

تأثير تقنيات القاعات الدراسية التفاعلية على مهارات الاستماع و الفهم لدى
متعلمي اللغة الانكليزية كلغة أجنبية في العراق

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The effect of interactive classroom technologies on listening and comprehension skills Among learners of English as a foreign language in Iraq

The effect of interactive classroom technologies on listening and comprehension skills Among learners of English as a foreign language in Iraq

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ملخص البحث :

يستكشف هذا البحث تأثير تقنيات القاعات الدراسية التفاعلية على مهارات الفهم الاستماعي لدى المتعلمين العراقيين الذين يدرسون اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. يركز البحث على فعالية هذه الأساليب في تحسين مهارات الاستماع، وتعزيز مشاركة الطلاب، وخلق بيئة تعلم داعمة. شارك في الدراسة 82 متعلماً عراقياً للغة الإنجليزية، تم تقسيمهم إلى مجموعتين: مجموعة تجريبية تستخدم أساليب التدريس التفاعلية، ومجموعة ضابطة تلتزم بالمناهج التقليدية التي تركز على المعلم، أظهرت النتائج أن المجموعة التجريبية حققت تقدماً ملحوظاً في مهارات الاستماع والفهم، مما يشير إلى تأثير الأساليب التفاعلية في تعزيز التعلم. كما لوحظت زيادة في مستوى المشاركة والتعاون بين الطلاب، بالإضافة إلى تصورات إيجابية للمتعلمين حول التقنيات التفاعلية المستخدمة، تشير الدراسة إلى أهمية اعتماد أساليب تعليمية تفاعلية في تدريس اللغة

الإنجليزية، حيث تسهم هذه الأساليب في تحسين الفهم الاستماعي وتعزيز التفاعل بين المعلم والطلاب. كما توفر الدراسة رؤى قيمة لمتعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية في العراق، وتقتراح آثارًا لتحسين ممارسات تعلم اللغة في سياقات مشابهة. بالتالي، فإن استخدام التقنيات التفاعلية يمكن أن يكون له تأثير كبير في تطوير مهارات اللغة لدى المتعلمين، مما يعزز فرصهم في النجاح الأكاديمي.

Abstract:

This research explores the influence of interactive classroom techniques on the listening comprehension skills of Iraqi learners studying English as a Foreign Language (EFL). It highlights the effectiveness of these methods in improving listening skills, fostering student engagement, and promoting a supportive learning atmosphere. A total of 82 Iraqi EFL learners participated in the study, divided into two groups: an experimental group that utilized interactive teaching methods and a control group that adhered to traditional teacher-centered approaches. The findings reveal that the experimental group demonstrated significant progress in their listening comprehension skills. Higher engagement, collaboration, and positive learner perceptions of interactive techniques were also noted. The study supplies valuable insights for EFL learners in Iraq and suggests implications for upgrading language learning practices in the same contexts.

1. Introduction:

English Language competency has become essential in today's worldwide society for communication, education, and employment prospects. As a result, teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) in schools and colleges has become a top priority in many nations, including Iraq. However, learning and teaching English in Iraq is faced with unique challenges, such as restricted resources, large class sizes, and traditional teaching approaches that often prefer rote learning over effective student engagement. These challenges prevent the development of crucial language skills, particularly listening comprehension. Listening comprehension, as a major component of language acquisition, gives an opportunity for learners to understand spoken language, put up with instructions, and engage in significant conversations. It is a skill that needs active participation, problem-solving, and cognitive engagement. The dynamic and intricate nature of listening comprehension may not be sufficiently addressed by conventional techniques like lecture-based training. Alternative teaching strategies that encourage student engagement, critical thinking, and active learning is therefore required.



Group discussions, role-plays, task-based learning and multimedia integration are just a few of the interactive classroom strategies that have been shown to improve language learning results. By encouraging students to actively interact with the course material and one another, these strategies foster a more dynamic and cooperative learning environment. . This study examines the effects of interactive techniques on the development of listening comprehension and language competency among Iraqi EFL learners.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Listening Comprehension in EFL Contexts for EFL Learners

Listening comprehension is frequently regarded as one of the most difficult language skills. Successful listening comprehension requires a number of subskills, such as paying attention, decoding, interpreting, and synthesizing information (Vandergrift and Goh, 2012). Learners must be able to identify and process spoken words in real time, frequently under time pressure, and with a variety of accents and speech patterns in order to comprehend spoken language. This calls for cognitive and metacognitive abilities in addition to language proficiency (Rost, 2011). Listening comprehension may be affected by several factors, such as the learner's vocabulary knowledge, the complexity of the audio input, and their familiarity with the topic. Learners are frequently exposed to a restricted variety of listening resources in a typical classroom settings, such as recorded conversations or teacher lectures, which may not be authentic or varied enough to foster the development of comprehensive listening skills (Goh, 2014).

2.2 The types of listening

Listening, as an essential language skill, includes various types that cater to different contexts and purposes. The following are the elementary types of listening:

1. Discriminative Listening

Discriminative listening is the most essential type of listening and involves the capacity to distinguish between different sounds. This skill is pivotal for language learners, as it helps them differentiate phonemes, stress patterns, intonation, and other auditory signals in a foreign language. It serves as the foundation for higher-level listening skills (Brown, 2007).

2. Comprehensive listening

The goal of comprehensive listening, sometimes referred to as active listening, is to comprehend spoken language. In order to understand this

kind of listening, students must analyze not just the words but also the tone, context, and non-verbal clues. Following directions, comprehending lectures, and participating in discussions all require it (Rost, 2011).

3-Critical Listening

Assessing and analyzing the information being heard in order to ascertain its veracity, applicability, or significance, is known as critical listening. When performing jobs that call for making decisions, solving problems, or forming views, this kind of listening is crucial. EFL students, for instance, employ critical listening to ascertain the arguments or intents of the speaker during discussions or debates (Lynch, 2009).

4. Appreciative Listening

When people listen for pleasure or aesthetic pleasure—for example, when they listen to poetry, music, or stories—they are engaging in appreciative listening. According to Goh and Vandergrift (2012), this kind of listening can improve students' emotional attachment to the language they are learning as well as their cultural understanding.

5. Empathetic Listening

Understanding and sharing the speaker's emotions or viewpoints is a key component of empathic listening. Because it promotes emotional ties and clear communication, it is especially beneficial in social situations. This kind of listening aids in the development of interpersonal skills in the target language for EFL learners (Rost, 2011).

6. Selective Listening

Focusing on particular aspects of a message while disregarding unimportant details is known as selective listening. When students need to recognize important details or precise information, like listening for names, dates, or numbers in announcements or presentations, this ability is especially helpful (Brown, 2007).

2.3 Nature and significance of listening

Listening plays a vital role in daily communication. According to Byrne (1984, p. 78), communication involves a two-way process, as an idea cannot be effectively conveyed without someone to receive it. In the context of oral communication, listening represents the receptive process, serving as the foundation for building relationships, exchanging knowledge, and making individuals feel valued. Research by Temperly (1987), Oxford (1993), Rivers (1989), and Celce-Murcia (1995) highlights that listening comprises approximately 45% of total communication time, followed by speaking (30%), reading (16%), and writing (9%). Adrian (2002) was urged by the significance of communication in various facets of life to think of listening as the queen





of communication skills since better speakers are those who comprehend what they hear. Additionally, several studies have shown that Listening is a useful tool for social interaction. For example, social contact and even the majority of jobs involve the ability to listen and receive information, according to Smith, Finn, and Dowdy (1993). They contend that People are severely disadvantaged in society if they are unable to listen and engage in verbal communication. They go on to say that those with poor listening abilities would not be able to communicate in a social situation. Furthermore, according to Schilling (2002), listening is a crucial job skill since it minimizes mistakes and wasted time. Children who listen in the home grow up to be resourceful, independent, and capable of handling their own difficulties. Additionally, Johnson (1996) argues that all interactions and communication issues are resolved when someone is prepared to thinking or stop talking and start actually listening to others. Apart from its widespread importance, Listening plays a highly useful part in language learning and acquisition processes. It is believed that language is automatically learned by listening. Children acquire language by listening to and imitating the sounds they hear from their environment. Through this process, they develop their mother tongue and eventually engage in conversation, a capability that is absent in deaf children (IELP-II, 2002). This concept aligns with Terrell and Krashen's (1985) Natural Approach, which underscores the importance of listening in language acquisition. Nord (1985, p. 17) further elaborates, stating that learning a language involves "constructing a mental map of meanings" rather than merely mastering the ability to speak.

Therefore, listening exercises in the classroom ought to offer language input to the student, but language acquisition cannot start unless this input is understood at the appropriate level (Al-Hariree, 2004). Numerous scholars have attempted to investigate the critical role that hearing plays in language learning and acquisition. This significance is explained by Nord (1985), who states that Listening is the method of language acquisition. It provides the student with information to help them accumulate the knowledge required to use the language. The student can start talking once they have accumulated this knowledge. The foundation for the other language abilities is laid during the listening-only phase, which is a period of observation and learning. (Page 17) Hyslop and Tone (1988), Mee (1990), and Al Khuli (2000) emphasize that listening serves as the cornerstone for learning and is integral to all aspects of linguistic and cognitive development. Its influence extends throughout an individual's life, shaping both learning and communication processes, which are essential for achieving personal and professional success. Al

Khuli (2000, p. 58) asserts that "unless the learner hears accurately and understands correctly, they will not be able to respond adequately." Similarly, Smith, Finn, and Dowdy (1993, p. 142) highlight that deficiencies in this critical skill can significantly hinder a student's ability to comprehend and process new information effectively.

The following topics should be briefly discussed in order to comprehend the nature of listening:

1. Listening and Hearing

Hearing and listening differ significantly, as listening involves more than simply perceiving sound. Listening can be categorized as a receptive skill, an active skill, and a complex cognitive process. Unlike hearing, which is a passive physiological function, listening requires focused attention and mental engagement to interpret and understand the meaning of spoken language. A clear distinction between these two concepts is essential to fully grasp the multifaceted nature of listening. Many individuals mistake the terms "listening" and "hearing," according to Brown (2004, p. 72). He clarifies the distinction between the two, stating that listening is a learned behavior and hearing is only an experience. He goes on to say that Understanding the meaning of a written word is not the same as decoding it. He goes on to say that understanding the meaning of a written word is not the same as decoding it.

2-Listening as a receptive skill

The Two oral skills of any language are understood to be speaking and listening. Speaking is the receptive skill, and listening is the productive one. The reciprocal relationship between these two abilities is highlighted by Widdowson (1996), who states: It is absolutely true that speaking uses the aural modality and is active, or productive. As an example of use, it is thus a component of a reciprocal trade in which both production and reception are involved. Speaking effectively, in this view, requires both productive and receptive engagement. (Page 59)

3- Listening as an Active Skill

Effective listening is widely recognized as the preferred approach in applied linguistics and teaching methodology. Lapp and Anderson (1988, p. 16) challenge the outdated notion of the "listener as tape-recorder," highlighting the active nature of listening. Although the term "receptive" is often used to describe listening, it is misleading, as it does not imply passivity. As Discroll and Frost (1999, p. 70) argue, listening frequently demands the listener's readiness and active participation. To decode encoded messages accurately and respond appropriately, learners must



engage attentively and think critically as they listen, making listening a dynamic and collaborative process.

2.4 Interactive Techniques

Interactive techniques are designed to actively engage students in the teaching and learning process. Unlike traditional lectures, active learning involves methods where students participate in activities that require applying knowledge, discovering new concepts, and processing information. Meyers and Jones emphasize that active learning is based on two core assumptions: (1) learning is inherently an active process, and (2) individuals learn in diverse ways. While active learning is valuable, it is crucial to integrate it with clear content and objectives, as lectures still hold a significant place in education.

The core elements of active learning include listening, speaking, writing, reading, and reflecting. According to Bonwell and Eison, active learning involves several characteristics: students are engaged in more than just passive listening; they develop practical skills rather than merely absorbing information; they engage in higher-order thinking, such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation; they participate in activities like reading, discussing, and writing; and they reflect on their attitudes and values, promoting a deeper and more personal connection to their learning.

2.4 Classroom Interaction

Effective language learning requires classroom interaction because it gives students the chance to practice speaking, improve their language proficiency, and build knowledge together. Peer-to-peer conversations, group projects, teacher-student interactions, and whole-class activities are just a few of the ways that students might interact in the classroom. By assisting students in meaningfully interacting with the target language, these exchanges promote the growth of their speaking, listening, and comprehension abilities. Classroom interaction creates a learner-centered atmosphere where students actively engage and negotiate meaning, which is crucial for language learning, claims Ellis (2020).

Additionally, Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory highlights the importance of social interaction in cognitive development and proposes that cooperative learning and scaffolding from peers or teachers helps students reach higher comprehension levels. A supportive atmosphere that promotes risk-taking lessens language anxiety, and boosts motivation is also produced by effective classroom interaction (Richards & Rodgers,

2014). Therefore, encouraging interactive classrooms is essential to assisting EFL students in reaching their language learning objectives.

2.5 Interactive Classroom Techniques

In order to provide dynamic and captivating learning settings that improve language acquisition, interactive classroom techniques are crucial instruments in contemporary language instruction. These techniques shift from conventional lecture-based tactics to learner-centered approaches, emphasizing active student participation and collaboration. Think-pair-share exercises, role-plays, problem-solving exercises, group discussions, and the utilization of multimedia resources are a few examples. By giving students the opportunity to practice language in authentic settings, interactive techniques promote meaningful conversation and enhance fluency, comprehension and critical thinking abilities (Dörnyei, 2001). Furthermore, these techniques promote cooperative learning and peer engagement, both of which are essential components of Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, which emphasizes the role of social interaction in cognitive development. Teachers can accommodate a variety of learning requirements and styles while simultaneously increasing student motivation and engagement by combining these techniques. It has been demonstrated that interactive teaching methods enhance speaking and listening abilities, lessen language anxiety, and foster a positive learning atmosphere in the classroom (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

2.6 The importance of the interactive techniques

Interactive techniques play an important role in promoting language learning by enhancing active engagement, practical application of skills, and collaboration. Unlike traditional teacher-centered methods, interactive techniques like task-based learning, group discussions, role-plays, and multimedia integration make dynamic learning environments where students can actively participate and practice language in authentic contexts. These techniques enhance critical thinking, problem-solving, and peer interaction, which are essential for language acquisition, especially in skills like listening comprehension (Vandergrift & Goh, 2012). By preparing learners with opportunities to process information, negotiate meaning, and receive immediate feedback, interactive techniques not only improve linguistic competence but also boost motivation and confidence (Dörnyei, 2001). Moreover, these approaches align with contemporary educational theories, like Vygotsky's (1978) social constructivism, which confirms the importance of interaction and





collaboration in cognitive development, making them highly effective in EFL classrooms.

2.7 Interactive Techniques in Language Learning and Teaching

In language instruction, interactive methods place a strong emphasis on the value of active involvement, teamwork, and student engagement. According to Dörnyei (2001), these strategies include communicative language exercises including role-plays, group discussions, pair work, and task-based learning. In contrast to passive reception through reading or listening, research has demonstrated that interactive approaches improve language learning by giving pupils the chance to utilize language in real-world, meaningful circumstances (Vygotsky, 1978). Rahimi and Katal (2013) showed that task-based listening tasks improved students' listening comprehension abilities in the context of EFL instruction. Similarly, by involving students on a social, emotional, and cognitive level, interactive approaches promote more successful language learning, according to Shamim (2012). It has been demonstrated that group discussions and peer interactions, in particular, assist students in processing information more thoroughly and improving their language retention.

By employing interactive listening strategies, students can enhance their interpersonal skills and build strong connections with their conversational partners. Since listening occupies a significant portion of our communication time in language learning, it is essential for responding appropriately and effectively in daily interactions. This highlights the importance of interactive listening as a critical component of language learning and the exchange of ideas. To optimize students' listening skills, it is vital to implement a comprehensive and well-structured listening curriculum across academic disciplines, extending beyond the ESL classroom. Lecturers play a key role in modeling effective listening strategies and providing practice in authentic listening scenarios—those that learners are likely to encounter in real-world ESL contexts. To achieve this, they must consider each learner's background knowledge and preferences, ensuring a tailored and impactful approach. Listening is not a static skill but a dynamic process that evolves continuously, necessitating regular practice and adaptation.

2.8 Previous Studies on the Impact of Interactive Techniques on Listening Comprehension

Some studies have found out the impact of interactive techniques in improving listening comprehension skills. For example, Al-Jarf (2021)



investigated that gamification and interactive activities significantly developed learners' listening capacities and engagement inside the classroom. Sadeghi et al. (2014) also notified that group discussions and interactive listening assignments resulted in improved comprehension, especially in terms of detailed understanding and deduction skills. Yang (2010) explored the effects of interactive reading discussions and discovered that learners who engaged in these discussions showed significant improvements in their listening comprehension. Likewise, Zhang (2009) proved that the use of role-play and problem-solving tasks developed both listening and speaking skills between EFL learners. In spite of the positive results that were notified in these studies, many Teachers in Iraqi classrooms still use traditional, teacher-centered methods which restrict opportunities for student interaction and engagement. This research aims to fill this gap by investigating the impact of interactive techniques in improving listening comprehension in Iraqi EFL classrooms.

Research question

This research seeks to offer a thorough response to the following question:

-Does implementing classroom interactive techniques improves Iraqi EFL learners listening comprehension?

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research design

This research used a quasi-experimental design to examine the effect of interactive classroom techniques on the listening comprehension abilities of Iraqi EFL students.

3.2 Participants

The study implicated 82 Iraqi EFL learners from two 4th preparatory classes in one of the high schools in the Al Diwaniyah governorate. One of two groups was randomly selected from among the participants: an experimental group and a control group. Both groups were composed of intermediate-level English learners aged 16-18, with the same prior knowledge of English.

3.3 Instruments

Data for this study were gathered using the following instruments:

First, a standardized listening comprehension exam was used for the pre-test in the first week of the study to evaluate participants' knowledge of the major ideas, specifics, and conclusions of spoken texts. To maintain uniformity, the exam was administered to each participant in a comparable setting.





Second, in intervention was given to the experimental group, which included interactive classroom techniques such as role-plays, group discussions, task-based learning, listening to audio recordings followed by comprehension questions, and peer feedback sessions. These activities aimed to engage students actively. And improve their listening skills. Meanwhile, the control group followed traditional lecture-based lessons without interactive components.

Thirdly, a post-listening comprehension test was administered to both groups after the intervention. The test contained listening tasks that appreciated learners' ability to get the main ideas, details, and inferences from spoken texts.

Finally, a questionnaire was distributed to the experimental group to gather their feedback on the interactive methods used in the study. Both open-ended and Likert-scale questions regarding their educational experience were included in this study.

3.3 Data Collection

Data of the pre-test was collected and managed during the first week, and then some series of interactive listening activities were followed in the experimental group. The control group continued with traditional lecture-based lessons. A post-test was managed at the end of the intervention to check for any changes in listening comprehension. After the intervention, the experimental group was given the questionnaire in order to gather qualitative information about their experiences using interactive techniques.

3.4 Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using various methods. Descriptive statistics were applied to compare the pre-test and post-test results for each group. A pre-test was administered to determine whether there were significant differences in the listening comprehension scores between the pre-test and post-test for each group. An independent t-test was employed to compare the post-test scores of the experimental and control groups. Additionally, the questionnaire responses were analyzed to gain insights into students' perceptions of the interactive techniques and their impact on learning.

4. Results

4.1 Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores

The descriptive statistics for the pre-test and post-test scores are presented in Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores

Group	Pre-test mean	Pre-test SD	Post-test mean	Post-test SD
Control group	60.3	5.4	62.1	4.8
Experimental group	59.8	5.1	75.6	4.2

Interpretation:

The experimental group's post-test scores significantly outperformed their pre-test results, indicating that interactive strategies were successful in raising listening comprehension levels. However, there was a slight increase in the control group, suggesting that conventional approaches had less of an effect.

Table 2: Paired t-Test Results for Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores

Group	t-Value	df	p-Value
Control Group	1.12	29	0.275
Experimental Group	10.32	29	0.000

Interpretation:

There was no significant difference in the control group ($p = 0.275$), whereas the experimental group demonstrated a significant improvement ($p = 0.000$). This highlights that interactive techniques were more successful than traditional methods in boosting listening comprehension.

5. Discussion

The results in this study suggest that interactive classroom techniques have important positive impact on the listening comprehension skills of Iraqi EFL learners. In contrast to the control group, which used conventional teacher-centered techniques, the experimental group, which engaged in interactive listening exercises, showed notable gains in their listening comprehension scores. These findings support the findings of Vandergrift and Goh (2012), who contended that cooperative and communicative active listening exercises are more successful at enhancing listening abilities. The experimental group's task-based learning gave students the chance to interact with real language, work together, and solve problems—all of which are critical for improving listening comprehension. The increased student engagement that was noted during the intervention also upholds the idea that interactive techniques produce higher levels of active participation and motivation. As reported by Dörnyei (2001) states that interactive techniques enhance student-centered learning, which raises cognitive and emotional



participation in the learning process. This result is consistent with Sadeghi et al. (2014), who noted that interactive tasks in listening comprehension classes led to improved student performance.

6. Conclusion

This research highlights the role of interactive classroom techniques in enhancing the listening comprehension skills of Iraqi EFL learners. The notable improvement in listening comprehension scores in the experimental group underscores the value of integrating interactive techniques into language instruction. By enhancing student engagement, critical thinking, and collaboration, these techniques supply a more effective method of language learning compared to traditional methods.

7. Recommendations and Suggestions:

For future research, include investigating the long-term impacts of interactive techniques on language learning and exploring their effect on other languages skills. Additionally, further studies could consider how these techniques can be suited to different classroom settings and learner needs, especially in resource-limited contexts such as Iraq.

1-Use Interactive Techniques: To promote active learning and enhance listening comprehension, EFL teachers should incorporate role-plays, task-based activities, and peer cooperation into their lessons.

2-Professional Development: To successfully apply interactive techniques, teachers should undergo continual professional development. This should include workshops on technology integration, task design, and classroom management.

3-Address Barriers: By introducing smaller group activities and utilizing inexpensive, innovative teaching resources, schools can try to address issues like big class sizes and scarce resources.

4-Future Research: We should further investigate the long-term impacts of interactive approaches on the development of language abilities and listening comprehension. The effects of these strategies in different EFL contexts could potentially be studied.

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