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Research Paper

Iranian EFL Learners' Perceptions of Using Multiple Intelligence-Based Activities (MIBAs) to Improve Oral-Aural Skills

Marjan Lotfi-Khajouei¹, Roya Baharlooei², Hadi Salehi^{3*}, Omid Tabatabaei⁴

¹English Department, Najafabad Branch, Islamic Azad University, Najafabad, Iran

marjlotfi.ml@gmail.com

²English Department, Najafabad Branch, Islamic Azad University, Najafabad, Iran

roya_baharlooei@yahoo.com

³English Department, Najafabad Branch, Islamic Azad University, Najafabad, Iran

hadisalehi1358@yahoo.com

⁴English Department, Najafabad Branch, Islamic Azad University, Najafabad, Iran

tabatabaeiomid@yahoo.com

Abstract

Preparing proper activities in classroom setting and providing learners with them will lead to their success particularly in listening and speaking skills. This study aimed at exploring the learners' perceptions of applying Multiple Intelligence-Based Activities (MIBAs) to improve these two skills. To this end, 30 Iranian intermediate EFL learners were selected and they were taught using some appropriate activities based on the definition of eight types of Gardner's intelligence. The treatment period lasted for 10 weeks, three sessions of 60 minutes per week. After the treatment, two English perception questionnaires for speaking and listening with the same content based on the MIBAs were developed, validated, and administered. The data obtained from the questionnaires were analyzed using frequencies, percentages, item mean scores, and one-sample t test to get the learners' perceptions of using these activities in their classes and their effects on improving listening and speaking skills. A semi-structured interview was also conducted to gain and support the data obtained from the participants. It could thus be concluded that all respondents had positive perceptions about the application of MIBAs for the

purpose of L2 listening and speaking; moreover, this positivity was confirmed via the results of semi structured interviews. The findings may offer some implications for the fields of teaching, material preparation, and curriculum designing. Additionally, the findings can make optimal changes for assessment methods.

Keywords: *Multiple Intelligence, Multiple Intelligence-Based Activities (MIBAs), Oral Skills, Aural Skills, Perception*

Introduction

Intelligence is not restricted to a single unit to be assessed via conventional intelligence tests or instruments such as the IQ score, but is a multifaceted entity. Gardner (1983) believed in the concept of multiple intelligences. To him learners learned in a variety of different ways. According to MI theory, every individual is unique in many ways particularly in terms of their learning styles and main bits of intelligence. Intelligence was previously confined in the area of linguistic and logical-mathematical but Gardner broadened the outlook of that intelligence which was measured by standardized IQ tests (Hassan, Sulaiman, & Baki, 2011).

Capacities of individuals are demonstrated by MI to develop and apply skills. It can occur in different ways and is represented differently in each individual. All different forms of intelligence help and allow individuals to participate in meaningful learning (Brien, 2020). Two major claims are provided for the MI theory. The first one is that all individuals have some level of all the intelligence stated in the theory, and the second one is that as we all have different physical features, personality types, and characters, correspondingly we show different profiles of multiple intelligence (Gardner, 1983). The MI theory has become a beneficial tool for both teachers and students in the teaching and learning process.

The current study provides new insights into the process of teaching and learning, especially teaching English language skills. The study of MI theory is of great help to students with different potentials. In general, this study could be significant for other researchers, material developers, educators, learners, parents, and test designers, since it makes them familiar with different intelligence types. It is also significant and can be conducted in all educational levels and settings.

English teachers still spend too much of class time on reading and writing practices. They almost disregard speaking and listening skills. If the goal of the language course is truly to help students communicate in English, then listening and speaking skills should be taught and practiced more and more in the language classroom by utilizing different methods.

Creative and innovative learning activities can optimize multiple intelligence in listening and speaking classes which would optimally develop students' capacities. They will learn a variety of activities that highlight different aspects of intelligence (Adityas, 2016). Although numerous studies have been previously conducted using MIT and MIBAs in the teaching/learning process to improve skills and subskills, it is necessary to explore learners' perception of MIBAs toward enhancing skills and subskills specifically oral-aural skills in Iranian classrooms. Thus, the following research question was addressed:

RQ: What are the perceptions of Iranian EFL male and female learners of the impact of MIBAs on improving their oral-aural skills?

Literature Review

Through the understanding of MI theory principals, English teachers can input activities based on MI theory into the English language classroom to support learners learn more effectually and successfully. A lot of theoretical and empirical national and international studies have been conducted. Some of the most related ones are as follows:

Theoretical Background

Speaking as the target skill in both first and foreign languages is a way of conveying information or expressing one's thoughts and feelings. Whether speakers are native or non-native, they generate meaningful and interactive communication by using sounds, words, and sentences. Fakhar (2015) defined this skill as an interactive process of constructing meaning that comprises producing, receiving and processing information. Oral proficiency is a primacy and an integral part of a language syllabus in English as the second and foreign languages (Pan, 2011).

Although speaking is one of the significant skills to learn, learners may not reach a high level of oral skills unless teachers use appropriate strategies that allow them to develop it correctly. Teachers should implement strategies like role-plays, performances, songs, playing activities, and cooperative learning that improve their students' oral production (Gardner, 1983). In the same regard, Holden (1985) believes that dimensions of the speaking skill which include fluency, language use, and the development of speaking must be carefully considered and analyzed. They cause some challenges, label some recommendations for understanding this skill, and design instructional activities to train learners to communicate effectively in real contexts. These dimensions

The root of the word aural is the Latin word meaning pertaining to the ear, or the sense of hearing or listening out for something. Aural comprehension even supports and enhances spoken ability and is clearly connected to the development of speaking. Listening comprehension is often seen as a passive activity or skill because it is developed internally or, rather, it is a cognitive process which its results cannot be observed. However, some authors such as Vandergrift (2008), Mendelsohn (1989), and Richards (2008 b) have stated that listening is an active process which needs a classified variety of activities. Listening comprehension activities typically address a number of listening functions, including recognition (focusing on some aspect of the code itself), orientation (ascertaining essential facts about the text, such as participants, the situation or context, the general topic, the emotional tone, and the genre), comprehension of main ideas, and understanding and recall of details (Richards & Schmidt, 2010)

Multiple Intelligence Theory (MIT) as an important theory in education that was developed by Howard Gardner in 1983 supports the idea that each person owns several bits of intelligence which are used to perform specific tasks. This leads learners to different learning styles. MI demonstrates each individuals' ability for improving and applying skills. It can arise in multiple ways and is inversely signified in each individual. All intelligence types let an individual to entirely contribute and play a part in meaningful learning. Teachers should design and conduct classroom activities on the bases of the individual learner's inspiration and preferred learning styles (Bakarich & O'Brien, 2021).

Thus this theory can be applied to connect instructional strategies with students' learning styles, inspire students to extend their abilities and grow their intelligence to the maximum possibility, and remember and recognize variety (Güneysu, Özdermir, , & Tekkaya, 2006, p.1). It has become a beneficial tool for teachers and learners to help them in the teaching and learning process. MI training in the classroom by means of activities that are based on the eight intelligence types assisted students in learning via their dominant intelligence and reinforcing

their weaker intelligence simultaneously. The MIT paves the way for various numbers of approaches which can be simply used in teaching languages (Ahmed & Gasm, 2012).

MI and language learning has been one of the most controversial subjects of study. Many conducted studies have shown a relationship between MI and foreign language learning (Zarei & Mohseni, 2012). Language learning cannot be defined just in linguistic frame, but in other frames like, musical, visual-spatial, mathematical, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalistic which enable students to learn in their own best ways, and reduce dullness. Using this type of instruction that can transfer any content area with no fixed, specific and well-matched teaching method can be helpful for all learners with different inner capacities, abilities or bits of intelligence (Gardner, 1983).

Empirical Background

Some studies examined the effectiveness of using MI activities in developing English speaking skills. Christison (1996) argued MI and why it is a frequent topic of discussion among English as Second Language educators by developing lesson plans and curricula using MI. Furthermore, Lazear (1999) offered a comprehensive approach to teaching and learning strategies to promote the theory of MI. He focused on the use of all kinds of multiple intelligence to develop EFL learners' participation in the classroom. Students' participation in the learning process was the sign of the high or low attained consequence. The emphasis was on students' strong and weak multiple intelligence and how they could be used to grow the level of participation. What teachers know and do in the classroom should have a significant influence on the students' perceptions, thoughts, achievements, and behaviors.

Haley (2001) carried out a pilot study to identify, document, and promote effective applications of the MI theory in L2 classrooms. Having collected the data about the students' MI profiles, the teachers partaking in the study revised their lessons in selected classes to activate all the intelligence types. The findings revealed that the experimental group was eagerly interested in MI concepts and the increased variety of instructional strategies in their classrooms. However, the experimental and control groups' classroom performance was not extremely different.

Karadeniz (2006) studied the effects of multiple intelligence theory-based instructions on the achievements of English lessons and the permanence of the learned knowledge of the ninth-grade students in Anatolian high school. In this study, two ninth- grade classes were chosen. The study took five weeks. There was a significant difference between the experimental group and the control group. The experimental group had positive perception of learning through multiple intelligence-based instructions and outperformed in achievement and retention of learned knowledge in English lessons.

In this regard, Hamurlu (2007) analyzed the effects of the instruction based on multiple intelligence theory on the students' achievements in English classes and the students' attitudes towards the ninth grade English high school classes. Lessons were taught through traditional foreign languages, teaching methods, and techniques in the control group, and in the experimental group, they were presented through MIBAs. In conclusion, it was realized that the instruction based on multiple intelligence theory increased the students' achievement in English classes and made effects on the students' attitudes towards English.

In order to determine the issue of MIT use, Ibrahim (2007) explored the influences and perceptions of using an offered MIT-based strategy in assessing and developing oral skills. The study was conducted with the third-year primary school Arabic native speakers' students. He held

some training programs and showed the students' positive attitude and usefulness of these programs based on MIT by the use of an MI scale and a checklist of the study.

In line with the studies on multiple intelligence, Bemani and Pandian (2010) worked on the MI relationship with listening proficiency and attitudes among Iranian TEFL university students. They investigated both the relationship of Multiple Intelligence (MI) with listening among Iranian TEFL university students and the possible relationship between the type of intelligence the students fell into as well as their attitudes toward learning English. In this study, McKenzie's (1999) MI Inventory, a Likert-type questionnaire and a TOEFL test were used. Data analysis using Pearson correlation revealed no significant relationship between the score of listening and any of the MI. Similarly, the results indicated no significant difference between MI and attitudes.

In order to determine the attitude of learners, Hajhashemi, Ghombavani, and Yazdi Amirkhiz (2011) attempted to find the relationship between multiple intelligence theory and learning English. Findings showed that applying multiple intelligence theory gave students a better attitude toward learning English. Zhu (2011) employed task-based language teaching methods to teach English. This strategy represented multiple intelligence theory. There were many facets of teaching a language: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translating. There was a correlation between task-based learning and multiple intelligence theory in each aspect. For example, in the case of listening task-based learning activities, listening to English stories, news and songs, accompanying background music for texts, presenting lectures, mimicking by means of real objects, and pictures, and holding discussions in English were the most effective considerable activities. These activities correlated to the following multiple intelligence traits: linguistic, spatial, musical, interpersonal and intrapersonal. The correlation could be seen in all aspects like speaking and reading. The results introduced the multiple intelligence theory as a good framework to build understandable lessons for students. Thus, they expressed positive perception and felt comfortable while learning a new language.

Another study by Soleimani, Moinnzadeh, Kassaian, and Ketabi (2012) was conducted to investigate the effect of instruction based on MI theory on attitude and learning of General English courses among Iranian university students. They were taught based on the theory of MI and compared with the control group who was instructed based on the traditional method of teaching General English. In order to clarify the effect of MI-based instruction compared with the traditional method, the researchers constructed a test including 30 items, and to evaluate the attitude of the learners toward English, a 15-item attitude questionnaire toward the English Language was employed. The results of the study indicated a significant difference between experimental and control groups. The result showed the enhancement of experimental group attitudes towards learning English.

Similarly, Mohammadzadeh and Jafarigohar (2012) in a part of their studies to examine the relationship between willingness to communicate (WTC) and multiple intelligences (MI) among EFL learners found the learners' positive perception of the effect of MI and willingness to communicate. In Salem (2013), MI project-based learning affected the oral development and this effect led to students' achievement levels, as well as positive attitudes toward English lessons.

Rihani (2016) studied the effects of the MI theory application in EFL classes on the students' participation in classroom activities. The researcher used a descriptive method using a questionnaire. In addition, an interview has been conducted with eight English teachers. The finding obtained from both data gathering tools supported the prevailing hypothesis about the positive effects of integrating MI in EFL classrooms on enhancing students' participation.

Consequently, integrating different types of activities can both enhance students' participation and perception and help the EFL teachers to control their classes.

Generally speaking, based on the related literature, it is very crucial for both teachers and material developers to inform about students' perception on the applied methods and instructional materials and may end in many beneficial suggestions for teachers and researchers. Effective instruction is required in order to teach listening and speaking because it is always neglected so the instruction should be modified in a way that encourages learners to speak English and have better comprehension in listening. Multiple intelligence-based instructions help learners to involve and reach the learning process as it addresses various types of intelligence.

The review of the literature did not exactly pinpoint any study to evaluate learners' perception of using MIBAs specifically on the oral-aural skills of intermediate EFL learners; therefore, this study aimed to investigate the above-mentioned issue.

Method

Design of the Study

The present study was carried out on the students of Translation Studies at Islamic Azad University, Isfahan Branch. A concurrent triangulation descriptive approach was implemented which involved collecting, analyzing and integrating quantitative and qualitative data in research to present comprehensive picture of the research problem and question. It explored the learners' perceptions of using multiple intelligence-based activities for the improvement of oral-aural skills.

Participants

The participants of the study were 30 intermediates Iranian EFL learners with the age range of 18-23. They were selected out of learners with the same characteristics studying at Islamic Azad University, Isfahan Branch. Their first language was Persian. The demographic information of the participants can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1

Participants' Demographic Information

No. of Students	30 (Undergraduate)
Age	18-23
Level	Intermediate
Native Language	Persian
Major	Translation Studies
University	Islamic Azad University, Isfahan Branch
Academic Year	2019-2020

Materials and Instruments

Books

The books entitled *Developing Tactics for Listening* by Richards and Trew (2011) and *Communicate Listening and Speaking Skills 2* which is a two-book video-based communication course specially developed to expand learners' English oral/aural skills which was written by

Pickering (2012) were used. The books entitled *American Headways 2 & 3*, at the pre-intermediate and the intermediate levels, written by Soars and Soars (2015) were also used. These books help learners accelerate their progress in speaking. They were selected based on their content to design the proper MIBAs in the current study. The activities and tasks in these books were most communicative, motivating and useful to enhance the oral-aural performance of the students. They were well adapted and matched with each intelligence types and their definitions. Five English teachers who had many years of teaching experience especially of teaching these books and were familiar with them, confirmed the content of these books.

Multiple Intelligence-Based Activities (MIBAs)

Based on Gardner's multiple intelligence theory and the definition of intelligence types, some activities were designed and used as a tool through which materials with different contents could be transferred to learners applying their diverse innermost capabilities and intelligence types. More applicable, dynamic, and interesting MIBAs were selected to teach listening and speaking skills. A list of relevant activities indicating each intelligence type was adapted from Connell (2005) and Armstrong (2009).

Listening and Speaking Questionnaires

Two researcher-made Likert scale structured English perception questionnaires, for speaking and listening based on the MIBAs, were developed and administered to the experimental group members. They included 30 items, and for each intelligence type, three, or four questions based on the activities conducted in the class during the research period were posed. All items in the questionnaires were representative of all intelligence types. Since the questionnaires for both listening and speaking have the same content, one of them is considered for validity and reliability calculation. The questionnaire was validated based on the comments by a panel of experts, consisted of 3 professors from Islamic Azad University, Najafabad Branch. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.88 which showed a high internal consistency between items of the questionnaires.

Semi-Structured Interview

A semi-structured interview was a meeting in which the interviewer (researcher) did not have a list of formal questions. The questions in this kind of the interview were prepared in the open-ended form, and it was a two-way communication between interviewer and interviewee. Some follow up questions or probing questions were asked the interviewees (learners) to freely express their perceptions and beliefs relevant to the interview topic in their own words.

Procedure

The two phases of the data collection procedures were elaborated as follows:

The Quantitative Phase

The study began with a group of 30 intermediate undergraduate English learners. They were taught English speaking and listening skills through an English speaking and listening program integrated with MI classroom activities. They were willing to attend the training programs. As it was already mentioned they were supposed to fill the consent form. As it was stated above, learners were faced with the most appropriate activities designed based on the definition of eight types of intelligences proposed by Gardner (2011) to facilitate learning. The materials, appropriate MIBAs, for the treatment were precisely extracted from the books entitled

Communicate listening and speaking skills 2, American Headway 2 & 3, the pre-intermediate, and the intermediate levels, and Developing Tactics for Listening. When the treatment process was completed, two researcher-made, 30-item Likert scale perception questionnaires for speaking and listening with the same content based on the MIBAs, were developed, validated, and checked for reliability, then administered to them. For each intelligence type, three, or four questions were posed. The questions were based on the activities the researcher conducted in the class during the research period.

The Qualitative Phase

A semi-structural interview was also conducted to support the data obtained from their perception of the application of MIBAs. About one-fifth of the learners from among the volunteered learners were interviewed. The interview session for each interviewee (student) took about 40 minutes, and 9 approximately pre-planned open-ended questions and some probing or follow up questions were asked so that the learners felt relaxed and freely expressed their perception and feelings toward the intended topic under investigation.

During the interview session, the learners were asked to describe the method they were taught with and compared it with the traditional methods through which they were already taught. Additionally, they were questioned about advantages and disadvantages of using MIBAs, and the extent to which each activity affected their oral-aural skills. They were asked some probing questions about the activities they liked best while the researcher mentioned the applied activities one by one. Finally, they were asked to make their last comments and give perceptions of this training program. Consequently, the overall purpose of using semi-structured interview was to do a comparison between the data collected from the questionnaires in the quantitative phase and the information gathered through this interview to reassure their perception and attitudes, and to prepare reliable qualitative data, as well.

Results

EFL Learners' Perceptions of the Impacts of MIBAs on Speaking

The research question aimed to find out how Iranian EFL male and female learners perceived the impact of MIBAs on improving their oral-aural skills. To this aim the data were analyzed via two methods of data analysis, questionnaire, and semi structured interview. The data obtained from the speaking and listening questionnaires were analyzed using frequencies, percentages, item mean scores, and one-sample t test. The results of the analyses are presented in **Table 2 (see Appendix A)**

The very first thing that could be noticed in Table 2 was the fact that all the mean scores for both female and male learners were larger than the average value of the choices (i.e., 3.00). This means that the female and male learners participating in the present study agreed with all the statements demonstrated in Table 2, which are all positive comments about the effects of MIBAs. It could thus be concluded that both female and male respondents had positive perceptions about the application of MIBAs for the purpose of L2 speaking. In a nutshell, the female and male participants had overall positive perceptions of the application of MIBAs in their speaking classes as the overall questionnaire mean scores for them were found to be 4.26 and 4.25, respectively.

Table 3*One-sample t Test Results Learner s' Perceptions about the Impact of MIBAs on Speaking*

	Test Value = 3		Overall Mean	Sig. (2-tailed)	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>			Lower	Upper
	Female Learners	21.61			29	4.26
Male Learners	17.53	29	4.25	.00	1.11	1.40

In Table 3, the *p* values under the Sig. (2-tailed) column for both female and male students were smaller than the significance level ($p < .05$), which means that their overall questionnaire mean scores were significantly different from (and higher than) 3.00, which was the average value of the choices. Differently put, the female and male students in this study had statistically significant positive perceptions about the impacts of MIBAs on their speaking.

EFL Learners' Perceptions of the Impacts of MIBAs on Listening

In what follows, the same procedure is repeated for the learners' perceptions of the effects of MIBAs on their listening. The results of the analyses are presented in **Table 4 (see Appendix B)**. In Table 4, it could be seen that the only item with a mean score lower than the average for both females and males is item # 8, with a mean score of 2.66 for females and 2.80 for males. In this item, both female and male learners disagreed that pantomiming was an exciting and useful activity. As a matter of fact, 54% of females did not find this activity interesting, while only 33% of them (strongly) agreed that pantomiming was exciting and useful. As for males, again 54% believed it was not exciting and a minority of 40% found it intriguing and helpful.

Apart from this single item, all the other remaining items received above-average mean scores. As to the female learners, the items with the highest mean scores were items # 25 ($M = 4.66$), 29 ($M = 4.66$), 12 ($M = 4.60$), 27 ($M = 4.60$), and 30 ($M = 4.60$). In item # 25, the female learners attested to the usefulness of video-watching activities. All the 100% of female learners (strongly) agreed that this activity was interesting and no one expressed her disagreement. For item # 29, a majority of 67% of female learners strongly agreed and the remaining 33% agreed that taking part in debates in class was helpful. Concerning item # 12, 60% strongly agreed and 40% agreed that listening to short stories and drawing pictures was a fun activity. Through item # 27, of all the female learners, 73% (strongly) agreed that listening to a story and doing critical thinking to reach a conclusion was helpful. Regarding item # 30, 60% of the female learners strongly agreed and 40% of them agreed that oral presentations were very effective for their listening performance.

Regarding male learners, the largest mean scores went to items # 12 ($M = 4.66$), 29 ($M = 4.66$), and 25 ($M = 4.60$), in which the female learners expressed their positive attitudes about listening to short stories and drawing pictures, participating in a debate, and watching videos and predicting the next scene. Of all the male students, 67% strongly agreed and 33% concurred with the idea that listening to short stories and drawing the related pictures was fun. The same percentage of male learners (strongly) agreed that debating in class improved their listening comprehension. Additionally, 60% of these male learners strongly agreed and 40% of them agreed that watching videos and predicting the following scene was fun and interesting. Whether

the female and male learners' positive perceptions about the impacts of MIBAs on their listening reached a significant extent or not could be determined in the one-sample t test table (Table 5):

Table 5

One-sample t Test Results for Students' Perceptions of the Impact of MIBAs on Listening

	Test Value = 3					
	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	Overall Mean	Sig. (2-tailed)	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Female Students	9.25	29	3.95	.00	.74	1.16
Male Students	10.30	29	3.99	.00	.79	1.18

The overall questionnaire means scores for females ($M = 3.95$) and males ($M = 3.99$) could be seen in Table 5, The p values for these two analyses were smaller than the .05 level of significance, indicating that both groups of female and male learners had positive perceptions about the effects of MBAs on their listening, and their positive perceptions reached a level of statistical significance. The same results were obtained in the qualitative section of the research which further confirm this result. The findings are elaborated in the following section:

Analysis of the Semi-Structured Interviews

The interviews with the students provided further opportunity to explore their perceptions of the MIBAs' effect on oral-aural improvements in EFL classes. When the students were asked about the activities influencing their ability to enhance their oral-aural skills, they highlighted the activities which were prepared based on each intelligence types. In order to complement the answer to the research question, the analyses of the interviewed learners' responses are reported based upon the following major issues of the students' interviews. These issues are related to the effect of MIBAs on oral-aural skills of the university students, intermediate level (both males and females). The main issues under study focused on the activities designed and applied by the researcher based on eight types of intelligence proposed by Gardner (1983).

The findings are presented in three major sections. Each section discusses the objectives of this research, namely the learners' perceptions of using multiple intelligence activities, advantages and benefits of them, as well as problems and challenges encountered by the learners in performing the activities to promote learners' oral-aural skills. About one-fifth of participants (both male and female) from experimental group were invited to the interview based on their own willingness announced in reply to the invitation letter. They just faced with numerous numbers of appropriate activities designed on the basis of multiple intelligence during the teaching program in treatment period, without knowing anything about multiple intelligence itself.

Perceptions of Using MIBAs

When the interviewed learners were asked to express their perception of using MIBAs especially for the improvement of their oral-aural skills, most of them were overwhelmingly supportive of them. They all believed that using cooperative learning in these activities helped them tutor each other, and solve their problems through interacting in group. They stated that

they were motivated to be active. They were all pleased to participate in those social activities in their classes. They enthusiastically talked about the applied learner-centered activities. For instance, participant 1 stated that:

My friends motivated and enabled me to be active and communicate effectively. I enjoyed activities which let me communicate more with my friends like interviewing my friends, conducting a survey, leading group discussions, playing a game with a friend, and many other activities we did in these types of classes, and I was not under pressure at all.

Almost all of the interviewed learners viewed this instructional program helpful they believed that they could help each other to improve their abilities especially listening and speaking skills and have a better productivity. Referring to group work they experienced, they found it useful, supportive, and encouraging especially when they were demanded to do difficult assignments.

For example, participant 2 indicated that:

I myself hardly ever participated in voluntary activities which were assigned in ordinary classes. Most of these activities helped me a lot to improve my communicative skills, and to do the activities easily like pantomiming, interviewing, acting out the scene, etc.

The above comments suggest that the MIBAs were useful for learners, and they had positive attitude toward many of them. Of course, MI-based activities can have positive results if it is implemented properly in the classroom. Learners develop increased sense of responsibility, self-direction and independence, they also develop and apply new skills, such cooperative learning can increase the learners' overall achievements.

In this regard, some of the participant's viewpoints were as follows:

Participant 3 pointed out that:

In these types of classes, working in a team was wonderful even in less pleasant activities, because it was totally encouraging. We helped each other to solve our problems and we had more time to speak and try a wide range of roles. I felt less nervous while I was speaking in front of the whole class. I think in these classes independence can be increased by group activities and the nature of the program itself.

The teacher's role is extremely important to cause the students get the most out of such instructional programs based on multiple intelligence theory in the classroom. Teachers should work with the students, rather than for the students, to develop the best group and individual activities, projects, and layouts. Teachers should continuously observe students' interests and successes in different areas and continually change the classroom layout and plan accordingly.

As participant 4 pointed out that:

I think it is very hard for teachers because they should be present in all activities, control everything and it is even more difficult in Iranian educational settings because of some cultural differences. Also preparing attractive materials is also very overwhelming. To me using appropriate materials is of great help; otherwise, students will get bored and reluctant to attend actively and energetically in the teaching program.

Benefits of Using MIBAs for Oral-Aural Improvement

When the interviewed students were asked about the benefits of MIBAs for the improvement of oral-aural skills, they all believed that the planned instructional programs were helpful and affected the enhancement of their speaking and listening skills. They were all

satisfied more with collaborative activities and those attractive individual ones they were asked to do and stated that they were completely involved in such activities. They also highlighted the effects of group activities on better performance of individual activities.

For example, participants 5 and 6 respectively stated that:

These classes inspired me to participate actively and I was not bored with the uniformity of classes we have ever experienced. When we worked in a group, I learned a lot from my friends, they also corrected me when I was wrong, so I was not worried about making a mistake or being laughed at.

Additionally, participant 4 mentioned that:

Various helpful and interesting techniques and activities were applied. We were able to work cooperatively with others in a group, and communicate verbally and non-verbally with our friends.

When the interviewees were asked about the benefits and strong points of the applied instructional program during the treatment period, they stated that since these classes were different and had a various atmosphere rather than their ordinary classes they could be more active with no fear. Then they just thought about the activity not about unpleasant threatening issues in formal traditional classes. Having more opportunities to listen to many audio files and discussing different topics were regarded as the most important strong points of this program and provided them with more practice on skills particularly listening and speaking skills.

Participant 1 described this model as follows:

Since most of the planned activities in our class were of great help to increase our abilities in all skills especially speaking and listening, I think not only I could improve my speaking ability but also my classmates' power of speech. I also think my vocabulary range was increased because when I needed a proper word I looked it up or asked my friends and used it to convey the meaning I demanded.

Generally, they believed that their abilities to listen and speak had been improved and they received more knowledge of words from video and audio files. They mentioned that, in order to receive and produce more and more English sentences they needed to listen progressively to appropriate audio files, or watch as many videos as they could, and this method of teaching was accommodating with more situations in which they could make advances in their listening and speaking abilities.

Problems of Using MIBAs for Oral-Aural Improvement

With regard to the problems and challenges of using MIBAs, most of the interviewees liked this method of teaching and had positive attitude toward using MIBAs; however, some of them had somehow different viewpoints about some activities. They mentioned a few problematic cases. They stated that although utilizing this method was encouraging, it was difficult to motivate some of the students and they were procrastinated by weak students. They also mentioned that this problem did not take a long time and gradually they were more comfortable to take part in activities.

Participants 1 and 4 respectively mentioned these points.

Some of my friends did not actively attend the group work; especially, in the first few sessions, so they restricted us. Earlier in these classes, I was embarrassed to do some of those activities such as, acting out in front of the others and pantomiming because I was not in the habit of such classes.

A few students referred to the cultural setting and said that some of these activities do not fit into our culture. Moreover, they viewed this curriculum as heavy which took the teacher's time and energy to be prepared.

Participant 3 explained that:

Some of these activities do not fit into our culture. To my opinion, managing these classes was very hard and took a lot of time and energy from the teacher and making diverse pedagogical materials are a difficult task to do. Perhaps I can refer to the heavy curriculum as a disadvantage.

Similarly, participant 5 talked about the problems and challenges they faced in performing some activities. He illustrated the situation with the following example:

In general, this method was useful, but I think in Iran or that is better to say in universities some of these activities were practical; for instance, having out door classes was a hard job to do, although a series of administrative tasks was required and done to get permission, it was still a troublesome job to do while most students liked such a novel way of teaching; because, they did not have to follow some of the rules in indoor classes.

Discussion

This study aimed at exploring how Iranian EFL male and female students perceived the impact of MIBAs on improving their oral-aural skills. To answer this research question, the results obtained from the analysis of two types of questionnaires (for listening and speaking) as well as what was gained via the semi structured interview were analyzed. The female and male participants had overall positive perceptions of the application of MIBAs in their speaking and listening classes as the overall questionnaire mean scores indicated, and their positive perceptions reached a level of statistical significance. Some studies are in line with the current study and they are as follows:

Hamurlu (2007) analyzed the students' attitudes toward the effects of the instruction based on multiple intelligence theory. Lessons were presented through activities based on multiple intelligence theory. The instruction based on this theory positively affected the students' attitudes towards learning English. Similarly, the result of Hamurlu's (2007) study is consistent with what is obtained in the current study. In the study conducted by Hajhashemi, Ghombavani, and Yazdi Amirkhiz (2011), the relationship between multiple intelligence theory and learning English was considered and the findings showed that applying multiple intelligence theory gave students a better attitude toward learning English. Learners learned because of their abilities and they were permitted to learn the way, they had been taught themselves, learning would be amusing to them.

Bemani and Pandian (2010) investigated possible relationship between the type of intelligence the students fell into and their attitudes toward learning English, and they found a positive relationship between attitude toward MI and English learning. Similarly, Soleimani, Moinzadeh, Kassaian, and Ketabi (2012) investigated the effect of instruction based on MI theory on attitude and learning of General English courses among Iranian university students. The results showed that students' attitudes towards learning English in the experimental group significantly enhanced.

Mohammadzadeh and Jafarigohar (2012) examined the existence of any possible relationship between willingness to communicate (WTC) and multiple intelligences (MI) among EFL learners. The findings revealed that the MI profile of learners of English has a significant correlation with their willingness to participate in L2 communication; moreover, the participants had positive perception of the effect of MI and willingness to communicate. In Salem (2013), MI

project-based learning affected the oral development and this effect led to students' achievement levels, as well as positive attitudes toward English lessons. In Baş and Beyhab (2017), the students had a higher motivation level on multiple intelligences supported project-based learning method.

As a result of what obtained from this study with reference to other previous studies, it is understood that the instruction based on multiple intelligences activities, has made positive contributions to the students' attitudes and achievements. The viewpoints of the interviewed participants from the group under investigation about the class activities and observing their active participation made support to the statistical findings of this part of the current research. So, although the students mentioned some points as limitations to perform those activities in and out of class, they were fascinated with all of them as they emphasized on their novelty. They referred to these classes as the most dynamic, attractive, and informative classes they have ever experienced and wished all their classes would be held like those MI-based activity classes in that treatment period.

Classroom environment should encourage students to participate in all assigned in and out of class activities with no fear, anxiety, and stress. To develop their skills in English, students should be provided with an effective more natural and more encouraging environment which enables them to interact with each other freely than the traditional classrooms which make them inactive and anxious.

Conclusions

In a nutshell, MI as one of the predictors of developing the oral-aural skills of EFL learners is an important and effective factor in this field. MI-based activities are effective and can improve English learners' listening and speaking skills because of individual differences among them (Salem, 2013). Applying the consequences of this study would satisfactorily assist many educational experts to boost up the learners' proficiency level. MI has positive effects on ELT to motivate and activate learners' minds concerning different types of intelligence. It also stimulates learners' minds by focusing on some special types of multiple intelligence to facilitate English learning.

Therefore, the use of these activities by language instructors in English classrooms is highly recommended to address learners' needs and abilities. Additionally, it can be used by parents to help them get an idea of their children's needs and abilities. However, in order to achieve this aim, teachers should be more familiar with this issue and how to apply it in their classes. Therefore, more studies need to be conducted. The current study paves the way for researchers who are concerned with pursuing the same line of investigation.

Some implications are provided through examining and applying the result of this study for language learners and also language teachers who want to improve their learners' language proficiency, particularly their oral-aural proficiency. It is also of great help for curriculum designers and material developers. Additionally, the current study would open a window of opportunity for performing further research in this field in the future. In the current study, MI was considered as a whole concept and its effects, in the form of a series of activities, were investigated on EFL learners' oral-aural skills. However, as previously mentioned, MI has various types; therefore, in the future, other researchers can investigate the effects of each kind of intelligence on improving EFL learners' skills and performances separately and explore their perception of applying this approach on the improvement of skills and subskills. It can be replicated with larger and different samples for the multiple intelligence models to be generalized with different language proficiency and different language backgrounds. In consequence, the

results of using MIBAs can contribute very well to instructional design in all educational settings. Additionally, the results of this research can contribute to devise assessment methods.

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Appendix A

Learners' Perceptions of the Impact of MIBAs on Speaking

Table 2. *Learner' Perceptions of the Impact of MIBAs on Speaking*

Statements	Gender	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean
1. Interviewing my classmates helped me to have more practices.	F	5 (33%)	10(67%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.33
	M	6 (40%)	9 (60%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.40
2. Discussing different subjects in the class was helpful.	F	9 (60%)	6 (40%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.60
	M	8 (53%)	7 (47%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.53
3. Making stories with a partner was interesting and helpful.	F	8 (53%)	5 (33%)	2(13%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.40
	M	8 (53%)	6 (40%)	1 (7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.46
4. Working in groups was motivating for me to speak.	F	5 (33%)	10(67%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.33
	M	4 (27%)	11(73%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.26
5. Writing our autobiography and telling it to our classmates was exiting.	F	7 (47%)	8 (53%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.46
	M	6 (40%)	7 (47%)	2 (13%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.26
6. Doing homework (as individual studies) provided more chances for me to practice speaking.	F	5 (33%)	6 (40%)	1 (7%)	3(20%)	0 (0%)	3.86
	M	6 (40%)	6 (40%)	1 (7%)	2(13%)	0 (0%)	4.06
7. Reading independently and answering individual questions, asked by my teacher and classmates, were very useful.	F	6 (40%)	8 (53%)	1 (7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.33
	M	7 (47%)	6 (40%)	2(13%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.33
8. Pantomiming was an exciting and useful activity to elicit more speech.	F	7(47%)	7(47%)	1 (7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.40
	M	6(40%)	8(5%)	1 (7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.33

9. Acting out a scene from the novel was pleasurable and effective.	F	5(33%)	9(60%)	1 (7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.26
	M	6(40%)	9(60%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.40
10. Conducting a class demonstration helped us have more practice.	F	3(20%)	10(67%)	2(13%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.06
	M	5(33%)		0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.33
11. Using physical gestures to communicate an idea was motivating.	F	5(33%)	5 (33%)	3(20%)	2 (13%)	0 (0%)	3.86
	M	6 (40%)	4 (27%)	1 (7%)	4 (27%)	0 (0%)	3.80
12. Listening to short stories and drawing the related pictures was a fun activity.	F	7 (47%)	8 (53%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.46
	M	7 (47%)	8 (53%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.46
13. Daydreaming about a vacation was one of the activities I really liked.	F	8 (53%)	6 (40%)	1 (7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.46
	M	6 (40%)	6 (40%)	1 (7%)	2 (13%)	0 (0%)	4.06
14. Mapping stories and using charts were helpful.	F	5 (33%)	8 (53%)	2(13%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.20
	M	6 (40%)	8 (53%)	1 (7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.33
15. Playing background music when we were acting out, telling a story, etc. were very inspiring.	F	4 (27%)	6 (40%)	2(13%)	3 (20%)	0 (0%)	3.73
	M	3 (20%)	5 (33%)	2(13%)	5 (33%)	0 (0%)	3.40
16. Making a list of popular songs and singers and talking about them were fascinating.	F	8 (53%)	5 (33%)	2(13%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.40
	M	6 (40%)	8 (53%)	1 (7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.33
17. Making musical advertisement was pleasurable.	F	7 (47%)	6 (40%)	2(13%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.33
	M	7 (47%)	7 (47%)	1 (7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.40
18. Acting out the musical advertisement which we made in class was one of my favorite activities.	F	6 (40%)	6 (40%)	1 (7%)	2 (13%)	0 (0%)	4.06
	M	7 (47%)	7 (47%)	1 (7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.40
19. Listening to the sounds of nature on an audio file in order to describe it could improve my speaking ability.	F	6 (40%)	6 (40%)	2(13%)	1 (7%)	0 (0%)	4.13
	M	5 (33%)	7 (47%)	2(13%)	1 (7%)	0 (0%)	4.06
20. Going out to the nature and describing the nature was enjoyable.	F	6 (40%)	9 (60%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.40
	M	7 (47%)	8 (53%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.46
21. Having free discussion in the nature was inspiring.	F	7 (47%)	8 (53%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.46
	M	8 (53%)	7 (47%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.53

22. Reading outside was a very different activity we have ever had in our classes.	F	5 (33%)	10 (67%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.33
	M	3 (20%)	11 (73%)	1 (7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.13
23. Comparing and contrasting the pictures and objects helped me.	F	6 (40%)	8 (53%)	1 (7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.33
	M	7 (47%)	8 (53%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.46
24. Making an outline for a topic posed in the class was an active cooperative work to do.	F	4 (27%)	3 (20%)	4(27%)	4 (27%)	0 (0%)	3.46
	M	3 (20%)	4 (27%)	3(20%)	5 (33%)	0 (0%)	3.33
25. Watching videos was interesting especially when the teacher asked me to predict the next scene.	F	10 (67%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.66
	M	9 (60%)	6 (40%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.60
26. Classifying objects based on the groups they belong to (with the time limitation as a match) was fun.	F	4 (27%)	4 (27%)	2(13%)	4 (27%)	1 (7%)	3.40
	M	3 (20%)	5 (33%)	1 (7%)	3 (20%)	3(20%)	3.13
27. Listening to a story and doing critical thinking to get the conclusion was helpful.	F	6 (40%)	9 (60%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.40
	M	5 (33%)	10 (67%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.33
28. Retelling stories to my friend was helpful to promote my speaking abilities.	F	7 (47%)	8 (53%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.46
	M	8 (53%)	7 (47%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.53
29. Participating in a debate was of great help to improve my speaking abilities.	F	10 (67%)	5 (33%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.66
	M	12 (80%)	3 (20%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.80
30. Giving oral presentation was effective in speaking skills.	F	9 (60%)	6 (40%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.60
	M	13 (87%)	2 (13%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.86

Appendix B

Learners' Perceptions of the Impact of MIBAs on Listening

Table 4. Learners' Perceptions of the Impact of MIBAs on Listening

Statements	Gender	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean
1. Interviewing my classmates helped me to	F	7 (47%)	8 (53%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.46
	M	5 (33%)	7 (47%)	2 (13%)	1 (7%)	0 (0%)	4.06

have more practices.							
2. Discussing different subjects in the class was helpful.	F	8 (53%)	6 (40%)	1 (7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.46
	M	7 (47%)	7 (47%)	7 (47%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.40
3. Making stories with a partner was interesting and helpful.	F	8 (53%)	5 (33%)	2 (13%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.40
	M	8 (53%)	6 (40%)	1 (7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.46
4. Working in groups was motivating for me to be an active listener.	F	7 (47%)	5 (33%)	2 (13%)	1 (7%)	0 (0%)	4.20
	M	7 (47%)	6 (40%)	2 (13%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.33
5. Writing our autobiography and telling it to our classmates was exiting.	F	5(33%)	6 (40%)	3(20%)	1(7%)	0(0%)	4.00
	M	6(40%)	6 (40%)	3(20%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	4.20
6. Doing homework (as individual studies) provided more chances for me to practice listening.	F	5(33%)	7 (47%)	2(13%)	1(7%)	0(0%)	4.06
	M	6(40%)	7 (47%)	1 (7%)	1(7%)	0(0%)	4.20
7. Reading independently and answering individual questions, asked by my teacher and classmates, were useful.	F	3(20%)	5 (33%)	5(33%)	2(13%)	0(0%)	3.60
	M	5(33%)	4 (27%)	3(20%)	2(13%)	1(7%)	3.66
8. Pantomiming was an exciting and useful activity.	F	2(13%)	3 (20%)	2(13%)	4(27%)	4(27	2.66
	M	3(20%)	3 (20%)	1 (7%)	4(27%)	4(27 %)	2.80
9. Acting out a scene from the novel was pleasurable and effective.	F	4(27%)	4 (27%)	3(20%)	4(27%)	0(0%)	3.53
	M	5(33%)	4 (27%)	3(20%)	2(13%)	1(7%)	3.60
10. Conducting a class demonstration helped us have more practice.	F	4(27%)	5 (33%)	3(20%)	3(20%)	0(0%)	3.66
	M	5(33%)	6 (40%)	2(13%)	2(13%)	0(0%)	3.93
11. Using physical gestures to communicate an idea was motivating.	F	2(13%)	2 (13%)	6(40%)	5(33%)	0(0%)	3.06
	M	3(20%)	0 (0%)	8(53%)	4(27%)	0(0%)	3.13
12. Listening to short stories and drawing the related pictures was a fun activity.	F	9(60%)	6 (40%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0(0%)	4.60
	M	10(67%)	5 (33%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0(0%)	4.66
13. Daydreaming about a vacation was one of the activities I really liked.	F	8(53%)	5 (33%)	2(13%)	0 (0%)	0(0%)	4.40
	M	8(53%)	6 (40%)	1 (7%)	0 (0%)	0(0%)	4.46
14. Mapping stories and using charts were very	F	6(40%)	6 (40%)	2(13%)	1 (7%)	0(0%)	4.13
	M	6(40%)	6 (40%)	3(20%)	0 (0%)	0(0%)	4.20

helpful.							
15. Playing background music when we were acting out, telling a story, etc. were very inspiring.	F	7(47%)	8 (53%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0(0%)	4.46
	M	8(53%)	7 (47%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0(0%)	4.53
16. Making a list of popular songs and singers and talking about them were fascinating.	F	4(27%)	6 (40%)	1 (7%)	4(27%)	0(0%)	3.66
	M	3(20%)	5 (33%)	2(13%)	2(13%)	0(0%)	3.40
17. Making musical advertisement was pleasurable.	F	3(20%)	6 (40%)	1 (7%)	5(33%)	0(0%)	3.46
	M	4(27%)	6 (40%)	2(13%)	3(20%)	0(0%)	3.73
18. Acting out the musical advertisement which we made in class was one of my favorite activities.	F	7(47%)	4 (27%)	2(13%)	2(13%)	0(0%)	4.06
	M	6(40%)	5 (33%)	3(20%)	1 (7%)	0(0%)	4.06
19. Listening to the sounds of nature on an audio file in order to describe it could improve my listening ability.	F	2(13%)	4 (27%)	3(20%)	6(40%)	0(0%)	3.13
	M	3(20%)	3 (20%)	3(20%)	6(40%)	0(0%)	3.20
20. Going out to the nature and describing the nature was enjoyable.	F	2(13%)	3 (20%)	4(27%)	6(40%)	0(0%)	3.06
	M	3(20%)	3 (20%)	3(20%)	6(40%)	0(0%)	3.20
21. Having free discussion in the nature was inspiring.	F	6(40%)	6 (40%)	1 (7%)	2(13%)	0(0%)	4.06
	M	5(33%)	7 (47%)	2(13%)	1 (7%)	0(0%)	4.06
22. Reading outside was a very different activity we have ever had in our classes.	F	3(20%)	4 (27%)	3(20%)	5(33%)	0(0%)	3.33
	M	4(27%)	4 (27%)	2(13%)	5(33%)	0(0%)	3.46
23. Comparing and contrasting the pictures and objects helped me.	F	4(27%)	5 (33%)	3(20%)	3(20%)	0(0%)	3.66
	M	4(27%)	6 (40%)	3(20%)	2(13%)	0(0%)	3.80
24. Making an outline for a topic posed in the class was an active cooperative work to do.	F	2(13%)	6 (40%)	4(27%)	3(20%)	0(0%)	3.46
	M	2(13%)	5 (33%)	4(27%)	4(27%)	0(0%)	3.33
25. Watching videos was interesting especially when the teacher asked me to predict the next scene.	F	10(67%)	5 (33%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0(0%)	4.66
	M	9(60%)	6 (40%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0(0%)	4.60
26. Classifying objects based on the groups they belong to (with the time limitation as a match) was	F	4 (27%)	8 (53%)	2(13%)	1 (7%)	0(0%)	4.00
	M	5 (33%)	8 (53%)	2(13%)	0 (0%)	0(0%)	4.20

fun.

27. Listening to a story and doing critical thinking to get the conclusion was helpful.	F	9 (33%)	6 (40%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0(0%)	4.60
	M	8 (53%)	7 (47%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0(0%)	4.53
28. Retelling stories to my friend was helpful to promote my listening abilities.	F	7 (47%)	8 (53%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0(0%)	4.46
	M	6 (40%)	9 (60%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0(0%)	4.40
29. Participating in a debate was of great help to improve my listening abilities.	F	10 (67%)	5 (33%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0(0%)	4.66
	M	10 (67%)	5 (33%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0(0%)	4.66
30. Giving oral presentation was very effective in listening skills.	F	9 (60%)	6 (40%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0(0%)	4.60
	M	8 (53%)	7 (47%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0(0%)	4.53
