

The Effect of Information-Gap Task versus Reasoning-Gap Task on Iranian EFL Learners' Listening Comprehension

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Abstract:

This study aimed at investigating the effect of cognitive tasks namely, reasoning-gap task and information-gap task on listening comprehension among Iranian Intermediate EFL Learners. The researcher chose 60 male and female EFL learners whose homogeneity was determined through administering an Oxford Placement Test (OPT) at the beginning of the study. The participants were divided into two groups: the experimental group which was taught through cognitive tasks, and the control group, which was taught through conventional method of teaching. The instrument utilized in this study was a listening test, the test was used as both the pretest and posttest. A number of independent samples *t* tests were conducted to determine whether there was a significant difference in developing the listening of EFL learners in the two groups and to find the possible significant difference in listening comprehension development of female and male learners through cognitive tasks. The results revealed that cognitive tasks significantly enhanced both male and female EFL learners' listening comprehension in listening comprehension. According to the findings of the study, it can be concluded that cognitive tasks can be a tool for EFL learners to develop their listening comprehension. The finding of this study can be used in the process of curriculum development.

Keywords: Cognitive tasks, information-gap task, reasoning-gap task, listening comprehension.

Introduction:

Listening comprehension is a very vital skill for L2 learners to acquire. The criteria involved in listening are highly important to attain. There is need to pay attention to more prominent activities such as different types of tasks that are designed to help achieve comprehension goals. So many factors, e.g. task-based language teaching, are involved in this issue. These factors can have negative or positive effects on the overall quality of students' listening comprehension performance. In this regard, to show the value of the performance of tasks in L2 classrooms, Nezhad (2009) conducted a study to determine the effectiveness of task types in L2 classes to improve the learners' listening comprehension could be emphasized. The results of such a consideration showed that students taught by the use of different tasks had much more better comprehension of listening than those who were taught by traditional way of teaching listening. The purpose of the present research is to focus on the improvement of listening comprehension of students by using two types of cognitive tasks (information gap and reasoning gap).

Different studies and observations suggest that a large number of EFL university students are not able to read and understand materials in the English language effectively (Valencia & Buly, 2004; Vlack, 2009), which may affect their academic performance. In fact, effective teaching of listening has long been recognized as vital in second language learning (Carrel, 1989). Readers read texts in order to make some sense of the text (Graesser, Singer, & Trabasso, 1994; Nuttall, 2005), and they do so by cognitively interacting with the text (Nuttall, 2005) and by utilizing not only linguistic and background knowledge but also cognitive capabilities such as inferencing during listening (Grabe & Stoller, 2002). Consequently, the ultimate success in listening is the result of both linguistic/conceptual knowledge and readers' cognitive characteristics.

Finding the possible impacts of the performance of cognitive tasks on EFL learners' listening comprehension is the purpose of the present study. In the realm of learners' listening improvement, different cognitive tasks have been studied (e.g. Nezhad & ShokrPour, 2012; Salmani, 2006). It is believed that such different task types cause learners to focus on different characteristics of the text because the demands of tasks are not the same (Joe, 1998). Information-gap task types require participants to express their knowledge on a subject. A

reasoning-gap task is a task which requires the participants to engage in reasoning, such as synthesizing the provided information and deducing new facts in order to perform it successfully. The two task types activate different cognitive strategies. Therefore, the outcomes of the two task types may be different when performed by learners with different cognitive styles (Pica, Young, & Doughty, 1993). Apart from the specific cognitive style that learners carry with them into the learning environment, the type of listening questions they are asked also influences their listening performance. This has been comprehensively addressed by Bachman (2000) under the title of test method facets, suggesting the wide range of variations in test rubrics and procedures that leave impacts on the performance. In fact, the concept of “listening comprehension” has not lent itself well to a clear operational definition so that it has been mostly defined by many measures used in its assessment (Daly, Chafouleas, & Skinner, 2005; Frith&Snowling, 1983; Myles, Hilgenfeld, Barnhill, Griswold, Hagiwara, & Simpson, 2002).

However, most listening comprehension research studies still use only one measure and response form despite the fact that many investigations inform us about the limitations in using one single test in the assessment of listening comprehension (Cutting & Scarborough, 2006; Fletcher, 2006; Pearson & Hamm, 2005; Young, 2005). The present study aimed to see how the development of listening comprehension was affected by task-type mediated by cognitive tasks; the results of this study can shed light on the development of listening comprehension.

Statement of the Problem:

studying history of language teaching, it can be found that different approaches and methods have been developed in order to help learners learn a second/foreign language better. Before the scientific era of language teaching, which began with the emergence of Audiolingualism in the mid20th century, the focus was on teaching grammar and on the ability to translate literary texts. However, this teacher-centered method could not resist the new findings of psychology, linguistics, and educational theory and the field of language teaching gradually proceeded towards more learner-centered approaches and methods. The shifts in the goals of language teaching and the new communicative needs changed the methods and hence the views about the four skills, for instance, listening comprehension, were treated differently in various methods and approaches. Listening was considered a passive skill in some methods and approaches. However, with the emergence of comprehension and communicative approaches,

listening gained prominence and came to be known as an active and meaningful process rather than a passive product. Brown (2001) introduced different techniques for teaching listening comprehension. In spite of all of the techniques and procedures which have been used for teaching listening skill, Iranian learners have serious problems in listening and comprehending texts which have been written in English. The problem with traditional approaches is that they do not consider listening as being purpose-driven. Furthermore, the use of new methodologies in teaching EFL listening is rare in Iran. That is why this study used two different cognitive approaches to teaching listening comprehension, to examine their efficiency, and to compare their effectiveness.

Objectives of the Study:

Based on the problem which is stated above, the purpose of the present study is to determine whether teaching listening to EFL learners through Task-Based Language Teaching, especially cognitive tasks could be influential and particularly useful in EFL listening improvement. Two types of cognitive tasks, i.e. reasoning gap activity and information gap activity, were the focal points of the study. Most of the past studies (e.g. Baddeley, 1992; Dornyei, 2003) calculated correlation coefficients between foreign language cognitive tasks as a whole and performance measures, but they did not examine the impact of cognitive tasks and performance measures. Since this is a multifaceted phenomenon, investigating the effect of cognitive tasks on listening improvement of intermediate EFL learners may be more important than investigating how cognitive tasks overall are related to performance measures. Against this backdrop, the present study focused on cognitive tasks as an affective trait of L2 learners and it investigated the impact of cognitive tasks on listening improvement of Iranian intermediate EFL learners. Thus, in this study, attempts were made to find out the impact of tasks on intermediate Iranian learners of English in EFL classrooms with a focus on cognitive tasks. This was represented in the two research questions of the study that are mentioned in the next part.

Research Questions

1. Does implementing cognitive tasks have any impact on listening comprehension of male intermediate Iranian EFL learners?
2. Does implementing cognitive tasks have any impact on listening comprehension of female intermediate Iranian EFL learners?

Research Hypotheses

Correspondingly, two null research hypotheses were formulated:

1. Implementing cognitive tasks has no impact on listening comprehension of male intermediate Iranian EFL learners.
2. Implementing cognitive tasks has no impact on listening comprehension of female intermediate Iranian EFL learners.

Review of literature:

It is clear that the type and amount of interaction is the determining factor in SLA (Lloret, 2003). TBL brings about the effective interaction desirable for acquisition through structured tasks, collaborative output and relevant feedback. Interaction cannot be achieved effectively in second language classrooms without first determining the forms and structures to be used. Students take part in interactive activities willingly only when the task is defined, that is when they are told what to do and how to do it. Both the 'creation' process and the 'product' are invaluable tools for student-student and teacher-student interaction, which is essential for acquisition (Ellis, 2001). Learners of a second language feel quite restricted while trying to communicate because they feel they must say what is appropriate to the context in a coherent way. The need for interpersonal acceptability poses constraints on them (Batstone, 2002). Therefore, most of them are naturally unwilling to risk the danger of seeming stupid. The most effective way of overcoming such difficulties and inhibitions is to define and limit tasks for second language learners and give them clear instructions about forms they can use. In TBL, learners are also given time for thinking and planning, which is another principle that may erase psychological barriers. In his study on producing / developing task-based materials, Moor (1998) outlines a 'model planning/rehearsal/input-task' cycle in the figure below and suggests that any non-task-based material can be modified into task-based activities. He proposes activities such as "giving short talks, conducting surveys and questionnaires, designing posters or texts to be stuck on the wall and writing or recording class magazines and videos".

Information-Gap Activities:

According to Neu and Reeser (1997), in an information gap activity, each person has some information that the other one does not have, so they start sharing their information to

solve a problem or make decisions on some issues. These types of activities are so helpful and they make all the students speak and communicate in the L2 classroom. Another advantage of information gap activities is that students are in a situation that they have to talk and discuss because they must share their information to accomplish the task. The three information gap activities utilized in this study are as follows:

-Jigsaw:

Jigsaw was originally developed by Eliot Aronson (2007). Essentially, it is a cooperative learning lesson design that takes the place of lecture and each student is responsible for teaching his section to other students.

-Missing:

Information According to Lam Son (2009), students work in pairs. They are both given tables with information missing. What is missing in one partner's table is there on the other partner's table and vice versa. So the students start asking questions from each other to fill out the missed parts of their tables.

-Finding the Differences:

According to Doff (1988), the two students in each pair have identical picture with ten important differences. "They do not look at each other's pictures, but they try to find the differences by describing their pictures" (p. 217).

Reasoning-Gap Activities:

Reasoning-gap activity presupposes deriving some new information from the given information through processes of inference, deduction, practical reasoning, negotiating, working things out in the mind [Prabhu, 1987, p. 46]. Examples are (a) working out a teacher's timetable on the basis of given class timetables, or (b) deciding what course of action is best for a given purpose and within given constraints, or (c) deciding what attractions would be most appropriate on a small island to develop it as a tourist resort and discussing how to publicize it.

Narita (2008) conducted a research at an elementary school in Japan where she taught English as a foreign language. The classes were given lessons and activities in which they experienced realistic communicative situations such as shopping tasks and an interview task. The results showed that many students had a feeling of contentment and strong willingness to continue to study English in the future after completing the tasks.

Noroozi (2012) based on the semantic procedure, investigated the effect of task-based language teaching on the pragmatic competence (Illocutionary force) on the Iranian male and female students. By virtue of gaining a persuasive and forceful ultimate goal of this study 400 language teaching Iranian juniors between 20 and 30 voluntarily took part in this study. They were initially exposed to the proficiency TOEFL test. Those who got over the 70 percent of the scores- 120 male and female subjects- were selected as the subjects of the study. This study subsumes three phases. Phase 1 witnessed a T-test where 60 males and females of the aforementioned subjects were randomly classified into two-30 subject groups. The experimental group was assigned tasks based on illocutionary act measures where the communicative force of the utterances was taken into account and the control group was given tasks based on locutionary act where the well-formedness of the utterances was considered for the period of twelve sessions. As the posttest five native like Iranian Ph.D holders in linguistics who had full command of pragmatic competence in general and speech act theory in particular were hired to interview all the 60 subjects to unravel their differences.

The acquired result revealed that the experimental group was much more versed in pragmatic competence regarding the illocutionary force of speech act theory. Phase 2 was allotted to a correlational study. The researcher intended to look into the degree of correlation between the locutionary and the illocutionary forces. The scores of 30 subjects in illocutionary experimental group were correlated with those of the locutionary control group. The coefficient of correlation demonstrated that there was a negligible positive correlation between the two variables. In phase 3 a 2x2 factorial design was employed where the 120 male and female subjects selected by the TOEFL test were subjected to locutionary and illocutionary act. According to the observed F it was proved that the females outperformed the male subjects in both locutionary and illocutionary acts.

Shoushinasab (2013) conducted a research on the effect of task-based instruction on language learning, she introduced tasks as activities with a purpose or activities towards a purpose. The purpose of her study was to investigate the effects of task-based instruction on the development of different aspects of pragmatic competence. The participants in this study were the intermediate adult students of Ahvaz Gooya Educational and Cultural institute, 50 male and 50 female who were chosen based on their performance on a quick placement test (QPT). The participants were divided into two groups; the control and experimental, experimental group was taught for four weeks using the techniques such as Role-Play, Learning Together and Pair Talk; the control group was taught in the conventional method.

Fatemipour and Nourmohammadi (2014) focused on different information-gap activities, and their effect on learners' willingness to communicate. More specifically, this study examines the effect of jigsaw, missing-information, and finding the differences activities on the learners' willingness to communicate. The obtained results showed that there were significant differences regarding the effects of information-gap activities on learners' willingness to communicate.

Design:

The present study used a quasi-experimental design, i.e. an experiment in which the participants are not assigned to the experimental and control groups at random. Since access to a sizeable number of participants was not feasible, the researcher had to have recourse to an available sample comprising EFL learners. After administering an Oxford Placement Test (OPT), 60 homogenized EFL learners were selected out 86 EFL learners, all of whom were native speakers of Persian. Of the 60 learners, 30 were females and 30 were males with the age range of 16 to 24 years old. These learners formed an experimental group and a control group. The control group received some instruction regarding listening comprehension, whereas the experimental group learners were taught, though under different conditions, to use two types of cognitive tasks, i.e. information tasks and reasoning tasks, during the planning stage of listening. Pretest and posttest results were analyzed and compared to discern whether and to what extent the participants in each group could gain benefit from their specific instruction. The data collection and the training period lasted for seven weeks, including the pretest and posttest sessions. The independent variable was the cognitive tasks (information tasks and reasoning tasks) for listening instruction, whereas the dependent variables was the participants' listening

comprehension. More elaborate information regarding different aspects of the study is provided in the following sections.

Participants:

The participants of the present study were a total of 60 (30 males and 30 females), out of 86 learners who initially participated in this experiment through convenient sampling. They were intermediate level English language learners enrolled for studying English in EFL department at language institute in Iran. Their age range was between 16 and 24 years. The participants' native language was Persian. They had completed the elementary and pre-intermediate level EFL programs in different institutes.

The main reason for starting the present study, besides the researcher's intention, was the great importance and attention that the institute managing board dedicated to the matter. They were interested in doing research about language teaching methodology and whether embarking on methods of teaching like cognitive task-based could improve the learners' achievement and whether the possible difference was worth the timing and budgeting. Therefore, having the support of his respected colleagues and institute managing board, the researcher tried to conduct the study over a period of 7 weeks, listening comprehension via cognitive tasks being the focus of the research.

The first step was then to establish the homogeneity of the participants, so they were chosen from among the learner population who were able to pass the Oxford Placement Test (OPT) with a score between 40 and 60 out of 100. The 60 final participants were those whose scores were within the aforementioned range. The second step was to divide the participants into experimental and control group. Additionally, to determine the effect of gender on listening comprehension, the participants were also supposed to be divided into groups with regard to the number of each sex. Finally, the data of the study could be collected based on the performance of the two groups and then compared.

Comparison is facilitated by various methods of ensuring that the groups being compared are the same or similar; these methods include *random assignment* and sometimes *stratified sampling*. Random assignment ensures that learners have an equal chance of being assigned to the control or treatment group. Stratified random sampling is the division of a population into

exclusive and exhaustive units called. Stratified random sampling is used when the working population is heterogeneous; that is, the working population contains groups of interest that are of unequal size. Because of their unequal size, smaller groups might not be accounted for in simple or systematic random sampling. Typical examples of such groups (strata) are gender, ethnicity, L1, and age. "Operationally, a stratified random sample is taken in the same way as a simple random sample, but the sampling is done separately and independently within each stratum" (Levy & Lemeshow, 1991, p. 99). So in this way, you can be reasonably sure that both groups will be represented in your sample in about the same proportion as you estimate they are represented in the population.

Instruments:

The instruments utilized in this study include an Oxford Placement Test (OPT), a pretest, and a posttest which are described in the following sections. The posttest evaluated the effects of two different teaching methods on learners' listening comprehension. Data for pretest and posttest was collected over a seven-week span.

After dividing the participants into one experimental and one control group, a listening comprehension test functioning as pretest was designed in order to determine the prior knowledge of the participants. The test items were selected from learners' textbook. The pretest was a listening comprehension test prepared by the researcher in the way described below: In order to eradicate possible learners' background knowledge, and also to make sure of learners' unfamiliarity with the to-be-learned subjects, a test of listening was used prior to the experiment. Three listening parts with 27 items were selected from the learners' textbook which was supposed to be covered during the course. The researcher then prepared a 50-item multiple-choice test and did a pilot study on a smaller group. Six items were discarded and some changed mostly because of familiarity of the participants. Therefore, the revised test composed of 21 multiple-choice items that were the same for both groups. In order to determine the reliability of the tests, it was pilot studied on the L2 learners ($n = 14$) who were similar to the learners of the main study in terms of age, sex, and proficiency level. The results of Cronbach's alpha analysis showed that the test was reliable ($r = 0.84$). The content validity of the test was evaluated by three experts who were PhD holders of applied linguistics with more than five years of teaching and testing experience. Finally, the researcher decided to include those items in the pretest for the study. The

time for the pretest was 30 minutes and learners had to answer the questions in multiple choice formats in given time.

The posttest was the same as the pretest consisting of the same 21 items which were the same for the two groups. In order to eliminate the probability of remembering the correct answers of the test, the similar version of pretest with different item arrangement as well as option rearrangement functioning as posttest was used after implementing the treatments of the study in order to detect the listening comprehension of the participants.

Procedure:

In the light of administering an argumentative listening comprehension test, from among male and female learners studying English at language institute of Higher Education, a homogenous sample of EFL learners was selected to serve as the participants of the study. The sample included an experimental group and a control group. As it was pointed out in the section dealing with Participants, the researcher used conventional method of teaching listening for control group and cognitive tasks for the experimental group.

While the control group underwent a conventional listening class where the learners were required to listen and learn meaning of the listening on different topics and provided with the vocabularies, the experimental group was exposed to task-based instruction in the class, and that was cognitive tasks which are two types namely information tasks and reasoning tasks.

Results:

In order to examine the impact of cognitive tasks, i.e., the independent variable, on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' listening comprehension, i.e., the dependent variables, the participants of the study received a pretest. The following tables present the descriptive statistics and the results of the independent samples t-test related to the listening comprehension of the female participants in the pretest. The following table presents descriptive statistics related to participants' pretest scores.

Descriptive Statistics for the Females' Pretest Scores

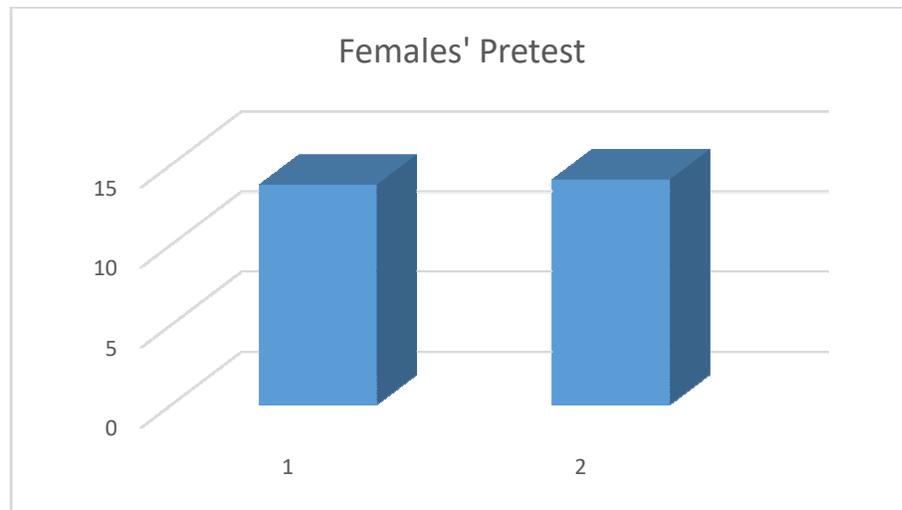
Group		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Female	Control	15	13.7333	1.66762	.43058
Pretest	Experimental	15	14.0667	2.18654	.56456

Although the means indicate that there was no significant difference between the experimental and control group females' pretests scores, in order to make sure that the difference was not statistically significant, an independent samples t-test was conducted. Next table presents the results.

Independent Samples t Test for the Females' Pretest Scores

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Pretest	Equal variances assumed	1.456	.238	-.469	28	.642	-.33333	.71002	-1.78774	1.12107
	Equal variances not assumed			-.469	26.169	.643	-.33333	.71002	-1.79234	1.12567

As the results indicate, there was no significant difference, $t(28) = -.46, p=.64$, between the control group females ($M=13.73, SD=1.66$) and experimental group females ($M=14.06, SD=2.18$) in terms of the listening comprehension in their pretest scores. The following bar graph shows the comparison of Female pretest scores.



Females' Mean Scores on Pretest

In order to examine the impact of cognitive tasks, i.e., the independent variable, on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' listening comprehension, i.e., the dependent variables, the participants of the study received a pretest. The following tables present the descriptive statistics and the results of the independent samples t-test related to the listening comprehension of the male participants in the pretest. The following table presents descriptive statistics related to participants' pretest scores.

Descriptive Statistics for the Males' Pretest Scores

Group		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Female	Control	15	13.6667	1.83874	.47476
Pretest	Experimental	15	13.6000	1.76473	.45565

Although the means indicate that there was no significant difference between the experimental and control group females' pretests scores, in order to make sure that the difference was not statistically significant, an independent samples t-test was conducted. Next table presents the results.

Independent Samples t Test for the Males' Pretest Scores

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
										Lower	Upper
Pretest	Equal variances assumed	.119	.733	.101	28	.920	.06667	.65804	-1.28127	1.41460	
	Equal variances not assumed			.101	27.953	.920	.06667	.65804	-1.28137	1.41470	

As the results indicate, there was no significant difference, $t(28) = .10$, $p=.92$, between the control group males ($M=13.66$, $SD=1.83$) and experimental group males ($M=13.60$, $SD=1.76$) in terms of the listening comprehension in their pretest scores. The following bar graph shows the comparison of males' pretest scores.



Males' Mean Scores on Pretest

As mentioned before, in order to examine the impact of cognitive tasks, i.e., the independent variable, and listening comprehension in Iranian intermediate EFL learners, i.e., the dependent variable, the participants of the study received a listening comprehension test at the end of the study which were considered as the posttest. The following tables show the information about each group in terms of number, mean, standard deviation, and standard error mean, respectively which is related to listening comprehension of the participants in the posttest.

Next table presents descriptive statistics for the listening comprehension of the participants in the posttest.

Descriptive Statistics for the Females' Posttest Scores

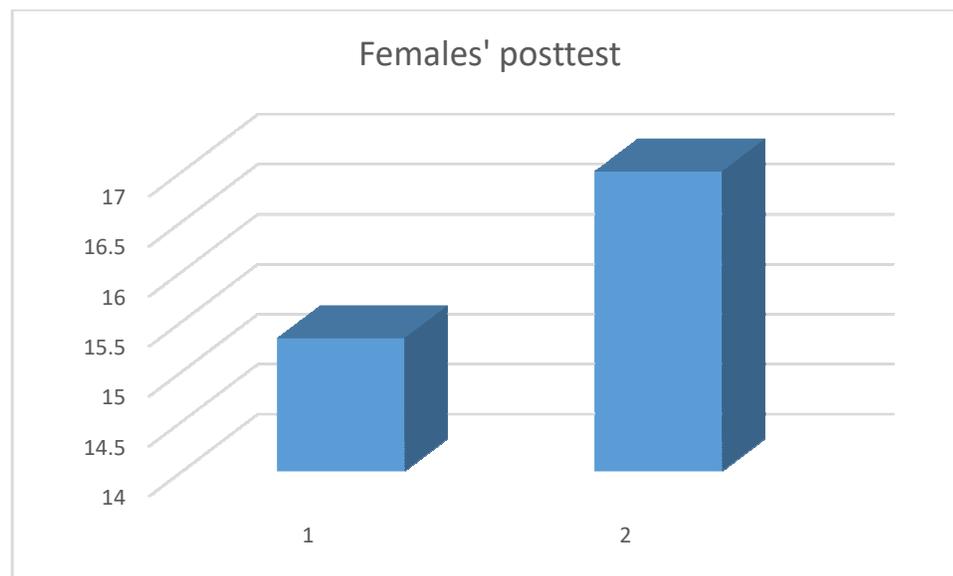
	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Posttest	Control	15	15.3333	1.49603	.38627
	Experimental	15	17.0000	1.77281	.45774

Although the means indicate that there was a significant difference between the performance of the experimental group females and that of the control group females, in order to make sure that the difference was statistically significant, an independent samples t-test was conducted. The table below indicates the results.

Independent Samples t Test for the Females' Posttest Scores

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower		Upper
Posttest	Equal variances assumed	.882	.356	-2.78	28	.010	-1.66667	.59894	-2.893	-.439
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.78	27.230	.010	-1.66667	.59894	-2.895	-.438

As shown in table there was a highly significant difference, $t(28) = -2.78$, $P < .05$, between the scores of the female participants in the control group ($M = 15.33$, $SD = 1.49$) and that of females in the experimental group ($M = 17$, $SD = 1.77$) in terms of the listening comprehension. The results help to answer the first research questions. As the results indicate, the answer to this question is positive. In fact, cognitive tasks, the independent variable, did make a difference in listening comprehension among Iranian intermediate EFL learners ($.01 > .05$). The following bar graph display the mean scores of females in posttest.



Females' Mean Scores on Posttest

The second and research questions of this study aimed to explore whether cognitive tasks through which students were taught had any significant impact on the listening comprehension of Iranian male EFL learners. To achieve this end, right at the outset of the study, the posttest scores of male participants in the experimental and control groups were compared via an independent samples t-test in order to make certain the two groups has a significant difference in regard to listening comprehension. The results of the analyses are presented below.

Descriptive Statistics for Males' Posttest Scores

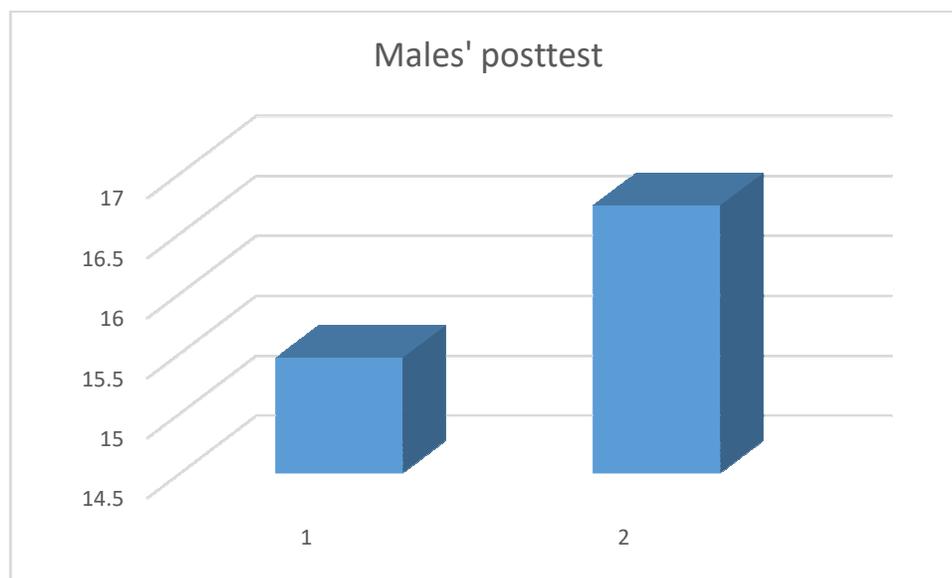
	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Delayed Posttest	Control	15	15.4667	1.84649	.47676
	Experimental	15	16.7333	1.16292	.30026

On the posttest, the mean score of male participants in the experimental group (M = 16.73) was greater than that of male participants in the control group (M = 15.46). The following table shows that this difference between the two mean scores was statistically significant.

Independent Samples t Test for the Males' Posttest Scores

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper	
Delayed Posttest	Equal variances assumed	1.467	.236	-2.248	28	.033	-1.26667	.56344	-2.420	-.112
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.248	23.596	.034	-1.26667	.56344	-2.430	-.102

The difference between the mean scores of the two groups on the delayed posttest shows statistical significance since the Sig. (2-tailed) value was found to be less than the significance level (.03 > .05). The figure below shows the significant difference which the statistical analysis has already proved.



Females' Mean Scores on Posttest

As the result of statistical analysis showed both male and female participants in the experimental group who received cognitive task as the treatment outperformed the male and female participant in the control group.

Discussion:

The findings of this study showed that the experimental group outperformed the control group in listening comprehension. Lots of other studies have confirmed this result of our study. As mentioned in literature Narita (2008) found that using tasks helped EFL learners to develop their language learning and have a better understanding of the language. Also Noroozi (2012) showed that target language subtitles can also facilitate foreign language speech perception, on the other hand he came up with the idea that tasks appeared to create a better use and variety of speech acts.

Similarly Joen and Hahn (2006) in their study on Korean learners showed that target language activities within cognitive tasks can also help learners to overcome their lack of confidence and to make them more motivated. A very close investigation to the present study was conducted by Fatemipour and Nourmohammadi (2014) which has been mentioned in Chapter Two; they focused on cognitive tasks and the result showed also better performance and learning for the learning which is in line with the result find in our study. It is also found in their study that they are having a better willingness and to promote their level of proficiency. It seemed to be the result of using such activities which are more learner centered and less anxiety would exist in their learning process. Therefore, argumentatively the use of tasks in general and cognitive tasks in particular may be effective in both learners' performance and motivation in a positive way.

Conclusion:

Cognitive tasks have a wonderful and significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' listening comprehension. By having activities like cognitive tasks namely, information-gap task and reasoning-gap task, learners try to do think more critically and improve their learning and the way they focus specially in listening comprehension activities in the class would be more systematic and their learning process would be developed in this way.

Pearson (1983) argue that listening comprehension is a need for language proficiency and it may be the first step in this regard, and the it is controlling different skills by the cognitive process, the present study also showed that this cognitive process can be better controlled by the use of cognitive tasks. According to Cohen (1996) learning and cognition are not separable in doing activities in which knowledge is developed and deployed. Neuman and Koskinen (1992, p. 96) argue that the combination between the visuals and the audio material can help children establish relationships between words and meaning, with the contextual clues provided in the visual channel thus facilitating vocabulary acquisition. Cognitive tasks have the same clues and facilitations accordingly.

Pedagogical Implication:

The main implication of this study is that cognitive tasks can be used as a helpful way to draw learners' attention to the correct form of the sounds and oral production. This study is probably to draw language teachers' and researchers' attention to the effect of cognitive tasks while the learners are involved in learning a foreign language. In fact, this kind of input plays a very critical role in learning and teaching a foreign or second language. Also, Chik (2014) suggested that more technologically aided activities in language learning dimensions mediated learning autonomously and from community and has pedagogical implication in L2 learning.

Cognitive tasks have an effective role in the successful and better Listening enhancement of EFL learners. This kind of task can play an important role both on language accuracy and fluency. EFL teachers and other stakeholders in Iran should become aware of the impact of cognitive tasks on foreign language learning in order to be contented to apply it more in their learners' learning process. In this study, the idea that cognitive tasks can affect foreign language learning in a positive way was proven. In this vein, analyzing the effect of them on the aural performance of Iranian EFL learners to identify its positive or negative effects would provide the teachers and the learners with tentative models of learning in correct listening comprehension patterns.

Whereas the majority of previous studies on cognitive tasks have investigated the effect of them on learning L2 listening, the present study has attempted to investigate the effect of cognitive tasks on listening comprehension.

Native like speaking and its comprehension should be highlighted while teaching or learning a target language. Since language learners need to speak in the target language it is a

necessity to listen and understand the target system of pronunciation. Thus, this thesis might be found useful for all those interested in teaching foreign languages especially listening class activities.

Practitioners who work on developing language materials are also welcome to include explicit exercises on listening to use tasks specifically cognitive tasks. In this way, learners can make way not only in better comprehension of the sounds they encounter but also in to be familiar with the correct pronunciation of them.

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