

**THE EFFECTS OF AUDIO- VISUAL RECORDED AND AUDIO RECORDED LISTENING TASKS ON THE COMPLEXITY OF EFL LEARNERS' ORAL PRODUCTION**

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**ABSTRACT:** *Research in the field of language teaching and learning claims that combination of task characteristics and processing conditions can direct a learner's attention to the competing goals of accuracy, complexity, and fluency. English audiovisual and audio recorded materials have been widely used by teachers and students, and have been the important resources of teaching and self-study. We are living today in a rich audiovisual environment. As teachers, we must face the fact that this radically changes our students' attitude towards language and language learning. What effects do these materials have on English speaking ability? The objective of this study is to find out whether there is difference in EFL learners' complexity in both audiovisual recorded (videos, movies, etc.) and audio recorded tasks. For this purpose, 40 students of intermediate level were chosen and then were randomly assigned into two groups each of which was under different listening tasks. (audio visual- and audio only). Data analysis showed that the group which was trained under AV listening tasks showed different effects on students' complexity, compared to the other group positioned using audio recorded. Based on the results of this study, it is imperative that teachers consider the types of activities and methods that can have influence over language learners' speaking ability.*

**KEYWORDS:** Audio- visual listening- audio recorded listening – complexity

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Speaking in a L2 has occupied a peculiar position throughout much of the history of language teaching, and only in the last two decades has it begun to emerge as a branch of teaching, learning and testing in its own right, rarely focusing on the production of spoken discourse (Bygate, 2001). There are many different theories and approaches to teaching a second or foreign language. Some of these theories and approaches are exotic, and some are mundane, however what is common among them is a desire to make the second or foreign language acquisition as efficient and effective as possible (Skehan, 1998).

As the use of multi- media increases in language learning settings, especially English language, the more realistic and more vivid foreign language learning classrooms become, accordingly. Consequently, language learners extend their language learning apparatuses to obtain their

language learning resources, like English programs of news, broadcasts, documentary, film, interviews, etc. Audio-visual devices make it possible for people to have access to more authentic material. Language learning can be better developed for both instructed and non-instructed learners via using of media (Cortier and Nunan, 2001). Nowadays, there is an increase in using of video and audio recorded materials. The consistent need for cross-cultural communication has forced people of many different places and origins to come together. It is in these circumstances that teaching English as the current “dominant lingua franca” (Byram, 2006) has increasingly become an important profession.

#### *Using materials*

Students, a teacher, materials, teaching methods, and evaluation are important components taken for granted in classroom. Allwright (1990) argued that materials should teach students to learn, that they should be resource books for ideas and activities for instruction/learning, and that they should give teachers rationales for what they do. O'Neill (1990), in contrast, stated that materials may be suitable for students' needs, even if they are not designed specifically for them. Learning is a sophisticated phenomenon which can be defined as changes in disposition, behavior over time and this is brought by experience.

#### *Input, Interaction and Output*

These three factors have been taken a great amount of weight in language learning setting, especially English classrooms. Thus, through negotiation, a learner's attentional resources may be oriented to (a) a particular discrepancy between what he or she knows about the L2 and what the L2 really is or (b) an area of the L2 about which the learner has little or no information (Gass & Torres, 2005). Interaction is said to be an attention-drawing device, which means that interaction serves to draw attention to an unknown part of language. Learning may take place during the interaction. But what these researches and findings can't to some extent provide is that if there is a change in the speaking ability of the language learners.

Iranian English teachers, trying to teach spoken English, don't heed to effect of the way they provide teaching materials. That is to say, most Iranian English teachers ignore the way they provide input for students in order to understand and speak. As a result, the type of speaking which a language learner yields doesn't show his/her true ability in listening.

#### *Task in classroom*

Since the advent of communicative language teaching and the belief that language is best learned when it is being used to communicative messages, the communicative task has ascended to a position of prominence as a unit of organization in syllabus design (Ellis, 2000). Nunna (2006), for example proposes a task-based unitary framework because it “leads to student-led holistic outcomes in the form of written reports, spoken presentations and substantial small group conversations that lead to decision-making outcomes” (p.70). This interest in the task has been motivated to a considerable extent by the fact that ‘task’ is seen as a construct of equal importance to second language acquisition (SLA) researchers and to language teachers. (Pica, 1997)

In order to use the language effectively learners need to develop communicative competence- the ability to use the language they are learning in a given social encounter. Hymes' notion of

communicative competence was elaborated by a number of practice-oriented language educators, most notably by Canale and Swain (1995) who contended that communicative competence comprises grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence.

regulate that processes.

There are two main sources of evidence which justify the use of tasks in language classes. As Lynch and Maclean (2000, p.80) mention, “the first source of justifications for task-based learning is what we might term the ecological one: the belief that the best way to promote effective learning is by setting up classroom tasks that reflect as far as possible the real world tasks which the learners perform.”

The second source of evidence according to Lynch and Maclean (2000) comes from SLA research. “Those arguing for TBL, drawing on SLA research, have tended to focus on issues such as learnability, the order of acquisition of particular L2 structures, and the implications of the input, interaction and output hypotheses” (p.81). Task-based language teaching is also discussed from a psycholinguistic perspective. Ellis (2000) noted that “From a psycholinguistic perspective a task is a device that guides learners to engage in certain types of information-processing that are believed to be important for effective language use and/or for language acquisition from some theoretical standpoint” (p.197). Ellis (2006) asserts that “tasks reduce the cognitive or linguistic demands placed on the learner” (p.23). Listening skill plays a vital role in learning a language especially one which is not known or familiar for a learner. Different people have different listening abilities and as a result their understanding of a situation would be different. Therefore, these differences can lead to distinct speaking outcomes. It becomes more important in an educational setting where language learners are engaged to understand and enunciate what they hear in a tape.

### *Listening*

No doubt, listening is the most common communicative activity in daily life without understanding input at the right level, any learning simply cannot begin. Listening is thus fundamental to speaking. Limited listening input fails to increase face-to-face communication. Adequate listening practice could give the learners essential contact with handy input that might activate their utterances. Reciprocal or interactive and non-reciprocal listening tasks have been neglected in language classrooms and failed to take adequate account of the fact that students need to interact with fellow students.

### *Task response Characteristics:*

- i. Accuracy: “Accuracy refers to the extent to which the language produced in performing a task conforms to target language (TL) norms” (Robinson, 1995, p.99)
- ii. Complexity: “The extent to which the language produced in performing a task is elaborate and varied is called complexity” (Ellis, 2003, p.340).
- iii. Fluency: According to the Skehan (1996, P.84), “Fluency refers to the capacity of the learners to mobilize his/her system to communicate meaning in real time.”

### *Communicative Language Teaching*

Since the 1970s communicative language teaching (CLT) has been the dominant paradigm in second language teaching in which the focus of attention has shifted away from form to meaning. Ellis (2003) claims that, CLT aims to develop learners' ability to use language in real communication. Brown and Yule (1983, cited in Ellis, 2003), consider two general purposes for communication: The interactional function, where language is used for establishing and maintaining contact, and the transactional function, where language is used for information exchange.

“It concentrates on getting learners to do things with language, to express concepts and to carry out communicative acts of various kinds. The content of a language course is now defined not in terms of forms, words and sentence patterns, but in terms of concepts, or notions, which such forms are used to express, and the communicative functions which they are used to perform” (Widdowson,1990, p.159). Communication is a process; it is insufficient for students to simply have knowledge of target language forms, meanings, and functions. Students must be able to apply this knowledge in negotiating meaning (Larsen-Freeman, 2000, p. 123).

Berns (1990 p. 104) provides a useful summary of eight principles of CLT:

1. Language teaching is based on a view of language as communication. That is, language is seen as a social tool that speakers use to make meaning; speakers communicate about something to someone for some purpose, either orally or in writing.
2. Diversity is recognized and accepted as part of language development and use in second language learners and users, as it is with first language users.
3. A learner's competence is considered in relative, not in absolute, terms.
4. More than one variety of a language is recognized as a viable model for learning and teaching.
5. Culture is recognized as instrumental in shaping speakers' communicative competence, in both their first and subsequent languages.
6. No single methodology or fixed set of techniques is prescribed.
7. Language use is recognized as serving ideational, interpersonal, and textual functions and is related to the development of learners' competence in each.
8. It is essential that learners be engaged in doing things with language—that is, that they use language for a variety of purposes in all phases of learning.

“An approach to language teaching methodology that emphasizes authenticity, interaction, student-centered learning, task based activities, and communication for the real world, meaningful purposes” (Brown, 2007, p.378). Brown (2007, p.241) also offers four interconnected characteristics of CLT:

1. Classroom goals are focused on all of the components of CC (communicative competence) and not restricted to grammatical or linguistic competence.
2. Language techniques are designed to engage learners in the pragmatic, authentic, functional use of language for meaningful purposes. Organizational language forms are not the central focus but rather aspects of language that enable the learner to accomplish those purposes?

3. Fluency and accuracy are seen as complimentary principles underlying communicative techniques. At times fluency may have to take on more importance than accuracy in order to keep learners meaningfully engaged in language use.
4. In the communicative classroom, students ultimately have to use the language, productively and receptively, in unrehearsed contexts.

“Negotiation consists of interactions during which speakers come to terms, reach an agreement, make arrangements, resolve a problem, or settle an issue by conferring or discussing; the purpose of language use is to accomplish some task rather than to practice particular language forms” (Lee, 2000, p.9). CLT drew on very different method of language. While the earlier methods viewed language as a set of linguistic systems (phonological, lexical, and grammatical), CLT drew on a functional model of language. In fact, “CLT focuses on language use, i.e. meaningful and appropriate use of language in the construction of discourse, rather than usage, i.e. correct use of language” (Ellis, 2003, p.30).

#### *Research Question and Hypothesis*

The present study attempted to answer the question raised about the impact of ‘using audio-visual recorded materials and audio- recorded tapes on EFL learners’ oral performance. The objective of the study can be expressed in the following question Does using audio-visual recorded materials improve the “complexity” of EFL learners’ speech as compared to audio recorded materials? According to the above question, the following research hypothesis was developed. The negative counterpart was the null one.

Using audio visual materials in classroom doesn’t improve the “complexity” of EFL learners’ speech as compared to audio recorded materials.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### *Participants*

The participants in this study were 40 male intermediate students studying English at Institute which is a private language institute with main focus on communicative approach toward language learning and teaching. The sample was selected out of a population of 70 intermediate students using the Preliminary English Test (PET). Those whose scores ranged from 50-60 out of 65 were selected to participate in the study

### *Instrumentations*

The Preliminary English Test (PET) was used to see if the two groups are homogeneous in terms of their L2 proficiency. The participants' PET scores were entered into an ‘Independent samples t-test’, the results of which confirmed the two groups' initial homogeneity. After ensuring the initial homogeneity of the groups in general language proficiency, the pre-test including four speaking tasks was administered, and on the basis of the scores obtained from the pretest, the Computers, cassettes and tape recorder, microphones and .students were assigned into two groups post-test were other key instruments for recording the oral production of all the participants of the study.

### *Procedure*

At the beginning of the program the PET exam including three sections of listening, reading and writing were administered to assure the initial homogeneity of the groups in terms of their L2 proficiency, then the pre-test including five speaking tasks was administered. All oral answers were taped-recorded and then transcribed. In order to score the oral pretest data, the raters listened to each audio-tape recording and then transcribed it. In order to measure 'complexity' the ratio of lexical to grammatical words was calculated.

The instructional treatment was provided during six sessions, each of which lasted approximately 30 minutes. In first group, the students were watching the audio visual materials. Second group were listening to the audio recorded tapes and cd's. At the end of the program, the participants in both groups were post- tested. The post- testing procedure was exactly the same as pre-testing. Five speaking tasks were administered. The procedure for scoring the post-test was the same as the pre-test. The speeches of the participants in second performance were transcribed by the researcher in order to measure. The transcriptions were coded, and evaluated in terms of complexity.

### *Measures*

In order to score the data, the measures used by Foster and Skehan (1997) were adapted for scoring the 'complexity of the participants' performance. In order to measure 'complexity' the ratio of lexical to grammatical words was calculated.

### *Statistical Procedures*

In this study, the following statistical analysis and procedures were utilized in order to analyze the collected data:

1. Independent samples test was utilized to compare the means of each group's PET examination scores to see the homogeneity of two groups, and
2. Independent Samples Test was utilized to compare the means of each group's task response characteristics in pretest and posttests in terms of complexity.

## **RESULTS AND FINDINGS**

In the following sections, discussion of descriptive statistics employed for comparing the means for research question of the study, and the Levene's test for equality of variances in both participants' PET examination and task response characteristics in terms of complexity will be explained.

Table 1 depicts the results of descriptive statistics and an independent t-test. The necessary condition for comparison of the means is the equality of variance in both groups, which is shown by Levene's test for equality of variances.



Table.1 Independent Samples Test for the homogeneity of groups

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		Equality of	
				F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
A	20	52.800	3.054	1.293	.263	.507	38	.615	
AV	20	52.350	2.540						

As the results of Table 1 show, regarding the significance level of Leven's test (0.263), which is more than 0.05, equality of variances is verified. The mean score of the PET test in AV group is (52.3), and in A group (52.8). Significance of the t-test was calculated, 0.615. As the significance of t-test is higher than 0.05, therefore equality of PET scores' means in two groups is not rejected. As a result, the means of PET scores in AV group do not have meaningful difference, so these two groups are homogeneous.

#### Results of the Pretest

A t-test analysis was run to determine if there was any statistically significant difference in scores of the pretest, measuring complexity of participants' oral performance.

#### Comparison of the "complexity" of two groups in pretest

Table2 Descriptive Statistics of the pretest results

	group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Error
pretest Complexity	A	20	1.9210	.06735	.01506	
	AV	20	1.9205	.08010	.01791	

Table3 Independent samples t- test for the comparison of 'complexity' means in pretest

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std.Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Pretest Complexity	Equal variances assumed	1.180	.284	.021	38	.983	.00050	.02340	-.04687	.04787
	Equal variances not assumed			.021	36.912	.983	.00050	.02340	-.04692	.04792

Independent t- sample test was utilized to compare the complexity of two groups. The necessary condition for comparing the means is the equality of variances of groups. Therefore, Levene's test for equality of variances was utilized to compare the variances of two groups. As the results of table 3 show, significance of Leven's test is calculated.284, which is more than 0.05; therefore, equality of variances is verified. Mean scores of complexity in A group is calculated (**M=1.921, SD=.067**) and in AV group is (**M=1.920, SD=.080**). Significance of the t-test is calculated .983. As the significance of t-test is higher than 0.05, therefore equality of complexity scores' means in two groups in pretest is not rejected. As a result, there doesn't seem meaningful difference between the complexity score of both groups. This difference is not statistically significant (**P>0.05, df=38, t= .021**).

### *Results of the post-test*

The results of descriptive analysis for the complexity of discourse produced by AV group, and A group in performing a listening task are shown in Table 4.

Table4 Descriptive Statistics of the post test results

Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Posttest Complexity A	20	1.9225	.066430	.01440
AV	20	2.1165	.34378	.07687

Table 5. Independent samples t- test for the comparison of 'complexity' means in post- test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence interval of the difference	
	F	Sig.	t	Df				Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	7.119	.080	-2.481	38	.018	-.19400	.07821	-.35232	-.03568
Equal variances not assumed			-2.481	20.331	.022	-.19400	.07821	-.35697	-.03103

Independent samples t-test was utilized to compare the complexity of two groups. Again the necessary condition for comparing the mean differences is the equality of variances of the groups. Therefore, Levene's test for equality of variances was utilized to compare the variances



of two groups. As the results of Table 5 show, regarding the significance level of Leven's test ( $P > 0.05$ ,  $df=38$ ,  $t= -2.481$ ), (sig .080) which is more than 0.05, equality of variances is verified.

Mean scores of complexity in A group is ( $M=1.92$ ,  $SD=.066$ ), and in AV group is ( $M=2.11$ ,  $SD=.343$ ). Significance of the t-test is 0.018. Because the significance of t-test is smaller than 0.05, therefore Null Hypothesis (equality of complexity mean scores in two groups) is rejected. Consequently, mean scores of complexity in AV group is meaningfully higher than the A group in post -test.

## DISCUSSION

The immediate study focused on the effects of audio- visual and audio recorded listening tasks on intermediate EFL learners 'oral performance. The underlying reason in this study is that Iranian English teachers, trying to teach spoken English, don't pay enough attention to effects these two different types can have on the speech production. Dependent variable measured was 'complexity' (operationalized as the ratio of lexical to grammatical words). It was discovered from the findings that the impact of audiovisual listening tasks is different from that of audio recorded listening tasks. Agreeing with this, Dike (1989) stated that varying media assets not just build the inspiration the instructors and learners, they add clarity to the theme taught and make adapting all the more fascinating. According to Ode and Omokaro (2007) audiovisual resources encourages learners to make abstract ideas more concrete. The above discoveries essentially bear assurance to the study by Balogum (1976) on the significance of varying media materials which underscored that a well-picked AV materials will advance better understanding, make enthusiastic adjust and permit learners offer encounters of different societies, and make individualized learning conceivable through their customized directions; and give solid premise to reasonable thinking henceforth lessening aimless word reaction by learners. To advance examine if there is no critical distinction between the utilization and non-utilization of varying media materials the invalid theory was tried and the outcome demonstrated that there is huge contrast between the utilization and non-utilization of varying media materials in learner's oral creation.

## PEDOGOGICAL IMPLICATION

The most vital commitment of this study is that it gives learners and L2 instructors with a reasonable clarification of how using audio –visual listening tasks affected the L2 learners' performance in terms of complexity of their speech. Regarding the results of the study, it is predicated that the type of a task is an important factor which contributes to the decision as to provide speech. There are sure likely ramifications taken from this study for language instructors and material planning specialists. Educators can incorporate audio –visual listening tasks more in their daily teaching of listening tasks. Providing students with the opportunity to watch listening materials is well worthwhile. Listening and interaction with teacher or with other students enable learners to work with a language problem in a reasonably stable site. Regarding research procedure, examination of the information uncovered that classes of investigation can be reached out past the worldwide measure of familiarity. Discoursal highlights, lexical determination, collocations of the discourse can likewise be researched<sup>7</sup>. Suggestions for further study

In order to permit greater confidence in the results, the following areas for further research are suggested:

1. Replication of the study for male vs. female learners;
2. Replication of the study with different age group;
3. Replication of the study with tasks other than the ones employed in this study

## CONCLUSION

According to Ellis (2003), the point of an assignment based class is animating language use, initiating whatever language the understudies have, and giving learning chances to understudies. With regard to the discrepancy among the researchers, it seems that it will be better for both the teachers and researchers to explore various ways of improving L2 production, particularly on complexity. Thus the main concern of this study was to investigate the probability of enhancing the fluency of Iranian EFL learners' task-based oral performance through listening tasks. The findings of the present study indicated that the AV group's performance in terms of complexity was more accurate than the A group's complexity.

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