# *In The Name Of God*

ON THE EFFECTS OF PICTORIAL CLUES ON THE EFL LEARNERS' LISTENING COMPREHENSION DEVELOPMENT



By:

RAFAT BAGHERZADEH



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*To My*

*Dearest*

*Parents*

# In The Name of God

**M.A Thesis**

**On the Effects of Pictorial Clues on the EFL Learners' Listening Comprehension Development**

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**Allameh Tabatabaee University**

**Tehran, Iran**

**Thesis advisor: Dr. Ziahosseini ..** Seyed M. Ziahosseini

**Thesis reader: Dr. Nowruzi ...** M. NOWRUZI

**Researcher: Rafat Bagherzadeh**

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# IN THE NAME OF GOD

## ABSTRACT


ON THE EFFECTS OF PICTORIAL CLUES ON THE EFL LEARNERS' LISTENING COMPREHENTION DEVELOPMENT

Speaking does not of itself consitute communication unless what is being said is comprehended by another person. The greatest difficulty for travelers in strange countries is not primarily that they cannot make themselves understood; this they can do by gesture by writing, or by pointing to something written in a bilingual book of phrases. Their major difficulty, and one that leads to considerable emotional embarrassment,is that they cannot understand what is being said to them and around them . Thus, in most cases enjoymet and participation in community life and thought are further curtailed by inability to comprehend announcements, broadcasts, lectures, plays and films.

Teaching the comprehension of spoken language is of primary importance if the communication aim is to be achieved. A frequently neglected area, listening comprehension has its peculiar problems which arise from the fleeting. immaterial nature of spoken utterances and the complicated ways we process what we hear (W.Rivers. 1981).

Finding ways and solutions to problems with listening comprehension is not different from attemps to solve any problem. Both teachers and students need to analyze the task and how they approach it . They must focus on the materials, the designed task, and the listeing process. If one solution does not produce the desired result they should try another or several others. With patience, effort, insights, new strategies and guided practice, language students can improve their listening comprehension skills.

Morley (1985), maintains that teachers should strive from the very first day of class to make input comprehensible through the use of

visuals and actions.

Muller(1980),found that the use of contextual visuals improves listening comprehension for less proficient students and concluded that visuals serve as advance organizers,enhance students ability to formulate correct hypothesis,and increase students interest, thereby causing them to pay closer attention(K.Chastain,1988).

With well constructed pictures,students find language classes more intresting and enjoyable.When they see the situations for which the phrases they are learning are appropriate,they feel they are learning something of great value.listeing materials,accompnied by pictures,have a greater sensory impact than the voice alone.In this case the attention of the student is kept focused on the picture,so that all the members of the class are concentrating on the same thing at the same time.

This centering of attention is particularly helpful for weaker students who in a purely aural-oral situation,frequently find their minds wondering to other things than the point on which the teacher is concentrating(W.Rivers,1981).

Infact,this study was centered around the following main research question.

**-Do Pictorial Cues have any Impact on EFL Students' Listening Comprehension Development?**

Accordingly,the following null hypothesis was proposed:

**-There is no Significant difference between the EFL students' listening comprehension development receiving pictorial cues and those receiving no Cuse.**

To test the null hypothesis,52 male and female freshmen students of medicine studing at Iran University of Medical Scinces were randomly

selected from a total population of 72 students.

To ensure that the subjects were homogeneous,a TOEFL test consisting of 30 multiple choice items on listening was administred.The the results revealed that the null hypothesis was rejected. The observed t- vaue (4.51)exceeded the t-critical value (2.0105)at 0.001 possibility with 50 degrees of freedom.

In short,the findings support what Muller found,that the use of contextual visuals improves listening comprehension for less proficient students and that visuals serve as advance organizers and enhance students ability to formulate correct hypotheses.

## Stitistical Data

group 1 = Control G.

group2 = Experimental G.

**Table 1 - Means of the pretest of two group**

| $\bar{X}_1$ | $\bar{X}_2$ |
|---|---|
| 10.19 | 10.35 |

**Table 2 - Standard deviation**

| $S_1$ | $S_2$ |
|---|---|
| 1.980 | 1.896 |

**Table 3 - Variation**

| $V_1$ | $V_2$ |
|---|---|
| 3.920 | 3.595 |

**Table 4 - The number of items**

| $K_1$ | $K_2$ |
|---|---|
| 30 | 30 |

**Table 5 - The Number of students**

| $N_1$ | $N_2$ |
|---|---|
| 26 | 26 |

**Table 6 - t - test formula**

$$t = \frac{\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2}{\sqrt{\left[\frac{(N_1-1)\,S_1^2 + (N_2-1)\,S_2^2}{N_1+N_2-2}\right]\left[\frac{1}{N_1}+\frac{1}{N_2}\right]}}$$

**Table 7- T-test for the pre - test**

| Observedt-value | 2-tailed prob | df |
|---|---|---|
| 0.297 | 2.0105 | 50 |

**Table 8 - Paired T- test formula**

$$t = \frac{\bar{d}}{\frac{Sd}{\sqrt{n}}}$$

**Table 9 - Pired - T- test for the experimental group**

| $t = \frac{2.885}{\frac{1.243}{\sqrt{26}}}$ | t-Value |
|---|---|
| | 11.834 |

**Table 10 - Paired t- test for the Control group**

| $t = \frac{0.115}{\frac{1.925}{\sqrt{26}}}$ | t- Value |
|---|---|
| | 0.3046 |

**Table 11 - T - test for the post test**

| ObservedT - Value | 2- tailed prob. | df0. |
|---|---|---|
| 4.51 | 2.0105 | 50 |

**Table 12 -Means of the post - test of the two groups**

| $\bar{X}_1$ | $\bar{X}_2$ |
|---|---|
| 10.30 | 13.23 |

**Table 13- Standard deviation of the post - test of the two - gruops**

| $\bar{S}_1$ | $\bar{S}_2$ |
|---|---|
| 2.36 | 2.32 |

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# *Chapter One*

## 1.1. Introduction

Current models of listening explain the listening process as an active, constructive one in which background knowledge is crucial. Anderson and Lynch (1988), for example, refer to schematic knowledge as one of the "information sources in comprehension" and suggest that it is the lack of such information that impedes comprehension. Brown and Yule (1983) describe schemata as: "organized background knowledge which leads us to expect or predict aspects in our interpretation of discourse". The listener's stereotypical knowledge based on prior experiences predisposes him or her to construct expectation in terms of seven areas: speaker, listener, place, time, genre, topic and co-text. Brown and Yule contend that the listener uses two basic principles to relate the new information to his or her previous experience: the principle of analogy and the principle of minimal change. In a discussion of ways in which listeners form inferences and use them to interpret spoken language, Rost (1990), suggests inferential processes at three levels (lexical/propositional, base or schematic, and interpersonal relevance) and proposes editing principles and procedures by which listeners construct meaning. He defines base meaning for a text as "the cultural and experiential frame of refernce that makes a text interpretable by a listener". The related editing strategies include employing cultural schemata, filling in schematic slots, filling in supporting data for claims, and using genres to generate expectations. These models clearly illustrate the view that listening is

not a passive activity and underscore background knowledge as a critical component of the listening process.

Investigations of the effects of background knowledge on comprehension have been undertaken since the seminal works in first language research by Bransford and Johnson, Anderson et al, and Steffensen et al done in the $1970_s$. The finding of these studies, that prior knowledge aided comprehension, led second language ($L_2$) researchers to investigate the same phenomenon. For more than a decade now, research in $L_2$ reading comprehension has investigated the effects of the knowledge that the learner brings to the text. Background knowledge has been operationalized in a variety of ways: cultural knowledge; technical knowledge; religious knowledge; vocabulary knowledge, topic familiarity and contextual visuals.

According to Ur. (1984), some environmental, usually visual, accompaniment to heard discourse is a characterstic of most listening situations. In the classroom these environmental clues will usually be represented by different kinds of visuals:

pictures, sketches on the blackboard or overhead projector, etc. The presence of such materials is of immense value in contextualizing and bringing to life the listening situation as well as in aiding comprehension of the language.

Winitz and Reeds combined aural input with pictures representing what was being said and tested comprehension by rquiring students to select from four illustrations the one demonstrating what they had heard.

To encourage active listening, Gary also used pictorial - audio matching in which students selected from written M.C. items, the graphic representation of