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***Investigating Teachers' Strategies in Incorporating Culturally Familiar
Tasks to Enhance EFL Learners' Inferential Listening Skills: The Case of
Middle School EFL Teachers and Learners at Berraian – Ghardaia
Province***

***A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Master in Didactics***

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Abstract

In the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom, teachers play an important role in selecting and adapting instructional strategies that make learning more reachable and meaningful for learners. The purpose of this study is to investigate the strategies implemented by middle school EFL teachers at Oulad Taher Ahmed Ben Babia, Abou El Yakadan, Metalag Metalag in Baraiane, Ghardaia province to integrate culturally familiar tasks that enhance learners' inferential listening skills in their classrooms. The research emphasizes the importance of learners' cultural background in facilitating comprehension and promoting critical thinking while listening when promoted by teachers through segments of the local culture. To achieve this, a qualitative and an exploratory approach was adopted, employing thirteen classroom non-participant observation sessions, semi-structured interviews with five teachers, and focus groups with eighteen students to obtain rich data. The findings expose that teachers use a variety of strategies such as including listening texts within familiar cultural settings and activating prior knowledge through pre-listening activities. These activities have a great impact in improving learners' ability to interpret implied meaning and draw clear feedback and logical conclusions. However, the study highlights several challenges ranging from limited culturally relevant materials to diverse learners' backgrounds. The study, then, concludes with necessary recommendations for the teachers to get sufficient training to incorporate these strategies carefully. It also demonstrates the significance of integrating culturally familiar tasks and its pivotal role in promoting learners' inferential listening skills.

Keywords: inferential listening, culturally familiar tasks, EFL students, teaching strategies, listening comprehension, EFL teachers

Dedication

In the name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate, I dedicate this work to:

My Dearest parents; my father Wahid, may ALLAH have mercy on him and my mother who provided me with all the support I needed during my Master career,

My dear brothers: Hamza and Oussama,

My one and only sister Amira,

My teacher Imane ALLAOUI who supported me throughout my dissertation journey,

And to all my teachers.

Chiraze

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

L1: First Language

L2: Second Language

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ESL: English as a Second Language

TEFL: Teaching English as a Foreign Language

TBLT: Task-Based Language Teaching

ESL: Learning English as a Second Language

CLT: Communicative Language Teaching

General Introduction

Learning a second language is a lifelong process that needs the language skills to be well mastered. Listening comprehension remains the most complex skill that the learners face challenges and difficulties with since it deals with different elements. The most important component of listening comprehension is the inferential listening skill. This skill involves going beyond the literal meaning of the words to construct meaning based on the background, context, and the prior knowledge that are in the spoken input (Vandergrift & Goh 2012). So it is very necessary to develop this skill for fruitful comprehension.

One of the effective approaches to enhance inferential listening skills is the integration of culturally familiar tasks into the process of language learning. This approach provides the learners with contextual frameworks that promote their comprehension and enable them to create inferences and interpret implied meanings (Kramsch, 1993). When the learners are surrounded by and exposed to listening materials that are generated from their cultural environment, they will automatically activate their relevant schemata to maintain understanding and promote critical engagement with the text (Anderson & Lynch, 1988).

In this process, teachers play a crucial role in appropriately selecting culturally relevant materials and designing listening tasks that align with learners' cultural experiences. Teachers have their effective strategies that may include the use of local stories, daily life scenarios, or culturally meaningful analogies that resonate with learners' lives. Not only do these strategies enhance learners' engagement but they also bridge the gap between language and meaning (Gilmore, 2007).

Despite the rising recognition of the significance of culture in language learning, there remains a lack of empirical research on how teachers practically incorporate culturally familiar tasks to enhance inferential listening, mostly in middle school EFL classrooms in non-English-speaking regions. This study aims to fill that gap in by investigating the strategies employed by

EFL teachers and exploring the impact of these strategies on learners' inferential listening development.

Background of the Study

Listening comprehension is often a challenging skill to the learners in the English as Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, where learners should be able to making inferences beyond surface-level understanding (Goh, 2000; Vandergrift, 2007). Inferential listening is an intricate skill that requires learners to comprehend the literal meaning, draw conclusions, and bridge the gaps. This process requires that both linguistic and cultural competences are mastered. In Non-English speaking countries (Byram, 1997) learners are often faced by challenges in inferential comprehension because of content and contexts that the learners do not have no familiarity with and don not reflect their sociocultural backgrounds (Pulido, 2003; Kramsch, 1993). For that reason, it is necessary to integrate culturally familiar tasks into listening lessons in order to bridge this gap and enhance learners' inferential skills

Statement of the Problem

Despite the success and the great results that cultural familiarity achieved in language learning, there are limited empirical evidence on how EFL teachers incorporate the appropriate culturally relevant materials that align with learners' cultural backgrounds and most importantly enhance learners' inferential listening This study addresses this gap by examining how middle school EFL teachers integrate culturally familiar tasks and how these strategies impact learners' inferential listening skills. (Byram,1997; Gay, 2010; Kramsch, 1993).

Research Objectives

The main objectives of this study are to explore the strategies used by EFL teachers to incorporate culturally familiar tasks into listening activities and to highlight the impact of culturally familiar tasks on learners' inferential listening skills. Also, it aims to detect the

challenges teachers and learners face when incorporating culturally familiar tasks in the EFL classroom.

Research Questions

To achieve the aforementioned objectives, the following question is raised:

MQ: How do teachers incorporate culturally familiar tasks to enhance EFL learners' inferential listening skills?

Along with this question, a set of sub-questions emerge as follows:

SQ1: What strategies do teachers use to incorporate culturally familiar tasks for inferential listening?

SQ2: How effective are these strategies in enhancing students' inferential listening skills?

SQ3: How do culturally familiar tasks impact students' overall engagement and comprehension in listening activities?

SQ4: What challenges do teachers face in using these tasks and what difficulties students encounter while listening?

Research Hypothesis

Since the study follows a qualitative case study design, it does not necessarily need a hypothesis in the same way that a quantitative research does. However, a guiding assumption rather than a testable hypothesis needs to be used in this dissertation to frame expectations, clarify the direction of the inquiry, and strengthen the research questions. Accordingly, the following assumption is posed as a “guiding assumption”:

- To enhance learners' inferential listening skills, teachers incorporate culturally familiar tasks using certain strategies that rely on activating their prior knowledge and promoting their engagement.

Rationale of the Study

The importance of listening comprehension in EFL education has gained significant attention in recent years, especially the development of inferential listening skills which is the ability to go beyond literal understanding and interpret implied meaning, intentions, and connections (Vandergrift & Goh, 2012). Despite this, many EFL learners continue to struggle with making inferences during listening activities, which negatively affects their overall language proficiency and communicative competence.

In this essence, the research highlights the role of cultural familiarity in improving language comprehension. When learners engage with content that reflects their own cultural backgrounds, they are more likely to activate prior knowledge and make meaningful connections. However, EFL instructions in non-English speaking countries' classrooms are often dependent on materials that may not align with learners' daily experiences. This gap can hinder their listening comprehension and limit their ability to think critically or understand contextually nuanced information.

Significance of the Study

This research contributes to the field of EFL by highlighting the importance of integrating cultural familiarity into language instruction. It offers valuable perspectives for teachers, curriculum designers, and policymakers on how culturally responsive teaching practices can enhance inferential listening skills. The findings may also inform teacher training programs and encourage a more localized approach to EFL pedagogy in Algeria and similar contexts.

Structure of the Dissertation

The dissertation is structured into two main parts, a theoretical framework and a practical one. The General Introduction outlines the study's background, problem statement, objectives, research questions, and significance. Part One comprises two chapters: Chapter One explores inferential listening skills in an EFL context, covering definitions, cognitive

processes, challenges, and teaching approaches, while Chapter Two examines cultural familiarity in EFL teaching, including task types, teacher strategies, and implementation challenges. Part Two focuses on methodology and findings: Chapter Three details the qualitative research design, data collection tools (observations, interviews, focus groups), and analysis procedures, and Chapter Four presents the findings, discussion of teacher strategies, student impacts, and challenges. The General Conclusion summarizes key insights, limitations, pedagogical implications, and recommendations for future research. Appendices include observation checklists, interview questions, and focus group prompts.

Definition of Key Terms/Variables

- **Culturally Familiar Tasks:** Listening tasks that include content related to learners' cultural experiences, norms, values, or environment.
- **Inferential Listening Skills:** The ability to understand implied meanings, draw conclusions, and make logical inferences based on spoken input.
- **EFL (English as a Foreign Language):** The teaching and learning of English in a non-English-speaking country.
- **Listening Comprehension:** The process of understanding, interpreting, and making meaning from spoken language.

Chapter one

Chapter One: Inferential Listening Skills in EFL Settings

Introduction

According to Field (2009), listening is a vital skill that has a direct impact on the classroom context in general and the learners in particular and has a great significance in foreign language classroom. Listening is crucial because it has an ability to afford the learners with different input (Rost in Jack, 2002). From the previous explanation, it is clear that the student who has information from listening is able to prepare himself in advance to read something. The student can acquire knowledge through listening and understanding. Listening is now one of the most required skills to learn a foreign language because it is necessary to know what someone is saying in order to give the appropriate response to the conversation. It concludes that listening is very essential and indispensable in daily life. However, some teachers do not consider listening as a skill just because they practice it through teaching (Gilakjani, 2011).

1.1. Definition and Importance of Inferential Listening in EFL

1.1.1. Listening Definitions

Listening is the most important skill that enables an effective human communication. Therefore, listening as a term has been defined by many researchers and scholars. Starting by Chastain (1971) who had defined the objective of listening comprehension as the ability to understand the native speech at normal speed in different situations Morley (1972) defined it as including not only basic auditory discrimination and aural grammar, but also reauditorizing, extracting vital information, remembering it, and relating it to everything that involves processing or mediating between sound and construction of meaning. Postovsky (1975, p.19) said, "Listening ranges in meaning from sound discrimination to aural comprehension (i.e., actual understanding of the spoken language)." Brown and Yule (1983), on the other hand, explained listening as follows: "Listening comprehension could mean that a person understands what he has heard. However, in EFL teaching, it is often taken to mean that the listener can

repeat the text, even though the listener may reproduce the sound without real comprehension. “If the learners could actually learn the text as they heard it, they would probably be said to have understood it” (p. 58). In this chapter the main focus is on the inferential listening which is the ability of go beyond the literal meaning in the spoken input, this by some intricate mental processes such as activating the prior knowledge, using clues in order to understand implied meanings, speaker intentions, or conclusions not clearly stated by the speaker (Vandergrift, 2007).

1.1.2. Importance of Inferential listening in EFL

Some studies and research suggested that to learn any new language, listening is the primary skill that the learner must master and that promoting listening comprehension leads to gaining other language skills, consequently resulting in acquisition of the target language (L2) (Richards, 2008). It is reasonable that the person cannot provide a clear and understandable feedback unless they comprehend the whole conversation perfectly. Therefore, listening is the most used skill among the four skills (Scarcella & Oxford, 1992). It is a central means that allows receiving the ideas and the information that are given (Devine, 1982).

According to Rubin (1995), “For second language/foreign language learners, listening is the skill that makes the heaviest processing demands because learners must store information in short term memory at the same time as they are working to understand the information” (p. 8). Rost (1991) summarized the importance of listening in second language learning which listening is a vital skill because it provides clear input for learners. Without understanding input at the right level, any learning simply cannot begin, added that the authentic spoken language presents a challenge for the learner to comprehend the language as native speakers actually use it. And Listening activities provide teachers with a means for drawing learners’ attention to new forms (vocabulary, grammar, new interaction patterns) in the language. For that reason listening is significant in EFL classrooms. In specific, inferential listening is an essential skill should be

taken in consideration especially when it comes to English as a foreign Language (EFL) learning because helps learners grasp the vague meanings, understand speakers' intentions, and obtain a fruitful comprehension of authentic spoken texts (Vandergrift, 2004)

1.2. Types of Inferential Listening Skills

There are different types of listening. Yet the focus here is mainly on inferential listening as it empowers EFL learners to comprehend real-life spoken discourse. Inferential listening, in this regard, is deriving the implicit meaning by interpreting context, tone, and background knowledge (Rost 2011; Goh 2000). Inferential listening is divided into many types including predictive, evaluative, bridging, and elaborative inferences; all of which provide the learners a deeper listening comprehension (Singer, 1994; McKoon & Ratcliff, 1992).

1.2.1. Predictive Inference

This type of inference means that the learner (listener), when listening to a conversation and predicting what will happen in next, depends on the given information or the details. For example, if someone says, "He put on his coat and picked up his umbrella," from this example everyone will predict that this person will go outside to play in the rain (McKoon & Ratcliff, 1992).

1.2.2. Elaborative Inference (Forward Inferences)

This is when the learner provides and adds information to the given situation, whether it is a text or a spoken input, in order to promote and enrich the comprehension. For example, "she opened the fridge and frowned", immediately leads the learner to infer that maybe the food she wanted is not there (Kintsch, 1998).

1.2.4. Bridging Inference (Logical)

This inference happens when the learner makes a connection between the parts of a text or a dialogue to maintain coherence and a logical understanding to the given situation, For

example, understanding that "Mary poured the water on the bonfire. The fire went out." This suggests that the water extinguished the fire because it is a logical fact (Singer, 1994).

1.2.5. Evaluative Inference

This type of inference helps learners to make judgments about texts, dialogues, events, settings, or actions to connect facts or predict events by assessing author emotions, state, characteristic, or attitude (Graesser, Singer, & Trabasso, 1994). This provides learners with profound comprehension.

1.3. Cognitive and Metacognitive Processes in Inferential Listening

Cognitive and metacognitive are terms that go interchangeably. Cognitive refers to the mental process that is involved in acquiring, processing, storing, and using information. This intricate process needs some skills such as perception, memory, and comprehension (Anderson, 2010). This process is a mental reaction the learners use to get a deeper understanding, learning, and restore information. This process has a highly significance which includes prediction, summarizing a text, guessing explicit meaning, and drill.

Metacognitive processes, on the other hand, refer to higher-order thinking skills that learners use while listening to facilitate comprehension (Flavell, 1979). Inferential listening is the most complicated skill that learners have challenges and problems with, since it deals with cognitive and metacognitive processes. These processes are fundamental in providing learners with a clear and deep understanding of the meaning that is unclear in the spoken input.

“Cognitive strategies are specific learning procedures that learners use in tasks to better acquire, store, and use information” (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990, p. 44). While metacognitive process refers to the highly thinking skill which helps learners planning for their learning, monitoring the abilities of comprehension and acquisition, and finally, assess them for an effective learning. ***“Metacognitive strategies involve planning, monitoring, and evaluating the learning process” (Anderson, 2002, p. 2.***

1.3.1. The Influence of Schemata Theory in Listening Comprehension

Schema theory has had a substantial influence in the listening comprehension. It is mental framework, prior knowledge, Or the background that the individual uses for obtain better understanding and simplify the meaning of the given information, bridge gaps, and draw conclusions. This theory plays a crucial role in listening comprehension through aiding the listener comprehend the incoming auditory information based on their prior knowledge and experiences. When learners initiate their schemata while listening, they are going to predict meaning, make relationships with the parts of the auditory information, fill in gaps, and infer the information that may not state clearly. ***"Schemata allows listeners to make inferences and predictions, facilitating comprehension especially when input is unclear or incomplete"*** (Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983, p. 557).

1.4. Challenges in Developing Inferential Listening Skills

Since inferential listening skills are intricate processes, some researchers have detected some challenges that hinder the developing of these skills and how they negatively affect learners' comprehension. For example, when learners have a limited linguistic proficiency such as vocabulary and grammatical knowledge, it influences them in receiving the auditory information more appropriately and hinders making inference (Guo, 2015). The second challenge which is stated by Ueda (2021) is the insufficient background knowledge. This can directly impact the learner in making inference and analyzing the spoken input. Background knowledge is like a weapon for learners that help in empowering them to listen carefully and make a connection between ideas. For that reason, general culture and prior knowledge are important in developing inferential listening skills. Another challenge which is suggested by Nasrudin et al) suggests that learners are not getting plenty training strategies deductively such as the speaker intent, tone, objectives and identifying cues to listen. Those strategies are highly required to avoid any listening problems.

1.5. Teaching Approaches to Enhance Inferential Listening in EFL

Classrooms

In the light of learning English as a second language (ESL), developing inferential listening skills is the crucial step that learners should master. This allows them to get the competence of going beyond the explicit meaning and make a connection by activating their prior knowledge and background for a total comprehension (Field, 2008). There are many suggested teaching approaches that have contributed in enhancing the inferential listening in EFL classrooms. Examples include: Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Schema Theory-Based Instruction, task-based teaching approach and top-down listening approach

1.5.1. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

Communicative language teaching approach emerged in the 1970s as a different approach than the traditional methods such as the Grammar-Translation and Audio-Lingual methods. Unlike those methods that have limited results in language teaching such as memorizing words and drills, Communicative language teaching approach depended more on communication. It encourages learners to be involved in a real life communication to implied meanings and making inferences by listening to podcasts and interviews. The goal of this approach is to make learners exposed to natural language use that demands inferencing skills (Richards, 2006).

1.5.2. Schema Theory-Based Instruction

This approach encourages learners to activate their prior knowledge and cultural backgrounds by creating their own schema. The purpose is to make inference and comprehend the literal meanings of the spoken input to maintain comprehension. Teachers often use this approach to make learners use their own knowledge or activate learners' schemata before listening (Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983).

1.5.3. Task -Based Language Teaching (TBLT)

This approach has emerged in the early 1980s as a response to the teaching language traditional methods. It emphasizes mainly the use of tasks that have real life content in order to involve learners in. The aim is to promote learners' communication proficiency and prepare them to be capable of solving problems and be familiar with the language that is currently used in the world, better than just memorizing huge lists of vocabulary like the traditional methods (Ellis, 2003; Nunan, 2004). Such as communicative language teaching (CLT), grammar-translation method (GTM), Audiolingual method (ALM), and the direct method.

Conclusion

Listening skills are one of the obstacles that prevent learners from making progress in learning a foreign language. Consequently, this makes them unable to receive sufficient understanding of information. This is due to the lack of efficiency and sufficient training on these skills. These skills are not limited just to listening, but rather they are linking information and creating a realistic connection between events and information and the whole parts of the spoken input. This is based on inferential listening, which means that the learners use their previous information, knowledge and experience, which is very important for useful and fruitful listening.

Chapter two

Chapter Two: Cultural Familiarity in EFL Teaching

Introduction

Learning English as a second language needs sufficient training and equipment. For that reason, listening skills are very important to get a fruitful comprehension. When learners activate their prior knowledge as well as their cultural background, this leads them to analyze the auditory input based on what they dealt with in the past and to solve problems according to their own experiments. Cultural familiarity is very momentous for EFL learners because it enables them to promote their inferential listening skills and gain a full comprehension by anticipating, analyzing, and making differences between their cultures and the others. This helps them making familiarity with the other cultures in the world. Cultural familiarity has notable outcomes in enriching listening comprehension and more importantly learners' inferential listening skills.

2.1. An Overview of Task-Based Language Teaching

There are many teaching approaches that contributed to language teaching. One of them is Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) that emerged in the early 1980s as a substitute to the traditional teaching language methods. Due to its positive impact in teaching, it is now an important instructional framework which has a great significance especially when it comes to second language acquisition. It emphasizes on meaning over form, aiming to foster learners' communication abilities and involve the integration of real- world content to learn how to solve problems and build learners' fluency and confidence through engagement in purposeful human communication (Willis & Willis, 2007).

Some recent studies have elucidated that Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) has three main characteristics which concern the classroom. The first characteristic is that Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) aligns with a learner-centered educational philosophy (Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Ellis, 2003; Nunan, 2005). Second, Task-Based Language

Teaching (TBLT) is designed for certain constituents such as goal, procedure, and specific outcome (Skehan, 1998; Murphy, 2003; Nunan, 2004). The last characteristic is that Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) does not give much importance to linguistic forms compared to content-oriented meaningful activities (Beglar & Hunt, 2002; Carless, 2002; Littlewood, 2004).

2.2. Types and Role of Culturally Familiar Tasks in Language Comprehension

In second or foreign language learning, learners are in a huge need for purposeful comprehension. Culturally familiar tasks could meet the students' needs especially listening and reading in collaboration with schemata theory of activating the learners' culturally background, and daily life experiences to support meaning-making processes (Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983). There are types of culturally familiar tasks that are used in EFL classrooms. These different types are designed to enhance learners' inferential listening skill which is very important, to draw clear feedback. Below are some of the most used culturally familiar tasks.

2.2.1. Types of Culturally Familiar Tasks

2.2.1.1. Narrative Tasks Based on Local Folklore or Stories. It is the integration of traditional tales, songs, and legends that are known to the learners. In these kinds of tasks, learners are required to write about a local event or a holiday in order to gain a cultural background and reduces cognitive load (Kramsch, 1993).

2.2.1.2. Situational Role-Plays Reflecting Daily Life. This kind of tasks works to enhance and intensify learners' culturally familiar contexts. For example, a teacher organizes a visit to cultural landmarks or markets to his/her learners in order to be surrounded by cultural contexts and acquire vocabulary and behaviors based on their real-life experiences (Vygotsky, 1978).

2.2.1.3. Media-Based Tasks with Local Context. Using media as a means to incorporate cultural aspects such as local news reports, songs, or radio shows in the target language that reflects learners' culture enhances relevance and motivation (Kramsch, 1993).

2.2.1.4. Visual and Graphic Tasks. In this type, using pictures and figures related to local customs, and cultural aspects like places and food is very crucial to enable learners to make a connection between the visual input and the linguistic structures (Paivio, 1991).

2.2.1.5. Problem-Solving or Decision-Making Tasks with Local Relevance. Dealing with problems is a usual thing that happens in daily life, but the ways of solving them are different from one to another based on the person's cultural background. For example, ethical dilemmas or community issues help promoting critical thinking and how to control the situations and come up with solutions (Gay, 2010; Brookfield, 2012).

2.2.2. The Role of Culturally Familiar Tasks in Comprehension

The integration of culturally familiar tasks have proved great results in enhancing language comprehension by providing learners with context that aligns with their background, prior knowledge, and their daily life experiences. As a result, learners become able to understand the spoken input, make inferences based on their cultural background, and decode meanings more efficiently. This familiarity reduces cognitive load and make learners focus more on the linguistic forms (Anderson & Lynch, 1988; Vandergrift, 2007). Most importantly, culturally familiar tasks enhance listening comprehension and inferential skills by making learners activate their schema which is to use their prior knowledge to infer the meaning and maintain the comprehension (Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983; Richards, 2005).

2.2.3. Culturally Familiar vs. Culturally Responsive Tasks

Culturally familiar and culturally responsive tasks are interchangeable terms but distinct concepts in education, especially when it comes to language learning contexts:

2.4.3.1. Culturally Familiar Tasks. Culturally familiar tasks are those activities that include context, references that are taken from the learners' culture and it is easy for them to recognize them and react with because it is generated from their cultural background and align with their prior experiences and previous knowledge. Those tasks have a positive impact in enriching learners' listening comprehension and help them to engage deeply with the learning materials (Tomlinson, 2013).

2.4.3.2. Culturally Responsive Tasks. Those tasks are not limited only to promoting familiarity to the learners but also emphasize valuing and integrating the diversity of learners' cultural backgrounds into the learning process and those tasks are part of a broader pedagogical approach that believes in the fair integration of the learners' identities and spared the equity (Gay, 2018).

2.5. Teachers' Strategies for Incorporating Culturally Familiar Tasks in EFL Listening Development

In the context of EFL teaching and learning, teachers are the main element in this process because they recognize the true value of incorporating culturally familiar tasks into EFL classrooms to enhance learners' inferential listening skills. Teachers select the appropriate tasks or activities that align with the learners' cultural backgrounds, experiences, and prior knowledge. This leads to the activation of learners' schema to facilitate listening comprehension (Anderson & Lynch, 2003; Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016). Here are some strategies that the teachers involve into EFL classrooms to reach the ultimate goal of developing learners' inferential listening skills.

2.3.1. The Use of Contextualized Listening Materials

The most common strategies that teachers use in the classrooms is selecting and adapting the fitting listening materials that learners are familiar with and reflect their cultural backgrounds such as songs, texts, and contexts. (Alptekin, 2006).

2.3.2. Pre-Listening Activities Involving Cultural Reflection

In this strategy, teachers start the listening text with discussions or brainstorming and ask about the learners' experiences and their culture to make them infer the meaning effectively by making logical connection based on their cultural perspective and prior knowledge (Nunan, 1999), enabling them a deep engagement with these activities.

2.3.3. Integration of Local Stories and Folktales

EFL teachers often incorporate traditional stories, folktales, and legends as available materials by translating them into the target language (English). This provides learners with both linguistic input and cultural familiarity, and allows them to focus on inference and comprehension rather than decoding unfamiliar cultural concepts (Kramsch, 1993).

2.3.4. Use of Visual and Multimedia Aids

In order to stimulate culturally familiar content, teachers use visuals such as photos, videos, or culturally resonant illustrations. These help learners to contextualize the listening input and make abstract or unfamiliar English expressions more comprehensible (Gilakjani, 2011).

2.4. Challenges and Considerations in Implementing Culturally Familiar Tasks

Despite the significance of incorporating culturally familiar tasks and the great pedagogical benefits they offer, there are some constraints that teachers face. First, teachers must navigate all the pedagogical and institutional considerations when attempting to implement culturally familiar approaches in the classroom. The most challenge teachers face is the lack of authentic culturally relevant materials that reflect learners' cultural backgrounds that urge them to adapt materials or create their own. This takes a long time and requires a high level of cultural sensitivity and creativity (McKay, 2003). Another challenge is teachers' cultural competence and training. For a successful implementation of culturally familiar tasks, teachers

must have cultural awareness and pedagogical skills to incorporate local content effectively. Regardless of teachers' training programs, they are still not competent to recognize and implement culturally responsive teaching strategies (Gay, 2010).

The next challenge that teachers face is classroom diversity. Being the teachers in a diverse cultural background within a single classroom make teachers unable to identify what is culturally familiar to the learners and result in them struggling to select materials that resonate equally with all learners because of the diversity of the learners' cultural backgrounds (Banks, 2008).

Regardless of these challenges, careful planning, reflective practice, and supportive policies can facilitate the effective integration of culturally familiar tasks. Addressing these considerations is critical for maximizing the benefits of culturally familiar listening instruction.

Conclusion

The integration of culturally familiar tasks has a significant role in the EFL classroom in enhancing learners' listening comprehension. It contributes in developing the most intricate skills which are the inferential listening skills by the strategies that the teachers incorporate into their classes and the challenges that they face. However, this cannot hinder the continuity of this teaching and learning process.

Chapter Three

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

Introduction

This chapter outlines the research methodology adopted in this study in order to investigate the strategies used by middle school EFL teachers in incorporating culturally familiar tasks to enhance learners' inferential listening skills. It explains the research design, population, sampling techniques, and the data collection methods employed. The aim of the chapter is to provide a clear and systematic explanation of how the procedures were conducted in order to ensure reliability, validity, and related relevance.

3.1. Research Design and Approach

This study employed a qualitative research design with an exploratory approach, aiming to gain in-depth insights into the instructional practices of EFL teachers. The qualitative nature of the study allowed for the exploration of contextual nuances and teacher perceptions, while the exploratory approach was chosen to uncover strategies that may not have been extensively documented in the existing literature. This design is particularly suitable for understanding how culturally familiar tasks are selected, adapted, and implemented to promote inferential listening.

3.2. Population and Sampling

The target population of the study contained middle school EFL teachers and learners in Berraiane, Ghardaia. A purposive sampling technique was used to select five EFL teachers based on their willingness to participate and their experience in teaching listening comprehension. These teachers were selected from three different middle schools within the region to ensure variability in teaching styles and classroom contexts. This procedure took place in the targeted middle schools of Oulad Taher Ahmed Ben Babia, Abou El Yakadan, Metalag Metalag in Baraiane, Ghardaia province. The student participants were the learners in the observed teachers' classrooms, providing natural settings for data collection.

Independent variable	Dependent variable
Teachers' strategies in incorporating culturally familiar tasks	EFL learners' inferential listening skills

Table 01: Research Variables (prepared by the researcher)

3.3. Data Collection Methods

To gather deep comprehensive data, the study employed significant primary qualitative data collection methods such as classroom observation, task analysis, teachers' interview, and students' focus group discussions to uncover patterns in teachers' strategies and students' responses related to culturally familiar tasks used for inferential listening development.

3.3.1. Classroom Observations

This method was employed in this study in order to explore how teachers implement culturally familiar tasks during listening lessons. Each teacher was observed during three sessions at least, with emphasis on the structure of the lesson, the type of tasks used, and learners' engagement during inferential listening activities. Observation checklists and field notes were used to document instructional practices, learners' responses, and interactions. The teachers in the sequence of "Me and the scientific world" they used some activities which are complete the biographies of local scientists and inventors, learners recognized those personalities because they were familiar to them so they engaged in the task.

3.3.2. Task Analysis

Task analysis was carried out to collect and examine examples of culturally familiar tasks used to support inferential listening. Listening activities and accompanying materials were analyzed in terms of content relevance, cultural familiarity, and cognitive demands. This method allowed the researcher to identify recurring themes and strategies in task design, as well as the extent to which tasks align with the learners' sociocultural backgrounds. The collected data exposed several key strategies that were integrated by EFL teachers to embed cultural familiarity in listening lessons that were analyzed.

3.3.3. Teachers' Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with five participating EFL teachers from three middle schools of Oulad Taher Ahmed Ben Babia, Metalagu Metalague, Abou Al Yakadan at Berraiane, Ghardaia province to obtain deeper insights into their strategies, experiences, and perspectives on incorporating culturally familiar tasks. These interviews allowed for open-ended responses, enabling teachers to elaborate on their decision-making processes, perceived benefits, and challenges faced when designing and implementing such tasks. The interviews were written and verbally recorded for analysis. By using a semi-structured format, the study was able to maintain consistency across all interviews while still encouraging rich, descriptive, and authentic responses, which were essential for thematic analysis and for addressing the study's research questions meaningfully. The interviews were not conducted face to face because the teachers declared that they cannot answer these questions in one meeting so this procedure did not take the same as usual interviews. For that reason, the interview forms were distributed on teachers in the same day. After while returned to ask the teachers the last questions which were open ended in person and the answers were recorded.

3.3.4. Students' Focus Groups

To evaluate the impact of culturally familiar tasks on learners' inferential listening skills, a focus group discussion was held with three learners from each observed classroom. The discussion was guided by prompts related to task enjoyment, difficulty, familiarity, and how the tasks helped them understand implicit information. Students' responses provided valuable learners' perspectives on the relevance and effectiveness of the tasks used. In these groups, the percentage of females was higher than that of males. Female students were 10, the males were 05. The learners were allowed to speak in Arabic since their level in English was not that good, learners use both English and Arabic in order to ensure that they are EFL learners.

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Males	05	33.33%
Females	10	66.67%

Table 02: Students' Gender (prepared by the researcher)

3.4. Data Analysis Procedures

The process of analyzing the collected data in this study followed a qualitative thematic analysis approach, which allowed for the identification of patterns, themes, and meanings related to the incorporation of culturally familiar tasks and their influence on EFL learners' inferential listening skills. The analysis was conducted systematically across the four data collection tools: classroom observations, task analysis, teachers' interviews, and the students' focus group.

3.4.1. Transcription and Data Preparation

All qualitative data were collected from the teachers' interviews and the students' focus groups and were transcribed exactly to ensure accuracy and preserve the authenticity of participants' voices. Field notes from classroom observations and copies of the listening tasks used by teachers were also organized and digitized for ease of analysis.

3.4.2. Coding and Categorization

The next step involved open coding, during which meaningful units of information such as teachers' comments, observed behaviors, or learners' statements were highlighted and labeled. These codes were then grouped into categories that reflected common themes such as teachers' instructional strategies, use of culturally familiar content, students' engagement and inference-making, task relevance and cognitive demand, and observed challenges and limitations.

3.4.3. Thematic Analysis

This step is for identifying variables, analyzing the data, and reporting patterns within data. It is especially useful for exploring participants' perspectives, experiences, or behaviors.

3.5. Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was gained from relevant educational authorities prior to data collection. All participants were informed about the purpose of the study and their right to withdraw at any time. Anonymity and confidentiality were ensured throughout the research process. All data were stored securely and used solely for academic purposes.

Conclusion

This chapter detailed the methodological framework of the study, including the research design, sampling methods, data collection tools, and analysis procedures. The use of multiple qualitative tools such as observations, task analysis, interviews, and a student focus group provided a deep understanding of how culturally familiar tasks are integrated into EFL classrooms and how is their impact on inferential skills developing. The following chapter will present the findings that emerged from this methodology.

Chapter four

Chapter Four: Findings and Discussion

Introduction

This chapter exposed the findings of the data gathered by conducted classroom observations by attending at least three sessions and observing the strategies that the teachers used while teaching listening texts or listening activities. It was also collected through interviews with both teachers and learners at the middle schools by asking some questions seeking to know their impressions about the integration of culturally familiar tasks. This demonstrated how EFL teachers integrate these culturally familiar tasks into their classrooms and the extent to which these strategies can enhance learners' inferential listening skills and listening comprehension. Furthermore, this chapter highlights the challenges that are faced by both teachers and learners that may hinder their learning and teaching process.

4.1. Overview of Collected Data

The data were collected over two weeks from three middle schools which are in Berraiane, Ghardaia province. The study employed three main tools to collect data which include first classroom observations. Three sessions were observed focusing on teacher's strategies in incorporating culturally familiar tasks, and observing learners' engagement through the listening activities while assessing the classroom atmosphere. It also an analysis of tasks which are activities that EFL teachers used in their listening lessons. Those activities were collected and analyzed for cultural relevance and cognitive demands.

In this study, teachers' interviews were included in order to get a deeper understanding about their strategies, experiences, and challenges. The interviews were conducted with five EFL teachers from the aforementioned three middle schools. For the learners, the study included a focus group to know about their impressions of the tasks and how they influenced their comprehension.

Tools	Purpose	Participants	Period
Classroom Observation	To observe teachers' strategies in incorporating culturally familiar tasks	5 EFL Teachers	Two weeks
Task Analysis	To collect and analyze examples of culturally familiar tasks	Tasks, Activities	After tasks
Teacher Interviews	To understand their strategies, perspectives, and thoughts	5 EFL Teachers	After observations
Students' Focus Groups	To assess learners' engagement and comprehension through tasks	03 Students From each class from the three middle schools	After tasks

Table.3: Data Collection Methods (prepared by the researcher)

4.2. Analysis of Teachers' Strategies for Incorporating Culturally Familiar Tasks

The collected data exposed several common key strategies that were integrated by the EFL teachers (A), (B), (C), (D), (E) in the three middle schools to embed cultural familiarity in listening lessons. Starting by Teacher (A) who demonstrated improvement in incorporating culturally familiar content in the observed session by activating learners' prior knowledge to help them comprehend the tasks, Teacher (A) guided the learners to identify key details and provided them with clear feedback about the tasks to promote their understanding. To reinforce learning, Teacher (A) had implemented follow-up tasks. However, Teacher (A) did not adjust tasks based on learners' culture due to the lack of relevance, and short time of the session. More importantly, Teacher (A) did not have the competence of adapting such tasks and needed training on acquiring in integrating familiar tasks' strategies.

Teacher (B) has also integrated culturally familiar content, adjusted tasks, activated prior knowledge, and boosted the learners to make inferences. Teacher (B) provided the learners with clear feedback and offered instructions to promote their inferential comprehension. Teacher (B) did conduct follow-up tasks, but did not guide the learners in identifying key details.

Teacher (C) and (D) was successful in including culturally familiar content, adjusting tasks that were derived from learners' culture, guiding learners in identifying key details about the task, and encouraging them to make inference. Teacher (C) did not, however, activate learners' prior knowledge, provide them with clear instructions, or conduct follow up tasks.

The teacher has also provided learners with clear feedback and had activated their prior knowledge to get deeper understanding. Yet, they failed to provide clear instructions or conduct follow-up tasks due to the lack of competence.

Teacher (E) included culturally familiar content in the listening session, aptly adjust tasks for the learners that align with them and have familiarity with. During the session, Teacher E activated learners' prior knowledge, encouraged them to make inference to the meanings, helped them in identifying key details about the tasks, and provide learners with clear feedback. However, Teacher (E) did not provide clear instructions or conduct follow-up tasks.

Most teachers included culturally familiar content in their sessions and adjusted tasks based on students' understanding and their culture, but some weaknesses were observed. These includes failure in providing learners with clear instructions as in the case of Teachers (A, C, E) and conducting follow-up tasks as Teachers (A, C, D, E) did, and the inconsistency of inference encouragement based on cultural familiarity like Teacher A. These strategies appeared to not only support comprehension but also foster a stronger connection between the learners and the lesson content.

4.2.1. Thematic Interpretation of Classroom Observation Sessions

4.3.1.1. Inclusion of Culturally Familiar Content. All the observed teachers (A),(E) included culturally familiar content in their listening lessons. They used local references that learners could relate to. This strategy enhanced engagement and provided meaningful contexts. Including familiar content helps learners activate prior knowledge and join with the material, which aligns with schema theory. However, the degree of cultural integration varied. For example, Teacher A lacked depth in adaptation due to time and training constraints. This shows the need for professional development in culturally responsive pedagogy.

4.3.1.2. Activation of Prior Knowledge. Teachers (B), (D), and (E) had effectively activated their learners' prior knowledge through pre-listening discussions. Teacher (C), however, did not this step. Activating schema before a listening task is crucial for inferential listening. It primes learners for deeper understanding and helps bridge cognitive gaps. Teachers who skipped this step found less confidence and engagement from learners, highlighting the need to regulate this practice.

4.3.1.3. Guidance in Identifying Key Details. Teachers (C), (D), and E guided their students to focus mainly on key details. Teachers (A) and (B) did not consistently emphasize this. This skill is dynamic for make inference. When learners can identify significant information, they're going to make evaluative and bridging inferences. Teachers need training to scaffold these instants during listening tasks.

4.3.1.4. Encouragement of Inference-Making. Teachers (B), (C), (D), and (E) encouraged the learners to inference-making using cultural clues. Teacher (A) was less consistent. Encouraging learners to infer meaning fosters critical thinking and deepens comprehension. Lack of this practice reflects either insufficient training or low confidence in handling implicit meaning-based instruction.

4.3.1. 5. Providing of Clear Instructions and Feedback. Teachers (A), (C), (E) did not to provide clear instructions, only Teachers (B) and (D) regularly offered clear feedback during tasks. Clear task instructions and feedback are essential for guiding learners through inferential listening processes. This inconsistency revealed a gap in pedagogical skills and highlights an area for professional development.

4.3.1. 6. Use of Follow-Up Tasks. Only teacher (B) had conduct follow-up tasks. The rest either skipped them or lacked time. Follow-up tasks allow learners to consolidate skills and demonstrate comprehension. The lack of these tasks limits the improvement of inferential listening and suggests that time or training constraints hinder task design.

4.3.1.7. Learners' Engagement and Confidence. Learners' engagements were generally higher when tasks were culturally familiar. Confidence varied, with some students hesitant due to vocabulary or anxiety. Students are more engaged when content resonates with them. However, lack of vocabulary and speaking anxiety weaken confidence. Teachers must balance cultural familiarity with vocabulary support and create a safe, low-stress environment.

Question Topic	Common Themes in Responses
Adjusting tasks	Most adjust tasks to learners' cultural background and simplify content
Selection of materials	Preference for local stories, daily life contexts, and traditional customs
Student reaction	Learners more engaged and confident with familiar content
Observed improvement	Inference and comprehension increased with familiar themes

Question Topic	Common Themes in Responses
Recommendations for others	Most would recommend culturally familiar tasks and advocate for training

Table.4: Common Themes in Responses of Teachers' Interview (prepared by the researcher)

4.3. Impact of Culturally Familiar Tasks on Students' Inferential Listening Skills

The analysis of classroom observations and students' focus group questions revealed that learners across the three middle schools showed improvement in inferential listening skills when they engaged with culturally familiar contents. The findings highlight the role of prior knowledge, confidence, and engagement in shaping their learning experiences.

Learners in Teacher (A)'s class actively engaged with tasks by participating and taking notes. Their familiarity with the cultural context motivated them to infer meaning, ask questions, and demonstrate improvement. However, some lacked confidence when listening to topics from their own culture, possibly due to gaps in prior knowledge. The focus group responses supported these observations, with students stating that knowing the topic beforehand made tasks easier. They also expressed greater confidence with familiar topics and a desire for other listening activities. Despite their engagement, challenges arose with unfamiliar vocabulary, such as the word "sociology," which some of them found it difficult.

Students in Teacher (B)'s class engaged with the tasks and grew more familiar with the cultural context as the session progressed. They attempted to infer meaning and asked questions for clarification. However, they often missed key details, and their shyness hindered full participation when cultural familiarity was required. The focus group echoed these findings, with one student admitting to feeling nervous about answering. While they acknowledged that

familiar topics boosted their confidence, their struggle with words, like "invention", likely suggested that vocabulary gaps persisted even in familiar contexts.

Learners in Teacher (C)'s class were highly engaged, taking notes and focusing intently on key details, likely because they had prior knowledge of the topic. However, some hesitated to share their ideas when tasks involved cultural familiarity, possibly due to uncertainty about the subject matter. Unlike the other groups, these students did not participate in the focus group, so their perspectives are based solely on classroom observations.

Students in Teacher (D)'s class displayed confidence and motivation when working with culturally familiar content. They inferred meaning, asked clarifying questions, and showed improvement. However, their initial engagement with the task was delayed, and they only focused on key details toward the end of the session. The focus group responses aligned with these observations, as students confirmed that knowing the topic made the task easier. They also expressed a preference for culturally relevant topics and greater confidence when the content was familiar.

Learners in Teacher (E)'s class were actively engaged, asking questions to deepen their understanding before starting tasks. They concentrated on key details and demonstrated development during the session. However, some lacked confidence when inferring meaning from culturally familiar content. The focus group revealed that while students found the tasks easier when they knew the topic, nervousness still affected their responses. Words like "discover" posed challenges, but they appreciated listening to topics from their culture and wanted more such tasks.

4.4. Challenges Faced by Teachers and Students

One of the key challenges teachers face is balancing the curriculum with the local culture. Many EFL textbooks are designed based on foreign cultural content, often from British or American contexts, which can feel disconnected from learners' identities. Teachers often need

to spend extra time adapting these materials, for example by replacing references to Western holidays like Thanksgiving with culturally familiar ones. Teacher (B) noted that Algerian students struggled to relate to British lifestyle examples in the textbooks, necessitating the use of more locally relevant content. Another major challenge is engaging learners at different proficiency and interest levels. According to Teacher (A), students typically fall into three categories those who were highly engaged, those with moderate interest, and those who participate minimally. This diversity makes it difficult to maintain a consistent level of engagement. Additionally, some students default to speak in their mother tongue, Arabic, during tasks, which limits their opportunities to practice English according to Teachers (B) and (D).

Resource and time constraints also hinder teachers' ability to tailor instructions effectively. Because textbooks often do not align with learners' needs, teachers must modify or even create materials from scratch. For instance, Teachers (A) and (D) described the need to print supplementary tasks or write them on the board. Teacher (D) mentioned that third-year textbooks were overloaded and included unfamiliar content, such as references to manga, which had to be omitted.

While adapting content, teachers must also ensure that lesson objectives are still met. This requires careful alignment of adapted materials, such as local stories or biographies, with curriculum goals, as highlighted by Teachers (A) and (C). Furthermore, the use of culturally familiar tasks sometimes disrupts classroom management. Teacher (D) observed that these tasks can excite students, leading to noisy or off-topic conversations in Arabic.

Students, too, encounter several challenges in culturally adapted EFL classrooms. A common issue is unfamiliar vocabulary. Even when the topic is culturally familiar, students may struggle with specific terms such as "sociology," "bachelor," or "discover," as noted in focus group responses. Additionally, nervousness and lack of confidence can hinder

participation. Some students, despite understanding the topic, feel anxious about answering in English. This was particularly noted by Teachers (B) and (E), whose students expressed such concerns during focus group discussions.

Another significant barrier is the overuse of the mother tongue. Students often revert to Arabic to explain or discuss ideas, which limits their exposure to and practice of English as mentioned by Teachers (B) and (D). Moreover, while cultural familiarity can boost engagement, it can also lead to a dependency on prior knowledge. Students sometimes rely too heavily on context to guess meanings, which can result in missed opportunities to learn new vocabulary and grammatical structures. As one focus group participant put it, “We guessed words.”

Challenge	Description
Lack of culturally relevant materials	Teachers had to create/adapt content to reflect learners’ local context
Curriculum rigidity	Textbooks often focused on foreign (Western) content
Learners’ diversity	Cultural and proficiency differences made content selection difficult
Language interference	Students frequently used Arabic, limiting English practice
Time and resources	Teachers lacked time to design new culturally grounded activities

Table.5: Challenges Faced by Teachers (prepared by the researcher)

4.5. Discussion of Findings in Relation to the Literature Review

The literature highlighted the inferential listening as a sophisticated cognitive skill, requiring learners to predict, elaborate, bridge ideas, and make evaluative judgments (Rost, 2011; Goh, 2000). According to (O’Malley & Chamot, 1990; Anderson, 2002) developing these skills depends profoundly on the use of cognitive and metacognitive strategies, such as activating prior knowledge and monitoring comprehension. In practice, Teachers (A), (B), and

E had effectively activated their learners' background knowledge and encouraged them to draw inferences. An approach consistent with the strategies outlined in existing research. However, the classroom practices of Teachers (C) and (D) revealed certain limitations, particularly in the clarity of instructions and the absence of structured follow-up tasks. These gaps point to the need for more robust metacognitive scaffolding to support learners throughout the process.

The observed improvements in learners' inferencing abilities, particularly in classrooms led by Teachers (A) and (B), support previous findings that explicit instruction in comprehension strategies contributes significantly to skill development (Field, 2008). Schema theory (Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983) also highlights how cultural familiarity can reduce cognitive load and facilitate understanding. When tasks are culturally relevant such as role-plays or narratives rooted in familiar contexts, learners are better able to connect new information to what they already know (Kramsch, 1993; Tomlinson, 2013).

Teachers (B), (D), (E). who had incorporated culturally familiar content into their lessons, such as local inventors and places, had noted a marked increase in learners' engagement and confidence. This aligns with the literature appropriately, which suggests that activating learners' existing schemata supports inferencing and largely comprehension. However. The challenges faced by Teachers (C) and (D) indicate that cultural familiarity alone does not guarantee success. Some learners continued to struggle with motivation or felt a lack of connection to the material, emphasizing the need for deeper, more responsive cultural integration (Gay, 2018).

The principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) are often recommended for enhancing real-world communication and inferencing skills (Richards, 2006; Willis & Willis, 2007). Schema-based pre-listening activities are also widely endorsed (Nunan, 1999). Teachers B and E exemplified TBLT by tailoring tasks to their learners' cultural contexts and encouraging collaborative problem-

solving, reflecting the literature's emphasis on meaningful, context-rich communication. However, some missed opportunities were evident. For instance, Teacher (C)'s lessons lacked structured pre-task preparation, and follow-up evaluations were inconsistently applied by Teachers (C), (D), and (E). These shortcomings echo concerns raised by Skehan (1998) and Ellis (2003) about the need for thorough task design and assessment.

Several encounters continue to hinder effective instruction. Learners' difficulties with inferencing and attending to detail particularly in the classrooms of Teachers (A), (C), and (D) highlighted some linguistic and cognitive obstacles (Guo, 2015; Ueda, 2021). Teachers (C), (D) also encountered hindrances in providing clear guidance and adjusting tasks to learners' diverse cultural backgrounds. For example, Teacher (A) missed an opportunity to culturally tailor content, suggesting a gap in training for culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay, 2010; McKay, 2003). The relationship between motivation, engagement, and cultural relevance remains fundamental. While tasks embedded in familiar cultural contexts that integrated by Teachers (B), (E) boosted learner' confidence. Teachers (A), (C), marked motivation varied across classrooms. This variability suggests a need for tasks that are not only culturally relevant but also interactive and explicitly tied to learners' identities, as supported by Gay (2018).

4.6. Interpretation and Synthesis of Results

The study aimed to investigate the strategies employed by middle school EFL teachers in Baraiane, Ghardaia Province to incorporate culturally familiar tasks in order to enhance learners' inferential listening skills. Through classroom observations, teacher interviews, and analysis of student performance, the findings provided valuable visions into how cultural familiarity influences listening comprehension, particularly in making inferences beyond the literal meaning.

The results revealed that when teachers integrated culturally familiar content into their lessons such as references to local traditions, daily life, and community events, the learners

demonstrated advanced levels of engagement and greater progress in making inferences from listening materials. Lessons grounded in unfamiliar cultural contexts, by contrast, often led to narrow comprehension and struggle in drawing deeper meanings. Teachers employed various strategies to achieve this, including pre-listening discussions that activated learners' background knowledge and storytelling based on familiar experiences. These methods consistently facilitated learners' ability to predict, infer, and interpret meaning beyond the literal level.

Interpreting these findings suggests that culturally familiar content serves as an essential scaffold that supports inferential listening. When learners recognize elements derived from their own local cultural background in the listening material, they are better equipped to use context signs, predict outcomes, and understand indirect meanings. Teachers who made conscious efforts to bridge new language input with learners' existing knowledge enhanced not only basic comprehension but also critical thinking skills related to listening. This underscores the importance of culturally responsive pedagogy in language classrooms, particularly in settings where students' exposure to foreign cultures and diverse listening materials may be limited.

When compared to previous research, the findings of this study are consistent with the work of Carrell and Eisterhold (1983) and Yildirim (2013), who emphasized the crucial role of background knowledge in comprehension processes. Moreover, the results support Kramsch's (1993) assertion that language learning and cultural context are inseparable. While much of the prior literature has focused on reading comprehension, this study extends those conclusions into the domain of listening, highlighting the unique benefits of cultural familiarity for inferential listening skills in particular, A dimension that remains underrepresented in EFL research.

Conclusion

This chapter presented and discussed the findings related to the use of culturally familiar tasks in developing EFL learners' inferential listening skills. The results indicated that such

tasks significantly contribute to deeper comprehension and learner motivation. However, several barriers need to be addressed for these practices to be more widely and effectively implemented. The General Conclusion will offer a summary of the study, highlight pedagogical implications, and suggest directions for future research.

General Conclusion

The main objective of this study was to investigate how middle school EFL teachers incorporate culturally familiar tasks into their lessons and activities and how such tasks influence learners in developing their inferential comprehension. The study adopted two main approaches which are the qualitative and exploratory approaches that included classroom

observations, task analysis, teacher interviews, and student focus groups to shed light on both the pedagogical practices and perceptions surrounding culturally responsive instruction in the context of English language listening comprehension.

The research findings exposed that EFL teachers who actively use culturally familiar content such as local customs and everyday life experiences could create more engaging and meaningful learning environment. These tasks allow learners to connect the lessons with their existing knowledge, which significantly supports the development of inferential listening skills. Learners are now able to infer the implied meanings, draw conclusions, and engage more confidently with listening tasks when the content rings with their cultural background.

The research highlighted that while teachers recognize the importance of culturally familiar tasks, they often face challenges such as limited time, lack of materials, and rigid curriculum constraints. Despite these obstacles, teachers demonstrated creativity and adaptability in their efforts to make listening tasks more relevant and accessible. Learners reacted positively to these efforts, showing increased motivation and comprehension when faced with culturally meaningful content.

The study also emphasizes the importance of culturally responsive pedagogy in language education. It highlights the value of supporting instructional materials with learners' cultural contexts to provide deeper comprehension and promote critical listening skills. It also offers practical visions for teachers, curriculum developers, and policymakers aiming to enhance EFL listening instruction in culturally diverse settings.

In conclusion, the integration of culturally familiar tasks is not just a pedagogical choice, it is an essential strategy for enabling learners to think critically, infer meaning effectively, and engage fully with the English language. By admitting and valuing learners' cultural backgrounds, educators can create more inclusive and effective learning environments that support both linguistic and cognitive development.

Summary of Findings

The findings exposed that teachers use a multiplicity of strategies, such as selecting relevant themes from learners' everyday lives, incorporating local customs and traditions, and adapting listening materials to align with the learners' cultural backgrounds. These strategies made the listening tasks more relevant and engaging for the learners, which in turn supported their ability to infer meaning beyond what is explicitly stated. Learners were observed to perform better in inference-based tasks when the content was familiar, as they were able to rely on their prior knowledge to interpret implied ideas. Teachers also shared a strong belief in the importance of culturally relevant content, as it increases students' motivation, comprehension, and classroom participation.

Limitations of the Study

Despite its contributions, this study faced numerous limitations. Firstly, the sample was limited to a small group of EFL teachers and learners in the Berraiane area of Ghardaïa Province, which limits the generalizability of the results to other regions or contexts. Secondly, the study was conducted over a relatively short time period of two weeks, making it difficult to assess the long-term impact of the strategies on learners' inferential listening development. Thirdly, language was a limitation during data collection, as some interviews and focus group responses were conducted in Arabic and later translated into the target language, which may have caused minor interpretation discrepancies. Finally, the qualitative nature of the study involved subjective interpretation, although triangulation was applied to improve the validity of the findings.

Pedagogical Implications

The outcomes of this study have several important implications for EFL teaching practices. First, the integration of culturally familiar content into listening tasks can be a great way to make lessons more meaningful and accessible. Teachers can use learners' cultural background as an available source to activate prior knowledge and foster deeper understanding. Additionally, inferential listening tasks should be designed to encourage learners to think beyond literal meanings and make predictions or connections using context. This approach promotes critical listening and supports learners in developing higher-order comprehension skills. Moreover, pre-listening and post-listening discussions can help learners reflect on the cultural relevance of the content and enhance their inferencing abilities.

Recommendations for Teachers and Curriculum Designers

According to the research's outcomes, there are several recommendations that should be taken into consideration, especially for EFL teachers to adapt existing listening materials or create some of them to reflect and align with learners' backgrounds. Integrating familiar places, stories, or events can help learners improve their inferential comprehension. For curriculum designers in practical, it is very important to design lessons based on the local culture that the learners can easily get familiar with and use their prior knowledge to understand and feel comfort while they listening. This enables them to develop their inferential comprehension and face no ambiguity in learning. Additionally, teacher-training programs should emphasize the importance of culturally relevant pedagogy and offer tools for designing inference-based listening tasks using familiar content.

Suggestions for Future Research

Future research could expand on this study by examining the long-term effects of culturally familiar tasks on learners' listening development through longitudinal studies. Including a larger and more diverse sample across different regions or educational levels would

provide more comprehensive insights. Another avenue for research could explore the relationship between learners' cultural identity and their comprehension of listening texts. Furthermore, with the growing use of technology in education, future studies might investigate how digital platforms and multimedia resources can be used to deliver culturally rich listening content in dynamic and engaging ways. Such research could help develop innovative practices that combine ICT with cultural relevance to improve inferential listening skills.

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Appendices 1

Observation Checklist

School:

Session number:

Level:

Date & time:

Sequence theme:

Class:

Session type:

Students' number:

Session topic:

Classroom conditions:

Observation Objective:

.....
.....
.....

I) Teachers' Strategies

Questions	Yes	No	Comments
1. Does the teacher include culturally familiar content in the listening tasks?			
2. Does the teacher adjust tasks based on students' understanding of cultural references?			
3. Does the teacher activate learners' prior knowledge before starting the tasks?			
4. Does the teacher guide learners in identifying key details while listening?			
5. Does the teacher encourage learners to make inferences based on the cultural familiarity of the task?			
6. Does the teacher provide clear instructions aligned with inferential listening goals?			
7. Does the teacher provide feedback or clarify misunderstandings when learners use inference skills			
8. Does the teacher conduct a follow up task to assess learners' comprehension and inferencing skills			

II) Learners' Engagement

9. Are learners actively engaged with the task (taking notes, participating...)?			
10. Do learners demonstrate confidence when listening to tasks involving cultural familiarity?			
11. Do learners demonstrate familiarity with the cultural context of the task?			
12. Do learners seem motivated when working on the culturally familiar task?			
13. Do learners focus on key details while listening?			
14. Do learners attempt to infer meaning from the listening material (tone, cultural cues...)?			
15. Do learners ask questions or seek clarification when they encounter listening difficulties?			
16. Do learners demonstrate improvement in their inferential listening skills throughout the session?			

Appendix2

Teachers' Interview

Dear Teacher,

This interview is part of a study investigating how culturally familiar tasks are incorporated by teachers to enhance middle school EFL learners' inferential listening skills. Please take your time to answer the following questions in as much details as you can. The researcher will remain available during the session to provide clarification or ask brief follow-up questions if necessary. All responses will remain confidential.

Interviewee Code: _____

Date: _____

1. Do you adjust your listening tasks based on students' familiarity with cultural references? Please describe how and why such adjustments are made.

2. How do you choose culturally relevant materials for listening activities? What criteria do you consider?

3. Do you adapt or modify authentic materials (textbooks, yearly plannings...) to make them more culturally familiar or accessible to your learners? If yes, please provide an example.

4. What types of culturally familiar content do you find most effective for engaging students in listening tasks? (e.g., local stories, songs, proverbs, community events, traditional dialogues...)

5. How do your students typically respond to listening tasks that include familiar cultural elements? Are they more engaged, confident, or willing to participate?

6. Do you observe any specific behaviors during culturally familiar tasks that indicate active engagement? (e.g., note-taking, answering inferential questions, asking for clarifications)

7. Have you noticed any changes in your students' inferential listening skills when using culturally familiar tasks? If yes, please describe the type of improvement and give specific examples if possible.

8. Do you believe that culturally familiar content supports the development of deeper listening comprehension? Why or why not?

9. Would you recommend using culturally grounded materials to other teachers? What advice would you give them?

10. Is there anything you would like to add or clarify about your strategies or observations related to using culturally familiar tasks in the EFL classroom?

Appendix 3

Focus Group Questions

1. **Did you understand the task(s) during the session?** *(Yes/No)*
2. **Was it easy or difficult? Why?** *(use single words)*
3. **Did you know the topic of the task(s) of the session before?** *(Yes/No)*
4. **Was it easier to understand because you knew it?** *(Yes/No)*
5. **Which words were difficult for you?** *(list words.)*
6. **Did you guess the meaning of some words from the task(s)?** *(Yes/No)*
7. **Do you like listening to topics from your culture in class? Why/Why not?**
8. **Do you feel more confident when the topic is familiar?** *(Yes/No)*
9. **Would you like more listening tasks with topics you know?** *(Yes/No)*

ملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة الى استكشاف استراتيجيات أساتذة اللغة الانجليزية كلغة اجنبية في دمج الثقافة المحلية في التمارين لتعزيز مهارات الاستماع الاستدلالي لدى تلاميذ المرحلة المتوسطة بالأخص اقسام السنة الثالثة متوسط من ثلاث متوسطات مختلفة: متوسطة اولاد طاهر احمد بن بابية، متوسطة الشهيد مطلق مطلق، ومتوسطة ابو اليقظان في بلدية بريان، غرداية. ولتحقيق ذلك، تم اعتماد منهج نوعي واستكشافي في هذه الدراسة، من خلال إجراء ثلاث عشرة جلسة ملاحظة صفية، ومقابلات شبه مهيكلة مع خمسة أساتذة، ومجموعات تركيز مع ثمانية عشر تلميذاً لجمع بيانات غنية. اظهرت نتائج هذه الدراسة ان استخدام المحتوى المؤلف ثقافياً، مثل القصص المحلية او التقليدية او المواقف اليومية يحسن مشاركة التلاميذ وقدرتهم على الاستنتاج. ومع ذلك، واجه الأساتذة تحديات مثل نقص المواد الثقافية المناسبة وصعوبة التوفيق بين المنهج الدراسي والخلفيات الثقافية المتنوعة لدى الطلبة. توصي هذه الدراسة بتدريب مكثف للأساتذة على تصميم مهام تستند الى الثقافة المحلية وتطوير مناهج تعكس تنوع الخبرات الثقافية لدى التلاميذ لتعزيز الفهم الاستدلالي والتفكير النقدي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الاستماع الاستدلالي، التمارين ذات الطابع الثقافي المؤلف، طلبة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، استراتيجيات التدريس، فهم الاستماع، أساتذة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية