

## A Correlational Study Between Listening Comprehension And Students' Listening Preference

Purnamasari ([purnamasari.bombana@gmail.com](mailto:purnamasari.bombana@gmail.com))

Zalili Sailan

Sartiah

*Halu Oleo University.*

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### ABSTRACT

This study investigated the correlation between listening comprehension and students' listening preference at the first year of English Study Program of Halu Oleo University. It aimed of finding out the correlation of listening comprehension and listening preference in between and the correlation between listening preference and students' gender. Samples were 44 students drawn using a random sampling technique. Instrument of the study were multiple choices tests of IELTS and TOEFL consisting of 20 items each of them, which was used to measure students' listening comprehension, and a questionnaire featuring 14 items to gauge students' listening preference towards British and American English. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistic and correlation analysis. Results showed that listening comprehension has a positive correlation toward listening preference and there is no correlation between students' listening preference and their gender because both male and female have high score in TOEFL test and they prefer American to British English. Since the study did not investigating the most influence factor of listening comprehension, the researcher recommended that future researchers to investigate the factor.

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Listening is the learning process of receiving, interpreting, recalling, evaluating, and responding to verbal and nonverbal messages. We begin to engage with the listening process long before we engage in any recognizable verbal or nonverbal communication. It is only after listening for months as infants that we begin to consciously practice our own forms of expression. In this section we will learn more about each stage of the listening process, the main types of listening, and the main listening styles.

In many ways it is unsurprising that learners perceive listening as a difficult skill. Buck (2001) emphasized the complexity of the listening process, in which the listener must use a wider variety of knowledge sources, linguistic and non-linguistic, to interpret rapidly incoming data. Moreover, Rost (2002) contended that the application of linguistic knowledge in comprehension is usually termed bottom-up processing, whereby the sounds, words, clauses and sentences of a passage are decoded in a fairly linear fashion to elicit meaning. According to buck (2001), in 'top-down processing', the listeners' knowledge of the topic, their general knowledge of the world and of how texts generally 'work', will interact with this linguistic knowledge to create an interpretation of the text. While it is generally agreed that listening requires a combination of both forms of processing, their respective contribution to effective listening is still not clearly understood (Tsui and Fullilove, 1998).

Given this complexity and perhaps because the process is largely unobservable, it may be difficult for learners to have a clear understanding of how they go about listening in a foreign language, or, more importantly, how they might improve their performance. Learners are likely, however, to have certain beliefs about listening, which may influence the way in which they approach it. While there is a growing body of research devoted to learners' beliefs about language learning in general, comparatively few studies have looked at beliefs about listening. Teachers have to realize that before they can hope to improve learners' listening skills, teachers need to be aware of the beliefs that learners hold, particularly where they perceive listening as a skill in which progress is difficult to achieve. The aim of the present study is to shed light on such beliefs.

Long time ago, Listening was not taught in language classrooms until late 1960s since it was ignored and the emphasis was on grammar. According to Richards and Rodgers (2001), language teachers and researchers paid more attention to reading and grammatical skills and teaching listening was not accepted as a significant feature of language teaching. As Field (2008) states, "In the early days of English Language Teaching (ELT), listening chiefly served as a means of introducing new grammar through model dialogues".

Many researches had been conducted to examine the low grade of students in listening. Among the factors found, the difficulties the students experience is related to the text structure and syntax and related to the background the students have. In other research it is found that these difficulties also include the students incapability of interpreting the listening materials they hear due to the word pronunciation, articulation, and speech rate. Additionally, research shows that listener difficulties may

be influenced by a number of factors. Lists of general factors have been identified (Tinkler, 1980; Boyle, 1984; Flowerdew and Miller, 1992) while the role of specific factors has also been examined. Some factors that have been the focus of research include speech rate (Zhao, 1997), lexis (Kelly, 1991), phonological features (Henrichsen, 1984) and background knowledge (Long, 1990). Other issues have also been related to listener difficulties.

These range from text structure and syntax to personal factors such as insufficient exposure to the target language, and a lack of interest and motivation. Brown (1995) acknowledged the relevance of all these issues, and further argued that listener difficulties are also related to the levels of cognitive demands made by the content of the texts. Besides these issues, problems arising from social and cultural practices have been suggested by Lynch (1997) in his study of two-way (interactional) listening.

Research suggested that in the cognitive process, when a person hears listening materials, the materials are first stored in a very short-term memory where it is first interpreted by the brain before it is stored in the long term memory. In other words, what a person will remember from a listening is only the part that can be translated by him/her. This is why, the matter of articulation, pronunciation, and speech rate hold a major role on the students' comprehension of a text. The more difficult a listening materials to be broke up into parts and be interpreted, the more difficult it will be for the students to interpret the meaning and be even more difficult to remember.

The researcher has a big assumption that the matter of articulation, pronunciation, and speech rate, which is addressed as speech style in this chapter, is a quite great determiner to the students' success in listening. English in itself has various style of speech. People in different countries speak English in different accent. The two most popular way of speaking English are American way and British way, which is well-known as American style and British style of English.

### **1.1. Research Questions**

This study is guided by the following questions:

1. Do listening comprehension correlate with listening preference?
2. Do listening preference correlate with gender?

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Listening is one of four basic language skills that have many definitions from different experts. In order to listen successfully, a listener needs to be able to conceive the meaning of what speaker is trying to convey. Listening is an act that is in many ways be referred to as hearing. While in academic listening, 'Hearing' is defined as a physical yet passive act involving the process and function of perceiving sound. In contrast, 'Listening' is hearing the sounds with deliberate intention. Howatt and Daking (cited in Yagang, 1993) state that listening is the ability to identify and understand what others are saying. This involves understanding a speaker's accent or pronunciation, his grammar and his vocabulary and grasping his meaning.

According to Hamouda (2013), EFL learners have crucial problems in listening comprehension because universities pay attention to grammar, reading, and vocabulary. Listening and speaking skills are not significant parts of many books and teachers do not consider these skills in their classes. Osada (2004) stated that listening is not very important for both teachers and learners and teachers test not to teach listening and learners learn listening not listening comprehension. Consequently, it remains the most neglected aspect of language teaching. Hamouda (2013) emphasized that comprehending speech is a very difficult activity for students. Learners face a lot of problems when they listen to a language. If teachers are expected to assist learners to improve their listening comprehension, they should comprehend their listening difficulties in understanding spoken passages and teach them effective listening comprehension strategies to be able to solve their listening comprehension problems.

Listening plays an important role in communication in people's daily life. As Guo and Wills (2006) said "it is the medium through which people gain a large proportion of their education, their information, their understanding of the world and human affairs, their ideals, sense of values" (p. 3).

Listening not only has an important role in daily life, but also in classroom settings. Most people think that being able to write and speak in a second language means that they know the language; however, if they do not have the efficient listening skills, it is not possible to communicate effectively (Nunan, 1998). According to Nunan (1998), listening is the basic skill in language learning. Over 50% of the time that students spend functioning in a foreign language will be devoted to listening,

In conclusion, Listening has an important role both in daily life and in academic contexts so that people sustain effective communication. Listening skills are also important for learning purposes since through listening students receive information and gain insights (Wallace, Stariha & Walberg, 2004).

If we consider how the language comprehension system works, it is obvious that a number of different types of knowledge are involved: both linguistic knowledge and non-linguistic knowledge. Linguistic knowledge is of different types, but among the most important are phonology, lexis, syntax, semantics and discourse structure. The non-linguistic knowledge used in comprehension is knowledge about the topic, about the context, and general knowledge about the world and how it works.

Mastering listening comprehension is the first step towards fully acquiring a second language (L2) or foreign language (FL) (Liu, 2009). However, in spite of the importance of developing listening comprehension abilities, L2 learners are rarely taught how to listen effectively (Vandergrift, 2007). In English as Second Language (ESL) and English as Foreign Language (EFL) fields in early decades, the focus of research and pedagogy on listening was primarily on testing learners' abilities to listen to oral discourse and then answer comprehension questions based upon the information, without instruction in skills or strategies for completing such tasks (Field, 1998).

Listening as comprehension is the traditional way of thinking about the nature of listening. Indeed, in most methodology manuals *listening* and *listening comprehension* are

synonymous. This view of listening is based on the assumption that the main function of listening in second language learning is to facilitate understanding of spoken discourse (Richards, 2008). There has been much debate about how this knowledge is applied to the incoming sound, but the two most important views are: the bottom-up view, and the top-down view. As Nunan (1998) stated that successful listeners use both bottom-up and top-down strategies. These terms refer to the order in which the different types of knowledge are applied during comprehension. In the rest of this chapter we will look at each type of knowledge used in understanding spoken language. Next, in this part also will be discussed about, the input to the listener; applying knowledge of the language; using world knowledge; the context of communication; and building mental representations of meaning.

As shown in the various definitions of listening, people experience several stages during the listening process. In the literature, top-down and bottom-up are two common processes that are usually mentioned as listening sub-skills (e.g., Berne, 2004; Flowerdew & Miller, 2005; Mendelshon, 1994; Rost, 2002).

Brown (2006) defines top-down processing as the process of “using our prior knowledge and experiences; we know certain things about certain topics and situations and use that information to understand” (p. 2). In other words, learners use their background knowledge in order to comprehend the meaning by considering previous knowledge and schemata. On the other hand, bottom up processing refers to the process of “using the information we have about sounds, word meanings, and discourse markers like *first*, *then* and *after that* to assemble our understanding of what we read or hear one step at a time” (Brown, 2006, p. 2, emphasis original).

During bottom-up processing, learners hear the words, keep them in their short term memory to combine them with each other and interpret the things that they have heard before. According to Tsui and Fullilove (1998), top down processing is more used by skilled listeners while less-skilled listeners use bottom-up processing. It is noteworthy to mention that while Vandegrift (2004) states that depending on the purpose for listening, learners may use top-down or bottom-up process more than another, according to Richards (2008), both processes usually happen together in real-life listening.

Similarly, Cahyono and Widiati (2009) stated that successful listeners are those who can use both bottom-up and top-down processes by combining the new information and the knowledge that they have already known. According to Flowerdew and Miller (2005), advanced listening skills are the results of combining listening process with the cognitive development.

Furthermore, Listening comprehension is a top-down process in the sense that the various types of knowledge involved in understanding language are not applied in any fixed order more than they can be used in any order, or even simultaneously, and they are all capable of interacting and influencing each other. This is sometimes referred to as an interactive process, especially by reading theorists. However, we should not underestimate the importance of the acoustic input, nor the importance of the linguistic information. The point is simply that listening comprehension is the result of an inter-

action between a number of information sources, which include the acoustic input, different types of linguistic knowledge, details of the context, and general world knowledge, and so forth, and listeners use whatever information they have available, or whatever information seems relevant to help them interpret what the speaker is saying.

In brief, *Top-down* means using our prior knowledge and experiences. We know certain things about certain topics and situations and use that information to understand. While, *Bottom-up* processing means using the information we have about sounds, word meanings, and discourse markers like *first*, *then* and *after that* to assemble our understanding of what we read or hear one step at a time.

Since listening is a complex active process in which learners decode and construct the meaning of the text by drawing on their previous knowledge about the world as well as their linguistic knowledge, there seems to be many factors that affect listening comprehension. Some researchers have classified these factors into different categories (Boyle, 1984,). After conducting an interview with thirty teachers and sixty students from two Hong Kong universities, Boyle (1984) suggested the lack of practice as the most important factor. He also pointed out such factors as linguistic understanding, general background knowledge, while attitude and motivation may affect listening indirectly but more powerfully. Two other factors that were mentioned by the students but not teachers in Boyle's interview were "memory" and "attention/concentration." Generally speaking, the factors identified by Boyle can be divided into four categories, i.e., listener factors, speaker factors, stimulus factors, and context factors.

There are numerous factors influencing the ease or difficulty of the listening activity. Generally speakers, researchers (Boyle, 1984; Brindly, 1998; Dunkel, 1991; Rubin, 1994; Wang, 2000) classified these variables into three types: speaker factors, oral texts factors, and listeners factors which interact in a variety of ways to make listener's task easier or more complicated.

As accents are present in everyday conversations and every single speaker has one as part of their daily speech, it could be difficult to define what this linguistic term may involve. However, there are some aspects that have been taken for granted due to the linguistic researches carried out in this field. The Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary (2012) defines accent as a typical way of speaking of particular people living in the same region. For the Cambridge Dictionary (2012), accent is, in part, the way in which people from a particular area or country pronounce words. To wit, it refers to the phonological realization of language inasmuch as it is an integral part of the spoken language.

Furthermore, accent is the term used for the linguists to refer to the pronunciation features typical of people who belong to the same geographical region or social class. It tends to reflect speakers' age, sex, level of education and so on. Montgomery (1996) predicates that accent is exclusively reserved for the patterns of pronunciation produced by speakers. From a deeper linguistic perspective, Lippi-Green (1997) suggests that an accent is a chain of prosodic and segmental features distributed over a specific limited -geographic or social- space. Prosodic (suprasegmental) features

include intonation, pitch, rhythm, stress and timing whilst segmental features refer to the phonological production of vowels and consonants.

Munro and Derwing (1999) expressed that too many accented speech can lead to an important reduction in comprehension. According to Goh (1999), 66% of learners mentioned a speaker's accent as one of the most significant factors that affect listener comprehension. Unfamiliar accents both native and non-native can cause serious problems in listening comprehension and familiarity with an accent helps learners' listening comprehension. Buck (2001) indicated that when listeners hear an unfamiliar accent such as Indian English for the first time after studying only American English will encounter critical difficulties in listening. This will certainly interrupt the whole listening comprehension process and at the same time an unfamiliar accent makes comprehension impossible for the listeners.

Bloomfield et al. (2010) and Walker (2014) expressed that one of the serious problems of listening comprehension is related to the pronunciation of words that is different from the way they appear in print. Due to the fact that the spoken language varies to the form of the written language, the recognition of words that make the oral speech can create some difficulties for students. According to Vandergrift (2007) and Walker (2014), in addition to identify the words despite their unfamiliar pronunciation, students should try to decide which linguistic part belongs to which word. Prosodic features of spoken language like where the stress falls, weak forms and strong forms of words, and intonation also impact the comprehension of oral text.

Vandergrift (2004) and Walker (2014) indicated that oral passages exist in real time and should be processed rapidly and when the passage is over, only a mental representation remains. Listening needs immediate processing to access the spoken input again, making the skill more complex than reading. Students' cultural background knowledge can have an important role in their listening comprehension. A general understanding of the country's culture and its history can facilitate listening processes. Vandergrift (2007) and Walker (2014) declared that listeners can use pragmatic knowledge to make inferences and identify speakers' implied meaning that these should be specifically considered by teachers when teaching listening comprehension. Bloomfield et al. (2010) told that regional accents can impact the spoken message that is understood by the listeners and familiar accents are easier to understand than unfamiliar accents. Buck (2001) mentioned a lot of problems in listening activities like unknown vocabularies, unfamiliar topics, fast speech rate, and unfamiliar accents.

When we produce speech, the vocal organs do not move from sound to sound in a series of separate steps. Instead, speech is a continuously varying process, and sounds continually influence their neighbours (Crystal, 2003). We do not discern speech as discrete units, all the units are integrated and we perceive a holistic representation of the speech signal.

Speech has to be easy to produce but also easy to distinguish, to maintain distinctive linguistic/phonetic aspects. When we talk, the speech sound can be assimilated and reduced without greater misunderstandings because of the redundancy

and context. Some aspects that are of importance are different prosodic aspects and paralinguistic phenomena. Prosody plays a very important role in human-computer interaction as well as in the communication between human beings (Hirschberg, 2002). The more we know of a language, the more we understand, despite great reductions in the speech signal. If we as listeners have limited knowledge of a language, we depend on the speaker leaving as much information as possible in the speech signal.

Trudgill (in McGee, 2009) says that Standard British English pronunciation is usually linked to RP (Received Pronunciation), but the latter is a social accent with no regional features (Rönnerdal and Johansson, 2005), failing to tell what part of the country the speaker comes from (Birds, 2005). On the contrary, SE is the spoken form of English considered to be acceptable by the community (Tioukalias, 2010). Due to the fact that it is the pronunciation type used in institutions such as the government and the law, literacy and education, it seems to be the most prestigious form of English in that country (Tioukalias, 2010). For this reason, it is the pronunciation model taught to foreign learners. It is also referred to as "BBC pronunciation", which seems to be a suitable label too, since it is the accent used on broadcasting. Rönnerdal and Johansson (2005) proposes the term General RP to describe SE as a neutral pronunciation regarding age, occupation and lifestyle of the speaker, but it does not avoid the social implications that the term "RP" carries out.

Melchers and Shaw (2008) argue that any American accent with no regional influences is called Standard American English pronunciation. It is also called American Network English or General American –GA for its initials– (Douglas Sewell, 2005). This is the accent used by the majority of the population in the United States as well as most radio and TV announcers. Contrary to SE, it is widely spoken on many TV series, American films, national news, commercial ads and American radio. It is also the model accent used in teaching English in such part of the world (Central and South American mainly). Being the most widespread accent in the US, Modiano (1996) says that around 70 percent of native speakers in that country speak GA.

An attitude towards accents study was made by Esteki and Rezazadeh in (2009). The study "relies on the assumption that gender differences contribute to the exploitation of a foreign accent while speaking in English. In other words, male and female language learners adopt different attitudes towards recouring to their L1 accent." In recouring to their own accent, such learners reflect their attitude towards the foreign language.

In research of Gender matter, Söderlund et al (2002) found that 61.3% of the students preferred American English. The study shows certain gender differences, with a higher preference for American English among the males: 68.1% of the males and 54.8% of the females preferred American English. Söderlund and Modiano give a possible explanation for the result by referring to the choice of words used in the investigation: young men in general being more interested in technology, computers and American sports, and therefore more exposed to words connected to American English (Söderlund and Modiano 2002:147168).



Moreover, Alftberg (2009) showed that the pupils tend to use American English more than British English, in both vocabulary and pronunciation, and that all of the pupils mixed American and British features. A majority of the pupils had a higher preference for American English, particularly the boys, who also seemed to be more aware of which variety they use, and in general more aware of the differences between British and American English. Both girls and boys use more American alternatives than British alternatives, but there is a gender difference in that the boys select American alternatives to a higher extent (63.4%) than the girls (55.1%), while the girls select British alternatives to a higher extent (44.9%) than the boys (36.6%). The results of this section of the investigation indicate that pupils tend to use American English more often than British English. In 60.8% of the cases American vocabulary was preferred by the pupils.

In Esteki's research (2009), again a major difference in gender is seen, where the boys had a considerably higher preference for AmE (65.2%) than the girls (30%). Most of the girls (70%) did not know which variety they preferred, and some of them did not know the difference between BrE (British English) and AmE (American English), and could consequently not separate them. It seems as if the boys are more aware of the differences between these varieties (even if 26.1% of the boys did not know which variety they preferred). According to Söderlund and Modiano's study in 1999-2000 (2002:163), "a slight difference can be observed between the sexes where the males reached better results in distinguishing the two varieties". This could be explained by the findings in earlier studies, which have shown that boys in general are more interested in and exposed to AmE due to television, the Internet, sports etc (Söderlund and Modiano 2002:152), and this exposure will most likely affect their awareness and attitudes. Möbärg (2002:119) points out that "there is empirical evidence showing a strong positive correlation between media preference and language attitudes". The attitudes towards AmE seem to be strongly affected by media, and consequently closely connected to youth culture. Several of the pupils claimed to prefer AmE because they hear it most on television, and some of them also regarded American films as "better than British films".

There are several studies conducted in the field listening comprehension, especially focusing on investigating speaking style. Adank's (2009) study focused in determining the relative processing cost associated with comprehension of an unfamiliar native accent under adverse listening conditions. In his study, he used two kind of different accents or speech style. In the first experiment, the sentences given were spoken in a familiar native or an unfamiliar native accent, or in two familiar native accents. In second experiment, the sentences were spoken in a familiar or unfamiliar native accent or in a non-native accent. The results showed that the differences between the native accents influenced the speed of language processing under adverse listening conditions and that this processing speed was modulated by the relative familiarity of the listener with the native accent. Furthermore, the results indicated that the processing cost associated with the non-native accent was larger than for the unfamiliar native accent.

In the other hand, Zarin (2013) investigated Bangladeshi English language learners' problems in acquiring listening skills in connection to pronunciation & accents of English and its possible connection to the motivation of learners. There were 255 students of first year undergraduate from twenty universities in Bangladesh were selected as subjects. The findings of the study showed that native accent and pronunciation of English play a critical role in listening skills acquisition process. Moreover, he further found that motivation to learn listening skills among English language learners in Bangladesh is affected by native pronunciation(s) and accent(s) of English.

Recently, another study conducted by Graham (2016) reports on the findings of an investigation into the perceptions held by English students aged 16-18 years regarding listening comprehension in French and how they view the reasons behind their success or lack of it in this skill. The study suggests that listening comprehension is the skill in which students in the post-compulsory phase of education feel they have achieved the least success. The main problems highlighted by learners were dealing adequately with the speed of delivery of texts, making out individual words in a stream of spoken French, and making sense of any words identified. Furthermore, most learners attributed their difficulties in listening to their own supposed low ability in the skill and to the difficulty of the listening tasks and texts set, with little awareness shown regarding the role played by ineffective listening strategies or skill application.

Based on the previous study, there are several research gaps and background which may lead the current study will be different to those previous study. Firstly, the accent or speech style which becomes the main focus of this current study is British and American style, while the previous study were focus to the accent of their native speaker. Secondly, since the study about speech style is still little found in Southeast Sulawesi, therefore it has been decided to conduct the study in Southeast Sulawesi, especially in English Department of Halu Oleo University. Moreover, gender is also considered in this study as one of the subject of research. Lastly, the design of the study focused on investigating the correlation of the variable.

### **3. METHODS**

Correlation method was used in this research. Gall, Gall, and Borg (2007) defined correlational research as the studies in which the purpose is to discover relationships between variables through the use of correlational statistics. Besides, they have stated that correlation study is used to for two major purposes: (1) to explore causal relationship between variables and (2) to predict scores on one variable from research participants' scores on other variables. In this study, the researcher is going to investigate the total variance between the speech style in this case is the accent which is used in the listening materials and the students' listening comprehension and listening preference.

There were two kinds of variable in this research, dependent and independent variable. Listening comprehension (Y) is the dependent variable, and listening preference (X) as the independent variables. The sample of this study was 44 subjects of

first year undergraduate English Department of Halu Oleo University. During the study, the students were given recording of each speech style (British and American). For British English, there were several Receptive Pronunciation audios that will be heard by the students. Meanwhile, some audios of General American were given to students as examples of American English. In order to see whether they understand or not the speech and whether they understand American English better than British English or vice versa. So, the research was conducted in the form of test (listening test) where the students were first given listening of American English then British English in the next day. To determine the students listening preference, the researcher use the questionnaire of preference. This questionnaire adapted from Muhlise Cosgun Ogeyik and Esin Akyay (2009). A preference questionnaire consists of 14 items using Likert scale: strongly agree, agree netral, disagree, and strongly disagree.

#### **4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

In descriptive analysis result of students' listening comprehension for IELTS, the minimum score was 10, maximum score was 70, and mean was 37.61. Meanwhile, in TOEFL test, students' got 50 for the minimum score, maximum score was 85, and mean was 68.64. These result indicated that students got higher score in TOEFL test than in IELTS. It might because students more familiar with TOEFL test than IELTS test. The students acknowledged that TOEFL listening was easier to understand than IELTS.

In students' listening preference, American speech style got higher score than British. Computation of descriptive statistic analysis showed that British got 11 for minimum score, maximum score was 21, and the mean was 17.23. While American speech style had score 27 for its minimum, 35 for maximum score, and the mean was 30.68. It can be seen that students prefer American speech style to British speech style. The results revealed that pronunciation of the speakers and the accent varieties are more important issues for students. The reason why students may not have seen varied accents is that they are generally exposed to American or British English. Although the recently published books give importance to presenting different accents, there may be limited examples in some of the course-books, so students may not realize the differences between the other accents of English and American or British accent.

Correlation analysis showed that there was a significant correlation between students' listening comprehension and their listening preference. The computation result of correlation of students' IELTS score and British speech style showed that correlation coefficient was 0.845 which indicated a very strong correlation. In the other hand, TOEFL score and American speech style had 0.899 for its correlation coefficient. The value showed that there was a high correlation between these two variables.

The correlation analysis between students' listening preference and their gender showed a positive correlation both male and female. Computation result of correlation of listening preference in British speech style for male students the Pearson correlation was 0.831. Meanwhile, their correlation coefficient of listening preference in American speech style was 0.940. These results indicated that male students preferred American speech style to British one.

In line with male students, female students also preferred American speech style to British. It can be seen from correlation coefficient of computation result of correlation of listening preference in British speech style was 0.877 and for American speech style was 0.948.

Both male and female had a superb hear in listening British and American speech style in this current study. However, there is a difference score between both of them. In British speech style, male students were lower than female students in listening. This was also happened in their American speech style where female better than male in listening. It indicated that female students were better in listening than male. Since the correlation coefficient showed a high correlation both male and female, there was no statement that male were good in American and female did not. It is because the value of male and female indicated that American speech style was easier to comprehend than British one.

TOEFL test is a common test to know how good people in their English skills. For fresh students in university might well-known with this rather than IELTS test. The researcher asked the students whether they know about TOEFL and IELTS listening. Most of them said that they ever learnt about TOEFL listening, however, they did not well known with IELTS listening. In other words, they more familiar with TOEFL than IELTS one.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings that have been explained, the writer can conclude as the following:

1. Descriptive analysis result of students' listening comprehension for IELTS, the minimum score was 10, maximum score was 70, and mean was 37.61. Meanwhile, in TOEFL test, students' got 50 for the minimum score, maximum score was 85, and mean was 68.64. These result indicated that students got higher score in TOEFL test than in IELTS. It might because students more familiar with TOEFL test than IELTS test. The students acknowledged that TOEFL listening was easier to understand than IELTS. In students' listening preference, American speech style got higher score than British. Computation of descriptive statistic analysis showed that British got 11 for minimum score, maximum score was 21, and the mean was 17.23. While American speech style had score 27 for its minimum, 35 for maximum score, and the mean was 30.68. It can be seen that students prefer American speech style to British speech style. The computation result of correlation of students' IELTS score and British speech style showed that correlation coefficient was 0.845 which indicated a very strong correlation. In the other hand, TOEFL score and American speech style had 0.899 for its correlation coefficient.
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