Volume: 2, Issue: 2, September 2020

The Effect of Recognition and Comprehension Test-types on Listening

Comprehension at Junior High School

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Received: 2020-09-24

Accepted: 2020-10-26

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Abstract

This present study investigated the effectiveness of two specific test-types of recognition and

comprehension of EFL learners at junior high school. The method of the study was quasi-

experimental with pre and post-test. 90 female students were selected at the National Iranian

Drilling Company (NIDC) Junior High- School in Ahvaz participated in this study. They were

randomly divided into three equal groups. After conducting a pre-test of listening, the first

experimental group received listening tasks of recognition exercises and the second

experimental group received listening comprehension exercises in the treatment period. The

control group worked on the regular exercises of the listening textbook. Results showed that

there was a significant difference between pretest and posttest in the recognition test-type

group. However, results revealed no significant difference between the comprehension test-

type group and the control group. Recognition test-type enhances the listening comprehension

skill of learners and maybe a suitable alternative for traditional methods of teaching listening

comprehension. Implications of the study suggest that recognition test-types an exercise may

boost learners' recall of listening cues. The novelty of this study might be the use of the

backwash effect (Weir, 2005) of testing on teaching listening comprehension among EFL

Iranian learners at junior high school.

Keywords: Comprehension Test-type, Listening Comprehension, Recognition Test-type

Volume: 2, Issue: 2, September 2020

1. Introduction

Among the many skills required to use a language (i.e. speaking, listening, reading, and

writing), listening skills are considered important for communicating with others (Elkhafaifi,

2005). Hamouda (2013) stated that listening skill is very important in acquiring understandable

input. Learning listening skill does not occur if there will not be any input. Pourhosein Gilakjani

and Ahmadi (2011) expressed that listening plays an important role in the communication

process. Listening comprehension is important for language learning in general and EFL

learning in particular because it allows learners to internalize language items through exposure

to the target language (Sari & Fithriyana, 2019). A large proportion of second and foreign

language research findings indicated that listening is the most important skill for language

learning, because it is the most widely used language skill in normal daily life (Morley, 2001;

Rost, 2001).

Testing may help the learners to practice the tasks (Nunan, 2002) enhancing their language

skills, especially listening comprehension. The importance of the present study is to use

backwash effect (Weir, 2005) of language testing to see whether item-types of recognition or

comprehension affect the learners' listening comprehension. The novelty of this idea is that

exercises of recognition test-type may provide the learners with enough input to comprehend

listening cues. Recognition test-types in listening tests refer to the items that need the learners'

recall or short-term memory like the multiple-choice items but comprehension test-types refer

to the items that deal with retention and long-term memory like completion items or giving full

answers. In general way, four orientations or perspectives characterize Rost's (2011)

description of the construct of listening comprehension i.e., receptive, constructive,

collaborative, and transformative. Rost elaborated on these perspectives as follows:

Volume: 2, Issue: 2, September 2020

• Listening is receptive as it involves receiving the speaker's speech.

• Listening is constructive as it involves constructing meaning and presenting it.

• Listening is collaborative as in real-life situations, listeners negotiate meaning with

speakers.

• Listening is transformative as it involves "creating meaning involvement, imagination

and empathy (p. 3).

In addition, Rost (2011) added that just as the fundamental role listening plays in L1

acquisition, it is by no means less important in second language (L2) learning. Rost added a

number of variables that may affect listeners' test performance during each stage. These

variables included stimulus variable, listener variable and item variable. Furthermore, Rost

listed four factors as a summary, including the medium of input, nature of the input, nature of

the assessment task, and individual listener factors. First, the medium of input includes video

or audio-only presentation or accompaniment with graphic or text enhancement. Enhancements

tend to improve test taker performance, such as video presentation, graphic cues, text subtitling

or selective captioning. Second, nature of the input refers to dialect, speech rate, length,

background, prepositional density, and amount of redundancy. Third, nature of the assessment

task involves use of visual context, amount of context given, clarity of instructions, availability

of question preview, and items of thinking process (Nunan, 2002). The final one is individual

listener factor, including memory, interest, background knowledge, motivation, and readiness

to take the test.

Volume: 2, Issue: 2, September 2020

Weir (2005) described listening comprehension process in three broad terms. First, executive

processing which includes goal setting, acoustic/visual input, audition, pattern synthesizer, and

monitoring. Second, executive resources comprised of grammatical, discourse, functional

(pragmatic), and sociolinguistic knowledge. The last one is content knowledge which is

composed of internal and external knowledge. It is understandable that processes such as goal-

setting, interpreting multimodal input, pattern synthesizing, and monitoring comprehension can

become highly complex and challenging in the foreign language context (e.g. in lectures or

discussions), putting great cognitive demands upon a student operating in their second language

(Ivonea & Renandya, 2019). Finally, according to Vandergrift and Gogh (2012), listening

comprehension refers to the understanding of what the listener has heard and it is his/her ability

to repeat the text despite the fact that the listener may repeat the sounds without real

comprehension.

The research problem can be stated as learners' cannot cope with listening exposure if the move

in top-down fashion. For instance, they listen to files or voices and then are asked what they

comprehend. This could be seen merely in traditional classes or in teaching methods like

Audio-Lingual method. The purpose of this study was to explore the effect test-type exercises

like recognition and comprehension activities on the learners' listening comprehension. This

purpose may be fulfilled if explore how we try to move in a bottom-up fashion through which

the learners work with recognition items to answer the questions raised by the teachers as tasks

at the end of each class. The hypothesis could be the assumption that if the learners are familiar

with the construction of recognition and comprehension items, they may use the cues in the

responses of the items and arrive at comprehensible input (Krashen, 1982).

Volume: 2, Issue: 2, September 2020

This study aims to compare recognition and comprehension test-items in teaching listening

comprehension of Iranian EFL learners at junior high schools. Students of English in a foreign

language environment have difficulty in comprehending the spoken language, especially in

one-way listening situations. Test takers are not informed of the test topics in advance, they are

allowed to listen to the input only once, and they may not receive any supporting information.

It is believed that one of the reasons why the listener fails to process incoming speech is that

the speech contains words or phrases that the listener can hear adequately but is unable to

understand because of serious problems with the syntax or semantics of the language. This is

a common problem faced by students as the topics that they have to listen to may contain new

or unfamiliar words. Teaching listening comprehension to second language (L2) learners has

changed considerably over the last few decades, yet learners still struggle with the task of

language learning. According to some studies (e.g., Ahmadi, 2016; Pourhosein Gilakjani &

Sabouri, 2016) listening is overlooked in Iran. Their findings indicate that in Iran, at school

level, for the dominance of Grammar Translation Method (GTM) on school pedagogy, teachers

may pay more attention to reading and writing than listening.

The present study is designed to investigate the following questions:

RQ1: Do recognition test-types affect listening comprehension of Iranian EFL learners at junior

high school?

RQ2: Do comprehension test-types affect teaching listening comprehension of Iranian EFL

learners at junior high school?

Regarding the above research questions, the following null hypotheses are made:

H01. Recognition test-types do not affect listening comprehension of Iranian EFL learners at

junior high school.

Volume: 2, Issue: 2, September 2020

H02. Comprehension test-types do not affect teaching listening comprehension of Iranian EFL

learners at junior high school.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Defining Listening Comprehension

Listening consists of auditory discrimination, aural grammar, choosing necessary information,

remembering it, and connecting it to the process between sound and form of meaning

(Pourhosein Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016). The development of listening comprehension skill

helps learners to succeed in language learning and increase their comprehensible input. Since

learners' self-confidence in listening comprehension can be increased, they are motivated to

have access to spoken English like conversations with native speakers (Ahmadi, 2016). In

addition, Pourhossein Gilakjani and Ahmadi (2011) stated that listening includes listening for

thoughts, feelings, and intentions and this needs active involvement, effort, and practice. Kurita

(2012) believed that learners might find listening comprehension skill difficult to learn and this

requires teachers to change their listening exercises into more effective ones.

2.2. Models of the Listening Process

Three most widely known models of the listening process are reviewed (Richards, 2008),

namely the bottom-up model, the top-down model and the interactive model in this section.

• The Bottom-up Model: The term bottom-up itself implies that in order to understand a

message, listeners begin with the text itself. In other words, the basis for understanding

a message is the incoming input (Richards, 2008). According to this model, listeners

build understanding by beginning with individual sounds, or phonemes (the smallest

Volume: 2, Issue: 2, September 2020

units of the acoustic message). These units are then combined into words to make up phrases, clauses and sentences. Finally, sentences are combined to generate ideas and concepts and establish relationships between them. According to this model, listeners apply the different knowledge necessary in the listening process in a serial and hierarchical way).

- The Top-down Model: The term top-down implies that the starting point in constructing meaning from the input is the listener's mind. In other words, top-down processing allows listeners to construct (Nunan, 2002; Richards, 2008), reconstruct, or create meaning from the speaker's message (Rost, 2011). Thus, top-down is a concept driven processing model as opposed to bottom-up which is a data-driven processing model. The components that contribute to top-down processing in facilitating the construction, reconstruction or creation of the speaker's message are context and prior knowledge. Context implies that top-down processes are based on listeners' expectations (Peterson, 2001; Richards, 2008). Prior knowledge, as defined by Vandergrift and Gogh (2012), is "all conceptual and life experiences that language learners have acquired and are available for comprehension purposes" (p. 65), which leads to the third model of the listening process: the interactive model.
- The Interactive Model: It is important to note that although the interactive model was established within the context of reading, it applies equally well to listening comprehension as both skills are receptive and share many characteristics (Nunan, 2002). In addition, this parallel processing allows the interaction of various items of knowledge, namely phonology, syntax, semantics and pragmatics. To sum up, since listening is a complex and active process, it requires an interactive model that includes

Volume: 2, Issue: 2, September 2020

both bottom-up and top-down processes working simultaneously. This allows listening

to regain its legitimacy as a skill similar to the other three.

2.3. Importance of Listening in EFL Settings

There is no communication without listening (Brown, 2001; Peterson, 2001; Richards, 2008).

There are four dimensions to the importance of listening: the cognitive, utility, efficiency and

affective dimensions (Vandergrift & Gogh, 2012). Regarding the cognitive dimension, L2

listening plays a crucial role in the language process since listening provides learners with the

input and data they receive throughout their language learning process. When learners believe

in the utility of listening, they are motivated to carry out a variety of activities such as listening

to the radio, watching television and reading and they spend about 40% to 50% of

communication time listening, 25% to 30% speaking, 11% to 16% reading, and about 9%

writing (Richards, 2008).

Concerning the efficiency of listening, research shows that language teaching and learning

should start with listening comprehension. One of the reasons for this is stated by Peterson

(2001) who argues that "no other type of language input is as easy to process as spoken

language; received through listening" (p. 106). In other words, exposure to listening before

starting to produce language allows learners to learn more meaningful language used earlier in

the course since learners can utilize all the limited attention resources of short-term memory

(STM) to concentrate on meaning. This facilitates the acquisition of other skills (Vandergrift

& Gogh, 2012).

Volume: 2, Issue: 2, September 2020

Finally, regarding the psychological or, specifically, the affective importance of listening, Vandergrift and Gogh (2012) have shown that exposure to listening prior to language production reduces pressure on learners. They added that postponing L2 production until a later stage of the learning process makes learners feel relaxed, stress-free and less embarrassed, which promotes their concentration on the L2 language input and leads to much more effective language learning. To emphasize the affective importance of an initial focus on listening in the learning process, Vandergrift and Gogh (2012) mentioned that even an apparently simple comprehension or production tasks such as mere mimicry requires considerable effort in addition to that necessitated by decoding. Thus, enabling learners to feel relaxed allows them to promote their listening skills and internalize the rules facilitating the acquisition of other skills, as well as enhancing their motivation to learn (Wolf, Muijselaar, Boonstra & de Bree, 2019).

Listening comprehension can be regarded as an important language skill to develop. Language learners are interested in understanding target language (L2) speakers and they want to be able to access the rich variety of aural and visual L2 texts available via network-based multimedia. In addition, as some scholars believe, listening comprehension is at the heart of L2 learning and the development of L2 listening skills can play a significant role in developing other language skills (e.g. Rost, 2011). By considering the above-mentioned importance, it is important to develop L2 listening competence; however, second language learners are rarely taught how to listen effectively although they are aware of the importance of this skill (e.g. Berne, 2004). Listening is a complex and active process of interpretation in which listeners try to suit what they hear with their prior knowledge. According to Richards (2008), this process is more complex for second language learners who have limited memory

Volume: 2, Issue: 2, September 2020

capacity of the target language. Therefore, it is necessary for them to utilize various listening

strategies. A common method used in teaching listening, especially in Iran, is to ask students

to listen to a text and tell what they have heard then answer a number of comprehension

questions. In Iran, the learners of foreign language mostly do not feel strength in listening.

They are always concerned about lack of understanding the native speakers in real situation, in

movies or while listening to authentic news through radio.

Few studies have been conducted to compare test-items and listening comprehension of Iranian

EFL learners' at junior high school. In order to bridge this gap and present a new, practical and

valid method, the present study was an attempt to compare recognition and comprehension

test-items in teaching listening comprehension of Iranian EFL learners' at junior high schools.

As mentioned earlier, listening comprehension is a complex activity. Coordinating sounds,

vocabulary, grammatical structures, and background knowledge involves a great deal of mental

processes. On the part of the listener, listening is even more difficult for learners of English

whose first language is based on a different rhythm and phoneme. Based on the literature

review, there have been different theories and methods involved in developing a good and valid

language test and there has been growing interest in use of assessment processes that are

different from the traditional forms of assessment.

3. Method

3.1. Participants

To fulfill the research goals, 90 female students at NIDC Junior High- School in Ahvaz with

the age range of 13 to 15 participated in this study at the start of the academic year (2018-

2019). The intervening variables of sex and age were controlled but other variables like family

Volume: 2, Issue: 2, September 2020

support, outside activities, internet exposures and the like were not controlled. The learners

agreed to participate in the study when they sat for the placement test at the beginning of the

study. 113 learners took Oxford Placement Test (OPT) and the learners who achieved the band

score from 27 to 37 out of 60 were selected as the participants of the study. Thus, based on

their homogeneity, they were selected as the participants of the study. Then they were divided

into three equal groups based on systematic random sampling method. There were 30 in the

first experimental group, 30 in the second one and 30 in the control groups. The first

experimental group received listening tasks of multiple choices as recognitions exercises and

the second one received listening comprehension as production tasks (Nunan, 2002). The

control group studied the units of the textbook and did the exercises in the classroom in

collaborative activities.

3.2. Design of the Study

A quasi-experimental pretest, posttest research design was used for this study to determine if

recognition and comprehension test items of listening comprehension ability influence Iranian

EFL learners at Junior High School. Due to the regulations of the center that imposed

limitations on selecting the participants, the selection of the participants was carried out based

on systematic random sampling method.

3.3. Instrumentation

To achieve the aim of the present study, the following instruments were utilized:

3.3.1. The Oxford Placement Test (Homogeneity Test)

Oxford Placement Test, which is a standardized test of Oxford University to determine EFL

learners' proficiency level and make the participants homogenized, was used to identify the

Volume: 2, Issue: 2, September 2020

participants English proficiency level (Appendix A). It was also used to place the participants

of the study into the pre-intermediate level since the got the band score from 18 to 37 based on

OPT. The materials included the textbook of Tactics for Listening: Developing developed by

Richards (2017). Ten units of this book was taught in ten sessions.

3.3.2. Listening Comprehension Test (Pretest and Posttest)

For assessing the listening ability of participants in the pre and post-test, Cambridge

Preliminary English Test (PET), was used (Appendix B). The test was taken from Cambridge

PET (2010). It was an English language examination provided by Cambridge English

Language Assessment. The listening part of this test contains 25 items in four different parts.

The time allocated to answer the test was 35 minutes. Recorded materials included

announcements, interviews and discussions about everyday life. This test was selected among

all standard tests because it demonstrated language proficiency at Level B1 of the Common

European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) that fits our participants' level of

proficiency best. However its reliability was calculated through K-R 21 formula as (r=.83) and

its content validity was confirmed by two experts in teaching EFL.

3.4. Data Collection Procedure

The study was conducted at the start of the academic year (2018-2019). At first, an OPT test

was administered and then the participants were randomly divided into three equal

experimental groups. Since the focus was put on teaching the textbook, Tactics for Listening:

Developing (Richards, 2017), the three groups had this textbook for the first time and they were

just taught the units of listening activities. They were told that they had the same book and the

Volume: 2, Issue: 2, September 2020

instruction, time and sessions were the same. Therefore, they did not feel or realize that there

might be a significant difference between the groups.

There were two groups of pre-intermediate. The groups took the pretest of listening

comprehension at the beginning of the study to determine their level of listening proficiency.

Then they were given special listening tasks for 10 sessions. Each session lasted about 80

minutes and the time was allotted to teaching listening by the intended tasks. The materials,

treatment, and time were similar in three groups. They worked on their ten units of Tactics for

Listening: Developing (Richards, 2017) as the materials of the study. The first experimental

group received recognition test-items designed from the materials. They listen to the CD and

answer the recognition items. Then their responses were discussed and corrected in the

classroom. The items were fill- in the blanks, multiple-choice questions, and true/false

questions. The second experimental group received comprehension test-items in listening

comprehension as cloze test, question and response, and reading comprehension questions of

the same materials. The control group worked on the regular exercises of the units. They

answered the questions and the teacher and students corrected the mistakes in collaborative

method.

The treatment lasted 10 sessions, each about 80 minutes. For each session, there were some

pre-listening strategies that were recommended by the teacher at the beginning of first session,

such as anticipating the words and phrases while listening, anticipating synonyms and ideas

expressed in different words, looking for key words. After looking through worksheet,

vocabulary and prediction as pre-task stage, the students listen to the material, which was

involved performing different task items of the study as the actual task. One of the most

Volume: 2, Issue: 2, September 2020

important problems during this stage was to arouse learners' interest in the content of the

listening materials. When the students were completely ready and motivated for the new lesson

and after some predictions and working on similar and related vocabularies, the actual task

stage began. The teacher first played the CD and then asked the students to perform the task

individually (Nunan, 2002). If they could not achieve the point individually, the teacher would

play the tape a number of times so that the students could discover the correct words and

compared their findings in pairs or in groups after each time of playing. This strategy was

repeated until students could discover the exact words and obtain the teacher's approval.

Eventually, if they could not find it, the teacher provided the exact word. After completing the

treatment, posttest was run to investigate the effects of different test items on learners' listening

comprehension ability. These tasks were used to strengthen the listeners' knowledge of the unit

contents which are shared among the three groups. After the treatment, the groups took the

post-test which was as the same as the pre-test in content with some modification in the format

for avoiding the learners to remind the items. Data were collected and scored by the researchers.

Since the items in the second experimental group included comprehension items, two raters

(i.e., the researchers) scored the responses and inter-rater reliability of scoring was estimated

trough Pearson Correlation Analysis as (r=.91). Finally, the data were analyzed through

descriptive and inferential statistics.

3.5 Data Analysis

To analyze data of the present study, One-way ANOVA and paired samples t-test were

conducted to measure the differences between the pretest and posttest means of the two

experimental groups and the control group (i.e., before and after the treatment through the

Volume: 2, Issue: 2, September 2020

pretest and posttest). The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, Version 22) was used for statistical analysis.

4. Results

The data were analyzed through descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive analysis is presented in Table 1. It illustrates the groups' means of the pre and post-tests of the two experimental groups, recognition and comprehension and one control group.

 Table 1

 Descriptive Statistics of Pretests and Post-tests in Each Group

Groups	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Recognition-Pre	14.3000	30	6.84382	1.24951
Recognition-Post	20.7000	30	7.23092	1.32018
Comprehension-Pre	12.0667	30	5.91278	1.07952
Comprehension -Post	14.5000	30	6.81150	1.24360
Control-Pre	10.8333	30	8.87881	1.62104
Control-Post	12.5667	30	9.29844	1.69765

Table 1 indicates the out performance of recognition test-type groups in the post-test while in the pre-test the means of the three groups are very close since they were homogeneous concerned with their listening proficiency. As the means cannot show the significant values, One-way ANOVA was run in Table 2.

Volume: 2, Issue: 2, September 2020

Table 2

The Result of One-Way ANOVA Analysis of Groups' Pre-tests

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	185.267	2	92.633	1.730	.183
Within Groups	4658.333	87	53.544		
Total	4843.600	89			

Table 2 shows that the difference between the experimental groups (i.e., Recognition and Comprehension) and the control groups is not significant (F=1.730, p>0.05). In other words, the groups were homogeneous at the beginning of the treatment. Also, In order to find out whether the differences in the participants' in three mentioned groups on posttests after the treatment were statistically significant, One-Way ANOVA analysis was conducted, which is shown in Table 3.

Table 3

The Result of One-Way ANOVA Analysis of Groups' Posttests

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1083.289	2	541.644	8.777	.000
Within Groups	5369.167	87	61.715		
Total	6452.456	89			

Table 3 shows that the difference between the experimental groups (i.e., Recognition and Comprehension) and the control groups is significant (F=8.777, p<0.05). In other words, the groups were not homogeneous at the end of the treatment. Thus, the differences in the participants' in three mentioned groups on posttests after the treatment were statistically significant.

Volume: 2, Issue: 2, September 2020

4.1. Results Obtained From Multiple Comparisons

Post-hoc Scheffe test is a follow-up test that shows the exact difference in each group, two different test-items groups and one control group. Table 4 displays the results of multiple comparisons of groups.

Table 4

Post-hoc Scheffe Test, Multiple Comparisons between the Groups' Post-tests

Crowns (I)	Differe	Std.	C:~	Inte	onfidence erval
Groups (J)	nce (I- J)	Error	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Comprehension	6.200*	2.02	.012	1.14	11.25
Control	8.13*	2.02	.001	3.08	13.180
Recognition	-6.200*	2.02	.012	-11.25	-1.14
Control	1.93	2.02	.636	-3.11	6.98
Recognition	-8.13*	2.02	.001	-13.18	-3.08
Comprehension	-1.93	2.027	.636	-6.98	3.11
	Control Recognition Control Recognition Comprehension	Comprehension 6.200* Control 8.13* Recognition -6.200* Control 1.93 Recognition -8.13* Comprehension -1.93	Groups (J) nce (I-J) Error Comprehension 6.200* 2.02 Control 8.13* 2.02 Recognition -6.200* 2.02 Control 1.93 2.02 Recognition -8.13* 2.02 Comprehension -1.93 2.027	Comprehension 6.200* 2.02 .012 Control 8.13* 2.02 .001 Recognition -6.200* 2.02 .012 Control 1.93 2.02 .636 Recognition -8.13* 2.02 .001 Comprehension -1.93 2.027 .636	Comprehension 6.200* 2.02 .012 1.14 Control 8.13* 2.02 .001 3.08 Recognition -6.200* 2.02 .012 -11.25 Control 1.93 2.02 .636 -3.11 Recognition -8.13* 2.02 .001 -13.18

Table 4 shows that there is a significant difference between the recognition, comprehension and control groups (p<0.05). However, the difference between the control and comprehension groups is not significant. It shows that the Comprehension and control groups treated similarly in the post-test while the recognition group outperformed the other groups.

4.2. Results Obtained From Descriptive Statistics and Paired Samples T-test

The pairs of each group pre and post-tests are comparing in Table 5. It shows that each group's pre and post-test in pair of recognition is different from the other two pairs including comprehension and control groups' mean scores.

Volume: 2, Issue: 2, September 2020

Table 5Paired Samples T-test of Pretests and Post-tests in Each Group

			Pai	red Diffe	erences				
					Interva	nfidence al of the rence			Sig.
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	Т	Df	(2- tailed)
Pair 1	Recognition Pre- post	6.40	10.135	1.850	-10.184	-2.615	-3.459	29	.002
Pair 2	Comprehension Pre - post	2.43	10.978	2.004	-6.532	1.666	-1.214	29	.235
Pair 3	Control-Pre- Post	- 1.73	8.681	1.585	-4.975	1.508	-1.094	29	.283

Table 5 shows that the recognition group is significantly outperformed the other groups in the post-test (p<0.05). As it is shown the significance level of recognition is .002 and comprehension and control are .235 and .283, respectively.

5. Discussion

As far as the research questions of the study are concerned, the researchers embarked upon discovering the effects of recognition, comprehension, and regular test-items on teaching listening comprehension of Iranian EFL learners at junior high school. The results obtained from data analyses of both research questions are discussed as follows:

Volume: 2, Issue: 2, September 2020

The first question asks whether recognition test-items have a significant effect on teaching

listening comprehension of Iranian EFL learners at junior high school. Following Weir (2005),

the results of the present study suggest that backwash effect of testing could contribute to the

efficacy of teaching methods of listening comprehension. The effects of learning listening skill

through working on the test-types may be a good idea since these exercises enable learners to

activate their abilities of recall, especially in the listening tests that have limited time for

answering the items. Learners' recall activation can be strengthened through learning the

mechanism of listening MC items in the classroom.

Findings of One-way ANOVA and paired samples t-test showed that the learners in the

recognition group significantly outperformed other groups. However, there was not any

significant difference between the comprehension and control groups. Thus, the effect of test-

type on learners' listening comprehension may be concluded that there is a hierarchy of

effectiveness regarding test-type construction (first, it is recognition, then, comprehension and

finally regular tests of the textbook exercises). Although all the groups showed progress at the

end of the treatment period, just recognition group could arrive at the significant level of

difference. Findings may indicate that the learners in the recognition group could activate their

recall power (short-term memory) since they do not need their retention power (i.e., long-term

memory). The reasons behind these findings may be the role of reminding of the key points

during listening comprehension. When the learners listen to the record and the teacher remind

them the key points like significant names, places, dates, and events in each part. The learners

may take notes while listening to the CD. These quick notes may help them to remind the main

parts of each story or happening clearly. Then they are able to recognize that specific point in

among the responses as quick as possible. These results are matched with Ahmadi (2016) and

Volume: 2, Issue: 2, September 2020

(Nunan, 2002) who stated the role of listening activities in the pre-task, tasks, and post-tasks

stages. The role of recognition test-items can be seen in the explaining of these items at the

beginning of the class before teaching the units. Introducing the key points at the beginning of

the class may be used as a pre-task since the learners are familiar with the key points before

listening the record.

The findings are in line with Pourhosein Gilakjani and Ahmadi (2011) and Pourhosein

Gilakjani and Sabouri (2016) who noticed the importance of listening comprehension and the

difficulties the learners have in listening activities. The lack of listening exposure, lack of social

interaction, and outside class activities could be the main obstacles the learners face when they

decide to boost their listening proficiency. Several listening activities are effective. These

listening tasks which are used in the present research agree with Peterson (2001) who proposed

several tasks like pattern practice which help the learners to use patterns of the common

sentences like greetings, thanking, complaining, etc. The other tasks could be participate in

role-playing, conversations inside and outside the classrooms, etc. Following Brown (2001), it

may be claimed that in the reception of the L2 language input, learners internalize the linguistic

information necessary to produce language and may recognize through the activation of their

short-term memory. It also may the role of recall activities which are available when the

learners see the possible answers and guess the familiarized responses. On the contrary,

comprehension items need learners' long-term memory and retention. They should think to

comprehend the relationships between the text clues and then find the response. Further

research is needed to realize other factors like age, level of proficiency, gender, and task type

affecting listening comprehension (Richards, 2008).

Volume: 2, Issue: 2, September 2020

The second research question asks whether comprehension test-items have a significant effect

on teaching listening comprehension of learners at junior high school. Findings showed that

comprehension test-items did not have a significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' listening

comprehension. Descriptive and inferential statistics showed that comprehend group

progresses in the post-test comparing to the pre-test but the group's mean. The mean did not

arrive at the significant difference in the post-test. Comparing to the control group, the

comprehension group outperformed this group but there was no significant difference between

them. This may be the results of working on the listening tasks to get general content of the

records. The teachers focused on the main ideas, general outcome and comprehension of the

sentences during listening. This may deviate the learners from the specific issues which are

regarded as the key points mentioned above. On the other hand, the comprehension group

focused on the class discussion, question/answer, and debates in the stories and events rather

than the main key terms including specific information. For instance, they hear "John is 10

years old." In recognition class, the focus is put on 10 but in comprehension class, it is put on

the fact that "John is very young." Thus, putting the focus on retention and long-term memory

may affect the problem of getting the gist of the record.

The other reason may be due to the lack of exercises on the speech patterns that are common

and frequent in daily talks like greetings, rejecting, accepting, etc. They are specific patterns

and common expressions that are used in daily conversations. These findings are matched with

Morley (2001) who noted that listening comprehension needs activities to boost patterns and

sentences which are commonly used by the learners. They are easily recalled by the learners

for using them in specific situations. The easiness of recall goes back to Krashen's (1982)

Volume: 2, Issue: 2, September 2020

hypothesis of comprehensible input through which the learners need to receive meaningful and

understandable for learning processes. The recognition test-types may help the learners to recall

the understandable input for later use. The results of the study are in line with Rost (2011) and

Ying-hui (2006) who emphasized the role of recognition listening activities and stated that

listening should be constructive since it involves constructing the specific meaning and

presenting it. The learners also need to work on the listening tasks in collaborative fashion and

learn common expressions for using in real-life situations.

6. Conclusion

Different methods have been tested to promote listening ability of EFL learners in Iran, but

unfortunately most EFL learners suffer from listening problems. This study was an attempt to

demonstrate the effectiveness of two specific test-types of recognition and comprehension on

leaners' listening comprehension skill. The comparison of the pre and post-tests indicated that

there were significant differences in listening comprehension test means of Iranian EFL

learners at junior high school. In other words, the learners who were taught to practice the

recognition test-types in listening comprehension significantly outperformed the

comprehension and control groups. According to the obtained results, there are several

contributions of the present study to the current literature. The findings showed that using

recognition test-types as exercises in the classroom can boost listening-comprehension skill in

EFL students at the pre-intermediate level. This may be generalized to other learners who tend

to improve their listening proficiency.

Results suggest that foreign language learners need listening as a receptive skill more than as

a speaking skill. There are many reasons for the primacy of listening. First, since listening now

Volume: 2, Issue: 2, September 2020

constitutes a core component of language proficiency tests, it is an essential skill for university entrance exams. Specifically, there were remarkable impacts and significant differences between pretest and posttest in improving listening comprehension skills of Iranian EFL learners in recognition test-type group. Furthermore, the results revealed that incorporating recognition test-type activities in EFL classrooms enhance the listening comprehension skill of learners and may be a suitable and effective alternative for traditional methods of teaching listening comprehension. In addition, the results of this study indicated that helping students make connections to the real world and authentic tasks in applying different kinds of test-items might facilitate listening comprehension among EFL Iranian learners at junior high school. Limitations of the present study could be the small sample size and the work on learners at the pre-intermediate level. The future studies may be beneficial for researchers if they conduct the related studies on the language learners at the other proficiency levels like beginners, intermediate and advanced learners.

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Volume: 2, Issue: 2, September 2020

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Volume: 2, Issue: 2, September 2020

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Appendix A: Oxford Placement Test (OPT)

Questions 1 - 5

- · Where can you see these notices?
- For questions 1 to 5, mark one letter A, B or C on your Answer Sheet.
- 1 You can look, but don't A in an office \mathbf{B} in a cinema touch the pictures. \mathbf{C} in a museum 2 in a bank \mathbf{A} Please give the right В on a bus money to the driver. C in a cinema

NO
PARKING
PLEASE

A in a street
B on a book
C on a table

4 CROSS BRIDGE FOR TRAINS TO
EDINBURGH

A in a bank
B in a garage
C in a station

5 KEEP IN A A on clothes
COLD PLACE B on furniture
C on food

Volume: 2, Issue: 2, September 2020

Questions 6 - 10

- In this section you must choose the word which best fits each space in the text below.
- For questions 6 to 10, mark one letter A, B or C on your Answer Sheet.

THE STARS

There are millions of stars in the sky. If you look (6) the sky on a clear night, it is possible to see about 3000 stars. They look small, but they are really (7) big hot balls of burning gas. Some of them are huge, but others are much smaller, like our planet Earth. The biggest stars are very bright, but they only live for a short time. Every day new stars (8) born and old stars die. All the stars are very far away. The light from the nearest star takes more (9) four years to reach Earth. Hundreds of years ago, people (10) stars, like the North star, to know which direction to travel in. Today you can still see that star.

 \mathbf{C} В A at up on \mathbf{C} 7 much A very В too В \mathbf{C} A is be are 9 A В of C than that 10 В \mathbf{C} A used using use

Volume: 2, Issue: 2, September 2020

Questions 11 - 20

- In this section you must choose the word which best fits each space in the texts.
- For questions 11 to 20, mark one letter A, B, C or D on your Answer Sheet.

Good smiles ahead for young teeth
Older Britons are the worst in Europe when it comes to keeping their teeth. But British youngsters
(11) more to smile about because (12) teeth are among the best. Almost
80% of Britons over 65 have lost all or some (13) their teeth according to a World
Health Organisation survey. Eating too (14) sugar is part of the problem. Among
(15), 12-year olds have on average only three missing, decayed or filled teeth.

11	A getting	В	got	C	have	D	having
12	A their	В	his	C	them	D	theirs
13	A from	В	of	C	among	D	between
14	A much	В	lot	C	many	D	deal
15	A person	В	people	C	children	D	family

Volume: 2, Issue: 2, September 2020

Christopher Columbus and the New World

16	A	made	В	pointed	C	was	D	proved
17	A	lied	В	told	C	cheated	D	asked
18	A	find	В	know	C	think	D	expect
19	A	Next	В	Secondly	C	Finally	D	Once
20	A	as	В	but	C	because	D	if

Volume: 2, Issue: 2, September 2020

Questions 21 - 40

• In this section you must choose the word or phrase which best completes each sentence.

•	For questions 21 to	40, mark one letter A,	B, C or D on	your Answer Sheet.

21	Т	The children won	't go	to sleep		we leave a light on	outs	ide their bedroom.
	A	except	В	otherwise	C	unless	D	but
22	I	'll give you my s	pare	keys in case you		home befo	re m	e.
	A	would get	В	got	C	will get	D	get
23	N	My holiday in Par	is g	ave me a great		to improve m	y Fr	ench accent.
	A	occasion	В	chance	C	hope	D	possibility
24	7	The singer ended	the o	concert	h	er most popular son	g.	
	A	by	В	with	C	in	D	as
25	F	Because it had no	t rai	ned for several mo	nths	s, there was a		of water.
	A	shortage	В	drop	C	scarce	D	waste
26	I	've always		you as my best	frie	end.		
	A	regarded	В	thought	C	meant	D	supposed
27	S	She came to live h	nere	a mo	nth	ago.		
	A	quite	В	beyond	C	already	D	almost
28	Ι	Oon't make such	a	! The do	entis	st is only going to lo	ok a	at your teeth.
	A	fuss	В	trouble	C	worry	D	reaction
29	F	He spent a long ti	me l	ooking for a tie w	hich	with h	nis n	ew shirt.
	A	fixed	В	made	C	went	D	wore
30		Fortunately, all.		from a bump of	on th	ne head, she suffered	d no	serious injuries from her
	A	other	В	except	\mathbf{C}	besides	D	apart

Volume: 2, Issue: 2, September 2020

31	S	She had changed	so m	nuch that		anyone recognised	her.	
	A	almost	В	hardly	C	not	D	nearly
32		teach	ning	English, she also	write	es children's books.		
	A	Moreover	В	As well as	C	In addition	D	Apart
33	I	t was clear that the	ne yo	oung couple were		of taking	char	ge of the restaurant.
	A	responsible	В	reliable	C	capable	D	able
34	7	The book		. of ten chapters, e	ach	one covering a diff	eren	t topic.
	A	comprises	В	includes	C	consists	D	contains
35	N	Mary was disappo	inte	d with her new shi	irt as	s the colour		. very quickly.
	A	bleached	В	died	C	vanished	D	faded
36	1	National leaders f	rom	all over the world	are	expected to attend	the	meeting
	A	peak	В	summit	C	top	D	apex
37		ane remained cal nothing had happe			otter	y and	aboı	at her business as if
	A	came	В	brought	C	went	D	moved
38	I	suggest we		outside the st	adiu	m tomorrow at 8.30	0.	
	A	meeting	В	meet	C	met	D	will meet
39	N	My remarks were		as a joke	e, bu	it she was offended	by t	hem.
	A	pretended	В	thought	C	meant	D	supposed
40	,	You ought to take	up	swimming for the	•••••	of your ho	ealth	
	A	concern	В	relief	C	sake	D	cause

Volume: 2, Issue: 2, September 2020

Appendix B: Preliminary English Test (For Pre and Post-test)

Paper 2 Listening (approx. 35 minutes including 6 minutes' transfer time)

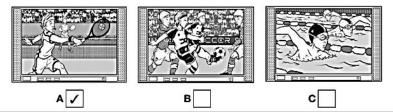
Part 1

Questions 1-7

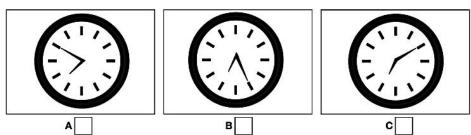
There are seven questions in this part.

For each question there are three pictures and a short recording. Choose the correct picture and put a tick () in the box below it.

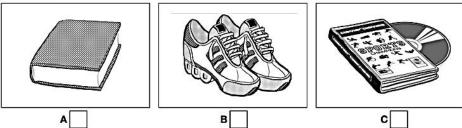
Example: Which sport did the girl watch on TV last night?



1 What time did the taxi arrive?

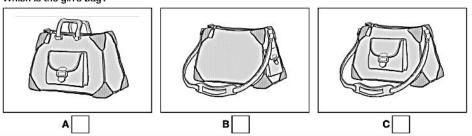


2 What will they buy first?



3 Which is the girl's bag?

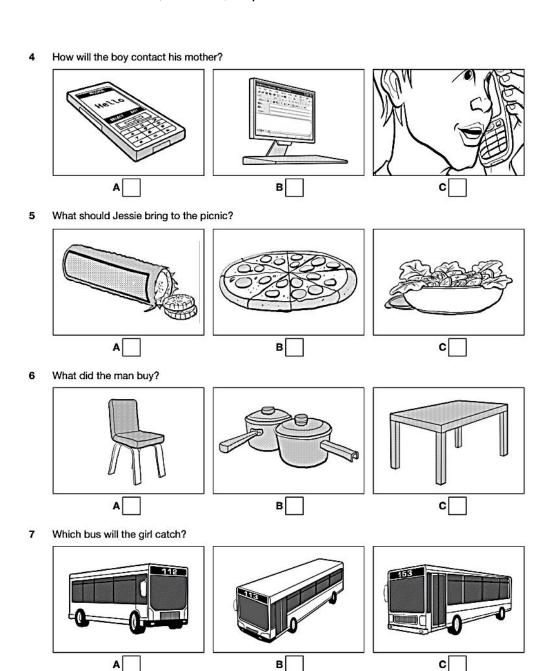
16



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PET TEST

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For each	question, put a tick (/) in the correct	box.		
M. 10.00	non asks other drivers for advice	A	has made a mistake on a racing track.	
wh	en he	В	is unsure which racing track to use.	
		С	uses a racing track for the first time.	
9 Wh	en do races take place?	A	during part of the year	
		В	on most days during the week	
		С	mainly on Fridays	
1 0 Wh	at problem does Simon have?	A	He can't stop training before a race.	
		В	He can't improve any more.	
		С	He doesn't ever have holidays.	
	at does he say is most important	A	not getting frightened	
for	a racing driver?	В	being able to concentrate	
		С	knowing how a car works	
12 Ho	w did he become interested in cars?	A	His friends were keen on motor-racing.	
		В	He enjoyed watching motor-racing on TV.	
		С	His father took him to races.	
	at advice does he give to young	A	They should do other sports too.	
rac	ing drivers?	В	They should study hard.	
		C	They should get very fit.	

18

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PET TEST

Volume: 2, Issue: 2, September 2020

Part 3

Questions 14-19

You will hear a woman talking on the radio about a new sports centre. For each question, fill in the missing information in the numbered space.

New sports centre
It opens on (14)
It is opposite the (15)
The car park entrance is in (16) Road.
It costs (17) £ per week to be a member.
A (18)is provided.
You can learn to (19) at 5.30 each day.

19

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PET TEST