

The Effect of Cultural Familiarity on Improving Iranian EFL Learners' Listening Skill

Masoumeh Rasooli *

Department of English Language, Tabriz Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tabriz, Iran

Saeedeh Ahangari

Department of English Language, Tabriz Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tabriz, Iran

Abstract

The present study was an attempt to investigate the effect of cultural familiarity on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' listening comprehension. The study was carried out at Iran-doostan Language Institute in Tabriz. From among initial 80 participants, 60 intermediate EFL learners were selected based on the results of Preliminary English Test (PET). Next, the selected participants were randomly assigned in to an experimental and a control group. The design of the study was quasi-experimental. Then, a listening pretest was administered to the participants to ensure their listening knowledge before the treatment. Afterwards, the treatment was carried out for 20 sessions twice a week. The traditional instruction was conducted in the control group. After the treatment, another listening post-test, similar to the pretest was administered to the participants of both groups. The analysis of the listening scores, attained through independent samples t-test at the end of the treatment showed that cultural familiarity had significant effect on the Iranian learners' listening comprehension. The obtained results have some implications for learners. Through exposure to specific culturally-oriented materials, for example, English culture materials, language learners can advance their listening comprehension.

Keywords: Culture, culture familiarity, listening comprehension

INTRODUCTION

Listening comprehension is not simply hearing what is being said. It is a person's ability to understand the meaning of the words he hears, and to relate them to each other in some way. Generally speaking, when we hear something for example an event, a good listening comprehension aids us to comprehend it, to remember it, to talk about it later, and even to restate it for others. Thus, listening comprehension is an essential skill to develop. It is critical even at early ages, because good listeners become good communicators in future. Consequently, there should be ways to help language learners to listen effectively in order to be successful speakers (Ravasani, 2014). In addition, Lynch and Mendelsohn (2002) stated that active listening brings about making sense of spoken

language. Listening is not a single process; series of processes are included in it, recognizing the sound of spoken language, perceiving the intonation, and interpretation of the statements. In general, we are not responsive to the processes of our first languages, when it comes to second or foreign language learning we notice the complexity of the processes.

Besides, as said by Chastain (1988), listening comprehension is of four constituents. The first one is the ability to distinguish all sounds, intonation patterns, and voice qualities in the second language and to distinguish between them and the identical sounds in the native language. The second is the perceiving of the entire message produced by a speaker. Rivers (1981, as cited in Ahmadi, 2016) said that the understanding of spoken messages rely on understanding of semantic meaning, moving from what one comprehends in the sound sequence regarding the knowledge of syntax only when the meaning is not understandable. The third constituent is the capability to perceive the message in one's auditory memory up to when it is developed. In order to build the learner's auditory memory, teachers hear as much as possible. It implies that most of the class time is devoted to language being taught. Also, the speed of lecturing and difficulty level of the content must be adapted with the learner's capability (Chastain, 1988).

In foreign language learning, listening is of ultimate significance, since without listening language input cannot be made, without listening we cannot communicate. The ESL and in particular EFL students find it difficult to listen to the materials successfully and fruitfully. In non-native settings, language learners experience lots of problems during developing listening (Cross, 1998). However, students find listening as a difficult skill, for the reason that they are trying to understand every word. We are able to understand what we listen to even on a noisy street, but indeed it is not simple to transfer this to a foreign language. Occasionally, learners get left behind trying to realize what the meaning of pervious word was.

According to Field (as cited in Oktorina, 2014), listening is a skill which at large has effects on precise ways on the classroom context, and on every individual learner. Listening is assuming greater and greater importance in foreign language classrooms. As well, Rost (as cited in Oktorina, 2014) emphasized that listening is of great importance in the process of language learning, since it offers input for the language user. Therefore, it can be concluded that the students have gained information through listening that prepares them before reading. In other words, listening has been a more important skill in foreign language classroom. Students can receive knowledge and comprehend about the language through listening.

When teachers are teaching listening, it is very important to follow types of listening. In accordance with Bueno, Madrid and McLaren (2006), the following types of listening were introduced like so:

- 1) Pre-listening would be the first stage, where the context is established. The teacher creates motivation and students do some activities with the purpose of preparing them for what they will hear.

2) The following stage is listening, where learners do the mentioned tasks or find answers. There are two kinds of material and procedure. On the one hand, extensive reading helps students to acquire vocabulary and grammar and it usually takes place outside the classroom. They do it for pleasure, so that their knowledge of the language improves and it makes students better readers. On the other hand, intensive listening is what students usually learn in the classroom, through audio CDs and activities such as answering questions, following a route on a map, making notes, etc.

3) The last stage is post-listening, the part where students have the opportunity to check their answers about they have been listening to, to give feedback and consolidate what they have learnt. It is useful for teachers because it helps to analyze particular difficulties the students could have with the listening activity.

As well, Pearl and Cynthialu (2012) specified three approaches in teaching listening including bottom-up approach; top-down approach; and interactive approach which are explained below.

1. The bottom- up approach acknowledges listening is a process of decoding sounds, from the smallest meaningful units to complex texts, inclusive of the main four processing levels as follows: a) phonemes, b) individual words, c) The semantic content, and at last, d) literal understanding.

2) The top –down approach employs background Listeners employ their background of knowledge the Context and situation to interpret what they hear. They make use of the knowledge of the topic at hand, speakers, and their personal correlation with the situation to enhance their understanding. It emphasizes the way various kinds of knowledge are used to help understand the message coming from the ears but it is not arranged into any fixed order because all the forms of prior knowledge interact and Influence each other.

3) Interactive theory shows another way to overcome the approaches to listening comprehension. It emphasizes the importance of acoustic input, suggesting that listening comprehension is a process of interaction among the acoustic inputs, different types of linguistic knowledge, details of the context and general world knowledge and so forth(Pourhossein Gilakjani & Ahmadi, 2011).English teachers in their classroom instruction can combine both bottom- up and top-down approaches to help students work on their ability in Listening comprehension(LC), making complex and simultaneous processing and interpretation much easier.

On the words of Ali, Kazemian, and Mahar (2015), culture can be approximately defined as “a ‘social heredity’ transmitted from one generation to another generation with the accumulation of individual experiences, or a mode of activities differentiating people of one society from another society” (p.2). Culture cannot be well thought-out as a biological phenomenon nonetheless a learned pattern of social behavior that is to be followed. It can be said that culture is a brilliant and exceptional phenomenon of human society with interesting diversity continuously changing its patterns which is the extreme beauty of human society. It is safe to claim that culture creates beliefs, carries ideas, and shares knowledge on customs and values. All of these characteristics are communicated through

language which is an integral part of culture (Ali et al., 2015). As a result, language is a "powerful and transformative tool of culture. Like culture, language is learned, it is shared, and it evolves and changes over time" (Banks, 2001, p. 268).

According to Hall (1959), cultural factors are varied but amongst the most prominent ones: High- Context culture versus Low-Context culture cannot be ignored. High and Low contexts denote communication styles. Low-context entails that individuals make use of direct, verbal communication, which their messages are communicated visibly, and that "reliance on words" is the preferred means of communicating to others. High-context denotes that the act of understanding the message is done by the listener. The greater part of the information is in a physical context or it is internalized. This is to say that the communicator "talks around the point" that she desires to produce and the listener must distinguish that point on her own, thus here meaning must be obtained due to environmental clues (Hall, 1959).

According to Kitao (1991), the underlying principle behind teaching culture not only within EFL courses, but also as a separate course is a manifestation of the great influence of teaching culture on the learners' attitudes and learning outcomes. What's more, the idea of teaching culture stemmed from the desire of most learners who want to continue their higher education abroad. This idea was emphasized by who stated that "cultural orientation is very important for students preparing to study abroad" (p.1). However, Bennett (1993) argued that if EFL learners master a foreign language without understanding its culture, they will end up fluent fool speakers who neither have an idea about the social content of a language nor about the philosophical one.

Ali et al (2015) pointed out that certainly, cultural awareness has an important contribution in foreign language learning programs. They believed that learners can enhance communication skills only after the formation of familiarity with the cultural patterns of target language. For them with the intention of achieving cultural awareness, it is essential to expose learners to a cultural context by creating interactive/ communicative activities by language teaching strategies. An assortment of multiple texts comprising cultural knowledge might be introduced to learners for the attainment of competence in using language patterns.

Without a shadow of doubt, cultural familiarity and listening comprehension are interrelated. Bakhtiarvand and Adinevand (2011) declared that foreign language listening comprehension is a multifaceted process and hence critical in the foreign language competence, yet, the position of listening in language learning has only been recognized relatively lately (Celce-Murcia, Rost, as cited in Bakhtiarvand & Adinevand 2011). They believe that given that the role of listening comprehension in language learning was moreover ignored or underestimated, it valued little research and pedagogical consideration in the past. They further add that presently, some researchers have devoted some time to listening and believe it to be an important skill in teaching and learning. For instance, Nunan (as cited in Bakhtiarvand & Adinevand 2011) believes that, listening is the rudimentary skill in language learning. Without listening skill, learners will not ever learn to communicate efficiently. Actually, over 50% of the time that students devote functioning in a foreign language will be devoted to listening. To provide

evidence on the relationship between cultural familiarity and listening comprehension, Fatemi, Montazerinia, Shirazian, and Atarodi (2014) investigated the effects of integrating culture on the development of Iranian EFL learners' listening comprehension. A sample of 52 upper-intermediate Iranian learners were selected based on a placement test and were also distributed randomly into two groups; the control and the experimental one. Results of the independent samples t-test indicated that there were remarkable effects of cultural integration on the development of listening comprehension on those students. Also, results offered pedagogical implications for integrating first language (L1) culture in EFL listening comprehension classrooms.

Similarly, in another study, Basavand and Sadeghi (2014) also worked on the effects of culture on listening comprehension. Along with their findings, what should be taken in to account is offering EFL course books for an intercultural communication. For them, there is a focus on 'immoderately language forms', lack of enough diverse social issues and not fulfilling student's awareness of the target language culture. They further add that, language teaching will be enhanced provided that culture and other aspects such as grammar and vocabulary are tangled with each other. It cannot clearly declare for them that features like adequate word knowledge and grammar have the final say, their significant role in listening comprehension cannot be overlooked. Still, in another study, Hayati (2009) investigated the effect of cultural knowledge on improving the Iranian EFL learners' listening comprehension. Data were collected from 120 pre-intermediate language learners who were selected based on their scores on a listening comprehension test and were randomly assigned to four groups. Each group was exposed to a certain condition as follows: TC (Target Culture), ITC (International Target Culture), SC (Source Culture), and CF (Culture Free). At the end of the experiment, a post-test was administered to the four groups to see whether any changes happened regarding their listening proficiency. The results indicated that the participants performed differently on the post-test indicating familiarity with culturally-oriented language material which promoted the Iranian EFL learners' listening proficiency.

In the same vein, Namaziandost, Sabzevari and Hashemifardnia (2018) conducted a study on the effect of cultural materials on listening comprehension. They concluded that culture and language are persistently connected and therefore cannot be isolated. For them, the teaching English without educating culture is not feasible. They tried to highlight the necessity of teaching culture for EFL students. They claimed that if it was not English, namely, it was another language, then it would be possible to teach the culture with the language; but that is not the same for English as it is a global language. They further add that irrespective of whether culture is "deliberately or unwittingly" part of the teachers' educational points, the transmission of culture is inevitable. They believe that base of our education is definitely connected to culture.

In providing support to their assertions they point to Tseng (2002) who emphasized that "each exercise is tied in with something and that something is culture (p. 20). They also assert that background knowledge is a significant characteristic of any kinds of listening materials. Consequently, language learners longing to improve their listening comprehension must have more meaningful exposure to two kinds of listening materials:

target culture materials and international target culture materials. They continue the discussion through putting emphasis on having more exposure to certain cultural materials, for example, English culture materials, language learners can advance their listening comprehension. Finally, they assert that background knowledge, cultural familiarity, and linguistic complexity are vital linguistic and meta-linguistic characteristics for the improvement of listening comprehension.

Likewise, in another study, Mahmoudi (2017) conducted a study for finding the effect of cultural schemata activation on listening comprehension. He found that activating background knowledge before listening is amongst the most important factors in successful listening comprehension skill. According to the study, it was supposed that through giving a theoretically familiar but culturally unfamiliar text the low-level participants' background knowledge about the familiar topic would be activated and by connecting new information to the previous one they would be able to guess answers to some of the questions and do better in their listening comprehension. However, Mahmoudi asserts it was established that familiar schemata are not triggered efficiently when the listeners do not have sufficient language proficiency particularly if the activating text is unfamiliar. Consequently, he says to achieve an acceptable level in listening comprehension, firstly a dependable level of language proficiency must be developed. He adds that linguistic ability can even compensate for the inadequate background knowledge though at higher levels lack of background knowledge might cause occasional misunderstanding.

But it is safe to assert that the cultural familiarity and listening comprehension studies are seriously scarce, it is even more inadequate when it comes to our own context, namely Islamic Republic of Iran. She suggested that learners will understand better when given cultural information about listening materials and when the background knowledge has been activated/created thus learners would be able to catch the message of which they received through listening. Therefore, the present study was an attempt to investigate the importance of Iranian EFL students' familiarity about culture and its effect on the Iranian students' listening comprehension. Having this purpose in mind, the researcher tried to answer the following research question:

1. Does cultural familiarity have any significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' listening comprehension?

Accordingly, the following null hypothesis was postulated:

H01. Cultural familiarity has no significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' listening comprehension.

METHOD

Participants

A total of 60 female Iranian EFL language learners with the age range of 18-21 participated in this study. The participants were selected from Turkish backgrounds. They were selected from five intact classes based on their performance on the proficiency test. They were chosen out of an accessible population pool of 80 Iranian EFL students.

Those whose scores were one standard deviation above and below the mean were through convenience sampling considered as the final sample. Then, these 60 participants were randomly assigned to two groups: one experimental group and one control group. The number of participants in each of the control and experimental groups was 30. They have been studying English for more than 7 years at Irandoostan institute in Tabriz, Iran.

Instruments

Pretest and Post-test Listening

A listening test adopted from World class series by Nancy Douglas and James R. Morgan was administered as a pretest to Iranian high intermediate participants to ensure their listening comprehension knowledge before the treatment. Also, another listening test, parallel to the one used in the pretest, was administered as a post-test to Iranian intermediate participants to see whether cultural familiarity has affected their listening knowledge or not after the treatment. The listening test included two task-types as a question formats: the first part includes multiple-choice questions that participants should choose one of the options provided. The second part includes comprehension questions as gap-fill that participants should find the suitable answer and put in the blanks. It should be mentioned that the time for answering the listening test was 30 minutes.

Design

The design of the study was quasi-experimental. The independent variable of the study was method on cultural familiarity and the dependent variable was listening comprehension skill.

Procedure

After obtaining the required permissions to conduct the study, first of all, the reading and listening subtests of standardized preliminary English Test (PET) as a proficiency test were administered to 80 Iranian intermediate participants to be sure of their homogeneity level. However, due to practical issues, and the focus of the present study, only the reading and listening subtests of Preliminary English Test (PET) were administered. The participants whose scores were one standard deviation above and below the mean were selected; thus, the number of participants decreased to 60. Then, the participants were randomly assigned to an experimental group and a control group. Afterward, a pre-test on listening comprehension was run to all of the learners for assuring their homogeneity on listening comprehension skill before the treatment instruction. Subsequently, the researcher started the treatment. In the experimental group every session she provided the learners with cultural information relevant to the listening materials before asking them to listen. For instance, she explained them the parallel events in their own culture. It is mentioned that every session, she explained about one of the target culture factors in the experimental group. For example, in the first session, she explained about the geography and history of the target culture and encouraged students to discuss about the geography and history of target culture. Next,

in the second session, she explained about the values and beliefs of target culture and its importance. Students also discussed and answered the questions. After that, in the third session, she explained about music, literature of the target culture and its' importance in English learning classes. In the final session, the teacher talked about customs of target culture and asked students questions about the target culture customs and also source culture. Students discussed the questions. Then they were asked to answer the comprehension questions. While in the control group, the researcher asked the participants to listen to the same materials without giving any information. In this institute, a course consists of 20 sessions which meet two times a week. World class series by Nancy Douglas and James R. Morgan (2010) are taught as the main source book. The books are based on interactions in different contexts. The course includes teaching new topics, vocabulary, function and grammar. Communication and successful speaking are one of the most important points of EFL teaching in this institute. Materials are used to activate the use of effective listening/ speaking in real situation. After 20 sessions, all of the participants sat for a post-test on listening comprehension. Independent samples t-test was used for comparing the results between groups.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results of Normality Distribution of Motivation Scores

Having collected the data, the data were analyzed using SPSS. To ensure the normality of the distribution of the participants' listening scores in the control and experimental groups, One-sample kolmogorov-smirnov test was used. The results of this test are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Results of One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test for the Participants' Listening Scores in Control and Experimental Groups

Groups of Students			Pretest Listening Scores	Post-test Listening Scores	
N			30	30	
Control Group	Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	12.03	13.00	
		Std. Deviation	1.07	1.05	
	Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.234	.263	
		Positive	.234	.263	
		Negative	-.218	-.171	
	Test Statistic			.234	.263
	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)			.146 ^c	.200 ^c
N			30	30	
Experimental Group	Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	12.17	16.63	
		Std. Deviation	1.18	1.10	
	Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.190	.236	
		Positive	.190	.236	
		Negative	-.144	-.197	
	Test Statistic			.190	.236
	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)			.185 ^c	.200 ^c

As it is indicated in Table 1, the significant value of the participants' listening scores was higher than alpha level .05. It means that the participants' listening scores had a normal distribution because normal data is an underlying assumption in parametric testing.

Results of the t-test between the Experimental and Control Groups

The null hypothesis formulated in the present study stated that cultural familiarity has no significant effect on Iranian intermediate learners' listening comprehension. In order to check the participants' listening comprehension, the researcher applied a pre-test listening test to 60 participants of the study. Before embarking on the independent samples t-test, it is vital to consider the descriptive statistics of the participants' pre-test listening scores. Table 2 demonstrates the results.

Table 2. Results of Descriptive Statistics of the Participants' Pretest Listening Scores between Two Groups

	Groups of students	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pretest Listening Scores	Control group	30	12.03	1.07
	Experimental group	30	12.17	1.18

As it is evident in Table 2, the participants' pre-test listening mean score in the control group was 12.03 with the standard deviation of 1.07, and the mean score of the participants in the experimental group was 12.17 with the standard deviation of 1.18. On the other hand, an Independent samples t-test was used to see whether there was a significant difference between the participants' pre-test listening scores in the control and experimental groups or not. The results of the independent samples t-test are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Results of Independent Samples T-test for the Participants' Pretest Listening Scores

	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	
Pretest Listening Scores	Equal variances assumed	.057	.812	-.460	58	.647	-.13	.29	-.71	.45
	Equal variances not assumed			-.460	57.443	.647	-.13	.29	-.71	.45

Table 3 shows that the p-value in Levene's Test for equal variances was .812. This means that the difference between the variances is statistically non-significant and the statistics in the first row should be used. Since $t(58) = -.460$, $p = .647$, larger than alpha level .05, it was revealed that there was no significant difference between the pre-test scores of the participants in two groups, and that participants were at the same level of listening comprehension proficiency before the treatment.

Then, another listening test as a post-test, similar to the one used in the pretest was administered to the participants in two groups. Table 4 presents the results of the descriptive statistics for the participants' post-test listening scores in the control group and experimental group.

Table 4. Results of Descriptive Statistics for the Participants' Post-test Listening Scores

		Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Post-test Listening scores	Control group		30	13.00	1.05
	Experimental group		30	16.63	1.10

As Table 4 indicates, the participants' post-test mean score in the control group was 13.00 with the standard deviation of 1.05, which was different from the mean score of the experimental group 16.63 with the standard deviation of 1.10. Moreover, to check whether there was a significant difference between the participants' listening post-test scores in the control and experimental groups, the researcher ran the parametric test of independent samples t-test since the normality assumption was met. Table 5 displays the results of the independent samples t-test.

Table 5. Independent Samples T-test for the Participants' Post-test Listening Scores

	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	
Post-test Listening Scores	Equal variances assumed	.093	.762	-13.096	58	.000	-3.63	.28	-4.19	-3.08
	Equal variances not assumed			-13.096	57.886	.000	-3.63	.28	-4.19	-3.08

As Table 5 demonstrates, the p-value in Levene's test for equality of variances was .762. It means that the equal variances were assumed and the results of the first row should be

read. Since $t(58) = -13.096$, $p = .000 < .05$, it was revealed that there was a significant difference between the participants' post-test listening comprehension scores in the control and experimental groups. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and the answer to the research question was affirmative.

The findings achieved from the analyses of the data collected through pre- and post- test listening scores confirmed that there was a significant difference between the participants' pre- and post- test scores in the experimental group as compared with those of the control group, indicating a significant effect of cultural familiarity on the learners' listening comprehension. The findings of the present study is consistent with the findings of Fatemi, Montazerinia, Shirazian, and Atarodi (2014) who found that there is a significant effect of cultural integration on the Iranian students' listening comprehension. Similarly, the findings of the study done by Basavand and Sadeghi (2014) support the results of the present study in which they asserted that teaching culture and culture knowledge had a significant effect on listening comprehension and its importance cannot be overlooked. Besides, the finding of the present study is in line with the findings of Hayati's (2009) study who found that learners' cultural knowledge is the foundation for language learning. He further adds that cultural familiarity had a positive and significant effect on listening comprehension. Moreover, the findings of the present study is compatible with the findings of Namaziandost, Sabzevari and Hashemifardnia (2018) who found that culture familiarity had an effect on language learning especially listening comprehension. Also, the findings of the study done by Tseng (2002) support the findings of the present study that culture familiarity and culture knowledge had a significant effect on listening comprehension. What's more, the outcome of the present study is in line with the findings of the study of Mahmoudi (2017) who revealed that culture knowledge has a significant effect on listening comprehension.

The findings of the present study provide support for some of the research studies which have been conducted thus far and reported support for the effectiveness of the culture in listening comprehension, but not for others which do not support any efficacy for that. Along with Sasaki, Yoshinori and Gakuin (1991, as cited in Bakhtiarvand and Adinevand, 2011), there are two general views concerning culture and material designing in ELT. Supporters of the first view believe in teaching English without culture or culturally sterile teaching. Considering no role to culture in teaching English as a second or foreign language, they discard the efficacy of culture in the educational settings. While in Iran, this idea has caused in the expulsion of culture from the educational settings on the grounds that: First of all, Iranian culture is a combination of national and Islamic cultures. National culture is rooted in old customs and traditions which people go through during the history and Islamic culture is instigated from religious beliefs and rules which people try to follow in their everyday life. Afterwards it is claimed by the opponents that the dominant Western culture will be a threat to our local culture. So, in their beliefs teaching Western culture might bring about cultural conflict. If we teach and emphasize English culture in EFL classes, we might be branded negatively as a Western-oriented or politically-motivated teacher. But we don't support these views on culture. Conversely, supporters of the second view believe in the inclusion of culture in the curriculum,

because they are certain that language and culture are not distinguishable and all language is interpreted concerning the culture and, consequently, teaching language regardless of culture is impossible. They also believe that language and culture are so intertwined that focusing on one regardless of the other is very problematic if not incredible. This very notion was the one which is favored in the present study. That is, the findings designated that cultural familiarization of the text has a significant effect on listening comprehension which high scoring the experimental group in the posttest was an approval.

CONCLUSION

The present study investigated the effect of cultural familiarity on Iranian EFL learners' listening comprehension. The results indicated that cultural familiarity can promote students' listening comprehension. Hence, it was shown that learners are able to find the relationships of new materials with preexisting once, they make sense of them and consequently they were encouraged to listen as successfully and as eagerly as possible. Through providing cultural information orally learners became able to understand the listening materials effectively. Also, by the use of cultural familiarity questions, students can comprehend the listening texts better. Therefore, it can be concluded that providing previous information about cultural materials help learners in their comprehension of the materials they listen. In the present study, the effect of cultural familiarity on Iranian learners' listening comprehension was examined. Definitely, eliminating the limitations imposed upon the present study, such as the small sample size or the amount of time, more research is needed to investigate various factors which might be associated with cultural familiarity, such as perceptions, self-efficacy, creativity, critical thinking and the like which all can have a role in students' listening comprehension and their ultimate language achievement.

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