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The Comparative Effect of Using Listening Strategies on Reflective and Impulsive Visually Impaired Learners' Listening Comprehension

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Abstract

This study aimed to compare the effect of listening strategies, namely, metacognitive, cognitive and social/affective strategies, on impulsive and reflective visually impaired EFL learners' (VILs) listening comprehension. The participants of the study were 58 male and female VILs at pre-intermediate level within the age range of 12-18 in the west of Iran, Khorram Abad. These participants were selected non-randomly from among 10 different classes available to the researcher. To select the participants, the researcher talked to learners of these 10 classes and sought the consent of 58 learners to take part in the study. The Preliminary English Test (PET) pre-piloted on 30 students with almost similar characteristics to the target sample was administered to 72 students for selecting a homogenized group of participants. Then, 58 students were selected. Afterwards, the researcher administered the Personality Questionnaire developed by Eysenck (1975) to categorize them into two experimental groups of impulsive and reflective. Furthermore, the researcher made sure that the two groups were homogeneous regarding their listening comprehension prior to the start of the treatment. In this study, both experimental groups practiced listening comprehension through listening strategies, namely, metacognitive, cognitive and social/affective strategies. The listening section of the PET test was administered as the posttest at the end of the treatment to both groups and their mean scores on the tests were compared through Independent Samples t-test. The results of statistical analyses led to the rejection of null hypothesis with the conclusion that the reflective learners significantly outperformed the impulsive students on the posttest of listening comprehension.

Keywords: impulsive learner**,** listening comprehension**,** listening strategies**,** reflective learner**,** visually impaired

Introduction

Listening comprehension is characterized as a "highly complex problem-solving activity that can be broken into a set of distinct sub skills" (Byrnes, 1984, p. 318). It is an active process that learners need to understand the verbal texts. Listening comprehension involves the continuing construction of an interpretation of the spoken input, and the ability to adjust the interpretation in response to new information is especially crucial in the L2 listening (Buck, 2001). Learners who are good at listening comprehension first are involved in building an understanding of individual words and sentences in a text. However, good listening comprehension goes beyond single words and sentences comprehension to construct a mental model (Kintsch & Kintsch, 2005) that investigates a story's multiple propositions (e.g. story elements, sentences) and prior knowledge into a cohesive whole. Rubin (1994) identifies five main factors that affect listening comprehension: text characteristics, listener characteristics, task characteristics, interlocutor characteristics, and process characteristics .

Vandergrift (2004) categorizes different stages of listening with best listening strategies for each stage. The beginning prediction stage, for example, has a different purpose than the ending reflection stage. Graham, Santos and Vander plank (2008) theorize that students at different listening levels use different listening strategies to meet their needs. Oxford (1990) defines learning strategies as "specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations" (p.8).

In addition, Chamot (1995) describes language learner strategies as "the steps, plans, insights, reflections that learners use to learn more effectively" (p.1). The way of applying strategy -based approach of L2 teaching and learning was paved by Rubin (1975). Chamot (1987) states that, "learning strategies are techniques, approaches or deliberate actions that students take in order to facilitate the learning and recall of both linguistics and content area information" (P.71). According to O'Malley and Chamot (1990) there are three strategies: metacognitive strategies that are concerned with knowledge of learning process, planning for, monitoring and evaluating learning; cognitive strategies that manipulate or transform materials or tasks mentally; and socio-

affective strategies that involve social interactions with others or mental control over personal affect. Although metacognitive knowledge is acquired through implicit socialization with experts, it can be enhanced through classroom instruction (Vandergrift, 2004).

Zhang and Goh (2006, as cited in Goh, 2008) maintain that language learners use these strategies to improve their listening comprehension and proficiency, since they know the benefits of these strategies. Some students may use these strategies for promoting their comprehension and overall listening development (Optiz & Zbaracki, 2004). Chamot (1993) and Vandergrift (1997) have investigated listening comprehension from the point of view of the cognitive and metacognitive strategies employed by learners. Metacognition plays a very important role in enhancing students' learning. The metacognitive approach aims to train learners to apply effective strategies to cope with the demands of listening (Mendelsohn, 1998).

Goh (2008) believes that learning through metacognitive strategy can potentially enhance learners' knowledge about their listening and teach processes and help learners to use suitable strategies for dealing with the needs of listening. She states that using metacognitive strategy instruction has some positive effects on listening comprehension and holds that this type of training enhances students' level of confidence, creates more motivation and lessens anxiety in learners during the listening process. Goh also adds that less successful listeners potentially benefit to a great extent from the strategy training. Vandergrift (2006) maintains that listening tasks and activities can promote learners' metacognitive knowledge which is vital for learners to develop self-regulated listening just for the reason that this knowledge engages learners in using prediction, monitoring, and problem-solving. Listening comprehension directly and positively is affected by the knowledge of strategies (Goh & Yusnita, 2006; Coskun, 2010).

According to Rubin (1994) learner's characteristics is one of the main factors for using effective strategies. There are "285 million people who are estimated to be visually impaired worldwide: 39 million are blind and 246 have low vision" (World Health Organization, 2014). Language development for visually impaired learners will be affected by the nature and severity of sensory impairments, and by other factors such as motor and cognitive skills. Meanwhile learning a second / foreign language can occur in different styles

including cognitive, affective, and physiological styles (Keefe, 1987). One aspect of cognitive style which is specifically related to the behavior in problem solving situation is conceptual tempo or the reflectivity/ impulsivity dimension (Kagan, 1966; Kagan, Pearson, & Welch, 1966).

Shipman and Shipman (1985) classify learners as impulsive or reflective, depending on their willingness "to pause and reflect upon the accuracy of hypotheses and solutions in a situation of response uncertainty" (p. 25). According to Zhou (2001) to apply learning style theory to English learning and teaching, learning style has taken place when we observe a change of learner behavior resulting from what has been experienced. There is a way to understand and recognize the learning style of an individual student by observing his overt behavior. Zhou (2001) holds that:

Generally speaking, learning styles can be divided to three major categories: cognitive learning styles, sensory styles, and personality learning styles. Cognitive learning styles include field-independent/field-dependent learning styles, analytic/global learning styles, reflective/impulsive learning styles and Kolb experiential learning model. "Sensory learning styles also fall into the following four sub-styles: auditory learners, visual learners, tactile learners and kinesthetic learners (p. 74).

Listening skills, as aptly pointed out by Arter (1997), are particularly significant for visually impaired EFL students since listening skills provide an indispensable avenue for learning. Moreover, Lamb (1998) states that without intervention, visually impaired students do not essentially develop efficient listening skills and audio reading skills. McCall (1999) states that strategy instruction can be integrated in the EFL listening classroom, and can lead to positive effects for learners' understanding and use of listening strategies. It is believed that specific teaching to develop listening abilities is an indispensable aspect of an expanded core curriculum (McCall, 1999). Accordingly, it is deemed necessary to provide a structured program, not only to inspire the improvement of effective listening abilities, but also to teach listening comprehension so that visually impaired students can listen, comprehend, learn from and appreciate the range of material, which is available to them in auditory formats (Arter, 1997). Researchers such as Guinan (1997) and Araluce (2002) argue that the foreign language needs of the visually impaired have been

ignored. They learn a foreign language and develop it without adequate context, sufficient examples, and many other related aspects. The same seems to be true for Iranian context.

As far as the researcher, who teaches VILs, knows in Iran these learners are not given due attention and no study has been conducted to investigate the role of visually impaired students' cognitive styles (being reflective or impulsive) on their listening comprehension, which seems to be the main source of learning for most of them. Moreover, up to now, no single study has ever evaluated the differential effect of listening strategies on reflective and impulsive visually impaired EFL learners in the context of Iran.

Therefore, this study was an attempt to fill this gap and to empirically investigate the possible effect of using listening strategies, namely, metacognitive, cognitive and social/affective strategies, on impulsive and reflective visually impaired learners' listening comprehension. Therefore, the following research question was formulated:

RQ: Does the use of listening strategies have any significantly different effect on reflective and impulsive visually impaired EFL learners' listening comprehension?

Method

Participants

The participants of the study were 58 male and female VILs at pre-intermediate level within the age range of 12-18 in the west of Iran, Khorram Abad. A pre-piloted PET was administered to72 students who had been selected non-randomly on availability basis to select a homogeneous group from them. The participants (N=58) whose scores were one standard deviation above and below the mean were selected as the target sample of the study. Then the researcher administered "Eysenck's Personality Questionnaire" in order to categorize them into two groups of impulsive and reflective based on their performance, which lead to the two groups each consisting of 29 EFL students. It is noteworthy that the participants were in five different classes and had the same teacher, namely, the researcher, throughout the study. The participants of both groups enjoyed the same educational and institutional milieu.

Instruments and Materials

The following instruments and materials were utilized in this study.

Preliminary English Test (PET). PET is the English language proficiency test which is considered as one of the standardized tests. The test consists of three papers: first paper for reading and writing, second one for listening and the last one for speaking.

Reading and Writing. The reading section consists of five parts with 35 reading comprehension questions. This section has ten multiple choice questions, five matching and ten True/False questions each carrying 1 mark. The reading part has 35 marks. The writing section consist of three parts with seven questions. In part one; it is needed to show the ability of vocabulary use and structure through answering five transformational questions each having 1 mark. Part two consists of writing a short text (35-45 words), and a short story or letter of about 100 words. This section has a total of 25 marks. The time assigned for these two parts is 1 hour and 30 minutes.

Listening. In listening section, the examinees should be able to understand spoken materials such as weather reports and discussion which happen in everyday life. It is required to follow the attitudes and intentions of speakers. This section includes four parts with 25 questions in total. The part one has seven multiple choice questions about finding key information, part two consists of six multiple choice questions about specific information and finding detailed meaning. Part three includes six gap-fill questions about missing information, and in part four there are six True/False questions. This section carries a total of 25 marks.

Speaking. The last section is speaking which includes four parts and takes 10-12 minutes. The total mark of this is 25. In the first part, the examiner asks questions and candidates should talk for 2-3 minutes. In part two, two candidates talk about the personal details for 2-3 minutes. The next part is allocated to each student and she should talk about a picture given by the examiner for two minutes. In the last part, two candidates talk about the topic in part 3 and discuss it for 3 minutes.

The Speaking Rating Scale. For speaking assessment, the researcher used a reliable speaking rating scale which is developed by Cambridge ESOL for PET test to assess the speaking ability of the learners. There are a total of 25 marks for part 3, making % 25 of the total score for the whole examination. Throughout the test, candidates are assessed on their language skills, not their personality, intelligence or knowledge of the world. They must, however, be prepared to develop the conversation, where appropriate, and respond to the tasks set. Prepared speeches are not acceptable. Candidates are assessed on their own individual performance and not in relation to each other. The examiner assesses the candidates according to criteria which are interpreted at PET level. The interlocutor awards a mark for global achievement (the interlocutor awards each candidate one global mark), whilst the assessor awards marks according to four analytical criteria: grammar and vocabulary, discourse management, pronunciation and interactive communication.

The Writing Rating Scale. The researcher used a reliable writing rating scale developed by Cambridge ESOL for PET test. Candidates should be able to give information, report events, and describe people, objects and places as well as convey reactions to situations, express hopes, regrets, pleasure, etc. They should also be able to use the words they know appropriately and accurately in different written contexts, and be capable of producing variations on simple sentences. There are two passing grades (Pass with Merit (85-100) and Pass (70-84). The rating was done on basis of criteria stated in the rating scale including the score a candidate needs to achieve a passing grade will always be 70.

Eysenck's Personality Questionnaire. Eysenck's Personality Questionnaire is prepared by Eysenck (1975) to assess the participants' degree of impulsivity / reflectivity was used in this study. It includes 30 items and in front of each item three answers including 'Yes', 'No', and '?' are presented. The participants are instructed to answer each item by putting a circle around the alternatives as quickly as possible. If they find it impossible to decide one way or the other for any reason, they are asked to put a ring around the '?' If examinee answered 'Yes', s/he scores nothing; if s/he responded with a '?' s/he scores1/2. The second question is reverse scored: 'Do you usually make up

your mind quickly?' This time, because the sign is a plus, it is the 'Yes' which scores 1 and the 'No' which scores zero; the '?' again scores 1/2. To summarize then: if there is a plus sign the 'Yes' scores 1, if there is a minus sign the 'No' scores 1. In either case a '?' is scored 1/2. As there are thirty items in this questionnaire, so the possible range of scores is 0 to 30. Using Cronbach's Alpha, Eysenck and Barrett (1985) reported the reliability of this instrument to be 0.85. Moreover, several studies (e.g., Eysenck, 1990; Eysenck, 1985) reported acceptable validity rate for this instrument as well.

It is noteworthy that in the present study the Persian version of the Eysenck's Personality Questionnaire was used. The Persian version of this instrument was translated and validated by Bazargani and Larsari (2013) for the context of Iran through different procedures such as back translation. Bazargani and Larsari (2013) reported that the Persian version had an acceptable reliability and validity rate. In this scale, those who scored 17 or less are considered as reflective and those who scored 18 or more are considered as impulsive. The score 17.5 indicates that the subject is in the average domain (i.e. not being a true impulsive nor a true reflective).

Listening Posttest. The researcher chose another sample of PET listening test to be used as the posttest of the study. Its administration took about 25 minutes. Using Cronbach's Alpha, the reliability of the posttest was found to be 0.87.

Course Book. Participants in two groups received listening tasks instruction based on "Developing Tactics for Listening" (Richards, 2011) as their course book during a period of 14 sessions of 70 minutes which took 7 weeks. The CD is included, too. Units 1 to 5 were taught to participants during the course. The paper was prepared in large printed and bold-lined because the participants were visually impaired learners.

Procedure

To begin with, the sample PET was piloted on 30 students with almost the same characteristics as the target sample and KR-21 formula was used to make sure that the test has appropriate reliability. The reliability index turned out to be .82 which is considered acceptable. Moreover, item facility and item discrimination were calculated in order to eliminate any mal-functioning items.

In this case, two items were found mal-functioning and deleted. The researcher gave the piloted PET to 72 pre-intermediate female and male visually impaired students for homogenizing them in terms of language proficiency.

Fifty-eight students whose scores fell between on standard deviation above and below the mean were selected and assigned into two experimental groups, namely, reflective and impulsive learners, based on their performance on Eysenck's Personality Questionnaire (EPQ). Twenty-nine of them scored 17 or less and were considered as reflective and 29 of them scored 18 or more who were considered as impulsive. The participants including both impulsive and reflective were assigned to two experimental groups (EG1, 29 impulsive learners) and (EG2, 29 reflective learners). After the division of the participants into reflective and impulsive, their homogeneity regarding their listening proficiency was ensured prior to the treatment.

The participants of both groups received listening strategy instruction which involved the training of three main categories of listening strategies, namely, metacognitive, cognitive, and social/affective strategies. To do so, in the first session of the treatment, the researcher described the metacognitive strategy to the students briefly in two experimental groups and gave them an overview of the process they were assumed to undertake based on the model proposed by Vandergrift and Tafaghodtari (2010) and Goh (2008) and O'Malley and Chamot (1994). It is an organized instructional model to teach learners how to use learning strategies. The goal of this model is to help learners become independent learners who can assess and reflect on their own learning. This model comprises three main components, namely, a) issues from the main content subjects, b) expansion of academic language abilities, and finally, c) explicit training in language learning strategies for both language and content. It is noteworthy that the focus of this study is on the third component, namely, strategy instruction. The students received strategy instruction in listening tasks two sessions a week.

The second session was pre-listening which is also called planning/predicting stage based on metacognitive strategy instruction model. During this stage the teacher gave the definition of these strategies and

provided the students with some examples of listening situations, identified the main ideas, and organized principles.

The teacher focused on subcategory of Planning/Predicting which is directed and selective attention. In this session these strategies were described for learners which assisted them to concentrate on what they were listening to. The teacher attended key words, phrases, ideas, linguist markers and types of information and drew a distinction between listening and hearing and its significant listening tasks.

In this step the self-management which is another subcategory of planning/ predicting was practiced. The teacher explained planning on when, where, and how to study. The researcher explained that one way to attend to the specific aspects of input is identifying the content words, and then focusing on hearing that specific information. Another example which was given to the leaners was to concentrate hard and avoid distractions and when one's mind wonders, he/she should recover his/her attention right away.

Session four was allocated to Monitoring strategy. First, the monitoring strategy was defined to the students. It was defined as checking or modifying one's comprehension while listening. Then the teacher helped the students verify initial hypothesis, correct as required and note additional information understood. Also the appropriateness and accuracy of students' comprehension against old and new information was checked. One example of monitoring strategy was 'I ask myself what I am listening to or what I have understood while listening', thus the researcher encouraged the students to do so during the listening tasks.

This session focused on Reflection and Evaluation strategy. During this step, the students after receiving the definition of Evaluation and strategy practiced three subcategories of Evaluation which are performance evaluation, strategy evaluation and problem identification. Through this step they become familiar with the second verification stage to verify points of disagreement and make corrections. For example, using guiding questions to reflect on a specific listening experience, learners recorded their responses to issues related to metacognitive knowledge. In this stage, the interpretation of accuracy, completeness and acceptability after listening were checked through judging

how much one could understand his/her strategy use and any encountered difficulties.

Self-assessment is subcategory of evaluating. In this session the appropriateness and accuracy of students' understanding was checked. That is, learners evaluate their own knowledge and performance by referring to a list of pre-selected items of metacognitive knowledge about L2 listening. During sessions seven to nine the combination of all strategies was implemented based on the proposed steps by Vandergrift and Tafaghodtari (2010), O'Malley and Chamot (1994), and Goh (2008).

It is worth mentioning that in the present study some cognitive and socio-affective strategies were also applied. However, the main focus was on metacognitive strategies. Concerning the used cognitive strategies, the followings can be mentioned: a) Listening for gist: listening for the main idea first and then details, b)Inferencing: using information from the speaker's expressions to guess the meaning, c) Prediction: predict or make hypotheses about the possible content according to the title, the instruction, and the questions, d) Summarization: try to remember the key points, and organize the concepts of what one heard in his/her mind, and e)Note-taking: write down some key words in abbreviations, symbols, or visual forms.

With regard to socio-affective strategies, the following were applied in this study: a) Social: asking for explanation /clarification, and b) Affective: encouraging oneself by trying to calm down when he/she does not understand something. One week after teaching the listening strategies, the researcher met with the students for another session to administer the post-test. The participants took another version of PET listening post-test.

Design

The design of this study was quasi-experimental, since random selection was not possible for the researcher. It was also two equivalent groups post -test only design, as there were two experimental groups whose post-treatments performances were meant to be compared.

The independent variable was listening strategies. The dependent variable was listening comprehension. The moderator variable was personality trait with two values of impulsive and reflective. The age and gender were control

variables as both male and female learners at the age range of 12-18 participated in this study.

Results

Selection of the Participants

After the main administration of the PET, the descriptive statistics of the PET were calculated.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics of PET Scores, Main Administration

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic
PET administration	72	28.00	79.00	46.4583	11.01336
Valid N (listwise)	72				

Based on the calculated mean score and the standard deviation, 58 learners who scored one standard deviation below and above the mean were chosen to participate in this study and assigned into two experimental groups, namely, reflective and impulsive learners, based on their performance on Eysenck's Personality Questionnaire (EPQ). Twenty-nine of them scored 17 or less and were considered as reflective and 29 of them scored 18 or more who were considered as impulsive.

Testing the Null Hypothesis

To test the hypothesis, firstly the researcher had to make sure that the two groups of learners were homogeneous regarding listening comprehension prior to the treatment. Therefore, their listening scores on the PET were compared. The normality condition of the scores was checked before using the independent samples t-test. Table 2 shows the results of Kolmogorov Smirnov test of normality and descriptive statistics for the pre-treatment scores.

Table 2
Results of Kolmogorov Smirnov test of Normality on Pretest Scores

		Kolmogorov-Smirnova				
	Groups	Statistic	df	Sig.	Std. Deviation	Mean
	Preimpulse	.167	30	.733	2.009	5.4138
	Prereflect	.150	30	.882	1.888	5.0690

Table 2 indicates that the significant levels for the pre-treatment scores are greater than the confidence interval of 0.05. Accordingly, the data sets enjoyed normal distribution and parametric statistics should be used for the inferential statistical analysis. Therefore, the researcher used independent samples t-test. Table 3 demonstrates the respective results.

Table 3
Independent Samples Test on the Listening Pretest Means

		Leven Test for Equaliy of Variance		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-taile)	Mean Differenc e	Std. Error Differenc e	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Pretest	Equal variances assumed	.39	.53	-.67	56	.503	-.3448	.51204	-1.37	.6809
	Equal variance not assumed			-.67	55.7	.503	-.3448	.51204	-1.37	.6810

As shown in Table 3, the difference between the two mean scores turned out to be non-significant (t=.67, p=.503>.05), which implies that there was no significant difference between the two groups' listening comprehension ability prior to the treatment.

To test the null hypothesis, the researcher compared the listening posttest scores of the two groups after checking the normality condition. Table 4 displays the results of Kolmogorov Smirnov test of normality and descriptive statistics for the post-treatment scores.

Table 4
Results of Kolmogorov Smirnov test of Normality on Pretest Scores

		Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]				
	Groups	Statistic	df	Sig.	Std. Deviation	Mean
	Postimpulse	.212	30	.841	2.29746	7.7241
	Postreflect	.317	30	.314	2.03540	13.0000

Table 4 shows that the significant levels for the post-treatment scores are higher than the confidence interval of 0.05. Accordingly, the data sets were normally distributed and independent samples t-test was used to check if there was a statistically significant difference between the means of the scores for the posttest. Table 5 present the results.

Table 5
Independent Samples Test on the Listening Posttest Means

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
posttest	Equal variances assumed	.325	.571	9.256	56	.000	5.2758	.56997	4.1340	6.4176
	Equal variances not assumed			9.256	55.198	.000	5.2758	.56997	4.1337	6.4180

As exhibited in Table 5, the variances were homogeneous (F=.325, p=.57>.05), and the difference between the mean scores turned out to be significant (t=9.25, p=.000<.05). Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected implying that the reflective learners benefited from the treatment significantly more than the impulsive learners.

To estimate the effect size, the researcher used the following formula as proposed by Pallant (2007):

$$\frac{t^2}{t^2 + (N1 + N2 - 2)}$$

With the *t* value turning out to be as large as 9.25, the outcome of the above formula was .41; that is, 41 percent of the difference between the two means was due to the intervention, which is a large effect size according to Cohen's (1988) guideline.

Discussion

The present study set out to compare the effect of listening strategies, namely, metacognitive, cognitive and social/affective strategies, on impulsive and reflective visually impaired EFL learners' (VILs) listening comprehension. The results of statistical analyses indicated that the reflective learners significantly outperformed the impulsive students on the posttest of listening comprehension. The findings of the present study are in line with those of Sedarat (1996), who conducted a study in order to discover some evidence representing the effect of reflectivity/impulsivity on EFL students' listening comprehension. The findings revealed that reflective EFL learners were significantly better listeners than impulsive ones.

Moreover, the findings of this study corroborate that of Pallandino, Poli, Masi, and Gabrieele (1997) who investigated the relationship between metacognitive functioning, reflective/impulsive cognitive style, and listening comprehension of young adolescents. The findings of their investigation indicated that young adolescents with reflective cognitive style attained significantly higher scores than impulsive students concerning their listening comprehension.

However, the findings of this study are in odds with those of Hansen-Strain (1987) and Jamieson (1992). They concluded that cognitive tempo of English language students had no significant relationship with their language proficiency. Moreover, Jamieson (1992) concludes that impulsives/reflectives have more association with learning activities than production of language proficiency.

One possible justification for the findings of the present study is the fact that reflective learners, as aptly pointed out by Brodzinsky (1985), are more likely to progress more in language learning, due to the fact that these learners can apply the knowledge base and rule systems which are related to academic problems better than impulsive learners. Additionally, Brodzinsky (1985) argues that in the case of simple tasks, impulsive learners benefit more, whereas in cases of tasks demanding analytical decisive problem-solving such as listening comprehension reflective learners performs much better than impulsive learners.

The present study came to the conclusion that reflective learners significantly outperformed the impulsive students on the posttest of listening comprehension as a result of receiving instruction on listening comprehension strategies. Listening is one of the main and powerful skills in learning a foreign/ second language and learning strategies can help learners to improve their understanding of input, but, as far as the researcher knows, they are usually ignored in the Iranian high school context. Oxford (2003) states that most of the times students are not aware of the power of consciously using learning strategies to make learning better and more effective.

Listening tasks may be considered demanding and analytical since learners are required to pay close attention to every detail of the aural input to be able to answer the raised questions. This type of activity which invites more problem-solving activity may be more easily done by reflective learners generally, and more specifically those who receive metacognitive strategy instruction. As pointed out by Oxford (1990), consciously using metacognitive strategies helps listeners to re-gain their focus in the case of losing it.

Moreover, as pointed out by Alashkar (2014), different listening strategies should be a part of curriculum since listening strategies such as cognitive strategies are among the cognitive processes which visually impaired EFL learners need to ease their own learning, and to develop their academic achievement. Alashkar (2014) claimed that all (both reflective and impulsive) students would benefit if the teachers taught listening strategies appropriately.

Based on the findings of this study, a number of possible implications are assumed. Syllabus designers and material developers are believed to play an important role in the process of L2 learning through providing a great portion of the input, tasks, and activities. Based on the findings of the present study and extensive review of the related literature, a statistically-supported justification is provided for paying a higher level of attention to visually impaired EFL learners' listening comprehension in general and teaching different listening comprehension strategies in particular. Since listening is regarded as a

challenging skill for many EFL learners in general, developing suitable listening strategies might help to overcome several problems related to foreign language listening. As stated by O'Malley, Chamot, Stewner-Manzanares, Russo, and Kupper (1985), these listening strategies are regarded as the steps taken by EFL learners to assist them obtain, store, retrieve, and apply information. Therefore, according to Mendelsohn (1998), carefully designed listening strategies can improve the performance of the EFL learners and promote learners' autonomy.

It seems that Iranian reflective visually impaired EFL learners need to be informed by their educators of the significance of different listening strategies. EFL instructors should explain to the reflective visually impaired EFL students the possible effects listening strategies will have on their listening comprehension and consequently their success in academic settings. Moreover, it is recommended that EFL teachers, especially those involved in visually impaired and blind schools, detect the type of their learners' cognitive styles in order to know how to treat them with regard to listening strategy training, since based on the findings of this study one way to improve the reflective visually impaired EFL learners' listening comprehension is explicit instruction of listening strategies. Thus, EFL teachers are recommended to try to find different ways in order to enhance the learners' level of reflectivity so that they benefit more from listening strategies.

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Biodata

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