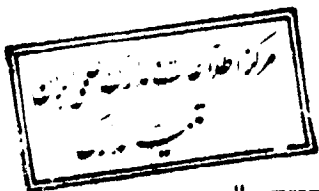


IN THE NAME OF GOD

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Allameh Tabatabaee University



M. A. Thesis

" THE EFFECTS OF LISTENING COMPREHENSION

ON

EFL HIGH SCHOOL LEARNERS' READING COMPREHENSION "

Submitted

in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for  
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Teharan 1995

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DEDICATION

DEDICATED TO MY WIFE

ROYA

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In the Name of God

ABSTRACT

" THE EFFECTS OF LISTENING COMPREHENSION ON  
EFL HIGH SCHOOL LEARNERS' READING COMPREHENSION "

BY

Robatjazi, Mohammad Ali

The development of target language skills has long been a concern of second language readers and teachers . The ability to easily read and understand written text is an essential component of language proficiency . In order to develop this ability, however , the first step is to understand reading difficulties of second/foreign language readers . Then it will be possible to plan effective programmes for helping these readers master the reading skills .

Reading is a skill which everyone needs whether s/he is a student in elementary and secondary school or in a university. It is closely related to other language skills, particularly listening comprehension . Listening comprehension which is the most but the least paid attention skill has been neglected for years in Iranian High Schools . The constant problems concerning Iranian High School EFL readers led the researcher to the question that " What would the effects of listening comprehension be on reading comprehension ? " Afterwards the



researcher assumed that listening comprehension would possibly improve the readers' reading comprehension, and the following question popped up :

" Is there any relationship between Iranian High School EFL learners' reading comprehension and listening comprehension ? "

Then the following Null Hypothesis ( H<sub>0</sub> ) was developed to the test. the above, mentioned question .

" There is no relationship between High School EFL learners' reading comprehension and listening comprehension . "

To get an appropriate answer to the question , the researcher gave 126 high school third grade students the Nelson Test and two groups of 30 being homogenized were taken as experimental and control groups .

For nearly 16 weeks, the experimental group meeting four hours two times a week received 20-25 minutes listening comprehension practice each session and the control group kept on the same way , but without any listening practice and they were just confined to their set English textbooks .

After 16 weeks , again the Nelson Reading Test was administered to both groups upon their scores the statistical analyses were based .

After scoring the test, some important statistical analyses were conducted . These analyses included general central tendency measures : Mean: Standard Deviation; Variance; Paired t-test; Pearson Moment Coefficient Correlation and t-test within the group .

The statistical findings could firmly provide the researcher with the evidence to reject the Null Hypothesis at both .05 and .01 levels of significance and state that Listening Comprehension can remarkably improve the learners' Reading Comprehension skills .

With the implications , the researcher found out that the findings of this research can be useful in language teaching . Teachers , as they have fully neglected Listening Comprehension Skill, should be aware that their efforts would be in vain, if they go on the method they are applying now . The research findings can also be useful in teaching reading skills, designing syllabi, testing and teaching other language skills .

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRDUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction to the scope of the study

" Although current theories of foreign/second language acquisition differ in specifics , all take into account the role of comprehension in the processing, storage , and retrieval of linguistic input, and its influence on the development of a learner's foreign/second language, " ( Adams, 1982 ) .

" In recent years , researchers have closely scrutinized the role that comprehension plays in learning a foreign language . According to Krashen and Terrel ( 1983 ) , the starting point in language learning is comprehensible input, since comprehension preceds production . In other words , a central and possibly predominant role is played by comprehension in the whole process of language learning, " ( Chastain, 1988, p. 97 ) .

Generally speaking, a set of requirements should be met by any activity or set of materials aimed at subconscious language acquisition . With respect to different aspects of methods and materials, the input should have the following characteristics:

- " 1. Optimal input is comprehensible
2. Optimal input is interesting and relevant

3. Optimal input is not grammatically sequenced
  4. Optimal input must be in sufficient quantity, "
- ( Krashen, 1987, p. 62 ) .

A great majority of studies on the subject of language comprehension during the recent decades have been concerned with Reading Skills only , but the fundamental reading problems remain rather unsolved . For many years , Listening Comprehension has suffered from being treated as a passive skill . Even some scholars have argued that it would be preferable to concentrate on ' Reading as ability which promises more success ' .

" In fact, little research has been devoted to providing a description of the listening skills of foreign language learners , and of the problems they encounter in learning to listen and comprehend a language in which they have partial proficiency , " ( Anderson and Lynch , 1988, p. 33 ) .

Language learning skills are in one to one correspondence and relationship with each other , and each may affect on the other productively . There has been little work on the relationship between listening comprehension and reading comprehension, and the effect of listening comprehension on reading comprehension in foreign language learning situations .

According to Nicholas ( 1988 ), the following are reasons

why listening comprehension seems to have received the least attention in language classrooms :

" One of the reasons for this neglect is the feeling among language teachers that this skill is automatically acquired by the learner as he/she learns to speak language . Another reason why this skill is not given the attention it deserves is the fact that incompetence in understanding the listening input can be hidden through nodding and shaking the head , which may give the impression of understanding even where there is none . A third reason is that some audiolingual courses give the impression that they are teaching listening comprehension when in fact they are teaching the other skills " .

As further stated by Nicholas ( 1988 ), unlike other language skills, listening is an internal process which cannot be observed . Therefore, nobody can be certain about what happens when somebody listen to a spoken language . Accordingly, listening is an active process in which the listener plays/ should play a very active role in constructing the overall message that is eventually exchanged between listener and speaker .

Chastain ( 1988, p. 192 ) maintains that listening comprehension is an internal process, and thus not subject to direct external observation, examination and correction . Therefore, its pre-requisite importance in language learning has been overlooked by language teachers and students . In fact ,

since speaking is their ultimate goal of learning . language teachers and students have neglected the need for developing functional listening comprehension skills as pre-requisite to developing skills .

Generally, the following stages are involved in the process of listening with understanding :

- " a. As we hear a sound or stream of sounds , our first reaction is to decide whether it is organized sound ( as language and music ) or simply random . In other words , before we go on to understand or fail to do so we must perceive whether the sound coming at us is systematic or not .
- b. Our next step is to impose some kind of structure on the stream of sounds . We can break it into words and sentences if it is, or other equivalent units if it is music .
- c. We next recirculate the sound in our mind, selecting from it what we judge to be important . The selected information is recorded or put into different language and then stored in the memory for future use , "  
( Rivers and Temperly, 1978 ) .

Indeed, a basic question that researchers have always had in mind is the relationship between the two comprehension skills of listening and reading in the first and second/foreign language and their respective effects on each other .

Although many researchers have been conducted concerning the L1 listening/reading relationship, in the second/foreign languages little work has been carried out .

Hence, the present work is an attempt of an experimental study to investigate the above mentioned relationship in Iranian-High School EFL Learners . Moreover, the study attempts to find out the relationship between English language listening and reading proficiency of Iranian students .

Due to the scarcity of research on the significant role that Listening Comprehension plays in the process of learning a second/foreign language , the researcher has devoted the present study to this very important but truly neglected skill .

## 1.2 Statement of the problem

" The asking of the right questions may lead to greater understanding and knowledge than the discovery of scientific facts . "

'Liskin-Gasparro ( 1949 )'

The study attempts to supply an appropriate answer for the following question :

" Is there any relationship between listening