

The Relationship between the Critical Thinking Ability and the Listening Strategies of Iranian EFL learners

Abbas Ali Azadi ¹, Zahra Zare ^{2*}, Alireza Khorram ³

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1. Department of English Language and Literature, Shahid Bahonar Technical and Vocational Faculty, Zahedan, Iran. Email: abbasali.azadi@gmail.com
 2. Department of English Language and Literature, Sistan and Baluchistan University, Zahedan, Iran. Email: zahrazare17790@yahoo.com
 3. Department of English Language and Literature, Sistan and Baluchistan University, Zahedan, Iran. Email: a.khorram2014@gmail.com
- * Corresponding Author: Zahra Zare
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Abstract – The purposes of this study was to investigate the relationship between the critical thinking ability and the listening strategies of Iranian EFL learners, as well as to investigate the relationship between the critical thinking ability of Iranian EFL learners and their use of each cognitive, meta-cognitive and socio-affective strategies. The participants of this study were one hundred Iranian EFL senior students majoring in English Literature and English Translation at Sistan and Baluchistan University and Shiraz Azad University in Iran. The instruments of this study were two questionnaires: a critical thinking questionnaire and a listening strategies questionnaire. The results showed that there was a strong positive significant relationship between the critical thinking ability and the listening strategies, and that meta-cognitive strategies were mostly used by Iranian EFL learners.

Keywords: critical thinking, listening strategies, EFL learners

I. INTRODUCTION

Listening comprehension is regarded hypothetically as a dynamic process in which individuals focus on chosen aspects of aural input, form meaning from passages, and correlate what they hear with existing knowledge.

Everyone who investigated on first language acquisition agrees that listening is crucial to language learning. It was discovered by second language listening research that more specialized learners are likely to depend on a set of strategies to classify their listening processes (Vandergrift, 2003). Research into facilitating language learning throughout strategy instruction started from the past quarter of century (Rubin, 1975; Wenden & Rubin, 1978; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). Listening comprehension strategies are universal actions, behaviors; approaches, procedures, and plans listeners use to be able to comprehend oral tasks more easily (Chen, 2008). O'Malley and Chamot (1990) classified these strategies into three main types: cognitive, meta-cognitive, and socio-affective strategies.

Cognitive strategies are problem-solving techniques that learners use to manage the learning tasks and make easy the acquisition of knowledge or skill and involve direct

manipulation or alteration of the learning materials (Derry & Murphy, 1986). These strategies can be more divided into, inferencing, elaboration, imagery, summarization, translation, transfer and repetition. Cognitive strategies exist in the working memory and facilitate the central administrative jobs of processing information and passing it from one process to another (Macaro, 2006). Meta-cognitive strategies are management techniques that learners employ to manage their learning through planning, monitoring, evaluating, and modifying (Rubin, 1987). According to Oxford (1990), the conscious use of meta-cognitive strategies helps learners get back their focus when they lose it. However, learners do not use meta-cognitive strategies very often despite the significance of self-monitoring and self-evaluation. Socio-affective strategies include the attempts to produce and promote positive emotional reactions and attitudes towards language learning (Chamot & O'Malley, 1987). Socio-affective strategies are defined as the techniques listeners utilize to collaborate with others, to verify understanding, or to lower anxiety (Vandergrift, 2003).

Critical thinking is the most significant life ability for people nowadays. The ability to think critically is important among students in higher education as the content of education at this level necessitates higher order thinking such as the ability to employ critical evaluation to provide evidence for their views, and to dispute the validity of realities they get from teachers. For performing most of our daily activities, we require to employ the skills concerned with critical thinking. Fahim and Teimourtash (2012) suggested critical thinking as one of the most important concepts under great consideration in today's educational program. Critical thinking is "our active, purposeful, and organized efforts to make sense of our world by carefully examining our thinking, and the thinking of others, in order to clarify and improve our understanding" (Chafee, 1988, p.29).

Critical thinking is "thinking that is purposeful, reasoned and goal directed. It is the kind of thinking involved in solving problems, formulating, inferences, calculating likelihoods, and making decisions" (Halpern, 1989, p.5).

A. Statement of the Problem and the Purpose of the Study

The relationship between the critical thinking ability and the listening strategies were investigated in the present study. Also, it examined the relationship between the critical thinking ability of Iranian EFL learners and their use of each cognitive, meta-cognitive and socio-affective strategies. As a result, the exact problem underneath exploration in current study is to find out the relationship between the critical thinking ability and listening strategies.

There is a general agreement among scholars that critical thinking can be significant in almost every activity due to its association with the abilities such as problem solving and decision making. Brown (2004, p. 25) utters that in a perfect academic English program, "the objectives of a curriculum are not restricted to linguistic factors alone, but in addition contain developing the art of critical thinking."

Atkinson (1997) observes that at the present time critical thinking is one of the foremost concepts under deliberation in education. In the United States, critical thinking has

been generally employed for first language education, but nowadays it has also acknowledged a high position in second and foreign language learning and teaching. Ghazali Mustapha (1998) stated that critical thinking skills can be associated with the ability to employ the mind to evaluate and judge the reasonableness of an idea, maturity of thought, to be capable to recognize good from bad ideas and to be capable to construct rational and right decision based on evidence available.

Strategies are specific methods of approaching a problem or task, modes of operation for achieving a particular end, planned designs for controlling and manipulating certain information. They are contextualized "battle plans" that might vary from moment to moment, or day to day, or year to year (Brown, 1995, p.104: as cited in Gilakjani, 2011). The listening strategies are divided into three important types: cognitive, meta-cognitive, and socio-affective strategies. The present study attempts to identify the relationship between the critical thinking and the listening strategies of EFL learners, and also examined the relationship between the critical thinking ability of Iranian EFL learners and their use of each cognitive, meta-cognitive and socio-affective strategies.

B. Significance of the Study

According to Devine (1982), listening is the most important means by which incoming ideas and information are taken in. Wolven and Coakley (1988) concluded that, both in and out of the classroom, listening consumes more of daily communication time than other forms of verbal communication. No one can deny the significance of listening skills in foreign language learning because the key to attain a language is to receive language input. As Hasan (2000) declared, "listening comprehension provides the right conditions for language acquisition and development of other language skills" (p.138). Listening, therefore, is important not only as a receptive skill but also to the development of spoken language proficiency. Rost (2002) also indicated that developing proficiency in listening is the key to achieving proficiency in speaking. However, different experts emphasized the importance of listening comprehension and different researchers confirmed its significant effects on different aspects of second and foreign language learning, but each of them has his/her own definition of listening comprehension while describing the term.

Dewey (1993) confirmed that the fundamental purpose of education is learning to think. In addition to education, learners require to develop and learn to think critically in their academic studies efficiently (Kealey, Holland & Watson, 2005), to the difficult problems that they will face in their professions (Yeh, 2004), and to the critical options they will be strained to make as a result of the information explosion and other rapid technological alterations (Oliver & Ytermohlen, 1995). About the significance of critical thinking, Levine (2002) acknowledges that experience can be a great teacher, but it cannot teach us much but just some repeating experiences and happenings. We learn just when we employ our creativity, and it takes place when we think about our experiences more than only experiencing them. In other words, thinking is very important and has effect on every aspect of our life. In much the same vein, Weiler (2004) recognizes that critical thinking is essential to the learning process, cognitive development, and useful information seeking. Furthermore, Hale (2008) utters that

critical thinking can pierce every aspect of human life if it is substantively visualized and occupied. He highlights the significance of critical thinking in education and asserts that critical thinking and education are inter-related and inseparable.

As stated by, this study tried to identify the relationship between critical thinking and listening strategies, and also examined the relationship between the critical thinking ability of Iranian EFL learners and their use of each cognitive, meta-cognitive and socio-affective strategies. By taking into consideration these purposes, the researchers endeavor to answer this question:

Q1: Is there any statistically significant relationship between the critical thinking ability and the listening strategies of Iranian EFL learners?

Q2: Is there any statistically significant relationship between critical thinking ability of Iranian EFL learners and their use of each cognitive, meta-cognitive and socio-affective strategy?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Listening Strategies

Vandergrift (1999, 59) demonstrated " Strategy development is essential for listening training because strategies are conscious resources in which learners can conduct and assess their own comprehension and responses." O'Malley and Chamot (1990) classified these strategies into three main types: cognitive, meta-cognitive, and socio-affective strategies.

In order to examine the interrelationship between listening strategy use, listening proficiency levels and learning styles, Liu (2008) conducted a study. For this purpose, a sample of 101 Taiwanese university EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students was studied with two structured pencil-and-paper questionnaires of listening strategy use (O'Malley et al., 1985; Vandergrift, 1997) and learning style (Willing, 1988; Nunan, 1996). First, with the one-way between groups analysis of variance (ANOVA), the results recommended that there was a statistically significant difference between the strategy use and the attainment levels at the $p < .05$ level. Second, the findings also recommended that listening strategy use was significantly correlated with learning styles (Sig. $p < .05$). Finally, the aim of this article was to throw some light on a little-investigated area, namely, listening comprehension strategies and learning style in L2.

To determine the effect of meta-cognitive strategy instruction on the listening performance of EFL university students, Birjandi (2012) conducted a study. The participants of this study were 82 students majoring in English translation and literature at Shahid Beheshti University. After selection of the participants, 62 of them were chosen and allocated to experimental and control groups. The experimental group ($n=32$) received the strategy training following the models proposed by Vandergrift and Tafaghodtari (2010) and O'Malley and Chamot (1990), although the control group ($n=30$) received no instruction. The listening section of the TOEFL was employed to measure the listening performance of the

participants before and after the treatment. The results showed that experimental group significantly outperformed the control group on the posttest measure.

Serri, Jafarpour Boroujeni, and Hesabi (2012) concentrated on the investigation of the relationship between learners' listening strategy use while they listen to the texts and some of their individual difference. To do so, 40 Iranian university EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students were studied with four structured questionnaires and an ILTES listening test. The questionnaires were Listening strategy use (Vandergrift, 1997), learning style (Soloman and Felder, 2001), motivation (adapted from Laine, 1988), and the Revised NEO-FFI. To understand whether there is a relationship between variables, and to distinguish which group of individual differences use which listening strategy more, statistical analysis of Multiple Regression analysis, Chi Square test, one way ANOVA, at the $p < 0.05$ level, were employed. The result revealed that there was a significant relationship between the level of motivation and the listening strategies. After motivation, learning style, also, had some effect on the listening strategies use. The other variables had no significant effect on the use of the three listening comprehension strategies. In addition it should be stated that social/affective strategy was omitted in the analysis because the mean of this strategy use was so low. It signifies that no individual groups applied this kind of listening strategy.

Chelli (2013) focused on the investigation of listening strategies used by second- year EFL students at Biskara University. For this purpose, a questionnaire was managed to 70 participants. Also, to make the findings of this study more reliable, the think aloud method was employed with 8 participants. The results of the two research instruments showed that most of the participants use few strategies and require help to obtain listening skills. Therefore, it is recommended to teach them listening strategies to assist them to minimize listening obstacles and to maximize strategy orchestration.

B. Critical Thinking

In general, it can be assumed that critical thinking plays a fundamental role in academic instruction because it is what students require to be successful both in an academic environment and real-life situations. Therefore, it looks as if compulsory to offer precise training in the particular critical thinking skills which students are estimated to show proficiency in. Paul, Elder, and Bartell (1997) claim that the academic roots of critical thinking are as ancient as its etymology, traceable, eventually, to the teaching practice and vision of Socrates 2,500 years ago who discovered by a method of probing questioning that people could not reasonably validate their confident claims to knowledge. In his mode of questioning, Socrates emphasized the need in thinking for simplicity and logical consistency. Socrates' practice was followed by the critical thinking of Plato, Aristotle, and the Greek skeptics, all of whom highlighted that things are often very different from what they appear to be and that only the trained mind is prepared to see through the way things look to us on the surface to the way they really are beneath the surface.

Alizadeh, Jahandar, and Khodabandehlou (2013) examined the relationship between critical thinking ability of Iranian EFL learners at B.A. level and their selected strategies of

listening skill and also the effect of gender variable on them. The participants of this study were 120, who majoring English literature or Translation from different classes junior and senior at Guilan Islamic Azad University. The result of this study showed that there was no significant relationship between gender and strategies the students select for their listening improvement via critical thinking ability. Based on the findings of the study, the rate of critical thinking ability seems to play an important role in selecting listening strategies.

Barjasteh and Vaseghi (2012) attempted to explore the role of critical thinking skills on EFL learners' reading comprehension performance using Bloom's taxonomy. Thus, the role of critical thinking strategies training across two language proficiency levels, high and low was considered. Then the difference between females and males concerning their critical thinking was studied. The participants of this study were 240 male and female Iranian EFL students and were screened into two proficiency levels based on the Longman preparation course for TOEFL test. Each proficiency group was separated into critical and non-critical group. The results showed that critical thinking skills significantly affected EFL learners' reading comprehension performance. However, the effects of critical thinking strategy training didn't contrast across different language proficiency levels. Generally, the findings offer empirical support for the facilitative effect of critical thinking strategy training on reading comprehension performance of EFL learners.

Tabatabaei and Parsafar (2012) considered the effect of self-directed learning on critical thinking of Iranian EFL learners. To this end, after the performance of a proficiency test, 60 female undergraduate participants were selected and then were accidentally assigned to the two homogeneous control and experimental groups. The authorized researcher-made questionnaire was employed as the pre-test. Then, a learning package including materials about self-directed learning was offered to the experimental group. Afterwards, this questionnaire was used again as the post-test. Finally, in order to determine the effect of self-directed learning on critical thinking in the long run, a delayed post-test was administered. The computerized statistical analysis of the results indicated that teaching self-directed learning led to the improvement of the participants' critical thinking. Implications of the findings were discussed for language teachers, learners, and curriculum developers.

Mirzai (2008) tried to investigate the relationship between critical thinking and lexical inferencing of Iranian EFL learners. The participants of the study were 130 male and female students of a language institute. The instruments were a TOEFL and Honey critical thinking questionnaire including 30 items. The results of the study revealed that those students with high critical thinking ability outperformed the ones with low critical thinking ability in lexical inferencing.

NourMohammadi, Hedari and DehghanNiry (2012) investigated the relationship between critical thinking ability and reading strategies used by Iranian EFL learners. The participants of this study were 75 EFL senior students (35 males and 40 females) majoring in English Literature and English Translation at the University of Sistan and Baluchestan in Iran. To do this end, two questionnaires were administered to the participants: a critical thinking questionnaire and a reading strategy questionnaire. Results of the study revealed that the most frequently used reading strategy was meta-cognitive strategy. Also, the statistical

analyses showed a low positive significant correlation between learners' critical thinking ability and their overall use of reading strategies. The participants' critical thinking ability also correlated positively with their use of each of cognitive, meta-cognitive, and compensation strategies. An independent-samples t-test was used to examine the difference between critical thinking ability of males and females and the result revealed a significant difference between the male and the female learners in their critical thinking; the males' critical thinking ability was higher than that of females.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Participants

The participants of the present study were elected from two cities because of accessibility constraint and also this constraint was assisted to homogeneity of participants by regarding the social background. Participants were 100 senior Iranian learners, who majoring in English Translation and English Literature at Sistan and Baluchestan University and Shiraz Azad University (Iran).

B. Instruments

The instruments of this study were The Listening Strategies Questionnaire and The Critical Thinking Questionnaire. The critical thinking questionnaire was adopted from unpublished M.A. thesis of Dehghan Niry, which in turn was adapted from the thesis of Naeini (2005). Naeini (2005) recognized that the English translation of The Critical Thinking Questionnaire was interpreted by her to guarantee the absolute comprehending of the questions by the participants; and the reliability of this questionnaire 0.86. The Listening strategies questionnaire was adopted from published M.A. thesis of Abdalhamid (2012), which in turn was adapted from a mixture of questions collected from two previous studies, one of which was "Teaching L2 Learners How to Listen Does Make a Difference: An Empirical Study" by Vandergrift and Tafaghodtari (2010), and the other "L2 Learners' Strategic Mental Processes during a Listening Test" by Taguchi (2001). In order to identify the reliability of this questionnaire, a pilot study was carried out in Marvdasht Azad University, and finally the reliability of questionnaire was 0.71 which is acceptable.

C. Procedures

First, The Critical Thinking Questionnaire and then The Listening Strategies Questionnaire were distributed between the participants. The participants should choose the suitable responses to the questions. The completion of the two questionnaires was seized about 30 minutes. After, collecting the done the questionnaires, researchers examined the data by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences software version 20 (IBM Corp., Released 2011). While this study designed to identify the correlation between the critical thinking ability and the listening strategies, Pearson Product- Moment Correlation was used, and also to find out the relationship between the critical thinking of Iranian EFL learners'

ability and their use of each cognitive, meta-cognitive, and socio-affective strategy, regression was used.

D. Data Analysis

The data will be submitted to Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) to be analyzed.

For the first research question, Pearson product–moment correlation coefficient was employed in order to observe if the relationship between the critical thinking ability and listening strategies of Iranian EFL learners is statistically significant or not; and then the researcher identify whether it is meaningful or not.

For the second research question, regression was used to observe if the relationship between the critical thinking of Iranian EFL learners' ability and their use of each cognitive, meta-cognitive, and socio-affective strategy is statistically significant or not; and then the researcher identify whether it is meaningful or not.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Research Question 1

Is there any statistically significant relationship between the critical thinking ability and the listening strategies of Iranian EFL learners?

In order to answer this question, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was used. For calculating Pearson r , the critical thinking ability has been considered as an independent variable and the listening strategies as a dependent variable. Table 1 shows the data, by measuring the correlation, the researchers found a positive and significant correlation between the critical thinking ability and the listening strategies. The results specified that the listening strategies were significantly correlated with the critical thinking, with the observed value of Pearson $r = 0.957$ at the 0.05 level of significance. This strong positive and significant value of Pearson r signifies that there exists a strong relationship between the critical thinking ability and the listening strategies of Iranian EFL learners. So, it shows that if the learners think more critically, it is likely for them to employ more listening strategies.

Table 1: Correlation between the critical thinking and the listening strategies

Critical Thinking	Listening Strategies
r	0.957
sig(tailed)	0.000
N	100

According to the results, the researcher found a strong and positive and also a significant relationship between the critical thinking ability and the listening strategies of the learners.

B. Research Question 2

Is there any statistically significant relationship between the critical thinking of Iranian EFL learners' ability and their use of each cognitive, meta-cognitive and socio-affective strategy?

To answer this research question, regression was used. Here for calculating regression, the critical thinking has been considered as dependent variable and each cognitive, meta-cognitive, and socio-affective strategy have considered as an independent variables. Table 2, shows descriptive statistics of each cognitive, meta-cognitive and socio-affective strategies, and Table 3 shows the regression of these strategies and also Table 4 shows the regression of each cognitive, meta-cognitive, and socio-affective strategy.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of listening strategies (cognitive, meta-cognitive, and socio-affective)

Strategies	Cognitive	Meta-cognitive	Socio-affective
N	100	100	100
M	2.75	2.85	2.94
SD	0.376	0.375	0.453
Max.	3.5	3.75	3.6
Min.	1.75	1.25	1.75

According to this Table, the mean score of cognitive strategies is 2.75 and SD is 0.376, the mean score of meta-cognitive strategies is 2.85 and SD is 0.376, and the mean score of socio-affective strategies is 2.94 and SD is 0.453. In order to find out the relationship between critical thinking of Iranian EFL learners' ability and their use of each cognitive, meta-cognitive, and socio-affective strategy, regression was employed. As you see Table 3 presents the results. Table 4 shows the regression of each cognitive, meta-cognitive and socio-affective strategy.

Table 3: Regression of listening strategies

R	R ²	F	sig.
0.601	0.361	58.002	0.000

Table 4: Regressions of each cognitive, meta-cognitive, and socio-affective strategy

Strategies	Fixed value	Cognitive	Meta-cognitive	Socio-affective
B	-0.206	0.262	0.623	0.184
T	-2.58	6.262	13.874	5.029
Sig.	0.011	0.000	0.000	0.000

As it can be seen in Table 3, the total value of regression is confirmed ($p = 0.00 < 0.05$). In Table 4 coefficients of each independent variables present in regression analysis are revealed. Based on the amount of B in Table 4, at first meta-cognitive strategies ($B = 0.623$, $p = 0.00 < 0.05$), then cognitive strategies ($B = 0.262$, $p = 0.00 < 0.05$), and finally socio-affective strategies ($B = 0.184$, $p = 0.00 < 0.05$) are mostly used by Iranian EFL learners. Meta-cognitive strategies are mostly used by Iranian EFL learners.

V. DISCUSSION

Nowadays, instructors believe that it is essential to place teaching in a critical circumstance. Plainly, teaching critical thinking from school systems to college systems is an instructive commitment that can obviously guide learners to expand their critical thinking abilities step by step. It was definite, by regarding the Pearson Correlation coefficient, that there revealed a significant positive relationship between the critical thinking ability and the listening strategies, $r(98) = 0.957$, $p < 0.05$, (see Table 1 above). This signified that critical thinking ability of Iranian EFL learners was strongly correlated to the listening strategies and those who thought more critically utilize more the listening strategies. The results of this study can underline the important of the critical thinking in language education. Serri, Jafarpour Boroujeni, and Hesabi (2012) considered the relationship between learners' listening strategy use while they listen to the texts and some of their individual difference. The result showed that there was a significant relationship between the level of motivation and the listening strategies. After motivation, learning style, also, had some effect on the listening strategies use. The other variables had no significant effect on the use of the three listening comprehension strategies. In addition it should be confirmed that social/ affective strategy was deleted in the analysis because the mean of this strategy use was so low. It indicates that no individual groups concerned this kind of listening strategy. In order to check the interrelationship between listening strategy use, listening proficiency levels and learning styles, Liu (2008) performed a study, for this purpose, first, with the one-way between groups analysis of variance (ANOVA), the results suggested that there was a statistically significant difference between the strategy use and the attainment levels at the $p < .05$ level. Second, the findings also suggested that listening strategy use was significantly correlated with learning styles (Sig. $p < .05$). Finally, the purpose of this article was to chuck some light on a little-investigated region, i.e., the listening strategies and learning style in L2. Nour Mohammadi, Hedari and Dehghan niry examined the relationship between critical thinking ability and

reading strategies used by Iranian EFL learners. Results of the study exposed that the most regularly employed reading strategy was meta-cognitive strategy. Moreover, the statistical analyses demonstrated a low positive significant correlation between learners' critical thinking ability and their overall use of reading strategies. The participants' critical thinking ability also correlated positively with their use of each one of cognitive, meta-cognitive, and compensation strategies.

The results of this study and the previous studies expose that there is a statistically significant relationship between critical thinking and language skills and also there is a statistically significant relationship between the listening strategies and language abilities, even though; no study was performed the relationship between the critical thinking ability and the listening strategies. Also it can be accomplished that learners who think more critically, attempt to be success in their learning troubles usually by using listening strategies; they compensate their learning troubles by working, investigating and analysis and by centering, arranging, and evaluating their individual learning.

Tabeei, Ahmadi and Tabrizi (2013) conducted a study in order to consider the effect of meta-cognitive strategy instruction on listening comprehension of Iranian English as Foreign Language (EFL) learners at Iran Language Institutes (ILI) in Parsabad, Iran. To carry out so, 72 EFL learners were selected among 102 learners based on the 1 standard deviation (SD) above and below the mean score of a listening comprehension test. They were divided into two groups, one experimental and one control group. Then, Meta-cognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ) was administered to distinguish their meta-cognitive strategy awareness. The experimental group underwent a treatment based on Chamot and O'Malley (1994) model and standard instructional plan of ILI, whereas control group did not attain any strategy-based treatment. A post-test from "Expanding Tactics for Listening" (Richards, 2011), was given to both groups after 6-session instruction. The findings revealed that (a) instruction of meta-cognitive strategy had positive effect on listening comprehension of Iranian EFL learners and (b) instruction of meta-cognitive strategy had no differential effect on listening comprehension of female and male learners.

The results of this study and previous studies showed that meta-cognitive strategies were mostly used by Iranian EFL learners. Between three kinds of listening strategies (cognitive strategies, meta-cognitive strategies, and socio-affective strategies), meta-cognitive strategies was mostly employed by Iranian EFL learners and also these learners thought more critically and also had a positive effect on their listening strategies, and also, there was a significant relationship between the critical thinking ability and the listening strategies of Iranian EFL learners.

VI. CONCLUSION

This study was carried out to identify if there is any statistically significant relationship between the critical thinking ability and the listening strategies of Iranian EFL learners, and also investigated if there is any statistically significant relationship between the critical thinking of Iranian EFL learners' ability and their use of each cognitive, meta-

cognitive, and socio-affective strategies. The findings of the study showed that there was a strong positive and significant correlation between the critical thinking ability and the listening strategies, and meta-cognitive strategies was mostly employed by Iranian EFL learners. It means that learners who thought more critically expand better listening strategies. It signified that learners with higher level of critical thinking ability used better listening strategies. The gained strong positive relationship between the critical thinking and the listening strategies can maintain the results of many previous studies that considered the relationship between the critical thinking and language learning's accomplishment in improvement of learner's learning.

According to literature review, many other studies there are that verify the relationship between critical thinking and various features of language learning (e.g. Myers & Dyer, 2006; Fahim et al., 2010; Kamali & Fahim, 2011; Mango, 2010).

As a conclusion, since of the significant function of critical thinking ability in enhancing learning, it is essential to advance critical thinking ability among language learning. Therefore, increasing learners critical thinking is one of tasks of language teachers, course developers and educations planners. Present study suggests teachers develop critical thinking of learners and learners' consciousness of listening strategies concurrently since their incorporation should lead to an improved listening comprehension.

VII. IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

A. Theoretical Implications

This study is paying attention to the important role of the critical thinking ability and the listening strategies of Iranian EFL learners, and paying attention to the important role of the critical thinking ability of Iranian EFL learners' ability and their use of each cognitive, meta-cognitive and socio-affective strategies. The finding of this study demonstrated that the critical thinking ability was significantly and positively correlated to the listening strategies of Iranian EFL learners, and also, meta-cognitive strategies was mostly used by Iranian EFL learners.

B. Pedagogical Implications

The pedagogical implications of this study might be applicable and useful for material developers, syllabus designers and EFL teachers and learners.

According to the results of this study that there is a significant relationship between the critical thinking ability and the listening strategies of Iranian EFL learners, and also, there is a significant relationship between the critical thinking ability of Iranian EFL learners' ability and their use of each cognitive, meta-cognitive and socio-affective strategies. It can be understood that use of critical thinking would assist EFL learners work better in learning foreign language. In order to perform properly in society, and develop independent learning, individuals must be able to think critically and reason effectively. So using the critical thinking ability would help EFL learners listen more effectively and become good listeners.

The EFL learners need course books which encourage their critical thinking ability as well. The first suggestion would be directed to the syllabus designers and material developers to develop more self-assessment activities in their course books to show the EFL learners' progress. They should consider critical thinking as one of the most important elements in their course books. To develop EFL teachers who are teaching the thinking necessary for the listening strategies. Educational systems must devote significant time and sources to professional development of their teachers. Therefore, the learners can benefit from their learning by incorporating critical thinking ability to their learning process that would help them to be independent and responsible in their own learning. Also, EFL teachers, they would observe the progress of their learners on the listening strategies properly. Furthermore, the findings of this study may provide additional direction for syllabus designers and materials developers in evaluation and selection of instructional listening strategies. So, using critical thinking ability is fruitful in academic success and also in our daily life.

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