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A Tale of Two Contexts: Attitudes of Learners towards Listening in Foreign Context and Target Context

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Studies in language education have mainly been carried out either on target language as a second or a foreign language. However, there are not enough studies on second language and foreign language education in the same setting. This comparative case study investigated the attitudes of two language learner groups toward listening based on their conceptions and understanding of the relationship between their listening development and learning context. The participants were selected through purposeful sampling. One group was composed of students learning English in Turkey as a foreign language, representing the foreign-context group, the other group involved international students of Turkish in Turkey, representing the target-context group. Open-ended questions and semi-structured interviews were used for data collection. The results of the content analysis pointed at the positive attitudes of both groups toward listening. In addition, while the foreign context was reported to lack the necessary chances for language exposure and listening practice, the target context was revealed to be input-rich and practice-rich in terms of listening in authentic settings. The results are discussed in line with previous research and some practical suggestions are offered concerning listening development and instruction in foreign context and target context.

LISTENING OPPORTUNITIES IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

The globalization movement has enabled world citizens to learn languages both in target contexts where learners are engaged in the learning process in its natural environment and in foreign contexts in which learners learn the target language in an environment where the language is not commonly spoken out of the educational setting by the local people. As settings where language learning takes place, language-learning environments have been one of the focal points of investigation in the field, especially the effects on learners' language-learning experience, their language development and performances (Taguchi, 2008). However, almost all of these studies were grounded on a comparison of the experiences of different participant groups learning English and centered on the ESL and EFL distinction presented in geographically different contexts (Collentine & Freed, 2004; Kimura, 2017).

With an aim to offer a comparative perspective, this study presents the attitudes of two groups of language learners, following their language studies in the same geographic location

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but in contextually different settings, toward listening based on their understanding of the relationship between learning environment and their listening development. The study aims to capture the attitudes of two learner groups learning two different languages in the same setting displaying different contextual characteristics for both groups.

This study is expected to contribute to the improvement of listening instruction in both settings, especially foreign context, identifying the characteristics of these contexts and how they affect the development of the listening skill.

STUDIES ON LISTENING IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

Evaluated within the scope of the input hypothesis by Krashen (1981), listening can be defined as the skill providing learners "information from which to build up the knowledge necessary for using the language" (Nation & Newton, 2009, p. 38). Underlying the essential contributions of listening in supplying input to learners, Rost (1994) maintained that listening is essential in the language classroom because it is a primary source of input for learners.

Rost (1994) also offered a definition of listening which can be evaluated within the terms of the Sociocultural Theory by Vygotsky (1978) and stated that "listening is considered to be a part of oracy, a capacity to formulate thought verbally and communicate with others, so it is the skill that underlines all verbal communication" (p. 7). Through these remarks, Rost (1994) underlined the significance of listening as a source of input and interaction among the interlocutors.

Referring to the place of listening in sociocultural communication, Purdy (1997) noted that communication is composed of two dimensions and listening is the basis for sociocultural interactions providing the informational content. In the particular case of language education, listening also plays a major role as a source of language input and interaction. Affected by personal, social and contextual factors, listening has attracted attention in the field of language education as a topic of continuous debate and investigation.

The literature on listening mainly presents studies on the examination of listening strategies (Bozorgian, 2014; Cross, 2009), affective factors (Kimura, 2017; Zhang, 2013), technology integration in listening (Lebedeva, Koltakova, Khaleeva, & Rusetskaya, 2017; Leveridge & Yang, 2014) and listening assessment (Ableeva & Lantolf, 2011; Hidri, 2014). A review of the literature reveals that though there are a number of studies examining different aspects of listening in foreign and target contexts, there is still need for further research focusing on the effects of learning environment on listening development.

Noting that what occurs outside of the classroom is as significant as what occurs within the classroom, Dell Hymes (1972) attracted attention to the effects of learning environment on the language-learning process. He asserted that "the key to understanding language in context is to start not with language but with context" (p. 19). With an aim to differentiate learning environments according to their basic characteristics, Batstone (2002) referred to two fundamental learning environments: learning context and communicative context. In the learning context, the teacher is the main agent directing the language input and output focusing on the presentation and practice of target linguistic forms. In communicative contexts, learners engage themselves in social and interactional situations. In this communicative fashion, the main aim is to center on the exposure to authentic productions and practice the target language. In

interactive situations, learners are naturally exposed to the target language through genuine communicative opportunities and can improve their listening skills in conjunction to their speaking skills.

In the light of Batstone's (2002) proposition of two learning environments, one can infer that while the learning context resembles foreign language-learning environments (foreign context hereafter), the communicative context is similar to second language-learning environments (target context hereafter). In foreign contexts, the main focus is on the presentation and practice of language-related forms and on developing pertaining skills. In foreign contexts, learners are not much exposed to the language outside the classroom setting. In contrast, in target contexts, more emphasis is placed on the interactional aspects presented and practiced inside and outside the classroom. In such an environment, learners can experience various forms of language use in real communicative settings. In other words, while language exposure and practice is mostly limited to formal classroom setting in foreign contexts, target contexts present language in formal and informal environments. The open question is how both contexts impact learners' listening development.

Regarding the effects target context on language development, Lafford (1995) and Brecht, Davidson, and Ginsberg (1995) noted that the learners in the target contexts improved their communicative skills because of the multiple opportunities for interaction. Sharing a similar research perspective, Segalowitz and Freed (2004) also concluded that the target context contributed to the participants' oral development supported by the simultaneous improvement in their listening through the language available all around the learning context. On a comparison of foreign and target contexts, Lafford (1995) explained that access to language input and practice inside and outside of the classroom in the target context fostered the participants' listening development. Collentine and Freed (2004) also suggested that the target context encouraged the participants to enhance their narrative abilities accompanied with listening development. What is common in these studies investigating the difference between foreign and target contexts is that the target context enhanced the development of listening. These results revealed that the availability of genuine examples of the target language offered learners authentic input, forming the basis for the listening development.

Issues related to listening also attracted attention in the Turkish context. Evaluating the existing listening instruction in Turkey, Seferoglu and Uzakgören (2004), Coşkun (2010) and Harputlu and Ceylan (2014) noted that EFL learners were not sufficiently exposed to linguistic input in the target language. Therefore, in order to help EFL learners compensate for the input deficiency in the foreign context and better develop their listening skills, the researchers suggested that listening strategies be integrated in listening instruction. In two successive studies, Bekleyen (2007, 2009) examined tertiary level EFL learners' evaluations of their listening performances and the factors affecting their listening anxiety. Bekleyen concluded that listening development in the EFL setting was challenging for the participants because they were not exposed to sufficient amounts of language input, which would in the course of time increase their listening anxiety. The results of these studies showed that listening development is a challenging process in foreign context because satisfactory amount of language input is not available. In such contexts, the classroom is for most students the only place where they are exposed to the target language. At the same time, the classroom practices are mostly of educational nature and language usage would typically lack authenticity. Hence, learners in foreign contexts would be negatively affected by the existing conditions (focus on grammar

instruction + the lack of language input outside of the classroom) and develop negative attitudes toward listening compared to those learners in target context who can have easy access to language inside and outside of the classroom.

Alternatively, one could think that a foreign context with constructed linguistic input might be a helpful step for language learners, because they can practice their listening skills in a protected environment where speakers usually have an educated accent. Listening to authentic language could be a frustrating experience because native speakers of a language might have an accent, speak at a fast rate and use a set of vocabulary, which is not in line with what the learner has stored in his or her L2 memory. So, this study will also look at how language learners perceive this challenge.

In conclusion, the literature reflects the existing attention and interest in listening as a major language skill (Harputlu & Ceylan, 2014; Lebedeva et al., 2017; Leveridge & Yang, 2014). However, a deeper analysis of the focus and contexts of these studies reveals substantial research gaps: a) The majority of these studies were carried out in contexts where the target language was learned as a foreign language. b) Most of these studies were grounded on experimental designs. c) These studies (Bekleyen, 2009; Bozorgian, 2014; Zhang, 2013) were conducted using English as the target language. d) Few of the existing studies addressed listening comprehension and development as well as the factor of learners' attitudes into consideration. As a consequence and to add the literature, research focusing on a comparison of the attitudes of learners, who learn two different languages in two contextually different settings, toward listening development stands as an area worthy of investigation to better understand learners' experiences in the language-learning process.

Theoretical perspective

The theoretical focus of this study utilizes Krashen's (1981, 1985) Input Hypothesis and Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory. The Input Hypothesis views input as the essence of language acquisition. In this view, input is seen as an essential source for learners to internalize the language (Mitchell & Myles, 1998). Learners need comprehensible input, any language form from word to sentence level, to form a basis for their language development. In the light of this hypothesis, foreign and target contexts can be compared based on the availability of input in the target language. While foreign contexts are reported not to provide learners with adequate amounts of input, target contexts are observed to be rich in authentic input presented in genuine communicative situations in and outside of the classroom. Compared according to the accessibility of input in both contexts, target contexts should promote listening development through diverse and abundantly available opportunities.

This study is also based on Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory regarding any type of learning as a social process of interaction. Within the terms of Sociocultural Theory, Atkinson (2002) suggested that learning should be a part of everyday life through continuous interactions. The nature of listening development requires genuine communication to expose learners to the language produced by different people in different settings (Hasbi, 2013). The claim is that in this way learners can accomplish full development in listening and can be motivated to hold positive attitudes toward the skill. The consideration of the two learning environments (foreign and target contexts) in terms of social interaction reveals that the target-context participants have opportunities to take up contact with native speakers of the language, while

the foreign-context group have limited access to interaction with the native speakers. In this way, the target-context learners can be exposed to the language through genuine communication while foreign-context group could not benefit from adequate chances of hearing and practicing the language. In line with the principles of Sociocultural Theory, this constellation would put foreign-context language learners at a disadvantage. In the long run, according to this theory, the availability of genuine communication in the target language or the lack thereof is thought to influence the attitudes of the participants.

In the light of Input Hypothesis and Sociocultural Theory, centring on an area which is yet unexplored, this study aims to examine the relationship between foreign and target contexts and learners' attitudes toward listening based on their conceptions, understanding and experiences in these contexts. The following research questions guided the study:

RQ 1: What are the attitudes of Turkish learners of English toward receiving listening education in a foreign context?

RQ 2: What are the attitudes of foreign learners of Turkish toward receiving listening education in a target context?

METHODS

This study was grounded on comparative case study research design to obtain in-depth understanding of the views and experiences of the participants' who were agents directly experiencing the cases (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007) in its natural and real-life context (Creswell, 1998; Yin, 1984). Since comparative case study entails, as noted by Goodrick (2014), "an analysis and synthesis of the similarities, differences, and patterns across two or more cases that share a common focus or goal" (p. 1), it enables the researcher to understand how the contextual characteristics affected the groups in terms of their listening development.

Setting

For the purpose of this comparative case study, the learning environment, a state university in Turkey, served as a target context for foreign learners of Turkish and as a foreign context for Turkish learners of English. For the first group, the learning environment offered opportunities to experience the language in its natural and authentic setting. In such a setting, the learners heard the language and were exposed to its different forms through authentic interactions with native speakers, which is presumably beneficial for their listening development.

For the foreign-context group, the chances of exposure to the target language were mostly available in the classroom. These learners did not have many opportunities for listening to the target language compared to their target-context counterparts. Therefore, these participants tried to compensate for the limitations in listening through individual out of class listening practice.

Participants

The two participant-groups in this study were selected through purposeful sampling (Patton, 1987). They were preparatory class learners who were about to finish a year-long language

education. The first group consisted of 10 Turkish students learning English in Turkey, representing the foreign-context learners. They were students at English Language Teaching (ELT) department. They had language-learning experiences from 2 to 6 years but did not receive extensive language education until they studied in this prep class.

The second group was composed of 10 participants from different nationalities (Mongolia, Georgia, Iran, Russia, Afghanistan) learning Turkish in Turkey, representing the target-context group. All had little or no experience of learning Turkish in their own countries. Before following their undergraduate or graduate education in Turkey, they needed to reach C1 level in Turkish. Therefore, they studied in a Turkish preparatory class for a year.

The participants in both groups, after a year-long language education, reached B2/C1 levels of language proficiency according to Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). These participants were selected on the criterion that they had regular language study patterns, had almost the same levels of language proficiency and were willing to participate in listening activities. In this way, the effects of language proficiency and willingness to participate were decreased to better understand the effects of learning environment on listening development.

Data collection tools

Two research instruments were utilized to ensure validity of the findings through data triangulation. The first instrument was open-ended questions formed by the researcher considering previous studies and her dialogs with learners. Six open-ended questions were prepared for each group centering on the relationship between the learning environment and their experiences and listening development as well as their attitudes toward the skill. The open-ended questions were in English for the foreign-context participants and in Turkish for the target-context participants. In order to increase the validity of the instruments, four field experts (two Turkish and two English language experts) were consulted for the comprehensibility and clarity of the questions. Below the open-ended questions are presented in English:

1. What is your attitude toward listening skill in learning English in Turkey ("learning Turkish in Turkey" for the target-context group)?
2. Does learning English in Turkey ("learning Turkish in Turkey" for the target-context group) contribute to your development in listening skill?
3. Would your listening development be different if you learned English in a target context ("learned Turkish in your own country" for the target-context group)?

Semi-structured interviews were the second data source adopted to ensure the reliability and validity of the findings and to compare and contrast the answers of the participants in open-ended questions. The questions to guide the interviews were formed by the researcher based on the participants' comments in the open-ended questions. These questions (in Turkish for the target-context and in English for the foreign-context group) were designed to reveal the participants' perceptions of the relationship between learning context and their listening development. There were also questions about whether it would have made a difference for them if their studies were conducted in a different context (foreign context for the target group and vice versa). These questions were intended to gain deeper understanding of the effects of learning environment on listening development, promoting listening instruction by disclosing the

available opportunities and existing challenges. Regarding the validity and reliability, one field expert also provided feedback on these interview questions.

Data collection

The data from the open-ended questions were collected in the last week of the preparatory education of both groups and the semi-structured interviews were conducted two weeks later in the final exam week. Before involving them in the study, the researcher asked the participants to sign consent forms informing them about their responsibilities and rights in the process and confirming their voluntary participation.

First, the participants were asked to provide written answers to open-ended questions. The questions for both groups were in the target language they learned. However, the participants were also offered the flexibility to switch the languages in their written answers when they could not convey the idea they had in mind in the target language (Turkish for the foreign-context group, English- as all the participants in the target-context group had at least B1 level in English- for the target-context group). The answers written in Turkish in both groups were translated into English by the researcher and a native speaker conducted the proofreading.

Two weeks later the semi-structured interviews were conducted. During the interviews, guiding questions prepared in the light of the participants' answers to open-ended questions were used by the researcher besides some additional questions asked in the flow of the interviews. The participants were again provided with the flexibility to switch to Turkish or English. Each interview lasted 10 to 15 minutes. The interview records were transcribed by the researcher (the parts in Turkish were translated as well) and proofread by the same native speaker.

Data analysis

Before the main analysis, the researcher showed the participants the transcribed versions of their comments and an early analysis to obtain participant approval. In the main analysis, a three-step content analysis was followed, establishing unity and ensuring the trustworthiness of the analysis process: Individual analysis of each participant, in-group analysis comparing participant answers in the same group and a cross-group analysis comparing participant answers in different groups.

The data from the open-ended questions and interviews were analyzed separately for each group. First, the open-ended questions were analyzed for each participant followed by an in-group analysis comparing the answers of the participants receiving language education in the same context. Then, based on the recurring codes and categories identified in in-group comparison, a cross-group analysis was carried out to compare and contrast the data obtained from two different groups.

The analysis of the data gathered through semi-structured interviews was also conducted in these three steps. After the open-ended questions and semi-structured interviews had been analyzed separately, the data from two sources were compared to each other to ensure validity and trustworthiness. The analysis of the two data sets pointed at similar aspects, again increasing the trustworthiness of the findings.

To ensure the reliability of the data analysis through interrater agreement and to decrease the possibility of single-rater bias, the researcher asked a field expert to analyse the data sets through content analysis. The Internal Rate of Return was 83.5% for exact, 13.5 for similar and 3% for different coding and this also increased the validity of the analysis.

RESULTS

This section presents the results related with the perceptions of foreign-context and target-context participants regarding the relationship between learning environment and their listening development. The results are shown in two separate sub-sections. The excerpts from the participant are identified as OQ for open-ended questions and SI for semi-structured interview.

Results from the foreign-context participants

For the foreign-context participants, there was consensus that listening is the tool to obtain information in the target language (English in their case). Some of them even considered listening more central than reading because they were exposed to linguistic input through listening more frequently than through reading. About the significance of listening as an information source, a participant stated that she could "obtain a great deal of information through listening in different contexts, which might not sometimes be possible through reading" (P3-OQ).

As for the amount of exposure to and practice in listening in the foreign context, the participants reported that they were practicing listening through audios in skill-courses and, in a limited way, in some other courses, which were taught in the target language. However, most of the foreign context students complained about not practicing listening in authentic, natural settings, as also reflected in the below comment:

> *We can practice listening in the skill-courses and in some of the courses in which our professors prefer to use the target language. However, I think, just in-class practice is not enough for the mastery of listening; so, additional out of class practice is essential*. (P7-OQ)

Another point of reference in the participants' remarks was the observable focus on traditional listening activities including exercises such as fill-in-the-blanks and finds the missing items. Participants expressed the need for effective listening classes because of the lack of listening practice in the foreign context. On this issue, a participant stated that their listening skills could not mostly "go beyond a hear-then-do the activity state" and added that they needed "purposefully-designed listening classes to compensate for the limitations in the foreign context" (P4-SI) . Sharing a similar viewpoint, another participant offered some alternatives for practice:

> *I believe that classroom activities are not enough for us to develop our listening. We also do not have many chances for being exposed to the target language in its authentic setting. So, as an additional activity, we can follow TV series or films and listen to music*. (P8-OQ)

Considering ways to develop listening, another participant pointed at strategy training and suggested that they should be equipped with main strategies to improve their listening:

> *The language education we have taken is not sufficient for our listening development. So, I believe our instructors should show and teach us some practical strategies we can use while developing our listening*. (P6-SI)

The same participant also referred to the need for modifications in language materials from a traditional to a more practice-based content:

> *I think the materials we use in listening classes are not fruitful. So, I believe the content and design of listening materials should be changed for better instruction*. (P6-SI)

Regarding their attitudes toward listening, all the foreign-context participants, with one exception, noted that they favored listening because of the low risk of making mistakes. Referring to the easiness of listening, a participant commented that she enjoyed listening because she was not forced to "use the language in its spoken form, there are already people speaking and listening to them is all I need to do; so it is a mistake-free process" (P5-SI). In addition, they had the chance to listen to the audio several times or, in a conversational context, they could ask for clarification. These participants stated that it was relatively easier for them to compensate for the lack of listening opportunities through their personal efforts, as expressed in the quote below:

> *I like listening because I feel less anxious with listening compared to the productive skills. There is less fear of making mistakes. In addition, through available audios, I find it easier to develop my listening in foreign context*. (P2-OQ)

Holding positive attitudes toward listening, another participant stated that she considered listening development essential. She said that she liked listening despite the inadequacy of authentic input and added she put additional effort to develop her listening:

> *I experience difficulties to develop my listening in this setting because natural input is limited. This is a challenge but it does not cause me to develop negative attitudes towards listening. Instead, I try to encourage myself to spend extra effort to improve my listening*. (P1-SI)

However, not all the participants had the same direction of attitude toward listening. The single participant with almost negative attitudes toward listening explained that the inadequacy of and limited access to authentic input was a source of demotivation for him. The participant added that the classroom instruction did not yield effective results in their listening development:

> *Listening is the information source helping healthy communication. But the foreign context does not offer enough chances for listening development. This demotivates me in listening development, directing me to develop negative attitudes towards the skill*. (P9-OQ)

Over all, the foreign-context participants held positive attitudes toward listening. They valued the significance of listening as a source of input and its contributory nature in the establishment of effective communication. However, despite the positivity of their attitudes, they also maintained that the foreign context was not rich in authentic input resulting in the inadequacy of exposure to the language. Combined with the traditional listening instruction, the lack of input blocked or at least slowed down the participants' listening development. Considering the contextual challenges, the participants tried to compensate for the lack of available chances for exposure to the target language through their additional efforts for their listening development.

RESULTS FROM THE TARGET-CONTEXT PARTICIPANTS

The participants in the target context, learning Turkish in Turkey, also held positive attitudes toward listening. They regarded listening as a source of information in the target language. Pointing at the importance of listening, a participant stated that listening "is essential because it provides us with the input through which we can understand how the language is used" (P8-OQ). Sharing a similar standpoint, another participant explained that listening is the skill through which she could develop her language proficiency:

> *Listening forms the basis of all language development because it is the skill through which we are first exposed to the target language and hear it in actual use.* (P6-SI)

As regards the benefits of the learning environment, the participants seemed to appreciate the chances of exposure to the authentic language. A participant expressed her happiness that she was receiving language education in Turkey because "there is ample amount of input everywhere and it is a great chance to be exposed to the language" (P4-SI). All participants referred to the advantage to hear the language both inside and outside of classroom. A participant noted that she improved her listening more than she could have in her own country because there were "ample chances of listening to the native speakers of Turkish in many different places" (P3-OQ). Referring to multiple-exposure, another participant with similar experiences offered the following statement:

> *I believe I am really lucky to learn Turkish in Turkey because I can listen to the language wherever I go. In the class, I can listen to the teachers; in the market, with cashiers; in the restaurant, with waiters… So, it doesn't matter whether I am in the class or not.* (P7-OQ)

The target-context participants held positive attitudes toward listening also because of the chance to practice the language, as commented below:

> *I am really happy to learn Turkish in Turkey. There are Turkish-speaking people everywhere. Through the interactions, I can develop my listening.* (P5-OQ)

The availability and authenticity of language input in and out-of-classroom served as factors motivating the target-context participants in developing their listening. Knowing that language can be accessible through their interactions with the native-speaker instructors inside the classroom and with native speakers outside the classroom, a participant appreciated the existing opportunities in the target context for listening development:

> *I don't experience difficulty in trying to reach authentic language input and I realize that this really motivates me in listening development. The more I am exposed to the language, the more my listening develops. And, the more it develops, the more I am motivated.* (P1-SI)

However, not all the experiences of the target-context group were unproblematic. Though being at the advantageous side, they still perceived some challenges in the process. The main difficulty for some target-context participants was the accent of some native speakers:

> *I like listening to the native speakers. But some of them have certain accent which is difficult to understand. This is a source of confusion for me in developing my listening.* (P2-SI)

The comments of the target-context participants revealed that the environment offered almost limitless chances for exposure to the target language. Receiving formal in-class instruction from native-speaker instructors, this group also had the opportunity to hear the authentic use of the language outside the classroom in informal contexts. In such an input-rich and practice-rich context, the participants naturally developed their listening and held positive attitudes toward the skill.

In conclusion, the comparison of both learner groups showed that they held positive attitudes toward listening. They appreciated listening as a source of input in the target language and felt the need to develop their listening skills. However, the experiences of these two groups in terms of listening development process differed because of the availability of authentic language input in the learning community. While the foreign-context group had limited access to the language and followed additional ways for listening development, the target-context group were involved in formal and informal situations in which they were exposed to the language input.

DISCUSSION

The overall results of this comparative case study revealed that participants in both contexts had positive attitudes toward listening as an essential information source and were aware of the necessity to develop their listening. This overall result echoes that of Hasbi (2013) who pointed at the positive attitudes of the participants in the foreign and target contexts toward listening. A detailed analysis of the results highlighted the contextual differences between the two learning environments. While the foreign context offered limited access to authentic language input, the target context presented limitless chances of exposure to natural target language forms.

The results of this study can be evaluated in the light of the theoretical framework upon which this study was based. The first set of discussion can be grounded on the Input Hypothesis (Krashen, 1985). Referring to comprehensible input as the essence of language development and listening development in particular, the hypothesis proposes that learners should be exposed to natural input to figure out how the language is used. The results of this study, therefore, shows that the foreign context fails to meet the main principle of the Input Hypothesis as learners in this setting cannot have quick and natural access to input in the target language. As also noted by some participants in previous studies (Cross, 2009; Lebedeva et al., 2017), the foreign-context participants in this study reported that the classroom was mostly the only context in which they heard the language. Taking the main principle of the Input Hypothesis into consideration, one can conclude that learners in foreign context inevitably experience difficulties in developing their listening skills because of the limited amount of natural and comprehensible input in the learning environment. In foreign contexts, listening development is mostly based on formal classroom instruction and practices which does not much support their listening improvement. Therefore, assessed from the stance proposed in the Input Hypothesis, foreign contexts are not listening-development-friendly environments.

The results can also be evaluated from the perspective proposed by the Sociocultural Theory considering interaction between the novice and the experienced essential. Through their interactions, the experienced can help the novice to learn better. Therefore, the target-context

participants had in and out-of-classroom interactions with native speakers, helping them improve their listening. Through their communication with native speakers, this group had easy access to the language in formal and informal learning contexts. In contrast, the foreign-context participants experienced almost a totally different case. The learning environment did not offer them interactive instances to develop their listening. In the classroom, listening instruction was mostly conducted for educational purposes and was carried out by non-native speaker instructors. Outside of the classroom, they did not have the opportunity to interact with native speakers. In conclusion, evaluated from the sociocultural stance, the language-learning contexts of both groups significantly differed because of the accessibility to the language through social interactions.

The results can also be evaluated from a motivational standpoint. The foreign-context participants experienced difficulty in improving their listening because they could not easily reach authentic target language input. Therefore, some of them engaged themselves in additional effort to compensate for the inadequacies in the learning environment in order to improve their listening. This process of trying to cope with the contextual challenges might have affected the motivational levels of the learners in two directions. These learners might have been negatively affected by the challenging process of listening development while trying to overcome the inadequacies brought by the context which was a case also reported by Zhang (2013), Harputlu and Ceylan (2014) and Kimura (2017). The researchers stated that the insufficiency of authentic language increased the EFL learners' anxiety in listening development while decreasing their motivation. However, foreign-context participants might have also been encouraged by the contextual factors and motivated themselves to search for ways to develop their listening.

Considered from the pedagogical perspective, the results obtained in this study are reflective of the limited opportunities for language exposure in foreign context and should be taken into account while developing materials for listening instruction and practice. In this sense, materials should be re-designed to meet the demand for more exposure to the authentic language forms. Instead of merely involving conventional listening activities, they should reflect the nature of the target language which can be adapted to classroom setting for foreign-context learners. For this purpose, materials raising metacognitive awareness for learners to control and evaluate the process of listening development (Kassem, 2015) can be created. In addition, to promote learner autonomy in the process, learners can be taught listening strategies to increase listening comprehension and oral production (Bozorgian, 2014; Zhang, 2012).

In this study, the major contextual difference between the two groups was the availability of opportunities for exposure to the target language. All the target-context participants emphasized the aspect that they received language education in its natural setting full of chances for exposure and practice. However, foreign-context learners were not that fortunate to reach natural and authentic language, which was a drawback also mentioned in previous studies (Sun, 2009; Taguchi, 2008). Within the limitations of their learning environment, foreign-context learners are to deal more with the theoretical and rule-based side of the language and language learning, which also affects listening instruction. Considering these differences, curriculum developers and material designers are challenged to follow alternative ways of preparing language content based on the more dynamic and communicative nature of language education.

Within the discussion of the available opportunities of language exposure and practice, there is also some place for the consideration of the value of native speakers and native-

speaker instructors. As participants commented in this study, there is not a high likelihood for foreign-context learners to take lessons from native-speaker instructors while this is all different for target-context participants. This result echoes that of Takkaç Tulgar (2018) underlining the inadequacy of the availability of opportunities for exposure and practice offered by native speakers and native-speaker instructors. This result may support the notion that instructors in foreign-contexts need to shoulder more responsibility for the act of teaching the target language. If this is the case, these instructors should be encouraged to take advantage of the accessibility offered by the Internet and other technological sources in designing or adopting authentic materials to help their learners develop their listening skills. In this way, foreign-context learners can be exposed to different forms of target language, developing their listening.

To sum up, it can be stated that foreign and target contexts constitute different characteristics in the process of language education. While target contexts offer ample chances of exposure to the target language in its natural setting accompanied with many chances of practice, foreign contexts present limited opportunities for authentic language examples and insufficient chances for practice. The availability of opportunities for exposure to and practice in the authentic target language in learning contexts naturally influence the experiences and attitudes of language learners. In this study, the foreign-context group found and pursued additional ways to compensate for the lack of exposure to authentic language in the learning context and held positive attitudes toward listening, just as their target-context counterparts.

CONCLUSION

The results of this comparative case study revealed that both foreign context and target context language learners had developed positive attitudes toward listening skills. So, it is safe to say that practicing listening in the language-learning process is attractive to all learners. It can be inferred from the results that contextual factors affected the level of effort the participants had to put in developing their listening. Setting out from these results, some practical solutions can be suggested as follows:

In the foreign context:

- Listening practices should center on listening comprehension and production instead of mere hearing activities.
- Since learners do not mostly have adequate chances of being exposed to and practicing the target language in its natural setting, foreign-context learners should be encouraged to take part in different social and educational events such as exchange programs in which they can be exposed to different forms of authentic language.
- Non-native language teachers should benefit from the advantage of cultural, social and linguistic familiarity with their learners. However, they should not abuse the case of having a common language with their learners. In order to help their learners develop their listening, they need to use the target language as the medium of instruction.

In the target context:

- Learners in target-context should be aware of the benefits in the natural learning setting and should make every effort to develop their target language.

For the improvement of listening instruction, some suggestions regarding the stages of language instruction can also be offered as the following:

- In the pre stages of listening instruction, instructors can benefit from such processes as brainstorming and providing background information about the content they are to cover. In this top-down processing, the content can be contextualized and students can *tune themselves into* what they are supposed to follow, which is a source of learner motivation.
- In the active stages of listening, instructors can present different listening strategies learners can adopt to scaffold learners in their language development.
- In the post stages of listening, instructors can focus on an analysis of language form and content, which can be especially contributory in foreign language- learning contexts in which learners are exposed to appropriate forms in a limited scale.

This study is not out of limitations. One of the most apparent limitations is the number of participants. There were 20 participants (10 for each group). Therefore, further research involving more participants can be suggested for more comprehensive comparisons. In addition, future research ought to collect data through different instruments to examine the issue in broader sense, in particular to explore the longitudinal effects of the learning contexts. The results of this study also pointed at the issue of non-native language instructors. Since language education is generally conducted by non-native speaker instructors, the competencies that non-native instructors are essentially expected to develop can also be a significant aspect to study. In addition, future research can also examine the current language materials, which are used especially in EFL settings, in terms of their language content to reveal the areas in which revision is required for the effective presentation of the target language.

As of now, the results of the current study draw attention to the fact that the instructions strategies and materials need to take into account the learning context. Instructors will need to understand the specific challenges of language teaching to adjust their classroom practice according to the needs of their language learners.

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