

## **THE EFFECT OF AUDIOLINGUAL-BASED VERSUS COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING-ORIENTED TECHNIQUES ON INTERMEDIATE EFL LEARNERS' LISTENING COMPREHENSION**

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### **Abstract**

This study was an investigation to find out the effect of audiolingual (ALM)-based versus communicative language teaching (CLT)-oriented techniques on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' listening comprehension ability. To do this, sixty EFL learners in intermediate level from Shokouh Institute in Lahijan, Iran were selected randomly and assigned to two groups; namely the experimental group and control group; 30 participants in each group were selected based on their performance using the Oxford Placement Test (OPT). A quasi-experimental design was used for this study. A listening audio text extracted from the book "Four Corners" was administered as pre-test and post-test. The researchers taught the students of both groups for 10 sessions. The CLT techniques were used as treatment in the experimental group while the control group received no treatment and just used ALM techniques. After 10 sessions, the listening passages extracted from the book "Four Corners" were administered as post-test in order to compare the results of the scores of two groups and decide about the effectiveness of the treatment. Finally, the data were analyzed via running an Independent Samples T-test and a series of Paired Samples T-tests. The results showed that Iranian EFL learners' listening comprehension skill has been significantly improved as a result of using CLT techniques at the significance level of .05. It was concluded that the use of CLT techniques was highly effective in Iranian learners' listening comprehension improvement.

**Keywords:** listening comprehension, techniques, CLT, ALM

### **Introduction**

According to Macaro, Graham, and Vanderplank (2007), Vandergrift (2007), Field (2009), Vandergrift and Goh (2011), and Taheri and Taki (2017), developing listening skill is often taken for granted. It has not been paid enough attention in the teaching of English as a foreign language (EFL). In EFL contexts, listening is the first encounter with the target language (Berne, 2004) and the first step towards fully learning a second language (Liu, 2009). However, despite the significance of developing listening comprehension skills, teachers rarely teach listening skills to their learners (Rost, 2011;

Taheri & Taki, 2017; Vandergrift & Goh, 2011). Listening is regarded as an active skill since the listeners are required to cope with some difficult tasks like differentiating between phonemes or interpreting stress and intonation (Ghoneim, 2013; Metruk, 2018). Traditional teaching methods primarily focused on reading and writing, paying little attention to listening and speaking skills (Metruk, 2018; Raissi, Nor, Aziz, Zainal, & Saleh, 2013).

According to communicative language teaching (CLT), four skills are integrated and listening and speaking are particularly emphasized (Rees-Miller, 2017). Korkmaz and Güneçli (2017) also pay more attention to reading and listening since the productive skills cannot be acquired without obtaining the receptive ones. Therefore, all four language skills should be included within the EFL teaching process. Listening skill has long been ignored despite its obvious importance within L2 learning (Kazemi & Kiamarsi, 2017; Metruk, 2018; Yildiz, Parjanadze, & Albay, 2015). Teachers should know that devoting little attention to the two receptive skills can bring about serious results for the learners' overall proficiency, and that the development of productive skills can also be seriously hindered. Teachers have a great responsibility to provide the appropriate materials to their learners and this is one of the important factors in identifying the success of the learning process. The other factor is to use the appropriate method according to the expected competencies. The use of appropriate method is very important, because the competence to be obtained can be known from the learning path that is structured based on the suitable method.

Unfortunately, listening skills are not often taught explicitly in spite of the regularity of listening activity in classrooms. Most teachers teach, assuming that because they are talking, their students are listening. Iranian learners have a lot of problems in listening comprehension skill as Iran is not a bilingual country and EFL learners do not have access to native speakers and samples of real language. Additionally, listening process is not clearly explained and it is mostly tested rather than being taught, although there is a wide access to listening materials (Bozorgian & Pillay, 2013). Although listening skill is very important for learners and is the heart of language learning, it has been an overlooked skill in EFL classes and it took many years for teachers to understand its importance in second and foreign language learning (Kurita, 2012; Martinez-Flor & Uso-Juan, 2006). Despite the significance of this skill, less time has been spent in teaching it and EFL learners have difficulty in learning this skill. They are not exposed to authentic language materials.

According to Basaran and Kose (2012), learners have difficulty in learning listening as they have limited opportunity of being exposed to the target language beyond the classroom time. They expressed that the input learners gather from their teachers and course books is not sufficient to compensate for the lack of exposure to real language. Iranian EFL learners have limited chance of being exposed to the target language beyond the classroom and they have difficulty in understanding the natural English of native speakers. Basaran and Kose (2012) express that the solution is to provide learners with authentic communicative input through using CLT techniques. Radio/TV programs, songs, newspapers, magazines, films are the examples of authentic input for EFL learners. Therefore, providing learners with these materials can

be an effective way to improve their listening skill. With this lack of research in mind, the present research is going to investigate the effect of audiolingual-based versus communicative language teaching-oriented techniques on intermediate EFL learners' listening comprehension ability.

Based on the above issues, we can realize the importance of listening skill and pay more attention to it. Being aware of such listening problems can help teachers to provide better ways of training their learners concerning using CLT techniques in solving listening problems. This study sought to see whether the use of ALM-based vs CLT-oriented techniques has any effect on the listening comprehension of Iranian EFL learners or not.

### ***Research Question***

The question that this study seeks to find its answer was:

Do audiolingual-based versus communicative language teaching-oriented techniques significantly affect Iranian intermediate EFL learners' listening comprehension ability?

### ***Research Hypothesis***

In step with the above-mentioned research question, the researchers posed the following research hypothesis:

Audiolingual-based versus communicative language teaching-oriented techniques do not have any effect on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' listening comprehension ability.

### **Review of the Literature**

#### ***Audiolingual Method (ALM)***

During the 1950s and 1960s, audiolingualism which focused on the memorization of new concepts through scripted audio texts, was the basic mode of listening instruction. Listening instruction focused on preparing learners for lecture listening, rather than spontaneous, real-life, and interactive listening activities (Brown, 2007). In the 1970s and 1980s, audiolingualism was replaced by a more communicative model that encouraged the use of previously learned skills in more authentic and real contexts (Brown, 2007; Field, 2009). Listening is no longer regarded to be a passive, receptive skill where learners indicate their comprehension through answering questions. Instead, instruction now treats listening as an active, productive skill that requires learners to be actively engaged throughout the entire listening process despite their educational setting (Ashcraft & Tran, 2010; Field, 2009; Vandergrift, 2007).

In ALM, the teacher gives examples of correct sentences and learners mimic. Then the teacher gives a new word to the pattern of the same structure. There is no explicit instruction of grammar and everything is just done by rote sentences so that they can master and use it spontaneously. ALM was developed during World War II and was a method where learners mimicked and memorized language patterns and dialogues through drill exercises (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). The emphasis was placed on teaching learners to listen and speak before they learned to read and write in the L2.

Unfortunately, learners had limited control over their learning activities because many of the materials were teacher-oriented and did not engage learners in the listening process. The techniques used in ALM are repetition chain, technical group, dictation method, dialog memorization, transformation drill, question and answer drill, complete the dialog, and multiple-slot substitution drill.

### ***Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) Approach***

CLT emphasizes on developing learners' communicative competence by collaborative activities in the target language, the use of authentic texts, and including personal experiences into language lessons. A CLT approach considers how learners learn language, the strategies and tools that facilitate this learning, and the roles of the teachers and the learners in the classroom (Pan, 2013). Forming accurate expressions, using these expressions appropriately in myriad contexts, and the learners' ability to perform through the grammatical rules all go back to the concept of communicative competence. The development of all aspects of communicative competence ought to be the concentration of all foreign language programs so that the pupils' overall communicative competence in a target language can be constructed (Harmer, 2007).

Banciu and Jireghie (2012) define the CLT context as one where learners learn to communicate by interacting in the second language; use authentic texts; focus not only on the language but also on the learning process; where the personal experience of the learner is part of the learning process; and learners try to activate language use outside the classroom in real life situations. Learners are assessed on their communicative competence rather than on their knowledge of grammar rules. The CLT approach stresses that learners engage in communicative acts for a purpose and they are motivated to learn because they wish to communicate meaningfully. CLT emphasizes "self-direction of the learners" where it is believed that the learner enters into situations which promote maximum communication to generate communicative proficiency. Teachers do not expect accuracy in grammatical structures through memorization but require the learners to negotiate meaning and to communicate meaningfully in the target language.

Sreehari (2012) states that in CLT classes, different activities like role plays, interviews, discussions, language games, language learning simulations, and problem solving tasks are used. The aim is to develop language skills and functions in authentic contexts. Many CLT classes use authentic materials. The purpose of using authentic materials is to create an authentic context in which learners develop their communicative competence. Authentic materials involve audio, audiovisual, and printed materials. They consist of TV news and programs, TV and radio commercials, music, movies, announcements at public places like railway stations, airports, supermarkets, newspapers, magazines, photographs, paintings, street signs, tourist information brochures, catalogues, telephone books, reports, billboards, notices, forms like applications and tax forms, podcasting on the internet and web based programs involving multimedia use. Teachers should choose authentic materials based on the needs and interest, language learning goals, cultural appropriateness, and language level of learners.

### ***Previous Studies about the Effect of CLT on Listening Comprehension Skill***

Several researchers have investigated the impact of CLT techniques on learners' listening comprehension skill. Krashen (1996) examined the impact of narrow listening on improving listening comprehension of L2 learners' performance. The participants listened to a series of related topic texts in which their linguistic knowledge together with their background knowledge were activated. The findings showed that repeated listening along with topic familiarity in narrow listening increased learners' self-confidence and listening comprehension.

Weyers (1999) carried out a study on the effect of video programs on listening skill. He believed that when learners are exposed to video programs, both their listening comprehension and communicative competence enhanced. The results of this study also revealed a significant increase of listening comprehension of the experimental group. Jones (2003) performed a study on using verbal and visual annotations in listening skill. The results showed positive outcomes in listening comprehension. The study also revealed that learners can recall information better when aided with verbal and visual tools. Finally, it was indicated that the use of multimedia-based instruction is not necessarily better than traditional instruction regarding listening comprehension. Digital stories were used to improve Spanish learners' listening comprehension.

Kusumarasyati (2004) performed a study on listening, viewing, and imagination: movies in EFL classes. This study used a technique of presenting movies in EFL listening classes. The researcher experimented the study using the films as learning tools which were presented in two modes: with or without subtitles. The results indicated that movies are considered as one of the effective teaching tools to develop EFL learners' listening skills and stimulate their imagination simultaneously. Furthermore, learners were enthusiastic to learn through using movies and the medium is exploited to improve listening skills. It was also revealed that the movies can be used in the teaching of listening skill owing to their pedagogical advantages.

Danan (2004) stated that learners' listening comprehension skill can be improved by audiovisual materials and the use of subtitles or captions as a pedagogical tool is very effective in enhancing learners' listening comprehension ability. Abo Rizk and Hassan (2005) investigated the impact of computer program on EFL learners' listening comprehension ability. The findings revealed that there were statistical significant differences between the performance of the experimental group before and after the experiment in favor of the post experimentation. The results also represented that the program was very effective in improving EFL learners' listening skill.

O'Bryan and Hegelheimer (2007) investigated the effect of podcasting on learners' listening comprehension. They declared that podcasting which improved learners' listening process, promoted autonomous learning, reinforced the topics taught in class where learners had the opportunity to be exposed to real and authentic English materials. It was also demonstrated that podcasting supported learners' listening comprehension skill because it developed learners' listening comprehension and promoted the need to listen podcast videos not only in the class, but also in their homes, and increased their intrinsic motivation.

Using a quasi-experimental research design, Verdugo and Belmonte (2007) investigated the impact of digital stories on listening comprehension by using this intervention into the experimental group. The findings revealed that the experimental group scored significantly higher in listening comprehension than the control group who did not receive multimedia lessons. Berk (2009) asserted that video materials draw on the learners' multiple intelligences and learning styles to maximize their comprehension. He continued that the use of videos can enhance learners' comprehension and understanding and would be more useful for learners. According to Winke, Gass, and Sydorenko (2010), captioning and subtitling can increase learners' attention, lower their anxiety, enhance their listening comprehension, and maximize their motivation.

Isik and Yilmaz (2011) performed a quasi-experimental research to evaluate the impact of computer-assisted listening instruction on EFL learners' listening comprehension ability. The experimental group which received multimedia-aided instruction scored significantly higher than the control group which received traditional language instruction. Mousavi and Iravani (2012) examined the impact of authentic versus non-authentic video materials on Iranian EFL learners' listening comprehension skill. The researchers revealed that authentic video materials had a significant impact on gaining higher scores in both listening comprehension and proficiency test. The results emphasized the use of authentic listening materials which can improve listening comprehension ability.

Marzban and Abdollah (2013) conducted a study about the impact of partial dictation on the Iranian intermediate EFL learners' listening comprehension. Two groups of intermediate EFL learners were selected for this study. Each group involved 30 female intermediate learners. One of the groups was selected as the experimental group (EG), and the other as the control group (CG). They both took a listening test as a pre-test. For one term, involving 20 sessions, the learners in the control group were given the listening exercises in their textbook. The experimental group, in addition to the listening exercises in the textbook, was given partial dictation 11 times during the term. Results of the t-test revealed that dictation had a significant impact on the learners' listening comprehension skill in the experimental group. The mean gain scores of the experimental group were significantly higher than those of the control group.

Young and Wang (2014) carried out a study on game embedded CALL system to facilitate vocabulary acquisition and pronunciation. The researchers found that those who learned English pronunciation by a combination of drill and game-based activities performed far better than those who learned the same component by drill alone. Khedidja Kaouter and Mechraoui (2015) contrasted between listening with podcasts and the conventional classroom listening strategy and the effect of these two modes on coincidental vocabulary gain. A pre-test and post-test exploratory outline was used. 34 students at the pre-intermediate level participated in the study. The learners were assigned randomly to the podcast listening (experimental) and traditional classroom listening method (control) groups. The findings demonstrated that both the experimental and control group had significant incidental vocabulary gains. It was also

indicated that the experimental group had higher progress in comparison to the traditional classroom listening method group.

Abbasian and Movahedfar (2016) carried out a study about the impact of computer-assisted language learning (CALL) on intermediate EFL learners' listening comprehension skill. 30 participants were chosen and were randomly assigned into two groups: the experimental and comparison groups. The former received 10 sessions of instruction using CALL, while the latter was exposed to traditional method of teaching listening. T-test analysis of the post-test results showed a significant difference between the groups as the former group outperformed over the latter one in developing listening comprehension. The results of this study revealed that using CALL improves learners' listening comprehension skill.

Namaziandost, Bohloulzadeh, and Rahmatollahi (2017) investigated the impact of using podcast on Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners' listening comprehension. 60 participants were selected for doing the objectives of this study. They were non-randomly divided into two groups: control and experimental groups. The experimental group received the treatment, which was teaching listening comprehension by using podcasts while the control group was taught using traditional methods of teaching listening. After 20 sessions of treatment, the two groups were administered the same teacher-made listening test as post-test. Data were analyzed by using Paired and Independent Samples t-test. The results of the study revealed that the experimental group significantly performed better than the control group. That is, the experimental group outperformed the control group. It was also revealed that podcasts are used to improve Iranian EFL learners' listening comprehension skill.

### ***Previous Studies about the Effect of ALM on Listening Comprehension Skill***

There are not enough studies about the impact of ALM on learners' listening comprehension skill. In this section, just a few studies are reviewed. In Wagner's (2010) study, a quasi-experimental design was used to compare the listening performance of two groups of learners. The control group took a listening test with audio only texts. The experimental group took the same listening test, except that test-takers received the input through using video texts. Multi-variety Analysis of Covariance (MANCOVA) was used to compare the two groups' performance, and it was indicated that the video (experimental) group scored 6.5% higher than the audio-only (control) group on the overall post-test, and this difference was statistically significant.

In Setiawan's (2011) study, it was indicated that through using single slot substitution drill and transformation drill, learners successfully improved their English oral past tense. This is because of the progress in learners' score in grammar aspect, which showed the learners' improvement in simple past tense. The results of this research indicated that audio-lingual teaching method helped learners to understand past tense easier.

Hijrah (2013) performed a study about the effect of ALM on learners' listening comprehension. The aims of this research were to explain the learners' ability to recognize the word meaning in the context and also to recognize the content of text.

The design of this study was a collaborative action research (CAR). The samples of this study were the school students. After carrying out the study, the learners' means scores indicated a considerable improvement in learners' listening skill. Therefore, it was concluded that the use of ALM had a great effect on learners' listening comprehension improvement.

Hag (2014) carried out a study on the effects of ALM on students' listening and speaking skills. 20 students participated in this study. It was an experimental process of eight weeks, which started with a listening and speaking pre-test in the first week. At the end of the last week, the participants took the post-test. The findings of this research indicated the significant impacts of ALM on students' listening and speaking skills. In addition, the post-test scores of students' listening and speaking skills were higher than that of the pre-test. Finally, it was revealed that the students showed considerable improvement in their listening and speaking skills.

Abdul (2016) conducted a study on using ALM in teaching listening comprehension. The results of the study represented that ALM improved learners' listening comprehension skill. Astuti, Marhum, and Erniwati (2016) conducted a study to examine whether using ALM improves learners' listening comprehension skill. The researchers used two groups for this study: the experimental group which involved 26 students and the control group which involved 25 learners. The data were analyzed statistically to find out the significance of the achievement of learners in pre-test and post-test. The results indicated that the t-counted was (12.8) higher than t-table (2.00). It means that using ALM improved students' listening comprehension skill.

## **Method**

### ***Research Design***

The researchers used a quasi-experimental design for this study because there was no random assignment of participants. There are situations where randomization is not possible; therefore, to have more reliable results, quasi-experimental designs can be a suitable substitute. In quasi-experimental design, participants will be selected from intact classes when the researcher is not allowed to assign learners to different groups randomly.

### ***Participants***

The target population of this study consisted of EFL students at Shokouh Institute in Lahijan, Iran. They have been studying English for two years. The original population of this study consisted of 110 EFL learners at the intermediate levels, 15-18 year-old (Age Mean= 16.30) female students. To achieve the required number of the participants for undertaking the current study, the students sat on a language proficiency test called oxford placement test (OPT), and based on their performance on the test, two more homogeneous intact classes were selected to take part in the current study, one of which was randomly selected as the experimental group which received listening instruction through CLT techniques and the other group entitled as the control group which received instruction via ALM techniques. The total sample which



participated in this study was 60 participants who were in two intact classes of thirty students, the experimental group (Female: 30) and the control group (Female: 30).

### ***Materials***

The researchers used four types of materials in the present study, each instrument has its own specific characteristics. They are as follows:

#### *Materials for the Proficiency Test*

To be sure of the homogeneity in two groups, proficiency test was administrated to establish the participants' homogeneity. OPT was administered to make sure the participants were homogenous in terms of their language proficiency. This enables teachers to have a great understanding of their students' level. The test contains 50 multiple choice questions which assess students' knowledge of key grammar and vocabulary, a reading text with 10 graded comprehension questions, and a writing task for assessing students' ability to produce the language.

#### *Materials for the Pre-test and Post-test*

A pre-test was administrated to assess participants' listening comprehension ability. After the treatment of the study, a post-test was administrated. The tests were taken from the book *Four Corners* by Jack C. Richard and David Bolkh (2011). The audio used for listening comprehension test comprised personal stories told by different people in a conversation form and participants were supposed to listen to the audio tracks and answer the questions provided for each conversation. Each conversation was about 5 minutes and the participants were supposed to answer the related questions.

#### *Materials for the Treatment of the Study*

The materials for the treatment of this study included 8 listening passages together with their related audio tracks used for listening talk. Listening texts were selected from the book 'Four Corners' series approved by the "Cambridge University Press Staff." The volume used in this study was the second book of the Four Corners series suitable for intermediate level.

### **Procedure**

This study was carried out within approximately two months. First, the objectives of this research were explained to Iranian intermediate EFL learners. The researchers informed the participants of this study that their personal information will be kept confidential. As it was mentioned before, the first step in the process of conducting the research was the administration of OPT as the homogenizing tool. It was administered to 62 intermediate EFL learners. After analyzing the results, subjects were randomly assigned into two groups. Prior to the study, a pre-test was administrated to assess participants listening comprehension ability. The obtained scores from the two classes were statistically analyzed and compared to figure out whether there was any significant difference between the experimental and control groups in terms of their listening comprehension ability. All selected 62 participants were randomly divided

into two groups with 31 participants for each one. However, 2 participants left the institute and the researchers had to continue the research with 60 participants who were divided into two groups each consisted of 30 participants. One group as the experimental group, received listening via CLT techniques. It took for ten sessions. While the other group as the control group received listening via ALM. The treatment took for ten sessions too. The participants were taught differently in two groups. To ensure that there was no environmental noise, the participants were allowed to wear headphones so that they could concentrate on the listening tasks. The time allocated to the tests was 40 minutes.

### **Data Analysis**

The numerical data were analyzed through SPSS, using an independent samples T-test between post-test scores of the two groups of the study and paired samples T-test between pre-test and post-test scores of each group.

### **Results and Discussion**

The present study aimed to investigate whether using ALM-based versus CLT-oriented techniques could significantly affect developing listening comprehension skill of Iranian EFL learners. The results of test scores were compared for both groups to ascertain which instructional treatment had been more effective. In this study, 60 students of intermediate level were selected randomly and were divided into two experimental and control groups. The pre-tests of listening comprehension were administered to both groups. After instructing two groups, both groups received the post-test. All the data gathered from the pre-test and post-test entered the data analysis process. This section presents the results of the current study. The multi-faceted nature of the hypothesis of the study necessitated the researchers to apply both descriptive and inferential statistics to display and interpret the data.

Thus, a descriptive analysis of the data for the hypothesis has been presented; then, the inferential analysis of the data has been provided using tables. The descriptive analysis consists of a discussion of the mean, standard deviation, and the standard error of measurement. Similarly, the inferential analysis of the data consists of calculating the paired-sample t value between the pre-test and the post-test of each group. An independent-samples t-test was also conducted to compare the means of the post-test of the two experimental groups. Moreover, the correlation coefficient was calculated to find the degree of relationship between two variables. The t-test was used instead of the ANCOVA because the result of the OPT showed that two groups were of the same level of proficiency prior to the start of the study.

### ***Descriptive Analysis of the Data***

The descriptive analysis of the data for different groups of the study has been summarized below. Table 1 summarizes the descriptive analysis of the data of the experimental group of the study.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for the experimental group

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Error
Pre-test	12.2667	30	1.74066		.31780
Post-test	16.2167	30	1.20833		.22061

As Table 1 indicates, the mean value of listening comprehension for the experimental group before the listening comprehension instruction is 12.2667 (SD= 1.74066), while the mean for the experimental group after listening comprehension instruction via CLT techniques is 16.2167 (SD= 1.20833). It is obvious that the experimental group performance on listening comprehension test was improved greatly after the treatment. It can be inferred that the instruction was effective in enhancing learners' listening comprehension. Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics for the control group.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics for the control group

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Pre-test	12.8667	30	2.02115
Post-test	13.9833	30	1.93196

As Table 2 indicates, the mean for the control group before listening comprehension instruction via ALM is 12.8667 (SD= 2.02115), while the mean of the control group after the treatment is 13.9833 (SD= 1.93196). With regard to its performance on the post-test, the control group showed a small degree of improvement in its listening comprehension. Table 3 illustrates the descriptive analysis of the experimental and control groups for the post-test scores of listening comprehension.

Table 3. Descriptive analysis of both groups

Listening comprehension	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Experimental group	30	13.9833	2.02115
Control group	30	16.2167	1.20833

The findings show that the mean value of the control group in the post-test measures of listening comprehension is 16.2167 with a standard deviation of 1.20833. However, the mean value of the control group in the post-test is far lower than that of the experimental group (Mean=13.9833, SD=2.02115). Thus, it can be stated that although two groups had almost the same mean value on the pre-test, the experimental group outperformed the control group on the post-test of listening comprehension. Yet, in order to investigate whether the difference between two groups is significant, the results of t-tests should be presented and discussed.

***The Inferential Analysis of the Data***

The inferential analyses of the data for testing the research hypothesis have been summarized in the tables below. Table 4 summarizes the inferential analysis of the data before and after listening comprehension instruction for the experimental group of the study.

Table 4. Paired-samples test for the experimental group

	Paired Differences					
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Paired1 EG Pretest- Posttest	3.9500	1.0284	.18777	-21.036	29	.000

A paired-samples t-test was conducted to evaluate the impact of the intervention on students' scores on the listening comprehension measure. There was a statistically significant increase in listening comprehension scores from pre-test (M = 12.2667, SD = 1.74066) to post-test (M = 16.2167, SD = 1.20833),  $t(29) = -21.036$ ,  $p < .0005$  (two-tailed). The mean increase in listening comprehension scores was 3.95 with a 95% confidence interval. Therefore, learners' listening comprehension performance via CLT techniques was statistically significant prior and after the intervention. Table 5 summarizes the inferential analysis of the data before and after listening comprehension instruction for the control group of the study.

Table 5. Paired-samples test for the control group

	Paired Differences					
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Paired1 X2 Pretest- Posttest	-1.116	.970	.17728	-6.299	29	.000

A paired-samples t-test was conducted to investigate whether the listening comprehension instruction via ALM improved students' scores on the listening comprehension measures as well or not. There was a statistically significant increase in listening scores from pre-test (M = 12.8667, SD = 2.02115) to post-test (M = 13.9833, SD = 1.93196),  $t(29) = 6.299$ ,  $p < .0005$  (two-tailed). The mean increase in listening scores was 1.116 with a 95% confidence interval. Therefore, the listening comprehension instruction via using ALM was statistically significant. Table 6 summarizes the inferential analysis of the post-test scores for the experimental and control groups to examine whether there was a significant difference between two groups in terms of their listening comprehension.

Table 6. Independent-samples T-test for the post-test of both groups

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means			t-test for Equality of Means			
	F	Sig.	t	F	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Upper	Lower
Equal variances assumed	6.18	.16	7.72	58	.000	-3.2333	3.2333	-4.0661	-2.40055
Equal variances not assumed			7.72	48.677	.000	-3.2333	3.2333	-4.0695	-2.39714

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the effect of two kinds of listening comprehension instructions on learners' listening comprehension ability. The Sig. value for Levene's test is larger than .05 (.16), then the first row in the table should be consulted, which refers to equal variances assumed. There was a significant difference in scores for the experimental and control groups;  $t(48) = 7.772$ ,  $p = .000$ , two-tailed). Overall, it can be concluded that the experimental group performed significantly better than the control group in the post-test measures of listening comprehension which indicates the great effectiveness of listening comprehension instruction via CLT techniques on the improvement of students' listening comprehension knowledge.

The next inferential analysis of the data was related to the degree of the relationship between the pre-test and the post-test of listening comprehension in each group of the study. This was indicated by calculating the Pearson Correlation Coefficient. The results of the Pearson Correlation Coefficient between the pre-test and post-test scores of the experimental and control groups have been illustrated in Table 7 below:

Table 7. The Pearson correlation for the pre-tests and the post-tests

and	Between the pre-test and the post-test of the experimental group	Between the pre-test the post-test of the control group
Correlation (Pearson)	0.092	.913

Table 7 indicates that the correlation coefficient between the pre-test and the post-test scores of the experimental group is 0.092 as compared with the correlation coefficient between the pre-test and the post-test scores of the control group to be .913 ( $R_{PRC\ POC} = .913$ ). The findings reveal the low relationship as well as significant difference between the scores of the pre-test and post-test in the experimental group. On the other hand, the higher value of R for the control group indicates that the scores in the pre-test and post-test of listening comprehension in the control group are closer to each other than the scores in the experimental group. It can be inferred from such closeness that there hasn't been a big progress in the post-test of listening comprehension in the control group after being compared with the scores in the pre-test scores.

### ***Results of Hypothesis Testing***

In this section, the results of testing the hypothesis of the study have been presented and elaborated. In order to give a detailed analysis, attempts were made to take advantage of the results of the study as evidence to determine the rejection or support of the hypothesis. In addition, the rejection or support of the hypothesis is justified by explaining the consequences of such rejection or support, i.e. what would happen if the hypothesis of the current study is rejected or supported. Before analyzing the hypothesis, it is repeated below:

H<sub>0</sub>: Audiolingual-based versus communicative language teaching-oriented techniques do not have any effect on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' listening comprehension ability.

The results of the descriptive statistics of the groups indicated that the experimental group outstripped the control group on the post-test measure of listening comprehension test. In order to explore that whether this difference between the groups is large enough to reject the null hypothesis at the significance level of .05, an independent-samples t-test was conducted. Upon reviewing the results of the t-test data analysis procedure concerning listening comprehension instruction of two groups, it was revealed that the experimental group significantly outperformed the control group after the listening comprehension intervention indicating that the instruction of listening comprehension via CLT techniques was quite successful in enhancing the students' listening comprehension. Therefore, the hypothesis of the study was rejected at the significance level of .05.

This study endeavored to examine the effect of using ALM-based versus CLT-oriented techniques on Iranian EFL learners' listening comprehension ability. Listening comprehension goes beyond the simple interpretation of vocal sounds. Due

to this, it must be known as an intricately active process that demands listeners to combine the heard materials with their current knowledge (Rost, 2011). Teaching styles of the behaviorist method like 'listening to repeat' method of the audio-lingual time were central in the past because of misconception about listening known as passive activity, which led to few classroom instruction. In the contemporary time, listening is acknowledged as an active process, which is crucial to L2 learning, worthy of teaching, and systematic development. Hence, the common method is 'real-life listening in real time', which comprises communicative tasks (Morley, 1999).

Through comparing the mean value of listening comprehension for the experimental group before and after the instruction via CLT, it was indicated that Iranian EFL learners' performance on listening comprehension test was improved greatly after the treatment and this reveals that the instruction was effective in enhancing learners' listening comprehension ability. This finding has been supported by the study of Abo Rizk and Hassan (2005), indicating that there were statistical significant differences between the performance of the experimental group who used computer program before and after the experiment in favor of the post-test. The finding also showed that the mentioned program had a considerable impact on EFL learners' listening comprehension improvement.

By observing the mean value of listening comprehension for the control group before and after listening comprehension instruction via ALM, it was revealed that the control group showed a small degree of improvement in Iranian EFL learners' listening comprehension. According to the findings of this study, the mean value of the control group in the post-test is far lower than that of the experimental group. This indicates that although two groups had almost the same mean value on the pre-test, the experimental group outperformed the control group on the post-test of listening comprehension skill. This result is supported by the study of Khedidja Kaouter and Mechraoui (2015) who contrasted between listening through podcasts and the traditional listening method and the impact of these two modes on vocabulary improvement. A pre-test and post-test design was used. Learners were assigned randomly to the experimental group (podcast listening) and control group (traditional listening method). The results displayed that both the experimental and control group had significant vocabulary progress. The results also demonstrated that the experimental group had higher improvement compared with the traditional teaching method group.

The findings obtained from the paired-samples t-test in the experimental group represented that there was a statistically significant increase in listening comprehension scores from pre-test to post-test. That is to say, Iranian EFL learners' listening comprehension performance via CLT techniques was statistically significant prior and after the intervention. The findings obtained from the paired-samples t-test in the control group also showed that there was a statistically significant increase in listening comprehension scores from pre-test to post-test. That is, the listening comprehension instruction via using ALM was also statistically significant. This result seems to match well with Wang's (2004) and Isik and Yilmaz's (2011) findings, indicating that learners in the experimental group which received multimedia-aided instruction scored

significantly higher than the control group which received traditional language instruction. The result of this study is also consistent with the previous research (NamazianDost, Bohloulzadeh, & Rahmatollahi, 2017), investigating the effect of podcast on Iranian learners' listening comprehension skill. The participants of this study were non-randomly divided into two groups: control and experimental groups. The experimental group was taught listening comprehension through using podcasts while the control group was taught using traditional teaching method of listening. Data were analyzed by Paired and Independent Samples t-test. The findings obtained from this research demonstrated that the experimental group outperformed the control group in improving Iranian learners' listening comprehension ability.

In addition, an independent-samples t-test was carried out to compare the impact of two types of listening comprehension instructions on Iranian EFL learners' listening comprehension skill. A significant difference in scores was observed for the experimental and control groups. Based on the above finding, it was revealed that the experimental group performed significantly better than the control group in the post-test measures of listening comprehension which shows the great impact of listening comprehension instruction via CLT techniques on the learners' listening comprehension improvement. This finding is in accordance with the finding of Abbasian and Movahedfar's (2016) study, examining the effect of CALL on learners' listening comprehension. 30 EFL learners were randomly assigned into two groups: the experimental and comparison groups. The experimental group received 10 sessions of instruction using CALL, while the comparison group was exposed to traditional teaching method. Based on the T-test analysis of the post-test results, it was indicated that there was a significant difference between the groups; that is, the experimental group outperformed over the comparison group in improving listening comprehension. This result implied that the application of CALL has a great effect on learners' listening comprehension progress.

Furthermore, the findings obtained from the correlation coefficient between the pre-test and the post-test scores of the experimental and control groups represent the significant difference between the scores of the pre-test and post-test in the experimental group. The finding also reveals that the scores obtained from the pre-test and post-test of listening comprehension in the control group are closer to each other than the scores obtained from the experimental group. Therefore, it is concluded that there has not been a considerable progress in the post-test of listening comprehension in the control group after being compared with the scores in the pre-test of listening comprehension. Finally, an independent-samples t-test was performed to examine that whether this difference between the groups is large enough to reject the null hypothesis. The t-test data analysis procedure indicated that the experimental group significantly outperformed the control group after the listening comprehension intervention, meaning that the listening comprehension instruction via CLT techniques was quite successful in improving Iranian EFL learners' listening comprehension ability. Thus, the hypothesis of this research was rejected at the significance level of .05.

## **Conclusion**



This study was an attempt to examine the effect ALM-based vs CLT-oriented techniques on Iranian EFL learners' listening comprehension skill. The findings showed that Iranian EFL learners' listening comprehension was improved more when CLT techniques were used than when ALM was used. This implies that the greater the amount of CLT techniques used by EFL teachers in their listening comprehension classes, the better their learners' listening comprehension skills would be. According to the findings, it was represented that the use of various CLT techniques helps EFL learners to improve their listening comprehension skill and that the use of these techniques in the process of listening comprehension provides interesting input for facilitating listening comprehension skill. Based on the obtained findings, it was indicated that there were significant differences in the listening scores between the experimental group which took CLT listening activities and the control group which took ALM listening tasks. This finding reveals that the impact of using CLT techniques on improving listening comprehension skill is much greater than that of using ALM techniques. Teaching listening comprehension skill combined with CLT techniques can be more useful to all EFL learners than traditional methods because the use of CLT techniques can meet the needs of different learners with different abilities much better than using traditional teaching methods. Teaching listening comprehension by using CLT techniques help EFL learners to be interested in the target subjects because they increase their motivation through using different interesting and motivating techniques that can lead to the learners' progress. Teachers should be aware of their learners' needs and skills by using different tools in teaching listening comprehension skill in order to attract their attention to the teaching subjects. Teachers should be trained in using CLT techniques to exploit their benefits in listening comprehension. Moreover, the choice of CLT techniques should be appropriate to the level of learners' proficiency. The techniques should be matched to learners' interests and their background knowledge so that they can improve their listening comprehension.

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