The Impact of Sequencing Repeated Familiar Tasks on Listening Task Performance

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Abstract

Over the years, much research has been done on the role of tasks in L2 learning, but little is known about how sequencing tasks affects listening comprehension. Thus, the present study evaluated the effect of sequencing repeated familiar tasks (SRFT) along three dimensions of complexity i.e. +/- visual support, +/- few elements, and +/- planning time. Sixty upper-intermediate EFL learners were randomly selected as experimental group (n=30) and control group (n=30) in this experimental research. To control the homogeneity of the participants and their topic familiarity, the Success Placement Test designed by Fricker (2007) and the listening comprehension test (developed by Richards, 2005) were administered respectively. Then the posttest of listening for IELTS which included 3 levels of task complexity was employed to analyze the results of SRFT. The participants in the experimental group were required to listen to keeping fit tasks ordered from simple to complex tasks during 10 sessions. The participants in the control group performed disordered tasks. T-test and SPSS version 20 were utilized to analyze the tests. Before employing treatment, the placement test addressed that both of the groups obtained no marked difference level of English language knowledge. They also displayed the same topic familiarity of listening comprehension on the pretest. In the end, the t-test indicates a positive influence of SRFT for the experimental group in the posttest. The findings of this study recommend sequencing tasks in English classes as a basic tool to improve the listening performance of learners.

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years, task-based language teaching has mostly affected the research attempts in the realm of second language (L2) teaching (Ellis, 2003). Thus, TBLT is viewed as a means of communication which requires cognitive processing to gain predictable objectives (Ellis, 2003; Skehan, 1996; Skehan, 1996). Furthermore, it should be noted that, pedagogical and psychological factors of TBLT such as task sequencing, task repetition, and task familiarity may affect the complexity of learners' performance. Moreover, many empirical studies have investigated these implementation factors since the advent of TBLT. These studies have also generated useful insights into the order of tasks (Kim, 2020; Lambert & Robinson, 2014). Most of the studies have provided pedagogical suggestions for task repetition as well (Bret Blasco, 2014; Fukuta, 2016; Hidalgo & Lázaro-Ibarrola, 2020; Hu, 2018; Jung, Kim & Murphy, 2017). In addition to task sequencing and task repetition, some studies have focused on improving L2 learners' performance by repeating familiar tasks (Jovari, 2020; Ovilia, 2019).Following Robinson (2011), this study asked the participants to repeat familiar tasks in sequence (from simple to complex).

One of the fundamental issues in task-based syllabus design is related to the order and cognitive complexity of tasks. This is because sequencing and grading complex tasks can have a remarkable impact on learners' performance. The model of task sequence took place since the advent of TBLT. Robinson (2010) developed SSARC model (stabilize, simplify, automatize, reconstruct, and complexify) of pedagogic task sequencing which led to further investigation in SLA (Malicka, 2020). Thus, the development of language learners' interlangauge can be predicted by the SSARC model. In fact, it presents steps for ordering tasks according to task complexity features. Additionally, the notion of task complexity has been defined by Robinson (2011) as "the result of the attentional, memory, reasoning, and other information-processing demands imposed by the structure of the task on the language learner" (p. 106). Henceforth, rational

manipulation of task complexity will lead L2 learners to perform more accurate and complex language. With regard to this fact, massive empirical research has been recently implemented to find if designing and employing complex tasks can maximize second language learning improvement (Baleghizadeh & Asadi, 2013; Hsu, 2017; Inoue, 2016; Jung, Kim, & Murphy, 2017; Lee, 2019; Rahimi & Zhang, 2019; Sanajou, Zohali, & Zabihi, 2017; Shajeri & Izadpanah, 2016; Vercellotti, 2017). Furthermore, manipulating task complexity dimensions indicated fruitful results in both receptive and productive tasks (Adams, Alwi & Newton, 2015; Fazilatfar , Kasiri & Nowbakht, 2020; Mohammadzadeh Mohammadabadi, Dabaghi & Tavakoli, 2013; Rostamian, Fazilatfar& Jabbari, 2018; Zare-ee, 2013).

Listening task complexity allows the students to communicate meaningfully in real contexts. Therefore, it is the important factor to learn a second language (Vandergrift, 2004). Zare-ee (2013) pointed that EFL learners' perceptions of task complexity effected listening comprehension task performance. However, the effects of applying other complexity dimensions may be reduced or increased according to the language proficiency of L2 learners and different contexts. Regarding the complexity of listening tasks, Attarzadeh and Farahani (2014) concluded that participants could perform better when listening to complex tasks. They also confirmed that prior knowledge and planning time had a fruitful influence on students' listening comprehension. Additionally, they verified that some gaps like sample size and lack of open-ended tasks made it difficult to generalize their findings. More importantly, manipulating task complexity dimensions without sequencing listening tasks may influence the cognitive and emotional aspects of L2 learners.

In line with the above points, it seems that repeating familiar tasks sequenced from simple to complex may affect the interpretation of auditory clues in international English tests. Imposing cognitive load along with the massed iteration of familiar listening tasks has been conducted to see if it transfers to perform listening novel tasks. Although the studies attempt to explore the effect of repetition, familiarity, and cognitive loading on

promoting language learning, there is no conclusive evidence for manipulation of sequencing repeated familiar tasks (SRFT) and transferring experience to handle identical novel tasks. In addition, as Larsen-Freeman (2013) stated "common problem arises when the expected transfer does not take place in new situations ". In fact, we didn't find any investigation on grading and repeating listening task complexity proposed by Robinson (2011) on +/- visual support (a type of +/- here and there condition), +/- planning time (considering or removing time planning for the students to complete a task), and +/- few elements (many or few steps to complete a task) in the realm of task-based teaching. Thus, this current study attempts to explore repeating familiar listening tasks sequenced from simple to complex.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ellis (2005) proposed two basic types of planning task, namely pretask planning and within-task planning. Additionally, he distinguished the first one as repetition and strategic planning. In fact, it is the preparation for performing subsequent related tasks. Thus, task repetition is defined as an iteration of the group of aims and information that L2 learners employ in language learning (Bygate, 2018). According to Takimoto (2011), the role of task repetition in promoting language learning has been helpful in two ways: the repetition of same task and the iteration of the same type of task. Bygate's (1996) investigation was the preliminary effect of research on task iteration. He asked a participant to watch a cartoon and retell it at different times.TR affected the improvement of fluency and accuracy. By and large, empirical evidence supports the fruitful effect of task repetition to promote language skills (Ahmadian, 2011; Amiryousefi, 2016; Nazemi & Rezvani, 2019).

        Dawadi (2019) maintains that performing TR on two occasions assisted students (40 English learners) to produce more fluent, accurate, and complex narratives. Following the line of research on TR, Etemadfar et al.

(2019) indicated that task iteration improved L2 learners' production. Hidalgo and Lázaro-Ibarrola (2020) examined TR in the context of writing. Ten English language learners required to write the same text to the similar pictures prompted 3 times in a period of 3 weeks. They accomplished *complexity*, *accuracy*, and *fluency* positively in the light of TR as well as their topic familiarity.

The role of topic familiarity in improving L2 learners has been studied with respect to different skills. Studies of the effects of TF and prior knowledge on listening comprehension have been conducted since the emergence of TBLT (Buck, 2001; Hu, 2018; Zohrabi et al., 2014). Ovilia (2019) conducted an investigation to examine the contribution of TF and listening comprehension. It was found that the participants who listened to TF without pre-listening activities were successful in understanding task. Likewise, Othman and Vanathas (2006) carried out an experimental research on 34 intermediate level students. The pretest and posttest comparison demonstrated that they could improve listening comprehension.

In line with the TF studies, Ovilia and Addina (2020) investigated the impact of TF and Genre familiarity on listening comprehension of advanced learners who had completed the 4th term of listening course. The findings indicated that TF was helpful in listening comprehension. Similarly, Merrill (2006) claims that practicing various tasks make students to empower their background knowledge and face with more complex tasks from the same family task (Robinson, 2011).

And finally, the third concept which is significant to mention in the present study concerns the task complexity. Robinson (2001) believes that task designers must gradually increase the cognitive complexity levels of tasks to provide L2 learners for real-world performance. The basic pedagogical tenet of the Cognition Hypothesis is sequencing tasks from easy to hard to promote success in performing complex tasks. Robinson (2005) proposed CH model that distinguishes 3 sorts of features (Table 1).

Table 1: Robinson's (2005) model of Cognition Hypothesis

Task complexity	Task condition	Task difficulty
a. *Resource-directing, developmental dimensions*	a. *Participation variables*	a. *affective variables*
±here and now ± few elements ± spatial reasoning ± causal reasoning ± intentional reasoning	± open solution ± one way flow ± convergent solution ± few participants ± few contributions needed ± perspective taking ± negotiation not needed	e.g., Motivation
b. *Resource-dispersing, performative dimensions*	b. *Participant variables*	b. *ability variables*
± planning time ± prior knowledge ± single task ± task structure ± few steps ± independency of steps	± same proficiency ± same gender ± familiar ± shared content knowledge ± equal status and role ± shared cultural knowledge	e.g., aptitude proficiency intelligence

Robinson (2005) presented his theoretical framework that basically includes three features: task complexity, task condition, and task difficulty. The first one is the result of various information processing demands that the structure of the task imposes on the learners. The second variable includes participation and participant factors, and the context of task performance. The last feature covers learner factors, that is, differences between learners in their cognitive and affective resources which make certain tasks personally difficult for them. Furthermore, the cognitive factor is divided into 2 features: resource-directing (focusing attention on language codes) and resource-dispersing (depleting attention on linguistic codes). Each of them embraces specific variables which decrease (-) or increase (+) the level of task complexity. Many researchers have manipulated these variables to see their effects on the language perception and production of learners.

Ghahdarijani (2012) utilized three variables of task complexity, planning time, perspective, and background knowledge in listening

comprehension. The results indicate that L2 learners totally improved listening to simple and complex tasks. In the same way, Zare-ee (2013) examined the influence of task complexity on English learners' listening comprehension. The findings show that time is an important issue for L2 learners. Additionally, the main purpose of CH is grading pedagogical tasks in accord with approximating the needs of real-life target tasks.

Regarding task sequencing, Malicka (2020) indicated that SSARC model had beneficial effects on L2 learners' oral production. In the same vein, Levkina and Gilabert (2014) examined the impact of 3 types of task sequencing (simple-complex, complex-simple, and randomized) in the acquisition of spatial expressions. They found that participants in simple-complex situation could produce variety of target items.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This investigation was influenced by the problems of listening to complex tasks that most Iranian L2 learners encounter as they are examined in international tests (Nowrouzi et al., 2015; Bidabadi & Yamat, 2011). Some researchers have attempted to explore the effect of repetition, familiarity, and cognitive loading on promoting language learning. Anyway, there is no conclusive evidence on the manipulation of SRFT to perform listening complex tasks. The review of literature merely demonstrated that repeating unsequenced similar tasks on several occasions yields improvement in language proficiency. However, as Larsen-Freeman (2013) noted "A crucial assumption motivating instruction is that what students learn at one time and one place is available for them to use at another time and another place. In other words, students should be able to *transfer* what they have learned".

Actually, repeating only same listening tasks without sequencing does not make the students generalize related terms and structures to the new context. In fact, accruing linguistic knowledge takes place for L2 learners not only by repeating familiar type tasks but also by practicing sequenced tasks. Thus, this present research has been designed to find out

whether repeating sequenced familiar type tasks can influence listening comprehension by considering 3 degrees of task complexity (-/+ visual support, -/+ few elements, and -/+ planning time). Thus, this study utilized a quantitative approach to answer the following research question: "Do sequenced repeated familiar tasks affect the participants' task performance?"

METHOD

Participants

Initially, a sample of 64 EFL learners aged from 13 to 16 participated in this study. The subjects were both female and male who were randomly selected from among 123 EFL learners. They were studying in five language institutes in Hamadan province, Iran, and they were at the upper-intermediate level at the time of data collection. The course book of *American English File* or *Touchstone* was instructed at these language schools. The participants' first language was Turkish or Persian. This sample was selected because the researchers intended to be sure they could afford sequential tasks and provided tests. Four of the learners were excluded from the study. In fact, their parents did not allow them to take part in the treatment sessions due to the fear of COVID-19.

Instrumentation

Placement Test

The language institutes utilized rigorous procedures to allow EFL learners to participate in upper levels. However, to homogenize participants of the groups and to ascertain proficiency of the upper- intermediate level, they were examined on a placement test. Therefore, the researchers employed the *Success Placement Tests* (2007) which are designed to assist the supervisors to determine suitable level of language for EFL learners. It includes 100 items of multiple-choice, Grammar (N=50) and Vocabulary (N=50), which has been designed to last for an hour. If the EFL learners get more than 70%

or less than 60% of the answers correct, the researchers excluded from the study. The KR-20 formula has been used to gain the reliability of the test. The reliability index was 0.821.

Pretest

Since this study aimed at task complexity, we selected a listening test on "keeping fit" to find out if the subjects could perform +simple real-life comprehension task. A total of 20 listening comprehension items were selected from *Expanding Tactics* for listening developed by Richards (2005). It contained task questions such as listening to the conversation, choosing options, and checking pictures. The subjects received one point for each correct answer. To make the tasks less or more complex for EFL learners, Robinson (2007) proposed some cognitive aspects. Because this test contained three minus (- complex) dimensions, it was considered to decrease the higher processing load of listening comprehension (see Table 2).

Table 2: The rational for -complex pretest dimensions

Dimensions	Underlying rational of +simple task
+visual support	Less cognitive effort demanded to focus on linguistic codes in listening task. Videos and photos support attention and memory.
+few elements	Listening task includes simple linguistic structures and fewer words.
+planning time	There is no time pressure as students are answering the listening questions. Replaying or pausing of files is possible.

To control the reliability of the pretest, it has been piloted for a sample population and the scores were compared and calculated. The results of test-retest reliability showed acceptable level (0.847).

Treatment Tasks: Cognitive Complexity Operationalization

Robinson (2011) asserts that sequencing tasks cognitively from simple to complex lets the learners of second language gain linguistic items progressively. Due to this basic tenet, data were collected by designing 10 ordered tasks to be practiced for both of the groups. This designing provides them with the opportunity to encounter and accomplish close similarity to the real-world target tasks. Thus, the tasks were basically about keeping fit which were sequenced from simple to complex. To manipulate task complexity, 3 levels of task complexity were selected under study (Table 3). In the low complexity versions of the listening tasks, learners were prompted to perform them with the visual presence like watching movies on their cell phones. Furthermore, to manipulate smaller degrees of task complexity, the variable +few elements was used to lessen the cognitive load. For instance, they listened to the listening files with low numbers of new words. Additionally, if they require time planning, the teachers devoted adequate time to process listening tasks. For the complex tasks, higher cognitive demands were operationalized through removing visual support, simple linguistic features, and ample time for planning. The treatment took over 30 minutes in 10 sessions. The teacher spent first 5 or 7 minutes on definition of new words or explaining and performing grammar exercises. Then the L2 learners were asked to practice shadowing. As a whole, while the subjects in the treatment group practiced sequentially all of the tasks (from the first task to the tenth), the control group only practiced randomized listening tasks.

Table 3: Sequence of task presentations

Dimensions of task complexity				
Treatments	**Seq. tasks**	**Visual support**	**Planning time**	**Few elements**
1st session	task 1	+	+	+
2nd session	task 2	+	+	+
3rd session	task 3	+	+	+
4th session	task 4	-	+	+
5th session	task 5	-	+	-
6th session	task 6	-	-	-
7th session	task 7	-	-	-
8th session	task 8	-	-	-
9th session	task 9	-	-	-
10th session	task 10	-	-	-

Posttest

The posttest aimed to explore which pedagogic version could lead the learners to perform complex tasks, sequenced or randomized tasks? The appropriate test which assisted the teacher on topic familiarity and cognitive demanding features was adopted from Collins Listening for IELTS. The test items, which were about keeping fit, entail minus (-) characteristics of task complexity. Furthermore, it did exclude any visual support like short movies or pictures and an allotted time of 30 minutes was determined for both of the groups to answer the questions. Additionally, the test was in the form of completing the diagram, questions, and form with 4 listening audios. The maximum time length of the listening file was 30 minutes. The expert panel verified the content validity of the test by piloting it with Advanced EFL learners and its reliability approved with KR-20 0.868.

Data Collection Procedure

The current research lasted about two months, and the participants underwent 3 hours of instruction phase in a week. The experimental group was offered treatment on the basis of SRFT while the control group received 4 sessions of the isolated repetition of familiar tasks (complex-simple-complex). A systematic framework for selecting authentic tasks was

implemented by the researchers. To follow precise procedures, the sequenced tasks booklets were distributed among the students. However, the control group only performed the unordered tasks.

All of the participants underwent three phases of listening tasks after gathering preliminary data. The class divided into three sections. First, the instructors prepared the participants to perform the tasks by defining unfamiliar words or providing visual clues like pictures or movies. Some researchers claim that the activities of pre-listening look to be the key prosperity for activating prior knowledge and linguistic codes of EFL learners (Barjesteh & Ghaseminia, 2019; Bei & Xinguang, 2017; Newton & Nguyen, 2018). Then, they were engaged in accomplishing the task. The teacher acted as a facilitator if the participants encountered with some dilemmas which confused them. This phase lasted over 15 minutes, and they had to complete the task. Finally, in the post-listening phase, the participants had an opportunity to carry out specific features of task complexity. Some activities such as summarizing the task, answering multiple-choice questions, information exchange, shadowing, and transcription were practiced to fulfill the tasks. Like the experimental group, the control group also followed these phases by performing isolated tasks.

After the ten-session instruction, the participants were administered the posttest. It covered fundamentally three task complexity dimensions. To collect the data, an independent t-test was employed and the results were compared to see the influence of SRFT on listening task complexity.

Data Analysis

The present research aimed to collect data from two different aspects of studies investigating the repetition of task familiarity (Gilabert, 2007) and sequencing task (Robinson, 2007). To answer the previously posed research question, the data obtained through the placement test, the pre- and the posttest stages were analyzed using SPSS version 20. Accordingly, the independent t-test and descriptive statistics were computed to explore any

possible difference(s) between the performances of both of the groups for three tests. To ensure the reliability of the tests (placement test, pretest, and posttest) KR-20 conducted in SPSS 20. Figure 1 depicted several procedures to examine and compare the performance of each group before and after the treatment.
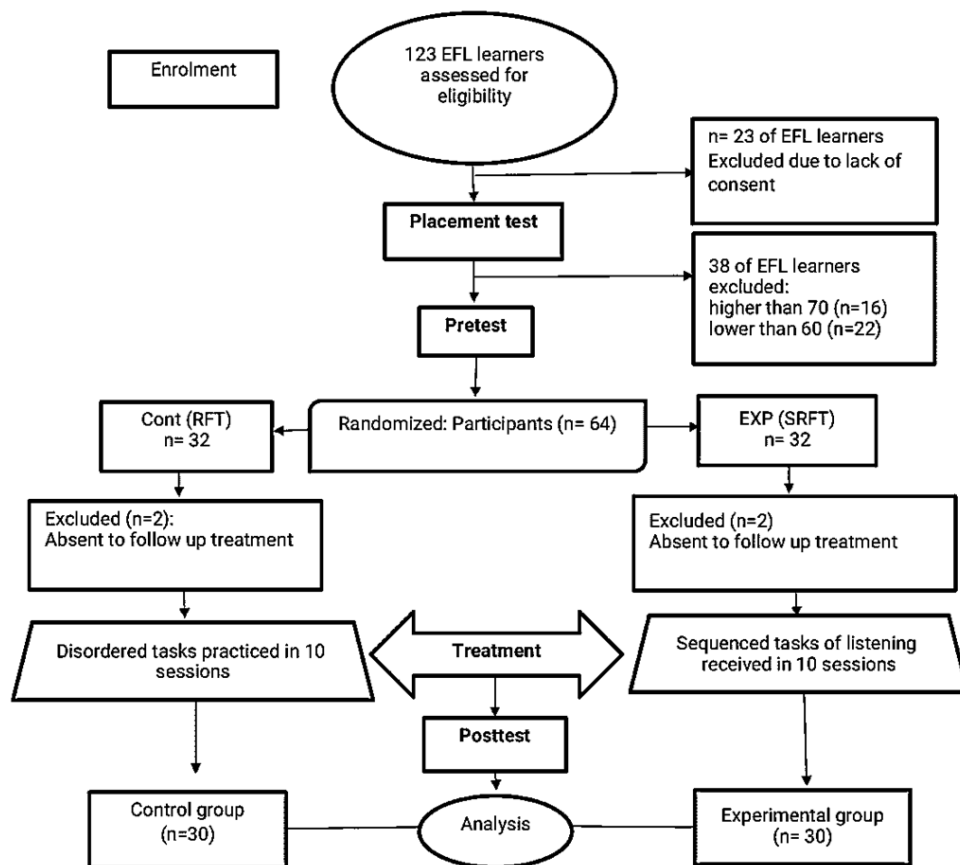

Figure 1: Flow chart of study procedures

RESULTS

The Placement Test Results

Before starting the treatment, a placement test was administered and an independent t-test was employed to ascertain the homogeneity of participants in terms of their English proficiency level. As Table 4 displays, there was no statistically significant difference in terms of language proficiency between the experimental (M=14.50, SD=1.85) and the control (M= 14.06, SD= 2.55) groups; thus, homogeneity was ensured.

Table 4: Descriptive statistics (Placement Test)

	Groups	N	Mean	Std.Deviation	Std.Error Mean
Placement	EG	30	14.50	1.85	.33
Test	CG	30	14.06	2.55	.46

The results of the independent t-test [t (58) = .751, P > .05] showed that there was not a statistically significant difference between the means of two groups on the placement test. As presented in Table 5, both groups enjoyed the same level of content familiarity before the pretest administration.

Table 5: Independent Samples t-Test (Placement Test)

	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
Equal variances assumed	2.70	.106	.751	58	.455	.433	.57	-.72	1.58
Equal variances not assumed			.751	52.84	.456	.433	.57	-.72	1.59

The Pretest Results

The pretest of listening comprehension was administered to determine whether there was any significant difference between the groups in terms of topic familiarity. This +simple listening test excludes any complexity dimensions. As Table 6 indicates, the participants of both groups enjoyed an equal level of topic familiarity (keeping fit) before treatment. The experimental (M=72.30, SD= 6.49) and control (M= 70.33, SD=6.79) groups displayed nearly the same means on the pretest.

Table 6: Descriptive statistics (Pretest)

	Groups	N	Mean	Std.Deviation	Std.Error Mean
Placement	EG	30	72.3000	6.49	1.18
Test	CG	30	70.3333	6.79	1.24

In other words, as the independent t-test [t (58) =.1.46, P > .05] in Table 7 demonstrates, there wasn't a significant difference between the participants of both of the groups for listening rates. Based on the results obtained from Table 7, it can be concluded that both of the groups were nearly at the same level in the pretest.

Table 7: Independent Samples t-Test (Pretest)

	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
Equal variances assumed	0.32	.858	1.14	58	.257	1.96	1.71	-1.46	5.40
Equal variances not assumed			1.14	57.87	.257	1.96	1.71	-1.46	5.40

The Posttest Results

To examine the efficiency of sequenced RFT and the performance of the groups in task complexity, the final phase of data analysis was conducted in the posttest and compared to that in the pretest. Table 8 reports that the experimental group (M = 12.20, SD = 2.32) indicated a higher mean than the control group (M = 8.06, SD = 1.96) on the posttest.

Table 8: Descriptive statistics (Pretest)

	Groups	N	Mean	Std.Deviation	Std.Error Mean
Posttest	EG	30	12.20	2.32	.42
	CG	30	8.06	1.96	.35

Table 9: Independent Samples t-Test (Posttest)

	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
Equal variances assumed	1.17	.28	7.43	58	.000	4.13	.55	3.02	5.24
Equal variances not assumed			7.43	56.42	.000	4.13	.55	3.02	5.24

The results of the independent t-test (Table 9) showed that sequencing RFT helps EFL learners deal with listening to complex tasks positively in the experimental group [t (58) = 7.43, p< .05]. The independent t-test showed that that the differences between the two groups were significant. In other words, the participants in the experimental group outperformed the control group for listening to complex tasks.

DISCUSSION

The present study aimed to find the effects of sequencing repeated familiar tasks on listening task performance. The main pedagogic claim of Cognitive Hypothesis is that tasks should be graded and ordered according to increasing L2 learners' cognitive load during task performance. In the light of this justification, Malicka (2020) rejects the assumption of performing tasks in isolation (complex-simple-complex).

In this respect, the findings of this study are in line with Abdi Tabari and Miller (2021). They found that task sequencing and increasing cognitive complexity made considerable improvement in L2 learners' productive ability. Therefore, notable efficiency results have been obtained in the case of sequencing tasks from simple to complex. In addition, the sequence of familiar tasks provides in-depth semantic processing that can promote a successful transfer of experience to new, similar tasks.

Concerning task repetition, the findings revealed a significant relationship between task iteration and listening to more cognitive demanding tasks. It is hypothesized that iteration of sequenced tasks on similar topics helped the participants in the experimental group provide an opportunity to utilize attentional resources. When they repeated the identical tasks, they paid adequate attention to various perspectives of listening comprehension performance. Moreover, the findings are consistent with Dawadi's (2019) study which showed that students could afford the constraints related to task complexity by attentional resources. Similarly, Bui et al. (2019) also mentioned that a learner's attention plays an important role in checking and monitoring a message. Thus, the learners allotted more time to pay attention to performance of tasks rather than linguistic codes. While this study contradicts the findings, which claim that less repetition or same task iteration leads to complex performance, it supports those findings, which suggest task-type repetition has greater benefits for similar novel tasks (Jung, Kim, & Murphy, 2017).

On the other hand, this study showed that content familiarity is not the mere factor of performing complex listening tasks. The control and experimental groups had the same background knowledge in the pretest. However, the posttest analysis demonstrated a meaningful difference

between the performance of the experimental group and the control group in the post-test. The participants in the experimental group significantly improved in three characteristics of cognitive complexity (i.e. -few elements, -visual support and -time planning). Therefore, the results of this investigation are congruent with previous studies which indicated that topic familiarity is the better predictor of listening comprehension. This finding is incompatible with Ovilia and Addinna (2020), who found that prior knowledge can help students transfer experience for text comprehension. Indeed, cognitive resources, such as memory and attention, during information processing, contribute to listening comprehension. If these cognitive mechanisms can be sequentially and simultaneously increased by repeating relevant tasks, the learners may promote better task complexity performance.

The degree of increasing cognitive load of listening tasks is also the central issue of this study. Enhancing task complexity should be manipulated progressively so as to enable the students to optimize their opportunities for successful learning and performance. Specifically, this research is concerned with three levels of cognitive complexity (+/- visual support, +/- few elements, and +/- planning time). During the instructional treatment, the participants gradually experienced minus characteristics as they moved forward to complete the tasks successfully within ten sessions. In addition, the results refuted what Attarzadeh and Farahani (2014) obtained as the learners perform better on a simple task than on a complex task. The main difference has rooted in the fact that RFT sequenced from simple to complex tasks allowed the participants to gain more awareness of task complexity levels. In other words, massed repetition of listening tasks along with increasing complexity degrees could ensure some successful transfer to the performance of a new similar task. Additionally, employing resource-directing and resource-dispersing variables in arranging tasks helps the learners reduce their anxiety as they want to challenge more listening tasks. This notable finding is congruent with Soodmand Afshar and Hamzavi (2014), who identified that learners' level of proficiency in

listening comprehension generated a low-anxiety environment. Like other studies, this investigation is not conclusive, and the findings can be generalized less to other L2 learners with various levels of English proficiency in different settings to be researched. Thus, the findings of this study could be validated by further research for evaluating other complexity variables.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The current research offers theoretical and pedagogical implications for English teachers and syllabus designers. Theoretically, the findings support Robinson's Cognition Hypothesis and demonstrate the progressive nature of task sequencing when manipulated along resource-directing and resource-dispersing features. According to the quantitative findings reported in this investigation, juxtaposing *repeating familiar tasks* with the *triadic componential framework* may be beneficial to achieve effective outcomes. Therefore, it can be claimed that sequencing RFT increased a higher cognitive load, and the experimental group participants could perform complex listening tasks successfully. In fact, the simple-complex ordering tasks provide L2 learners with fruitful linguistic features in their listening comprehension and, consequently, they can promote complex task understanding.

In line with the CH Model, mere repetition of a few familiar tasks or isolated sequencing of tasks did not reveal significant results in this study. On the other hand, as mentioned earlier, the identical task repetition without rational sequencing of the tasks didn't display any eye-catching findings. Indeed, welding massed repetition with sequenced familiar tasks assisted the subjects in the experimental group to outperform those in the control group in terms of task complexity dimensions.

As the pedagogical findings of this investigation addressed, it can be concluded that sequencing, content familiarity, and a good amount of iteration exposure optimize the efficiency of task complexity performance. Thus, language instructors can consider planning of tasks with variety levels of complexity. They can also motivate learners to iterate similar tasks to

foster their autonomy and gradually prepare them to perform real-world target tasks. In this way, L2 learners can extend their lexical resource and syntactic variety to influence their involvement in complex task performance. Additionally, teachers can push L2 learners to challenge familiar tasks by designing more sophisticated complexity characteristics. L2 teachers should take into account the number of performing extra similar tasks, learners' proficiency, and their background knowledge. In the end, as teachers are manipulating task sequence, they can regularly take brief notes of training and L2 learners' feedback to plan sound sequence tasks.

Further investigations are required to obtain profound insights of RFT since language learning concerns different characteristics of the materials, learners, and contexts. Moreover, repetition, familiarity, -/+ visual support, -/+ planning time, and -/+ few elements were the basic variables which influenced the participants' listening comprehension in this study. Familiarity or repetition can be manipulated along both resource-directing and resource-dispersing factors to see the reciprocal effects. Thus, it is recommended that future studies explore the effect of RFT along other variables of the task complexity with different learners and settings. It is also proposed that future research compares the influences of isolated and sequenced tasks on other skills by different research approaches. Finally, the findings are expected to guide materials designers, curriculum developers and teachers to manage and arrange reasonable activities in accordance with learners' proficiency and their instructional-learning context.

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