

The Effect of Pictorial and Non-Pictorial Listening Tasks on Improving Iranian EFL Listeners' Comprehension

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Abstract

The main goal of the present study was to investigate the possible advantages of using pictorial listening tasks to improve Iranian EFL listeners' listening comprehension over non-pictorial listening tasks, and to probe the relationship between the use of pictorial listening tasks and improvement of the Iranian EFL learners' listening comprehension at two levels of proficiency, namely, elementary and upper-intermediate. The study consisted of two groups at each level of proficiency, including one experimental and one control group. A pretest was administered in order to provide the researcher with necessary information about the learners' previously known listening ability. Then, the experimental group had the chance to see some related pictures while listening to the same audio file that the subjects in the control group were exposed to. None of the control group members received any pictorial assistance, though. Finally, the results were statistically analyzed. The analysis revealed that pictorial assistance did help those who were in the experimental group as the members in the experimental group over those who were in the control group. The findings of the current study could be useful to EFL teachers, test designers and coursebook writers.

Keywords: Comprehension, Listening, Listening comprehension, Pictorial assistance, Picture

INTRODUCTION

It is important for English as a Foreign language (EFL) instructors and teachers to pay a thorough attention to the improvement of the learners' both receptive and productive skills. Listening which is considered as one of the most important language skills needs to be taught and enhanced via different effective language teaching methods. It is notable that language skills could be developed by different learners in different ways, and listening skill is no exception. According to Nation (2009), listening is naturally the foundation of speaking and the early phase of first language acquisition and naturalistic acquisition of other languages. So, the development of listening skill has an important role on the development of other skills. As Vandergrift (2011) stated "Listening comprehension might be the language skill that is the most difficult to investigate, hence the least understood in second language research" (p. 160). This can be explained by a

number of variables, since listening skill engages many multifaceted processes on different levels and it also involves both linguistic and non-linguistic knowledge.

One way to provide paralinguistic or non-linguistic cues is through Pictorial Listening tasks that is a new technique used especially during the recent decade during which digital listening has been created to assist both test takers and students to comprehend more effectively; it is a technique which is believed to enhance and improve listeners' listening ability and comprehension, as asserted, for example, by Canning-Wilson (2000), Jones (2003) and Sueyoshi and Hardison (2005). Visual cues, or visual aids, refer to "any visual material that teachers may use to help learners with comprehension, for example pictures, subtitles and video" (Jones, 2003, p. 43). However, some researchers, Rubin (1994) for example, still argued that there is not enough evidence to prove that visual cues facilitate listening comprehension. On the other hand, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, there has been little attention paid to use pictorial listening tasks in Iranian EFL context. Therefore, the main goal of the present study is to probe the relationship between using pictorial tasks and the subjects' listening comprehension being improved among Iranian EFL learners at two levels of proficiency namely elementary and upper-intermediate.

As listening skill is considered as one of the major language skills, and since, as Feyten (1991) claimed, people spend more than 45% of their communication time listening, this skill must be much more emphasized by the language teachers. The importance of the role of L₂ listening skill in education leads the researchers to investigate the possible relationships between cognitive skills and listening skill improvement. Moran (2005) commented that the level of listening comprehension is lower compared to other skills. It has been evidenced that listening comprehension requires more exposure since learners are used to listening to the modified input that teachers and textbooks provide rather than the authentic input from native speakers of the target language. According to Vandergrift (2011), listening is a complex skill, which engages many simultaneous processes on various levels and involves a combination of linguistic and non-linguistic knowledge. Despite the importance of listening skill in learning a foreign language, most of the EFL learners feel unable to comprehend the entire amount of what they hear and this may lead to misunderstanding during communication. This lack of full ability to comprehend the listening materials is really distressing during listening comprehension tests and learners are expected to improve their listening skill and master the required strategies in dealing with any piece of listening.

Numerous studies have been published in the field of listening comprehension strategies, for example Rubin (1990), Rost and Ross (1991), Bacon (1992), and Vogely (1995). Vandergrift (2011) also commented on strategies and points out that they might help learners to adjust their listening, for example by focusing on the context instead of details. In case of the effect of visual cues in L₂ listening comprehension, there are many researches carried out, such as the studies done by Chung (1999), Ginther (2002), and Jones (2003), which support the effectiveness of visual cues on listening comprehension. However, the related literature lacks the studies about the effect of different listening tasks on the improvement of listening comprehension. Thus, the present study attempts

to investigate the effect of pictorial and non-pictorial listening tasks on improving listening comprehension of EFL learners in Iran.

Since listening is considered as an important way of getting information, or comprehensible input, and due to the difficulties that second and foreign language learners might encounter while listening that hinder their listening comprehension, finding a way to enhance this skill seems to be vital. Using pictures has always been a system to convey meaning all through mankind history. The incorporation of pictures and visual cues on the design and implementation of listening comprehension tasks promotes the use of listening strategies throughout tasks' stages. Additionally, learners' consciousness about facing listening tasks is modified since the awareness on the use of strategies increases confidence and motivates active participation. Hence, learners can use images as a guide to follow the thread of audio recordings.

The significance of the study lies in the fact that language researchers and scholars have been concerned with finding the most effective ways of enhancing EFL/ESL learners' listening comprehension. The outcomes of the study can be used by EFL teachers and learners in improving listening comprehension and finding new and applicable ways of teaching this skill.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESES

The research questions and hypotheses formulated to the present study were as the following.

Q 1: Does pictorial assistance lead to an improvement in the Iranian EFL learners listening comprehension at the elementary level?

Q 2: Does pictorial assistance lead to an improvement in the Iranian EFL learners listening comprehension at the upper-Intermediate level?

Null hypothesis 1: Pictorial assistance doesn't lead to an improvement in the Iranian EFL learner's listening comprehension at the elementary level.

Null hypothesis 2: Pictorial assistance doesn't lead to an improvement in the Iranian EFL learner's listening comprehension at the upper-Intermediate level.

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

Importance of Listening Skill in EFL Contexts

Listening is a functioning method of comprehension and constructing meaning from both verbal and non-verbal texts (Nunan, 1999). Therefore, it ought not be named as an inactive expertise. Notwithstanding the reality that it is perceived crucial to listen to second or foreign language (Nasri, Namaziandost, & Akbari, 2019), there is a deficiency of understanding the most proficient method to generate listening ability among students and teachers (Namaziandost & Nasri, 2019).

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2001) defined listening comprehension as an activity during which a learner "receives and processes a spoken input produced by one or more speakers" (p. 65). As Zhang (2009) stated, "listening is

motivated by the need to get messages out of what is heard” (p. 195). Zhang also stated that EFL learners hear the target language in contexts, thus they can understand the meaning clearly since the input they receive “has enough ‘old’ language that the student already knows and makes enough sense in the context for the new language to be understood and absorbed” (p. 195).

Visual Aids to Facilitate Listening Comprehension

Pictures help learners to comprehend and retain texts and listening. They also activate learners’ schematic knowledge (background knowledge) and raises noticing by motivating listeners. EFL/ESL teachers and researchers have always been trying to investigate the most effective ways in order to foster language learning and motivate learners to learn a foreign or a second language.

As Thao (2003) pointed out, one way to provide learners with the target language is through audio materials. He also stated that teachers must put in mind that using modified audio material is not helpful for the learners, since it is simplified and unrealistic. The audio material which is selected should also be motivating and encouraging (Richards, 2001). Therefore, in order to enhance learners’ motivation language instructors can benefit using some visual materials in the learning environment (Jahangard, 2007). Woon Kim (2003) also stated that “Additional information provided through visual images may enhance second language learners’ comprehension of the spoken message” (51). Language teachers can utilize a great number of resources such as pictures, graphic organizers, or handmade materials in order to provide meaningful input that is compatible with learners’ interest and cultural background. Hence, it is claimed that a listening task, which includes other resources like pictures, or any other visual aids, can enhance learners’ motivation which helps them pay more attention to the input they receive. This, in its turn, empowers comprehension and understanding (Gallego, Palacio, & Tasama, 2009).

Nowadays, the usage of audio-visual aids has risen significantly in language education. Ahmad (2013) denoted to some learning resources that can be regarded as wide media helps via: television programs, video films, movies, synchronized sound slide projectors, PCs and PC instructions helped. Moreover, Asokhia (2009) formed a compound word from sound and visual that is the term different media. Sound materials indicate those that can be heard and recorded in documents, tapes or CDs of computerized sound. For an ESL study classroom, every recorded exchange, speech, or hearing English can be sound material. Visuals are materials that can be seen as images at that stage, blurbs, illustrations, recordings, diagrams, streak cards and obviously films.

Visual aids or cues such as pictures and videos may be a means of helping second language learners’ listening comprehension. Based on the content of the spoken input or on the learners’ level of language proficiency and from a schematic point of view, visual images may not be necessary components of listening comprehension, but may only help learners with lower levels of proficiency because of their incomplete knowledge of the target language to use suitable schemata for better prediction, recognition and integration of the new knowledge (Won Kim, 2003).

Empirical Studies

Geranmayeh Jourkouye and Vahdani (2013) conducted a quasi-experimental study among Iranian intermediate EFL learners in order to investigate the impact of visual input enhancement on learners' listening comprehension ability. This study was carried out among 90 participants who were randomly assigned to control and experimental group. The learners in experimental group received treatment based on visual input enhancement during seven sessions. They later, analyzed learners' listening comprehension scores of pre and post tests and the findings revealed that learner's listening comprehension ability was improved when they were provided with visual input enhancement.

Kretsai (2014) examined the effect of using video materials to teach college understudies listening skills. The motivations behind this examination were: (1) promoting the listening skills of university understudies focusing English with the use of video materials, and (2) assessing the demeanors of understudies towards the use of video materials to show listening skills. At Thanks in University, Thailand, the participants of this inquiry were 41 first-year English true understudies in the second semester of the academic year 2012. They were selected by uneven fundamental examination. The examination was conducted over 20 periods of instruction. In this examination, the one-bunch pretest-posttest setup was performed. The outcomes demonstrated the understudies' English listening cognizance capacity expanded essentially subsequent to learning with recordings and understudies had uplifting frames of mind towards utilizing recordings in showing listening aptitudes.

METHODOLOGY

Design of the Study

A quasi-experimental design was applied in the present study since in this research the subjects were randomly selected and assigned in to two different groups based on their level of proficiency, namely the elementary and the upper-intermediate groups. They were then randomly divided into two other groups, the experimental and the control groups.

Participants

A number of 97 male and female adult Iranian EFL students in elementary and upper-intermediate levels of proficiency from the Jihad-e-Daneshgahi language institute were randomly selected and divided into 4 separate groups. There were a control upper-intermediate, a control elementary, an experimental upper-intermediate, and an experimental elementary group, each with 20-26 subjects in them. They were exposed to six listening texts, bearing in mind that those in the experimental groups will have the added assistance of listening to the same text while seeing some related pictures; this is what we called pictorial assistance here.

There were male and female subjects with the age range of 10-20 studying English in the Jihad-e-Daneshgahi language institute. They were divided into four groups mentioned above. Six different elementary listening comprehension tests were administered to all

the subjects in both the elementary experimental and the elementary control groups. It happened three times a week seeing through one test each time. Previous to the onset of the listening, all the subjects were asked to read the related comprehension questions to make sure they understood all the questions. All the members in both the experimental and control groups were given the same text to listen to, while those in the experimental group had the added assistance of the related pictures before their eyes while listening; this we called pictorial assistance. The control group, though, only listened to the text without pictorial assistance. Both groups were then asked to answer the related comprehension questions.

This same course of events was applied to those in the upper-intermediate levels, but the texts were chosen from an upper-intermediate level. Both experimental and control groups in both levels of proficiency had enough time to answer the related questions later on without having the chance to listen to the text again. All the members had the chance to look at the questions during the listening time selected.

Context of the Study

The present study was administrated in the Jihad-e-Daneshgahi Language Institute where students were classified into classes based on two factors namely age and learners' background knowledge of language. All the subjects were those from a course called elementary and upper-intermediate. Books used in this research were Interchange series (Richards, 2005).

Materials

Six listening comprehension tests were presented to all the subjects in both the elementary experimental and the elementary control groups. The experimental group, as indicated above, was provided with pictorial assistance. The CD was played for the subjects in the experimental group to listen to while seeing some related pictures on PowerPoint slides using a computer. This was supposed to help the subjects comprehend the text better and more competently. The texts were all spoken by native speakers of English. This was done to ensure that all the words were pronounced correctly.

Another six listening tests were also given to those in both the upper-intermediate experimental and the upper-intermediate control groups. These tests were selected from interchange movie book. The same process was applied to the upper-intermediate groups as it was done for the elementary groups.

Procedure

First, the movie was converted into audio files. Then pictures were taken by the computer from the movie and added to the audio files. All this combination was then changed into PowerPoint slide form such that when the audio files started, pictures would come one after another in time with the related texts of those pictures being played.

Before the onset of the study, the subjects were divided into two different levels of high and low proficiency each containing 48-49 students; the homogeneity and level identification of the learners was already confirmed by the institute and acceptable

enough for the purposes of research. Based on their levels, the students were then divided into two control groups and two experimental groups.

Three times a week, one listening test from two different sources was given to all the subjects in all the four groups. Those in the experimental groups were provided with the added assistance of some related pictures while listening to the text. All the subjects were given a set of 10 comprehension questions about the audio text played for them taken from the book. The process was repeated six times to ensure that there was enough reliable data to rely on. The scores were analyzed as described earlier to answer the research questions. For the purposes of this particular study, those in the experimental groups who had the chance to see the related pictures while listening to the text were expected to outshine those who did not have this chance.

RESULTS

Descriptive Analysis of the Data

To initiate with, in this section, descriptive statistics are presented for all the four groups either in elementary or upper-intermediate levels of proficiency. The following descriptive statistics has two functions: (1) it provides the researcher with an accurate explanation of the characteristics of the score distribution, and (2) the basis for further statistical analyses are formed in order to investigate the similarities and differences between and among sets of scores (Bachman, 2004).

Frequency Distribution of Listening Comprehension Scores of the Elementary Subjects in Both Experimental and Control Groups

As mentioned in details in Methodology, a set of listening comprehension tests were given to all the members in the elementary groups. However, those in the experimental group were also given the chance to make use of pictorial assistance while listening. The frequency distribution of elementary subjects' listening comprehension scores in the experimental group is illustrated in Table 1 and Figure 1 below.

Table 1. Frequency Distribution of Elementary Participants' Listening Comprehension Scores in the Experimental Group

Elementary-Experimental		
N	Valid	23
	Missing	0
Mean		7.1239
Std. Deviation		.85089
Skewness		.759
Std. Error of Skewness		.481
Range		3.66
Minimum		5.67
Maximum		9.33

Based on the data presented in Table 1, the mean score of elementary subjects' listening comprehension scores in the experimental group is 7.12 with the standard deviation of 0.85 and the skewness of 0.75. The lowest score in this group is 5.67 and the highest score is 9.33.

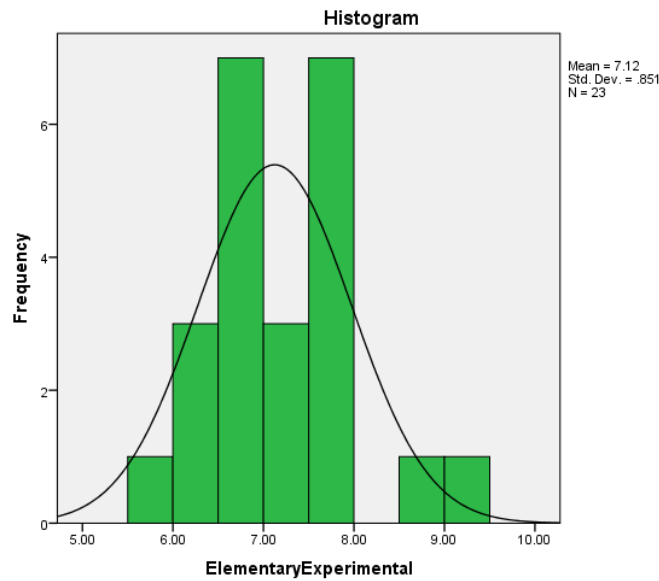


Figure 1: Frequency Distribution of Elementary Subjects' Listening Comprehension Scores in the Experimental Group

Table 2, on the other hand, illustrates the frequency distribution of the elementary listening comprehension scores of the control group.

Table 2. Frequency Distribution of Elementary Subjects' Listening Comprehension Scores in the Control Group

Elementary-Control		
N	Valid	26
	Missing	0
Mean	5.8462	
Std. Deviation	.71316	
Skewness	.368	
Std. Error of Skewness	.456	
Range	3.00	
Minimum	4.50	
Maximum	7.50	

According to the data presented in Table 2, the mean score of elementary subjects' listening comprehension scores in the control group is 5.85 with the standard deviation of 0.71 and the skewness of 0.36 while the highest score is 7.50 and the lowest score in this group is 4.50. The Figure 2 is a better representative of the data mentioned above.

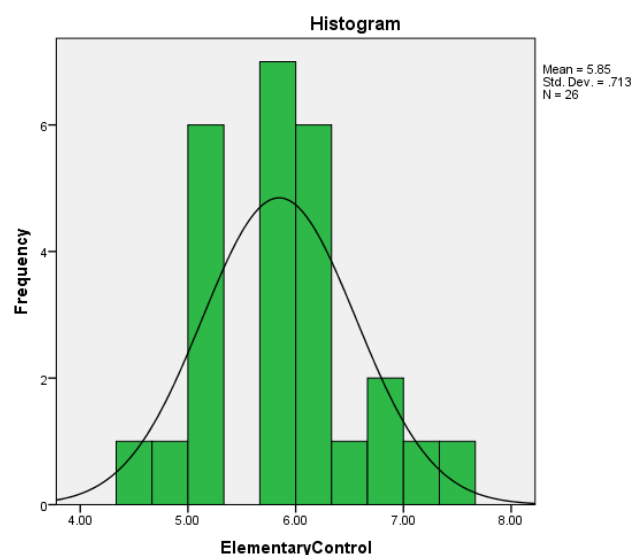


Figure 2: Frequency Distribution of Elementary Subjects' Listening Comprehension Scores in the Control Group

Frequency Distribution of Listening Comprehension Score of the Upper-Intermediate Subjects in Both Experimental and Control Groups

Another set of listening comprehension tests were also given to the subjects in the upper-intermediate groups following exactly the same structure as in the elementary group. The frequency distribution of upper-intermediate subjects' listening comprehension scores in the experimental group is shown in Table 3 and Figure 3 below.

Table 3. Frequency Distribution of Upper-Intermediate Subjects' Listening Comprehension Scores in the Experimental Group

Upper-Intermediate- Experimental		
N	Valid	26
	Missing	0
Mean	7.3654	
Std. Deviation	.44493	
Skewness	-.527	
Std. Error of Skewness	.456	
Range	1.67	
Minimum	6.33	
Maximum	8.00	

According to the data presented in Table 3, the mean score of upper-intermediate subjects' listening comprehension scores in the experimental group is 7.36 with the standard deviation of 0.44 and the skewness of -0.52 while the lowest score is 6.33 and the highest score in this group is 8.00.

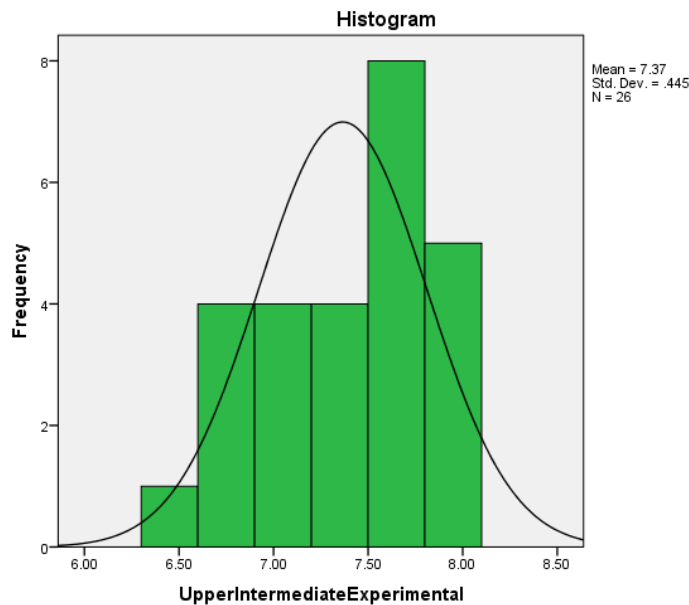


Figure 1: Frequency Distribution of Upper-Intermediate Subjects' Listening Comprehension Scores in the Experimental Group

An illustration of the frequency distribution of the upper-intermediate listening comprehension scores of the control group is also shown in Table 4 and Figure 4.

Table 4. Frequency Distribution of Upper-Intermediate Subjects' Listening Comprehension Scores in the Control Group

Upper-Intermediate-Control		
N	Valid	22
	Missing	0
Mean		5.6818
Std. Deviation		.51432
Skewness		.285
Std. Error of Skewness		.491
Range		2.00
Minimum		4.83
Maximum		6.83

According to the data presented in Table 4, the mean score of upper-intermediate subjects' listening comprehension scores in the control group is 5.68 with the standard deviation of 0.51 and the skewness of 0.28 while the lowest score is 4.83 and the highest score in this group is 6.83.

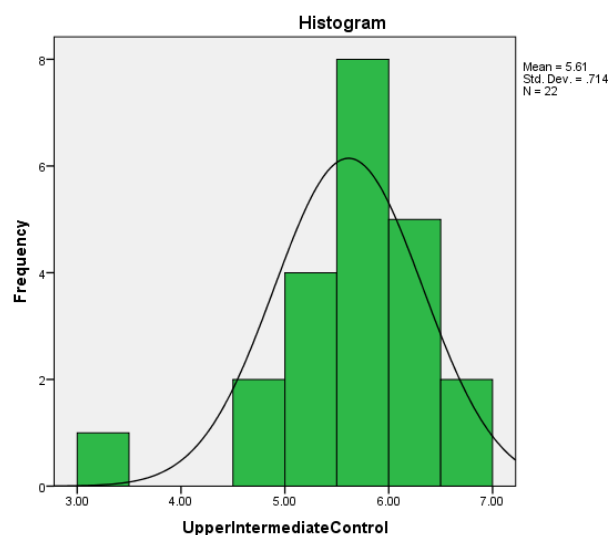


Figure 4: Frequency Distribution of Upper-Intermediate Subjects' Listening Comprehension Scores in the Control Group

Data Analysis

In this study, One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was administered in order to test if the variables distribution is normal. Also, independent sample T-test was used to find the answers to the research questions. The results of the mentioned One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov are discussed in the following section.

Analysis of Normal Distribution of Listening Scores in the Elementary Groups

To test the normal distribution of the listening scores in both groups, the Shapiro-Wilk test was used which is typically tested at the $\alpha = 0.05$ level of significance. The Shapiro-Wilk test is a statistical test of the hypothesis that sample data have been drawn from a normally distributed population. From this test, the p-value is compared to the a priori alpha level (level of significance for the statistic) – and a determination is made as to reject ($p < \alpha$) or retain ($p > \alpha$) the null hypothesis. Table 5 presents the results of the normality test.

Table 5. The Results of the Shapiro-Wilk Normality Test for Listening Test Scores in Two Elementary Groups

	Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.
Elementary-Control	.969	23	.666
Elementary-Experimental	.949	23	.273

Given that the p-value is higher than 0.05 for both sets of scores (i.e., $p=0.67$ for the control group and $p=0.27$ for the control group), it can be concluded that listening test scores in each group are normally distributed and the normality assumption was met for this sample. Therefore, a parametric test (independent samples t-test) was applied later on.

Analysis of Normal Distribution of Listening Scores in the Upper-Intermediate Groups

Similar to the elementary groups, another Shapiro-Wilk test was used to check the normal distribution of the listening scores in the upper-intermediate groups results of which are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. The Results of the Shapiro-Wilk Normality Test for Listening Test Scores in Two Upper-Intermediate Groups

	Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.
Upper-Intermediate-Control	.975	22	.821
Upper-Intermediate-Experimental	.954	22	.386

Based on the data presented in Table 4.6, the subjects' listening comprehension scores are normally distributed since $p=0.82$ for the control group and $p=0.82$ for the experimental group which both are more than 0.05.

Data Analysis for the First Question

The first research question aimed at investigating the possible effectiveness of listening to a text and having pictorial assistance related to that text at the same time in order to enhance the listening comprehension in elementary adult learners in Iranian EFL context. In order to answer the first research question and with regard to the normal distribution of the scores in both of the elementary group, an independent samples t-test was run. Table 7 reports the results of this analysis.

Table 7. Listening Scores Differences in Elementary Experimental and Control Groups

		Group Statistics								
		Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean				
Elementary	Experimental		23	7.1239	.85089	.17742				
	Control		26	5.8462	.71316	.13986				
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				t-test for Equality of Means				
								95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Elementary	Equal variances assumed	1.211	.277	5.718	47	.000	1.27776	.22346	.82821	1.72731
	Equal variances not assumed			5.656	43.168	.000	1.27776	.22592	.82220	1.73332

The Levene's Test for equal variances yields a p-value of 0.28. This means that the difference between the variances in two groups is statistically insignificant and the statistics in the first row should be used. In the first row, the p-value approaches to 0 which is less than 0.05 and indicates that there is a significant difference between listening scores of the subjects in the experimental and control groups. The 95% confidence interval for the difference between two means is (0.83, 1.73). The mean score of the control group is 5.85 while the mean score of the experimental group is 7.12, which is significantly more than the mean score of the control group and indicates that the experimental group outperformed the control group in terms of listening comprehension. Therefore, the first alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Data Analysis for the Second Question

The second research question dealt with finding out the efficiency of using pictorial assistance while listening to a text to enhance the listening comprehension among upper-intermediate adult learners in Iranian EFL context. Having insured about the normal distribution of the scores in both of the upper-intermediate groups, another independent samples t-test was run to answer the second research question the results of which are presented in Table 8.

Table 8. Listening Scores Differences in Upper-Intermediate Experimental and Control Groups

		Group Statistics							
		Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean			
Upper-Intermediate	Experimental		26	7.3654	.44493	.08726			
	Control		22	5.6132	.71413	.15225			

		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
Upper-Intermediate	Equal variances assumed	1.787	.188	10.367	46	.000	1.75220	.16901	1.41200	2.09241
	Equal variances not assumed			9.985	33.981	.000	1.75220	.17548	1.39557	2.10884

The Levene's Test for equal variances indicates a p-value of 0.19, which is more than 0.05 and reveals that the difference between the variances in two groups is not statistically significant and the statistics in the first row should be used. In the first row, the p-value approaches to 0 which is less than 0.05 and indicates that there is a significant difference between listening scores of the subjects in the experimental and control groups. The 95%

confidence interval for the difference between two means is (1.41, 2.09). The mean score of the experimental group is 7.36, which is significantly more than the mean score of the control group, that is, 5.61. It means that the experimental group had a better performance than the control group in terms of listening comprehension. Therefore, the second alternative hypothesis is accepted.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Research Question One

Does pictorial assistance lead to an improvement in the Iranian EFL learners listening comprehension at the elementary level?

The subjects at elementary level were divided into two groups, the experimental group and the control group. The outcomes obtained after the subjects in experimental group were exposed to pictures as a means of listening comprehension facilitator indicated that there are significant differences between the two groups' listening comprehension scores. Those subjects in the experimental group, who had the chance to listen to the text while looking at pictures related to the context, significantly outperformed those in the control group who did not have this opportunity.

The results of the present study are in line with other researchers who have done the same study in other parts of the world and based on their own reasons and hypotheses. The research findings of this study are in line with Arosenius's (2011) research carried out among Swedish upper secondary school students. He, in his study, assigned 58 learners into two groups, experimental and control groups. Then the students in experimental group were exposed to a listening while watching the video related to it. The results of this study showed that the subjects in experimental group outperformed the subjects in control group regarding their listening comprehension scores.

The findings also confirm the Won Kim's (2003) research findings who investigated the positive effect of visual cues on learners' listening comprehension ability. In his study, Won Kim (2003) tried to investigate the effects of various presentations using pictures and video cues in order to improve listening comprehension of English news programs among 687 EFL/ESL Korean secondary students. "Comparisons on listening comprehension showed better performance with visual cues than with no visual cues. Listening comprehension with video cues was more successful than that with pictures" (Won Kim, 2003, p. 6).

Levin and Berry (1980) also reached the same results. In their study among college students, they found out that the students who were exposed to visual cues while listening obtained better listening comprehension scores than the students in other groups.

Research Question Two

Does pictorial assistance lead to an improvement in the Iranian EFL learners listening comprehension at the upper-Intermediate level?

As it was mentioned earlier using pictures as a means of listening comprehension facilitator had a significantly positive effect on Iranian EFL students at elementary level of proficiency. The results of the t-test revealed the same result for the students at upper-intermediate level of proficiency. The p-value is almost 0 which is less than 0.05 and indicates that there is a significant difference between listening scores of the subjects in the experimental and control groups. The mean score of the experimental group is 7.36 which is significantly more than the mean score of the control group, that is, 5.61. It means that the experimental group had a better performance than the control group in terms of listening comprehension. Therefore, the second alternative hypothesis is accepted. These findings can be considered the same as the findings of Geranmayeh Jourkouye and Vahdani's (2013) research. They conducted a quasi-experimental study among Iranian intermediate EFL learners in order to investigate the impact of visual input enhancement on learners' listening comprehension ability. The learners' listening comprehension ability in experimental group who received treatment based on visual input enhancement during seven sessions was improved.

As it was mentioned earlier, the researcher ran One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test to test if the variables distribution is normal. All the collected data were analyzed on the bases of One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. The results of which signified that the scores were normally distributed for both elementary groups – control and experimental groups – with the p-value of $p=0.67$ for the control group and $p=0.27$ for the experimental group. The same test was run for the two sets of scores for the students at Upper-intermediate level of proficiency and the results indicated a normal distribution for two sets of scores.

The analysis of the data significantly proves that there is a significant difference between listening scores of the subjects in the experimental and control groups. This indicated that using pictorial assistance positively affected Iranian EFL students' listening scores at elementary level of proficiency (see table 7). So, pictures can be utilized to facilitate listening comprehension at elementary level of proficiency.

The data analysis to find the answer to the second research question also revealed that there is a significant difference between the mean scores of both groups at upper-intermediate level of proficiency (see table 8). Therefore, this can be concluded that utilizing pictorial assistance can positively affect students' listening comprehension at upper-intermediate level of proficiency.

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