	AUDITORY	83,9
6	F	AUDITORY	80,7
7	G	AUDITORY	72,7
8	H	AUDITORY	76,9
9	I	AUDITORY	85,3
10	J	AUDITORY	83,1
11	K	AUDITORY	84,1
12	L	AUDITORY	79,2
13	M	AUDITORY	85,5
14	N	AUDITORY	80,1
15	O	AUDITORY	72,4
16	P	AUDITORY	75,7
17	Q	AUDITORY	83,8
18	R	AUDITORY	84,7
19	S	AUDITORY	81,7
20	T	AUDITORY	81,2
21	U	AUDITORY	91,2
22	V	AUDITORY	86,3
23	W	KYNESTHETIC	80,2

24	X	KYNESTHETIC	95,8
25	Y	KYNESTHETIC	83,1
26	Z	KYNESTHETIC	77,1
27	AA	KYNESTHETIC	93,1
28	AB	KYNESTHETIC	83,8
29	AC	KYNESTHETIC	85,4
30	AD	KYNESTHETIC	87,3
31	AE	KYNESTHETIC	85,3
32	AF	KYNESTHETIC	96,3
33	AG	KYNESTHETIC	74,4
34	AH	KYNESTHETIC	90,8
35	AI	KYNESTHETIC	85,4
36	AJ	KYNESTHETIC	83,6
37	AK	KYNESTHETIC	90,1
38	AL	KYNESTHETIC	84,9
39	AM	KYNESTHETIC	90,4
40	AN	KYNESTHETIC	85,2
41	AO	KYNESTHETIC	83,3
42	AP	KYNESTHETIC	83,3
43	AQ	KYNESTHETIC	85
44	AR	KYNESTHETIC	89
45	AS	KYNESTHETIC	83,9
46	AT	KYNESTHETIC	86,3
47	AU	KYNESTHETIC	88,8
48	AV	KYNESTHETIC	90,2
49	AW	KYNESTHETIC	82,6
50	AX	KYNESTHETIC	91,1
51	AY	KYNESTHETIC	84,7
52	AZ	KYNESTHETIC	80,6
53	BA	KYNESTHETIC	52,5
54	BB	KYNESTHETIC	76
55	BC	KYNESTHETIC	75,8
56	BD	KYNESTHETIC	84,6
57	BE	KYNESTHETIC	89,2
58	BF	KYNESTHETIC	88,8
59	BG	KYNESTHETIC	89,6
60	BH	KYNESTHETIC	96,3
61	BI	VISUAL	86,1
62	BJ	VISUAL	94,5
63	BK	VISUAL	92,2
64	BL	VISUAL	88,6

65	BM	VISUAL	90,6
66	BN	VISUAL	89,5
67	BO	VISUAL	74
68	BP	VISUAL	78,6
69	BQ	VISUAL	89
70	BR	VISUAL	87
71	BS	VISUAL	82,2
72	BT	VISUAL	88
73	BU	VISUAL	81,4
74	BV	VISUAL	88,5
75	BW	VISUAL	70,2
76	BX	VISUAL	80,3
77	BY	VISUAL	85,8
78	BZ	VISUAL	83,7
79	CA	VISUAL	89,8
80	CB	VISUAL	88,6
81	CC	VISUAL	77

This research also tries to find out whether or not learners preferences have correlation with listening ability. To get the students' listening ability score, listening comprehension test was administered. The score of the students range from 96-52. The mean score of students' Listening Comprehension was 83,96 with 6.85of standard deviation. The finding of this research showed that the level of correlation is **-0,10**, it meant that the correlation between Learners' Preferences and Listening Ability is **negative**. In this research the variable Y is not influenced by the variable X, and the other way the variable X is also not influenced by the variable Y. In conclusion, null hypothesis is accepted and Ha hypothesis is rejected; there is no significant correlation study between Learners' Preferences and listening ability of third semester students of English department at IAIN Antasari Banjarmasin.

## E. CONCLUSION

This study examined the types of learners' preferences owned by English Department students in Banjarmasin and determined how the learners' preferences were influenced by the listening ability.

It can be concluded that the learning styles among the students are quite different which are Auditory Learning Style 31.5% (22 students), Visual Learning style 29.9% (21 students), and Kynesthetic Learning style 38,6% (38 students).

This research also found out that the level of correlation is **-0,10**. This showed that the correlation between learning styles and Language Proficiency is **negative**. The more varied the learners' preferences used, the score of listening ability is lower.

The findings of this research suggested that teachers should have some guidance and training to teach the target language communicatively so they can promote awareness of the learners' preferences and encourage their students to use their own learners' preferences effectively.



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