Examination of the role of family socio-economic status and parental education in predicting English as a foreign language learners’ receptive skills performance

Reza Abbasian¹, Bahram Hadian¹* and Mehdi Vaez-Dallili¹

Abstract: Although non-native English speakers have been defined as a single distinct group in the most research literature, it has been relatively recently argued that they extensively vary in socio-cultural background, socio-economic status (SES), and parental education background wherein they grow cognitively. The present research, therefore, was designed to investigate the potential role of SES and parental education background in predicting Iranian English as a foreign language (EFL) learners’ performance on reading and listening comprehension tasks. A non-experimental, correlational design was adopted and data were gathered from a total number of 300 Iranian senior high school EFL learners. Reading and listening comprehension was examined via a modified TOEFL reading comprehension subtest and a short listening test. The results indicated that correlations between the learners’ SES and parental education background as well as between their reading and listening comprehension scores were meaningful statistically. Furthermore, based on multiple regression calculations, it was found that the highest parental education level was the strongest predictor of

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PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

In much of the research, non-native English learners have been considered as a single, distinct population, despite their wide diversity in terms of socio-economic status, sociocultural backgrounds, and educational and familial contexts in which they develop cognitively. The present study investigated potential relationships between Iranian EFL learners’ L2 reading and listening comprehension with their parents’ socio-economic status (SES) and educational background (PEB). The results indicated statistically significant correlations between the learners’ L1-related non-linguistic variables (i.e., SES and PEB) and their L2 listening and reading comprehension. Moreover, it was found that the parents’ SES and PEB were the strongest predictors of the learners’ listening and reading comprehension. This study has some implications for both teachers, to have a better picture of factors involved in L2 academic reading and listening comprehension and understand differences among EFL students, and curriculum designers and administrators, to provide services that best accommodate groups of students.
listening and reading comprehension. Implications for policies and practices were discussed.

Subjects: Language & Linguistics; Language Teaching & Learning; English

Keywords: First language literacy-related resources; second language reading comprehension; second language listening comprehension; socio-economic status; English as a foreign language

1. Introduction

Wide-ranging questions from various perspectives have been raised in the research domain of second language acquisition (SLA), investigating how individuals acquire the ability to converse in a non-native language (Saville-Troike & Barto, 2016). Learning a second/foreign language has been shown to be dependent on different parameters and interactions among them (Sanz, 2005). These parameters highlight this momentous fact that some people are better than others in second language (L2) learning (Gass & Selinker, 2001). Learner-external variables include quality and quantity of input and output as well as interactions among them whereas learner-internal attributes consist of cognitive mechanisms, age, motivation, and so on. This discussion is in line with that from “an individual’s eye view” stepping stones which induce the impression of expected regular activities and habits forming a passageway for their progress.

The above figure of speech emphasizes human development in his cultural context (Weisner, 2002), and the unification of psycho-cultural models with activity ones highlights the family context as well (Whiting & Whiting, 1975). The effects of these variables on each other have been stated in many experimental studies exploring the variability of learning contexts and their influence on L2 development (Collentine, 2009). Yet, it is conventionally believed that all language learners can learn a language to some extent by one means or another, irrespective of existing variances (Johnson, 2017). Accordingly, sufficient language exposure guarantees language learning. As it is stated, SLA is described through input and learners’ intention to use L2 for the same purpose (Krashen, 1981).

However, the potential facilitating effects of input, interaction, and other socio-psychological variables have not been taken into consideration. Research has demonstrated that parameters including gender, first language (L1), culture, birth country, as well as academic success contribute to English language acquisition (Cummins, 2000; Deci & Ryan, 1980; Hidi & Harackiewicz, 2000). Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the potential role of socio-economic status (SES) and parental education background in predicting Iranian English as a foreign language (EFL) learners’ performance on reading and listening comprehension tasks.

2. Eco-cultural theory of human development and second language acquisition (SLA)

The eco-cultural theory concentrates on the cultural setting, in which human development occurs (Weisner, 2002). Contexts and activities closest to the family area, especially at the early stages of life, directly affect individuals’ development (Weisner, 2005). Routines and activities in the family, therefore, offer expected patterns along their developmental path while the surrounding cultural community brings significance to regular family endeavors. People become engaged in events and routines in the surrounding cultural community as they move along a path through their childhood and teenagehood. Certain properties that are central for people’s development, in particular through human cultures, encompasses child care, school work, work cycles, and family subsistence, the role of fathers and brothers as well as that of women and girls in the society, health and demographic characteristics, children’s play and play groups, division of labor by sex and age, as well as threats to safety (Weisner, 2002). Furthermore, a context-level pattern that takes into account the setting, where families have to adapt to changes or static economic and environmental standards is the eco-cultural theory in principle.
Similarly, many studies in the field of SLA has been lately dedicated to identifying psychological, biological, and social elements to pinpoint variability among language learners regarding their success and acquisition rates (Horwitz, 2010). Many empirical investigations, examining the dynamics of learning contexts and their impact on L2 development, have addressed the interactions of these variables and their joint impact (Collentine, 2009). Surely, the question of whether the present study can thoroughly explain such a variability has interesting implications.

Research reveals that factors such as gender, first language, birth country, culture, and academic success contribute to English language acquisition (Cummins, 2000; Deci & Ryan, 1980; Hidi & Harackiewicz, 2000). However, it appears that current English language development programs are not intended to address all these elements. It should be pointed out that only few studies have focused on the social context, in which L2 learners learn a new language, especially in EFL contexts. Even fewer studies have integrated SLA and learners’ social, intellectual, and physical development at the same period of time. Moreover, without consideration of learners’ families and cultural background as well as their social and cognitive development, any interpretation of their language learning behavior will remain incomplete. The current study aimed to classify the main factors contributing to English language learning in Iran, as there has been no systematic research to date in this regard. The study also intended to provide valuable empirical data by specifically examining the L2 acquisition process in Iranian EFL learners during early adulthood. By taking these critical issues into account, the current research attempted to answer questions associated with the interaction of various demographic factors and cultural diversity in SLA in the EFL context of Iran.

2.1. Parental education role in second language acquisition (SLA)

Evidence in supporting the theory of first language (L1) acquisition states that L1 learners benefit greatly in the process of learning their first language through “modified caretaker talk” or “motherese” (Snow & Ferguson, 1977). For the benefit of young children, it is a common practice that teachers in early childhood classrooms are encouraged to use a kind of language that parallels that used by mothers speaking to their young children at home. It is also believed that there is a complex system of rules, often referred to as universal grammar, that governs the learning process of a language, be it L1 or L2.

Therefore, all language learners tend to follow the same route in SLA. In order to address the issue of cultural diversity that might affect L2 children whose mother tongue and cultural background are totally different from those of the mainstream, more recent research has investigated ways and patterns, in which language-minority children are raised in home care situations and school environments. Findings from previous studies have suggested that, in addition to learners’ individual differences, differences between home and culture bring the students some difficulties and arouse frustration posed by both parents and teachers among them (Cummins, 2000). Hence, documentation of how language-minority children are taught to socialize in a certain culture and their particular ways of using and learning a language will help teachers and the general public gain a better understanding of difficulties students encounter at school. Under the guidance of the findings from studies on minority culture, teachers of dominant cultural backgrounds can be better prepared to adjust their teaching approaches to meet the needs of language-minority children, facilitate their L2 learning, and at the same time promote their literacy.

2.2. Family socio-economic status (SES) and L2 learning

Family SES is one of the major resources, which may stand up for the children in a household. Research has found that SES has a significant effect on individuals’ performance on L2 receptive skills. Children together with younger language learners, for instance, from wealthier families had greater performance in reading (Chiu & McBride-Chang, 2010), and those with highly educated parents reached higher academic achievement as well as a high level of reading comprehension (Kirby & Hogan, 2008). Silva, Verhoeven, and Leeuwe’s research (2011) showed a particular instance of the role of family SES in reading attainment. Their outcomes revealed that family SES was predictive of vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension among fifth-grade students in Peru.
After obtaining the socio-cultural data using a questionnaire filled out by the students with the assistance of their teachers or parents, the participants were tested using cognitive measures. Socio-cultural parameters considered in the study included SES, gender, intellectual maturity, and home literacy environment. SES was directly correlated with reading comprehension, as well as to vocabulary, which was a major reading comprehension predictor. This result revealed that not only is SES correlated with vocabulary, but it also affects reading comprehension. Kirby and Hogan (2008) further observed that family SES had a significant impact on distinguishing between poor and good listeners and readers. They showed that L2 reading and listening performance may be related to high family SES. It is apparent from the investigations mentioned above that family SES is strongly associated with listening and reading. Research on monolinguals has discovered close associations between reading achievement and family SES, and the finding has been verified in various counties (Chiu & McBride-Chang, 2010). Despite the importance of these variables in predicting L2 receptive skills, their implications in policies and practices have not been researched yet. Furthermore, there has been no unique systematic study conducted in Iran in this regard. The facts from the current research, thus, will be applied to realize how Iranian EFL learners’ SES and parental education background interact with their L2 listening and reading comprehension. The current research is founded on the following research questions:

1. Is there any significant relationship between family SES and Iranian EFL learners’ listening scores?
2. Is there any significant relationship between family SES and Iranian EFL learners’ reading scores?
3. Is there any significant relationship between parental education background and Iranian EFL learners’ listening scores?
4. Is there any significant relationship between parental education background and Iranian EFL learners’ listening scores?

3. Methodology

3.1. Study context

English education in Iran has a key role in the educational system of the country. Formal English teaching in schools begins when students are aged between 11 and 13 years from junior high schools (Ansary & Babaii, 2003). Furthermore, all textbooks are provided under Iran’s Ministry of Education supervision. As Borjian (2013) claims, there have been some roles defined for ELT programs in post-revolutionary Iran (1979–1988) to primarily combat ‘the west linguistic imperialism’. Further, Borjian (2013) states that education, particularly English education, is the first domain aiming at promoting the Islamic Revolution’s philosophies and is applied as a “means to impose the state’s top-down ideological and religious beliefs upon the people of the country” (p. 66). As far as ELT education is concerned, a higher priority is given to improving English reading skill to an adequate level to be capable of reading scientific texts in order to achieve economic, industrial, and agricultural self-sufficiency in particular (High Council of Cultural Revolution [HCCR] 2002, p. 3). Nevertheless, this one-dimensional emphasis on learners’ abilities to read has caused considerable criticism because the above-hinted targets have not been achieved adequately (HCCR, 2002, p. 3). As a consequence, the change in the focus of the English language education policy in the country is accompanied with the main emphasis on other abilities (Hayati & Mashhadi, 2010).

3.2. Research design

A correlational, non-experimental, ex-post facto design was applied in the current study (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2017). Correlational investigations are suitable to find associations between variables (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). This quantitative research aimed to examine whether an association existed between Iranian EFL learners’ family SES and parental educational background with their listening and reading comprehension. The research also sought to find out whether a prediction
equation could be established based on the two aforementioned parameters. The attempt to find the relationship between the variables as well as their possible prediction thus derived us to carry out a quantitative research study.

3.3. Instrumentation
The following instruments were applied to obtain the pertinent quantitative data in order to answer the research questions set previously in this work. More specifically, data were collected regarding SES and parental education background as well as L2 learners’ current proficiency level together with their performance on reading and listening comprehension.

3.3.1. Family socio-economic status (SES) and parental educational background
The data stored in schools’ databases were applied in this research. Each school had a database prepared by the Ministry of Education to collect information about students. The school superintendent secured written permission to employ the database. For all students attending school between autumn 2016 and spring 2018, the assistant superintendent prepared de-identified student information. The data consisted of first language, age at English language learner (ELL) identification, gender, SES, and parental education background, such as parents’ highest education level, employment status of parents, and date of achieving academic fluency. To maintain confidentiality, students’ names, identification numbers, and other personal information were not extracted.

3.3.2. Oxford quick placement test (QPT) version 2
The paper and pen (P&P) version of the Quick Placement Test (QPT) was run to group the learners at the advanced language proficiency level and standardize them in the current research. The test is made up of two parts. Basic level applicants take part I, and higher skill students take part II. According to Geranpayeh (2003), normal reliabilities are almost 0.9 for the 60-item test and 0.85 for the 40-item one. The reliability value obtained in the current research was 0.77, that is an acceptable value based on Edmonds and Kennedy (2017).

3.3.3. Modified TOEFL reading comprehension subtest (TOEFL-RBC)
The TOEFL reading comprehension test used in the current research was a homogenized multiple-choice reading comprehension test (Schedl, Thomas, & Way, 1995). It is a 2006 institutional TOEFL reading comprehension subtest, which consists of five passages demonstrating general academic issues followed by 30 questions. By picking up one from multiple choices, the applicants answered the questions. The internal consistency was reported by Qian and Schedl (2004) to be 0.93 in the version for adult EFL learners. The administration time was around 20 minutes. In the current sample, the internal consistency of the scale was estimated to be 90. It should also be pointed out that difficult words were in bold type and were clarified in the margin to assist the participants with reading. Inter- and intra-rater reliability coefficients were calculated for the reading comprehension test. Kappa values of 0.40 reflect satisfactory reliability; values above 0.70 indicate excellent reliability. The inter- and intra-rater reliability values of 74.6 and 78.8 were respectively obtained in the present study for the reading comprehension test.

3.3.4. Measuring listening comprehension
3.3.4.1. Short listening test. To evaluate the participants’ skills, a short listening test was conducted, which consisted of a short conversation with two turns lasting less than 10 seconds. It was a listening comprehension test at the sentence level. The participants were asked some factual questions regarding the exchange and inferential content of the meanings implied and/or derived from context. For example, an implied question was on where the conversation is made happening following the exchange between a shop attendant and a customer. An example of context-driven questions was addressing the meaning of “I hope you have better luck than I did!”, which requires a clear context in order to be thoroughly comprehended. The test was similar to the listening comprehension test used in TOEFL PBT. Learners listen to an almost 10-second conversation between a female and a male speaker, which is followed by a multiple-choice question. In this
research, Kappa values of 71.5 and 81.8 were respectively obtained for inter- and intra-rater reliability in the listening comprehension test.

3.4. Participants
The participants included Iranian senior high school students. The study design needed at least 300 learners of English language (Dörnyei, 2007). The age of the participants varied from 15 to 18 years, with their first language being Persian. As part of the high school diploma program, they were studying English as a foreign language during the research period. Purposeful non-random sampling was used to concentrate on a specific group of students as a homogenous group, according to placement/pretest test scores. Initially, the students were grouped at a level on the basis of their placement test for reading and listening. The participants with Z scores of one standard deviation above and below the mean were selected.

3.5. Procedures

3.5.1. Data collection
The following processes were carried out to collect the data. The students were met throughout their regular English language sessions and asked to take part in the study. The participating students were ensured that all their information would be kept confidential (using a code-number system) and that the study would not influence either their course grades or their further education in university. They were also requested to read and sign a form that allowed the collected data to be applied only for specific research purposes. The respondents were further given detailed instructions concerning how to complete and return the questionnaires and assessments. Then, they were requested to read the prepared participant information section. Notices were added to the questionnaires, explaining the research purpose and assuring participants’ confidentiality of any provided information. Over a period of four months, the questionnaires were collected. Since the sample was widely distributed across time and space, the study period was long enough.

3.5.2. Data analysis
To analyze the obtained data, the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS v. 24.0) was applied. The collected data were screened for accuracy on the basis of four procedures prepared by Trochim (2005). The answers were more precisely scrutinized for their readability and legibility, completeness, as well as presence of all pertinent contextual data (e.g., data, place, time, researcher). In this way, it was possible to recognize any problems or errors. Measurement quality is a major issue in most social research. Ensuring that there are no inaccuracies in the data collection process would help to ensure the overall quality of future evaluations. Then, the data were entered into the computer to be analyzed, and once finished, the raw data were transformed into variables. Fong (2003) suggested three phases in data analysis.

- Describing data (descriptive statistics)
- Defining associations between variables (correlation analyses)
- Scrutinizing associations between variables (multiple regression)

Over descriptive statistics, the mean, standard deviation, medium, mode, minimum, maximum, and standard error of each incessant variable were defined, and also frequency counts of all distinct variables were conducted. Moreover, correlational analyses were applied to examine potential associations between the variables. Finally, to observe the comparative contribution of the predictor variables on L2 listening and reading comprehension, the data were examined via multiple regressions (Larson-Hall, 2015). In the order mentioned according to hypotheses and earlier studies, the predictor variables were moved in the regression.
3.6. Confidentiality
For this quantitative correlational research, the data will be maintained for seven years on a removable media device, which will be locked and stored in a cabinet and will be only available to the researcher. After this period, the data will be destroyed. The collected data did not violate the schools’ privacy policy since informed consent was sought in every case.

4. Results
The major goal of the current research was to study and establish potential associations between SES and parental education background with Iranian EFL learners’ performance on listening and reading comprehension tasks. To further examine the comparative contribution of the aforementioned parameters to L2 listening and reading comprehension, the data were scrutinized via multiple regressions (Larson-Hall, 2015). The variables were operationalized via the following factors: parents’ highest education level, parents’ employment status, and date of achieving academic fluency. For suitability between distributions of the variables and the regression analysis notions, all the scores were tested for the independent and dependent variables prior to running statistical analysis. All the data sets were then tested for the hypothesis behind multiple regressions. Assuming that all the assumptions were true, the major part of the regression analysis was conducted. For all the variables, the means, standard deviations, and inter-correlations were also obtained.

4.1. Family socio-economic status (SES) as a predictor of listening and reading comprehension
This question aimed to investigate whether and how family SES variables (i.e., parents’ highest education level, parents’ employment status and date of achieving academic fluency) could act as the predictors of L2 listening and reading comprehension. Table 2 provides the means, inter-correlations, as well as standard deviations,

Moreover, the listening comprehension model is summarized in Table 3. The table presents R, R2, adjusted R2, and the estimated standard error, which may be applied to decide how well a model of regression fits the data.

The value of $R = 0.520$, according to Table 3, reflected the prediction quality of listening comprehension via the predictor variables that were parents’ highest education level, parents’ employment status, and date of achieving academic fluency. The determination coefficient (R2) was 0.425 that was the variation proportion accounted for by the model of regression below and above the mean model. As shown, the value of $R^2 = 0.425$ indicated that the independent parameters clarified 42% of the listening comprehension variability. Finally, the F-ratio related to ANOVA shown in Table 4 examined whether the general regression model was a good fit for the data. As indicated in the table, the independent variables predicted listening comprehension meaningfully, i.e. $F (4, 195) = 3.420$ and $p < 0.005$ (the model of regression was a good fit for the data).

### Table 1. The Participants’ Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency (%)</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>125 (41.6%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>175 (58.4%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant age (years)</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>7.91</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school</td>
<td>300 (100%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Thus far, it was found that family SES variables predicted Iranian EFL learners' listening scores significantly. Table 5 reports unstandardized coefficients in order to answer the second part of the research question (i.e., what elements have the most powerful impact?).

The unstandardized coefficients specified the extent to which the dependent variable differed within an independent one while all the independent variables remained constant. The most pivotal element to predict listening comprehension then was revealed to be parents' highest education level. The unstandardized coefficient, B1, for parents' highest education level was equal to 2.669. This means that parents’ highest education level predicted 2.669% of listening comprehension scores. To predict listening comprehension from SES parameters, a multiple regression was run. These variables predicted listening comprehension statistically significantly, i.e. F (3, 185) = 1.419 and p < 0.005, R2 = 0.349. Moreover, all the parameters were added to the prediction significantly (p < 0.05). The other research question, on the other hand, was concerned with the role of family SES variables in predicting Iranian EFL learners' reading scores. The three factors of family SES were regarded as reading comprehension predictors. The reading comprehension model is summarized in Table 4.12 that presents the values of R, R2, adjusted R2, and the estimated standard error, which may be applied to decide how well a model of regression fits the data.

Based on Table 4.12, the value of R was 0.807, indicating the prediction quality of reading comprehension via the predictor variables. Moreover, the determination coefficient (R2) was
0.620, indicating the variation proportion accounted for by the model of regression below and above the mean model. As observed from the value of $R^2 = 0.620$, the independent parameters clarified 62% of the reading comprehension variability. The F-ratio in the ANOVA table (i.e., Table 4.13.) tested whether the whole regression model was a good fit for the data. The table further indicates that the independent parameter associated with family SES meaningfully predicted reading comprehension, i.e. $F (5, 195) = 18.42$ and $p < 0.005$ (the model of regression was a good fit for the data).

It was shown thus far that family SES variables predicted Iranian EFL learners’ reading comprehension scores. The unstandardized coefficients are presented in Table 6 to answer the second part of the research question (i.e., what parameters have the most powerful effect?).

Therefore, the strongest factor in predicting reading comprehension was again found to be parents’ highest education level. The unstandardized coefficient, $B_1$, for parents’ highest education level in relation to reading comprehension was equal to 0.79. To predict reading comprehension from the SES parameters, a multiple regression was performed. Statistically, the parameters anticipated reading comprehension significantly, i.e. $F (3, 175) = 22.41$, $p < 0.005$, and $R^2 = 0.49$. Further, all the parameters were meaningfully added to the prediction, i.e. $p < 0.05$. Overall, these findings contribute to the directional hypothesis that family SES significantly and positively predicts Iranian EFL learners’ reading scores.

5. Discussion

This research mainly aimed to explore potential correlations between SES with L2 reading and listening comprehension. Studies propose that a host of demographic elements and literacy-related resources can account for success levels of ELLs and yet, as discussed earlier, there has been practically no research validating the efficacy of a more comprehensive screening procedure toward this end. Using Bronfenbrenner’s bioecological theory as a lens to examine Iranian EFL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.473</td>
<td>3.264</td>
<td>2.345</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest education level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.669</td>
<td>0.217</td>
<td>4.570</td>
<td>0.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening Employment status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.014</td>
<td>0.041</td>
<td>0.663</td>
<td>0.444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date of achieving academic fluency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-0.584</td>
<td>0.563</td>
<td>-1.256</td>
<td>0.039</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Dependent Variable: Listening Comprehension

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>0.807$^a$</td>
<td>0.620</td>
<td>0.491</td>
<td>2.346</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Predictors: (Constant), parents’ highest education level, parents’ employment status, date of achieving academic fluency
learners’ development, this research uniquely contributed to the literature in several significant ways. As receptive abilities, listening and reading comprehension are key academic abilities among high school learners in EFL contexts, particularly in Iran, since L2 learners have great difficulties with such abilities (Grabe & Stoller, 2013; Rost, 2013).

The results of the research indicated that associations were statistically meaningful between the Iranian EFL learners’ SES with L2 reading and listening comprehension. Furthermore, the findings specified that in the EFL context of Iran, parents’ highest education level was the most powerful predictor of reading and listening comprehension. The results also revealed that parental educational priorities and social status affected L2 literacy skills (Bialystok, 2001, 1997). For example, the demographic profiles of the families in this analysis were comparable with the data on the SES variables found in the literature (Ballantyne, 2008). In the same vein, earlier studies have shown that ELLs of lower socio-economic backgrounds are unlikely to achieve higher levels of academic achievement and English language proficiency (Hakuta, Butler, & Witt, 2000; Halle, Hair, Wandner, McNamara, & Chien, 2012).

Other research has also revealed that EFL students whose parents have low educational backgrounds are at greater risk of academic failure (Halle, et. al 2012). Although the results mostly agree with the earlier literature, the difference between them is likely associated with inadequate sample size and stratification within this group. Furthermore, in agreement with the results of this study, Spolsky (1989) discussed that the social context of an L2 learner, comprising their socio-economic prestige, may anticipate their L2 skills. Correspondingly, different researches on L1 literacy-related resources and socio-economic elements as effective elements played a significant part in FLA or SLA development (Olshtain, Shohamy, Kemp, &

**Table 7. The ANOVA Results to Predict the Dependent Variable**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>106.053</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>61.513</td>
<td>24.420</td>
<td>0.000a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>55.314</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>2.813</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>351.367</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a) Predictors: (Constant), parents’ highest education level, parents’ employment status, date of achieving academic fluency

b) Dependent Variable: Reading Comprehension

**Table 8. The Estimated Model Coefficient to Predict Reading Comprehension**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>6.473</td>
<td>2.264</td>
<td>0.222</td>
<td>1.445</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest education level</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>0.317</td>
<td>0.238</td>
<td>2.580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Employment status</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.051</td>
<td>-0.328</td>
<td>0.673</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achieving academic fluency date</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>0.663</td>
<td>-0.328</td>
<td>-0.256</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dependent Variable: Reading Comprehension
Chatow, 1990). This is why L2 learners from middle and high socio-economic families may have a powerful sense of learning English language for different objectives, including forthcoming research and international communication. However, L2 learners from a lower socio-economic class cannot continue their tertiary education, and international relationship and touring around the world cannot be among their aims in learning English as a foreign language. Additionally, the present findings are also in line with Duncan and Seymour (2000) results for literacy acquisition of L1. They realized that lower SES elementary students would learn the knowledge of letter names, letter sounds, as well as word and non-word reading with one-year delay, as compared higher SES items.

Generally, these results evidently show the necessity for further focus on the role of scholars and practitioners concerning non-linguistic parameters in conjunction with linguistic parameters as teaching or elaborating on L2 receptive skills.

6. Implications for policies and practices and suggestions for further research
In the literature examining school success among ELL communities, this work determined numerous voids. The study also contributed to our knowledge of how schools and parents may best prepare ELLs in EFL contexts. It has important implications for parents, teachers, and school supervisors. Primarily, those in charge of schools ought to concentrate on nurturing parental participation in ELL families. One way to achieve this goal is to present more funds and available services to this group of students and their parents. After contributions are met and parents are involved in their students' emotional and social context, school teachers and administrators should assess available services they offer to ELL families to control whether schools sufficiently satisfy needs of this group; otherwise, schools should alter their services by providing further ways to help raise parents' awareness for autonomous involvement in school affairs. Moreover, supervisors and educators should concentrate on educating ELL parents to become significantly involved in children's growth. This confirm that schools are constructing strong coalitions with ELL families and appreciate each family's participation.

The findings of the present research significantly help literacy theorists flesh out a more comprehensive model of what it takes to make integrated understandings from multiple factors that influence L2 listening and reading comprehension. However, certain limitations of the study are also significant to note, which can be also regarded as grounding for further research. First, questions of causality were not sufficiently answered using the analyses provided in this work. The “causal modeling” approach could be used to help us further understand the role of non-linguistic variables in predicting L2 listening and reading comprehension and examine whether any moderating or mediating variable exists. Undoubtedly, it should be recognized that this specific approach is a method for testing notional relationships rather than discovering causes. Moreover, auxiliary modeling of hypothetical associations between these factors should rather examine structural equation models that apply latent variables instead of observed variables to prevent measurement errors as demanding to validate theory. Next, the results should be considered in context, not only by a sample of Iranian high school students, but also by specific materials presented to them. By considering other student populations, future studies testing complex relationships (directly and indirectly) between the assumed causal predictors with L2 listening and reading comprehension should hence investigate the generalizability of these findings. Finally, this was a cross-sectional research, which investigated ELLs in a specific period and its nature confined the causal statements. For instance, although the findings showed that SES and parental education background meaningfully predicted Iranian EFL learners' receptive skills performance, it cannot conclude that these variables will necessarily lead to higher L2 reading and listening comprehension among ELLs because all measures were obtained simultaneously. Future research ought to concentrate
on longitudinal analyses, which may better identify how one parameter contributes to another over time to disentangle certain causal matters.

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References


