

8-2013

## Impact of Awareness Raising about Listening Micro-skills on the Listening Comprehension Enhancement: An Exploration of the Listening Micro-skills in EFL Classes

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### Recommended Citation

Rezaei, A., & Hashim, F. (2013). Impact of Awareness Raising about Listening Micro-skills on the Listening Comprehension Enhancement: An Exploration of the Listening Micro-skills in EFL Classes. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 38(8).

<https://dx.doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2013v38n8.4>

This Journal Article is posted at Research Online.

<https://ro.ecu.edu.au/ajte/vol38/iss8/1>

## **Impact of Awareness Raising about Listening Micro-skills on the Listening Comprehension Enhancement: An Exploration of the Listening Micro-skills in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Classes**

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*Abstract: It is common practice in the classes that teachers focus on the outcome of listening rather than the listening process itself. Based on the interventionist view of language teaching, one of the ways proposed for teaching listening is to break it into smaller micro-skills and give learners awareness about them. But before giving awareness, it is important to identify the micro-skills that learners need mostly in performing listening tasks. This study was aimed at exploring the most frequently used listening micro-skills in EFL classes at lower levels. Also, an attempt was made to investigate the impact of awareness raising about these micro-skills on the EFL learners' listening comprehension enhancement. For studying the effect of awareness raising, 252 EFL female learners took part in the study and 30 experts and teachers from different universities took part in identifying the most frequently used micro-skills in the EFL context. After gathering data, 10 listening micro-skills were identified as being the most frequently used skills for performing tasks in EFL classes. Also, after awareness raising activities about these micro-skills, a significant difference was found between the learners in the experimental and control groups. The results of the study are discussed in the experimental and control groups. The results of the study are discussed in the light of teachers' language awareness (TLA) and implications for the educators and task designers*

### **Background**

Some researchers have stressed the key role that listening as comprehensible input plays in acquiring the target language (Krashen, 1985, 1996; Krashen & Terrell, 1983; Mendelsohn, 1998; Rost, 1990, 2001, 2002; Vandergrift, 1999). Rost (2001) points out that “since listening is very prevalent in language use and listening is the main channel of L2 acquisition, the development of listening as a skill and as a means for language input should receive great importance in instruction” (p. 10).

Compared with other skills in TEFL/TESL, listening has not received much attention during the past years. Buck (2001, p. 32) notes that “listening is an important skill but due to the practical complexities of providing spoken texts, it is neglected in many language learning situations”. According to Vandergrift (2004), for beginning and intermediate language learners, who are often unable to process information quickly enough to make sense of spoken language, listening activities can create stress.

Unfortunately, teachers, especially in EFL contexts, often are not aware about the process of listening and learners' problems in listening comprehension, as a result, the common practice in the class is that teachers and educators focus on the outcome of the listening rather than listening itself i.e. the process of listening. Sheerin (1987) asserts that instruction in listening has too often been associated with testing, focusing on the product of listening. Similarly, Field (1998) believes that most published courses continue to practice listening rather than teach the skill, raising the concern that the material tests not teaches. He(Field) notes that success in listening is based on the criterion of correct responses to questions. Instruction focuses upon the outcome of listening, rather than on listening itself, upon product rather than process of listening. When a learner gives a correct answer, there is no question and analysis as to how that answer has been reached at.

On the other hand, research and observation are constantly extending the scope of language awareness with the result that the list of skills to be aware of in learning and teaching are constantly being expanded (ÓLaoire & Aronin, 2003).

On the whole, most of the studies carried out in the second language (L2) classroom (e.g., Elbro & Petersen 2004; Leow, 1997; Nakatani, 2005; Robinson, 1997a, 1997b; Rosa & O'Neil, 1999; Saito, 2007; Shu-Chin, 2012; Slade, 1997; Svalberg, 2007), have noted a general positive impact of awareness giving on learners' subsequent post-exposure performances. Altman (1997), from her personal language learning case study, found that, "a key to the success of the language learner seems to be the extensive employment of awareness—the focusing of attention on all aspects of the language to be learned" (p. 93). Nakatani (2005) studied the influence of awareness giving on young Japanese adults' use of oral communication strategies such as maintenance of fluency and negotiation of meaning. The researcher found that the learners in the experimental group who received awareness produced longer sentences and used more achievement strategies, and did not leave the message as often as the learners in the comparison group. Similarly, Shu-Chin (2012) found positive effect of the use of rhetorical consciousness raising instructional materials in writing research papers. In line with the results found by Nakatani (2005), Slade (1997) and Jones (2001) found positive impact of explicit training in conversational story telling. Similarly, Elbro and Petersen (2004) came to this conclusion that phonological awareness raising of kindergarten children of dyslexic parents was influential. The children received awareness raising for 17 weeks and it was revealed that the awareness training had long-term effects as late as grade 7.

Although a review of literature shows that awareness raising plays an important role in the process of second language acquisition and learning different skills (e.g., Carr & Curran, 1994; Curran & Keele, 1993; Ghorbani, 2011; Robinson, 1995; Schmidt, 1990, 1993, 1994, 2001), there are some arguments against the importance of language awareness. For example, Alderson, Clapham, and Steel (1997) in their study conclude that whilst knowledge about language may be worthwhile in its own right, there is no evidence to justify the teaching of metalinguistic knowledge as a means of improving students' linguistic proficiency. Tomlin and Villa (1994) disagree with Schmidt on the necessity of awareness for learning, and Al-Hejin (2004) also takes a more cautious stance, but concludes that both attention and awareness (and hence noticing) facilitate learning. The debate includes Norris and Ortega's (2000) synthesis and analysis of 49 published studies, which concluded that on the available evidence explicit instruction is more effective than implicit instruction.

Most of the studies in the field of awareness have dealt with the learning of grammatical form. However, it has been claimed that explicit learning within language awareness (LA)

framework is facilitative in a variety of linguistic fields. (Svalberg, 2007). Similarly, in a discussion of language awareness in relation to teacher education, Borg (1994, p. 62) outlines that “LA methodology aims to develop not only the learners’ knowledge about understanding of language but also their learning skills, thus promoting learner independence”. In brief, the above studies imply that awareness raising is not just limited to the forms of language but it can be expanded to different skills of language.

Recent research on teaching listening demonstrates a heightened interest in enhancing student awareness of the listening process (Berne, 1998; Mendelsohn, 2001a). This process approach can assist learners in learning how to listen, leading them through phases of real-life listening (Field, 2001; Goh, 2002b; Mendelsohn, 2001a; Vandergrift, 2003a). Vandergrift (2004) states that this approach allows teachers to help beginners learn how to understand authentic short texts on topics related to their interest and level. Therefore, investigating the awareness of the listening process and exploring the impact of giving awareness raising activities on listening comprehension can be of great significance.

Calling for a rethinking of the purposes of the listening lesson, Field (1998) proposed approaches based on micro-listening exercises, which practice individual sub-skills of listening. Micro-skills, which are also called sub-skills, are seen as competencies which native listeners possess and which non-natives need to acquire in relation to the language they are learning. They involve mastering the auditory phonetics, the word-identification techniques, the patterns of reference, and so forth. These components make up successful listening processes. In his recent paper, Field (2010) emphasizes the importance of the strategy training especially in the early stage learners of L2 to make partial sense of they hear. In separate studies, Freday (2011), Vandergrift & Tafaghodtari (2010) emphasize the importance of explicit teaching and metalinguistic awareness about the listening comprehension process. Moran (2005) posits that listening teachers need to consider the fact that many students at lower levels are unable to decode foreign language and only through massive amount of input or by raising students’ awareness about features of foreign language will this be possible.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In a community where English is learned as a foreign language, English learners are less exposed to listening materials. Although listening skills are of crucial importance in language intake and acquisition, listening lags behind the other skills. Consequently, most of the EFL learners at low levels have problems in listening comprehension and listening seems the most demanding skill. This is the case in many countries that use English as a foreign language. As a result, there is a need to do more research on listening in such contexts and present appropriate methodology, skills and tactics to compensate for the gap. Most educators test listening and consider it as a product without regarding the processes and skills through which listening takes place.

One possible way to teach the process of listening is to give learners metacognitive awareness about listening micro-skills. This view of teaching listening stems from the synthetic approaches to teaching language (Wilkins 1976), namely those which focus on the teaching of discrete points of language in accordance with what Rutherford (1987, p. 4) describes as “the accumulated entities view of language learning”.

Cummins' research (1979) makes a difference between Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). Cummins believes that while many children develop native speaker fluency (i.e. BICS) within two years, it takes between 5-7 years for children to be working on a level with native speakers as far as academic language is concerned. The initial theoretical intent of the BICS/CALP distinction was to qualify Oller's (1979) claim that all individual differences in language proficiency could be accounted for by just one underlying factor, which he termed *global language proficiency*. However, Cummins (1979) argued that it is problematic to incorporate all aspects of language use or performance into just one dimension of general or global language proficiency. Discrete language skills can sometimes be learned in virtual isolation from the development of academic language competence as proven in the fact that some learners who can "read" English fluently may have only a very limited understanding of the words they can decode (Cummins, Brown & Sayers, 2007).

Long and Robinson (1998) use the label "focus on form" for this approach. Another view "focus on meaning" refers to a range of approaches that Long and Robinson (1998, p. 18) call noninterventionist. These approaches emphasize abandoning a focus on language forms. Instead they seek to replicate the process of first language (L1) development in the belief that classroom language learning will proceed more effectively if language learners are allowed to construct their interlanguage more naturally, in the same way as they were learning grammar and other skills through the process of learning to communicate (Ellis, 1994, p. 652). In the case of teaching listening comprehension, some scholars (e.g., Ridgway, 2000) advocate the non-interventionist view and support the idea that listening should be practiced holistically and naturally without breaking it into smaller components while some other researchers advocate the synthetic approach to teaching listening (see e.g., Field, 1998; Moran, 2005). Very few studies have been carried out on the importance of awareness raising about these skills on listening comprehension enhancement (Field, 1998; Moran, 2005; Peterson, 2001). Especially in EFL classes, there is a dearth of research exploring the impact of awareness giving on the language development of EFL language learners at low levels.

On the other hand, there is little knowledge about how listening takes place. Comparing it with other language skills, Goh (1997) states that, "there are fewer insights about the process of listening and the way it is learnt" (p.361). In the countries where English is not the official language or the second language, EFL learners face lots of problems in listening; therefore, delving more into the process of listening and exploring the skills involved in the process of listening for performing listening tasks is worthwhile. Therefore, besides investigating the effect of awareness raising about different listening micro-skills on the listening comprehension, the purpose of this research was to extend the result of previous studies on the synthetic approach and interventionist view of language learning in general and effectiveness of awareness raising on skill building in particular.

## Research Questions

Based on the objectives of the research, the following research questions were proposed:

1. What are the most frequently used listening micro-skills used in the performing listening tasks in EFL context classes?

2. Do awareness raising activities about listening micro-skills have any significant effect on the listening comprehension enhancement of the EFL learners?

In order to enrich data, as a pre-requisite for the second research question, it was necessary to explore and identify the most frequently used listening micro-skills in the EFL context to raise learners' awareness about; hence, the first research question was posed. Therefore, in addition to exploring the frequently used listening micro-skills in EFL contexts, the current study informs educators on how awareness giving activities may be used to enhance listening comprehension. In other words, the study reveals the way listening can be enhanced with the aid of awareness giving.

### **Listening Micro- Skills**

Bottom up processing involves keen attention to input details, whereas top down processing requires listeners to make inferences and predictions based on the incoming data. According to Richards (1990), the listening process involves bottom-up and top-down processing whereby bottom-up processing means direct decoding of language into meaningful segments while top-down processing means using prior knowledge to give meaning to language input; in other words, enabling our background knowledge of the world to create meaning. Taking these perspectives into account, there are different taxonomies in the literature proposed by different scholars. In the listening exams and tasks, at the pre- intermediate levels, the listeners are mostly expected to have both top-down and bottom-up processing skills (Nunan, 1999; Peterson 2001; Richard, 1983; Rost, 1994, 2001; Weir, 1993) and, also, in contexts like Azerbaijan, Iran and other EFL contexts having developed top-down and bottom-up processing listening skills is required in performing listening tasks and listening exams. Since there are many taxonomies proposed by different researchers, for the current research, first, based on the top-down and bottom-up processing, 19 different listening micro-skills which are most agreed-upon by different researchers in different taxonomies in literature were selected. Since it was not plausible for the current researchers to raise awareness about all the listening micro-skills, an attempt was made to identify the most frequently used listening micro-skills which are used in EFL classes. In order to select the most frequently used skills for the study, 30 EFL teachers in the field of listening comprehension were asked to rank these skills from the most useful one to the least useful one in the Iranian context. In effect, they were provided with the list of different skills and were asked to select and rank the most useful skills used in EFL classes.

After gathering EFL teachers' ranking of the micro-skills, in order to select the micro-skills and analyze them statistically, ranks of judges were summed and, then, the median of scores distribution was selected as the cutoff score. Hence, skills were divided on the basis of their ranks, and then a Mann-Whitney test was carried out. The results of this test are displayed in Table 3. In the first set of the micro-skills selected by the teachers, there are 10 listening micro-skills that are more frequently used in EFL contexts especially in the context of Iranian listening classes. As a result, for the purpose of the current research these 10 frequent micro-skills were selected and used in all stages of the research. The list of these 10 listening micro-skills is given in the Table 1 below.

1- Ability to guess the meanings of unfamiliar words from the context
2- Listening for gist
3- Understanding cohesive devices
4- Listening for specific information and important details
5- Recognizing functions of stress and intonation in spoken language
6- Listening to discriminate between distinctive sounds
7- Ability to understand reduced forms of words in spoken language
8- Listening for key words
9- Recognizing the topic
10- Making inferences and understanding the speaker's purpose

**Table 1. Listening micro-skills frequently used in Iranian EFL classes**

## Method

For selecting homogenous subjects, first a standard listening comprehension test, Preliminary English Test (PET), was administered to a group of EFL learners who were learning English in their first semester. The subjects were 252 pre-intermediate female Iranian EFL learners studying English at four different universities, namely Saveh Azad University, Zanjan Azad University, Payamnoor University and Samaparan University in Iran. The average age of the subjects was between 19 to 22. All the subjects were at the first year of their study in the university and before that had not received any formal education in listening comprehension. In order to select homogenous subjects, those who scored between 9-10 out of 25 were selected for the purpose of the study.

After selecting the homogenous participants, they were assigned to the control and experimental groups randomly so that every participant had the equal chance of being in the control or experimental group. For randomization, every subject was assigned a number and then the odd numbers were selected as the control group and the even numbers were selected as the experimental group. There were 130 female learners in the experimental group and 125 female learners in the control group. Female subjects were chosen because it was found in earlier studies that they are more cooperative. Furthermore inclusion of males would introduce another possible influence on the results.

During the study the experimental and comparison groups went through different procedures. While the comparison group did not receive any treatment, the experimental group received the treatment. They were given awareness about the most useful listening micro-skills involved in the listening process in EFL contexts. All the classes met twice a week at different times of the day, covering the same content and material for all the groups with the experimental groups receiving the treatment and the control group not receiving any awareness raising activity. To enhance the reliability and validity of the study, the same material was used by the same teacher (the researcher). The tasks used for the classroom were extracted from American New Interchange (Richards, 2005) and Tactics for Listening (Richards, 2005). This writer's books are the most quoted ones in the field of listening and speaking. These are the books most commonly used in Iran for listening classes for lower intermediate learners and the listening tasks used are authentic and compatible with EFL contexts. The course of treatment lasted 10 weeks. Every week, students were taught on each listening micro-skill during two sessions. The common practice in such English classes is that the teacher plays the listening text in the class two or three times and after that focuses on the coming listening comprehension questions. After

answering the questions, they usually compare the different answers and discuss the right answers. This typical method goes on in listening classes without teaching listening skills. Therefore, in this research, to address this issue and to investigate the impact of teaching listening micro-skills, the above practice was applied for the control group.

Students in the experimental group were taught 10 different listening skills. On the whole, the classes were held for 20 sessions, with students becoming aware of and practicing one skill in every two sessions. These awareness giving sessions heavily relied on the instructions and suggestions given by O'Malley and Chamot (1990), Mendelsohn (1994) and Oxford (1990) which emphasize explicit teaching of the different learning strategies.

When the awareness raising sessions and exercise giving sessions were over for the experimental and control groups respectively, another PET as a standard listening comprehension test for post-test was administered to all the groups to test their listening comprehension enhancement. The scores in both experimental and control groups were calculated and separated for the data analysis using SPSS package.

## Results

### Research Question One

1. *What are the most frequently used listening micro-skills used in the performing listening tasks in Iranian EFL classes at low pre-intermediate levels?*

The results revealed that there are two groups of listening micro-skills according to the teachers' perspective. One group of micro-skills is used frequently in EFL classes i.e. crank 2 (selected). The mean score for this set of skills is 6.30. The second set of the micro-skills is not used frequently in EFL classes i.e. crank 1 (unselected) with the mean of 14.11. The result of descriptive analysis for ranking the micro-skills is presented in the following Table 2.

	Crank:select	N	Mean Rank	Sum Ranks
Trank	1. unselect	9	14.11	127.00
	2. select	10	6.30	63.00
	Total	19		

**Table 2. Descriptive statistics for ranking skills**

The significance of the difference between these two sets of micro-skills has been indicated in Table 3. As evident from the results of Mann-Whitney test in Table 3, the difference between two sets of the micro-skills is significant statistically,  $p < .005$ . The two groups differed significantly,  $U = 8$ ,  $p < .005$  with measure of effect size of 0.69 ( $r = 0.69$ ).



		Trank
Mann-Whitney <i>U</i>		8.000
Wilcoxon <i>W</i>		63.000
<i>Z</i>		-3.022
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.003
Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]		.001(a)

**Table 3. Test Statistics for Mann-Whitney analysis**

Therefore, it can be concluded that there is significant difference between these two sets of micro-skills. This result implies that the micro-skills identified by the teachers as being more frequent and useful are true. In the first set of the micro-skills selected by the teachers, there are 10 listening micro-skills that are more frequently used in EFL context classes at low levels. As a result, for the purpose of the current research these 10 frequent micro-skills in EFL listening classes were selected and used in all stages of the research.

**Research Question Two**

*2. Does awareness raising activities about listening micro-skills have any significant effect on the listening comprehension enhancement of the EFL learners?*

This research question addresses the significance of the difference between learners in the experimental and control groups and explores the effectiveness of awareness raising on both groups' enhancement in listening comprehension. In order to test significance of difference between both groups, the following null hypothesis was proposed:

**H. 1.** Awareness raising activities about listening micro-skills do not have any significant effect on the listening comprehension enhancement of the EFL learners.

In order to see if learners benefited from the treatment and to attribute the learners' enhancement to the awareness giving activities, a comparison had to be made between learners in the experimental and control groups. The result of descriptive statistics comparing the scores of control and experimental groups in the post-test has been shown in Table 4.

Group Statistics				
		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
P2	Experimental	130	17.2962	2.79236
	Control	122	11.5697	2.43113

**Table 4. Descriptive statistics for experimental vs. control group**

By comparing the means of the learners in the experimental and control groups, it is clear that there is a considerable difference between learners in both groups. Learners in the experimental group with mean= 17.29, SD= 2.79 did much better than the learners in the control group with mean= 11.56, SD= 2.43.

The difference between both group’s enhancement in listening comprehension has been illustrated in Figure 1.

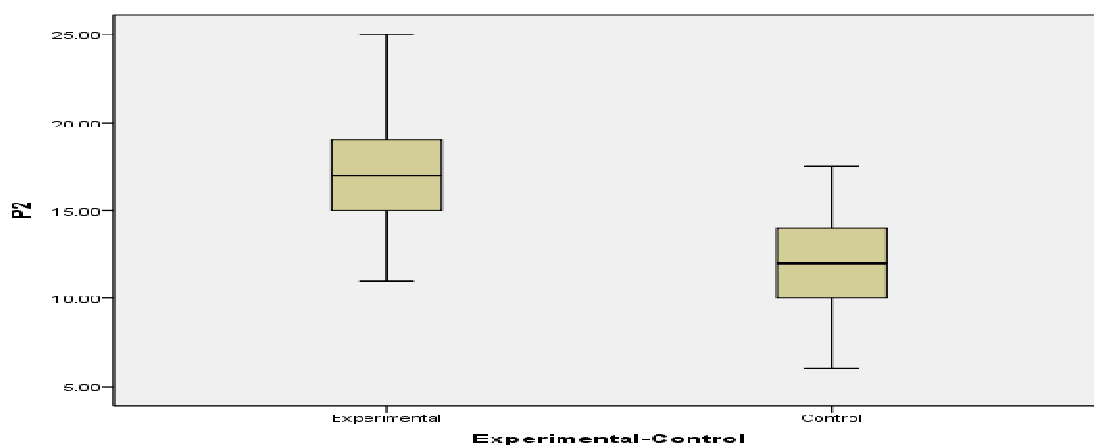


Figure 1. Box plot for experimental vs. control group

The above graph verifies the result of descriptive statistics above. As it is clear, there is considerable difference between learners in both groups and it seems that awareness raising about the most frequently used listening micro-skills has positive effect on the listening comprehension enhancement. But in order to find out if the acquired difference is significant or not, a T-test analysis was carried out. The result of T-test analysis has been displayed in Table 5.

		Independent Samples Test				
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
P2-	Equal variances assumed	2.932	.088	17.3	250	.000
P1	Equal variances not assumed			17.3	248.91	.000

Table 5. Result of T-test analysis

As the result in table 5 reveals, there is a significant difference between the learners in the experimental group(M= 17.29 ,SD= 2.79) and control group, M= 11.56 , SD= 2.43 , t(250)= 17.3, p<0.001. Since the difference between the means of the experimental group and control group is significant statistically, the proposed null hypothesis for the second research question can safely be rejected. Therefore, it is concluded that raising awareness of the EFL learners about different listening micro-skills enhances their listening comprehension significantly.

## **Discussion**

This study is an extension of research focusing on the synthetic approach and interventionist view of language learning. It extends the results of previous studies focusing on skill awareness. As the results reveal, breaking listening into smaller micro-skills and then giving awareness to the learners about these micro-skills is an effective way to teach listening skill at the lower levels in EFL contexts. Though there are some counter arguments against breaking listening into smaller skills, this study has shown that this can be an effective way to improve listening comprehension.

This study confirms the results of the previous studies advocating the importance of awareness raising. Based on the findings of the present study, it can be asserted that awareness giving about different listening micro-skills can be a good solution for teaching listening comprehension at the lower levels and teaching learners how to tackle their listening problems in EFL contexts. In a country like Iran in which learners have less exposure to the listening and listening comprehension tasks, listeners are intimidated while performing listening tasks and teachers cannot help learners in these cases. The role of explicit teaching especially giving awareness about grammar is more frequent in EFL contexts than ESL ones; therefore, it can be understood that in EFL settings learners need more explicit knowledge from the side of the teacher than the ESL context; as demonstrated in this study breaking listening into smaller components and then teaching these components help learners improve their listening comprehension significantly.

In brief, it can be concluded that in EFL contexts teaching listening comprehension by raising learners' consciousness about different listening micro-skills is an effective way to improve listening comprehension. Accordingly, it can be an effective replacement for the traditional way of practicing and testing listening skill in EFL classes.

## **Implications of the Study**

The findings in this study have some implications for researchers, educators and task designers. Based on the results of the study, our recommendation for educators would be to raise learners' awareness about different listening micro-skills in their listening classes. Most of the teachers have vague idea about how to teach listening at the lower levels and mostly practice listening or test listening in their classes. Hence, they can benefit from these findings and pay more attention to the importance of consciousness raising about different skills and thereby enhance the listening comprehension of their learners in the listening courses. As the findings in the current research show, raising learners' awareness about listening micro- skills can assist learners to tackle their listening problems to a great extent; therefore, it is suggested that educators try to raise learners' awareness of different listening micro-skills to improve listening comprehension in the EFL context.

On the other hand, as evidenced in the control group, just providing learners with simple practices in listening and doing listening exercises and then testing their listening by giving them some questions would not lead to satisfactory outcomes, so educators are strictly discouraged from following the typical way of practicing and testing listening in listening classes especially in the lower levels in which learners have little knowledge about how to improve their listening comprehension. As EFL teachers, we have experienced that when learners come to university

and take a listening course they are very confused about it and do not know how to perform listening tasks and when the teacher cannot teach these skills, they lose their motivation for learning and this brings up serious consequences. To avoid these issues, it is recommended that educators in the field raise awareness of their learners about different listening micro-skills which constitute the components of listening comprehension.

Another implication of this study relates to the importance of language awareness for teachers. In teacher education courses, the findings can be beneficial for training language teachers who are to teach English as a foreign language in EFL contexts. Consequently, the result achieved in this part about the positive effect of awareness giving about different skills gives awareness to the teachers themselves. With regard to the importance of teacher language awareness (TLA), research (see e.g., Andrew 1999a, 2007; Mcneill, 2005) suggests that TLA does have the potential to exert a powerful influence upon teaching effectiveness. Thornbury (1997) stresses the importance of focusing on language awareness in L2 teacher development courses. Wright and Bolitho (1993, p. 292) point out that the more aware a teacher is of language and how it works, the better it is. With regard to the awareness of listening micro-skills, teachers' being aware of the significance of awareness raising about different listening micro-skills in the enhancement of listening comprehension will give them insights to improve their teaching of listening comprehension.

Similarly, the findings of this research have important implications for task designers as well. According to the findings, it is suggested that listening tasks be designed in accord with listening micro-skills. In the sense that before designing tasks for the EFL listening courses, task designers should consider the most frequently used listening micro-skills that learners use in performing the listening tasks. Most of the books available are not based on the different listening micro-skills; therefore, it is recommended for the material and task designer to design materials and tasks based on the listening micro-skills that are used more frequently in the EFL context. It is argued that educators' being aware of the importance of listening micro-skills will help them in designing and adapting the materials according to the listening needs of the learners in the EFL context. Thornbury (1997) believes that an unaware teacher will fail to interpret the course book, syllabus and materials and adapt them to the listening needs of the learners. Wright and Bolitho (1993, p. 292) identify a number of pedagogical tasks where teachers' awareness may have a significant positive impact, including preparing lessons, evaluating, adapting and writing materials and designing syllabuses.

By considering the findings of the present study about the importance of raising learners' awareness listening micro- skills, teachers can enhance their own awareness of these skills. This will aid teachers and task designers in modifying the materials and tasks in accord with these micro-skills. In some cases, designing new tasks based on the listening micro-skills is difficult and time consuming; consequently, in these cases the teachers can play a significant role in shaping the tasks and compensating for the shortcomings of the previously designed materials. In a model about the role of teacher language awareness (TLA), Andrew (1999a, p. 166) believes that 'learners may encounter L2 input direct from sources such as the textbook and other students, but their exposure to output from these sources may also be modified or shaped by the teacher via the TLA "filter"'. This means that in making use of different materials, the teacher may change their presentation based on the needs of a specific context. In the same way, Rahimpour (2010) notes that syllabus should be open so that teachers who are in direct contact with the specific context and specific learners in that context can modify the syllabus and tasks based on the learners' needs. In teaching listening comprehension in the classroom, the teacher

can mediate and shape the input made available to the learners. While presenting the input in the books, an aware teacher can shape or even design new tasks that are based on the learners' listening needs.

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