

## Language Learning Curiosity and Performance in Receptive Skills: A Correlational Study Of Iraqi EFL University Students

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### Abstract

Exploration and knowledge-seeking are fundamentally driven by the natural urge of curiosity. individuals with high levels of interest will be driven to question areas of their learning that are still unclear, look for new information and knowledge, provide particular answers, and pay great attention in class, whereas individuals with low levels of curiosity would behave differently. As a result, the present study is conducted to investigate the correlation of EFL learners' language learning curiosity with their performance in receptive skills. Thus, the current study aims at finding out:

1. Iraqi EFL students' level of language learning curiosity and performance in receptive skills.
2. the correlations between Iraqi EFL students' language learning curiosity and performance in receptive skills.
3. the extent to which language learning curiosity and ambiguity tolerance contribute to EFL students' performance in receptive skills

A random sample of 375 students from Baghdad University, Tikrit University, and Wasit University's English language departments for the 2022/2023 academic year is selected.

In the current study two instruments are employed which are language learning curiosity questionnaire and a receptive skills test.

The results show that students have an accepted level of language learning curiosity and a low level of performance in receptive skills with positive significant correlations between EFL learners' language learning curiosity with their performance in receptive skills. Finally, conclusions are put forward.

**Key Words:** EFL, language learning curiosity, performance in receptive skills.

فضول التعلم اللغوي، تحمل الغموض والاداء في المهارات الاستقبالية لدى طلبة الجامعة العراقيين  
دارسي اللغة الانكليزية لغة اجنبية : دراسة ارتباطية

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### الملخص

إن الدافع الأساسي للربغة الطبيعية في الفضول هو الاستكشاف والبحث عن المعرفة. وهو يدفع الأفراد ذوي المستويات العالية من الفضول إلى التساؤل عن مجالات تعلمهم التي لا تزال غير واضحة، والبحث عن معلومات ومعارف جديدة، وتقديم أجوبة خاصة، وإيلاء قدر كبير من الاهتمام في الصف الدراسي. تهدف الدراسة الحالية لايجاد ما يلي:

- مستوى فضول التعلم اللغوي والأداء في المهارات الاستقبالية لدى الارتباط بين فضول التعلم اللغوي لدى الطلبة العراقيين دارسي اللغة الانكليزية لغة اجنبية وأدائهم في المهارات الاستقبالية.  
- إلى أي مدى يسهم فضول التعلم اللغوي لدى الطلبة العراقيين دارسي اللغة الانكليزية لغة اجنبية في مستوى الاداء في المهارات الاستقبالية.

تم اختيار 370 طالباً عشوائياً من طلاب السنة الثالثة في أقسام اللغة الطلبة العراقيين دارسي اللغة الانكليزية لغة اجنبية. الإنكليزية في كليات التربية في جامعة بغداد وجامعة تكريت، وجامعة واسط للسنة الأكاديمية 2023/2022.

وتستخدم الدراسة الحالية اداتين في تصميمها البحثي الارتباطي، تحقق منها وأقرها فريق من الخبراء. وهي كما يلي:

وتبين النتائج أن الطلاب يتمتعون بمستوى مقبول من فضول التعلم اللغوي ومستوى منخفض في الأداء في المهارات الاستقبالية. كذلك وجود ارتباطات إيجابية هامة بين فضول التعلم اللغوي والاداء في مهارات الاستقبال لدى الطلبة العراقيين دارسي اللغة الانكليزية لغة اجنبية ، وأخيراً، تم تقديم عدد من الاستنتاجات.

## I Introduction

### The Problem

In essence, language learning is a deliberate endeavor to foster language skills both within and outside of the classroom. The quality of the human resources that contribute to making progress in this respect is significantly improved by learning (Hardianti et al., 2020). The driving force behind learning at every stage of the educational process, regardless of the discipline being studied is curiosity. Those who advance their language learning are not content to absorb only what is previously known in that field. Instead, individuals progress learning when their own quest for information propels their investigation into unexplored territory (Kashdan et al., 2004). Most concepts of curiosity share in learning this need for information and exploration of the unknown (Loewenstein 1994), and it has been suggested that curiosity is a driving factor behind research and academic explorations that need endless hours to produce results (Bowler 2010).

Moreover, it has been stated that curiosity-driven learning is a key component of any effective educational system. Thus, curiosity contributes to increased academic performance by enticing people to dive deeper into the material they have learnt and the skills they achieve (Freeman et al, 2014).

Intense input sessions can enhance students' receptive skills, particularly listening and speaking, in producing effective language. Listening is crucial for meaningful communication and helps learners learn pronunciation, word stress, vocabulary, and syntax. It is essential for understanding messages conveyed through tone of voice, pitch, and accent. Language learning cannot improve without accurate information understanding, and communication cannot occur without listening abilities. Therefore, it is essential for students to develop these skills to produce more effective language. (Renukadevi, 2014).

With respect to reading, according to Hung and Ngan (2015), it is a fundamental ability that may help students become more proficient in their target language by enhancing their vocabulary, fluency, speaking, and writing. It makes sense to say that successful students need to have efficient reading abilities. Reading is an integral aspect of the learning process, wherein readers strive to comprehend the texts they are perusing through the acts of interpreting, synthesizing, analyzing, and selecting the essential information (Wiyasa, 2015). In reading, a number of skills and processes require effort of the reader to "anticipate text information, select key information, organize and mentally summarize information, monitor comprehension, repair comprehension breakdowns, and match comprehension output to the reader's goals." Grabe (2009: 15). However, because reading demands the simultaneous development of cognitive, social, and language skills, it can be a challenging task for inexperienced readers (Moreillen, 2008).

Numerous studies indicate that Iraqi EFL university students frequently experience some challenges while learning the language, which results in low EFL proficiency and typically subpar performance in receptive skills. As for listening, students face certain challenges due to a variety of variables, including their limited exposure to the target language, the less emphasis placed on paying attention to instructions in terms of the syllabus, the absence of a classroom atmosphere when it comes to technology tools that improve learning and the number of students. The aforementioned challenges, along with instructors' probable inability to efficiently teach listening, ultimately result in learners' dissatisfaction and failure to communicate, since they cause students to misunderstand the message (Dhumad & Kamil, 2022).

When it comes to reading, the majority of Iraqi EFL students don't have a high level of reading comprehension due to different possible reasons among which are difficulties processing text effectively, poor word recognition, decoding skills, and a lack of language proficiency (Al-Saadi, 2019).

The problem of the current study is reflected in attempting to understand how university students' curiosity in learning a new language relate to their ability to listen and read. Accordingly, the following questions are addressed by this study:

1. Is there any significant relationship between university students' language learning curiosity their receptive skills.
2. Does language learning curiosity contribute to student mastery of receptive skills?

### **Aims**

The current study aims at:

1. finding out EFL students' level of language learning curiosity and performance in receptive skills.
2. finding out the correlation between Iraqi EFL students' language learning curiosity with their performance in receptive skills.
3. finding out the extent to which language learning curiosity contribute to EFL students' performance in receptive skills.

### **Limits**

This study is limited to:

- Iraqi EFL third year university students at the colleges of education during the academic year 2022/2023.
- finding out the correlation of each of students' language learning curiosity with their performance in receptive language skills.

### **The Value**

This study is hoped to be of value to:

1. EFL learners to be aware of how their language learning curiosity may be correlated with their receptive skills, which may be helpful to improve their performance in listening and reading and support them to achieve their goals in learning English.
2. EFL teachers to highlight the role of this variable which is highly related to educational settings and should be stimulated and embedded on their previous arrangement. Teachers' attention may also be attracted to help students promote their mastery of listening and reading due to their significance in language learning.
3. Educators and researchers who may benefit from the findings of this study as a reference for results, conclusions, recommendations, and further studies of the variable involved in this study from different perspectives.
4. Curriculum and syllabus designers who may reconsider the course components to include learning opportunities and activities that may promote students' performance in receptive skills and their level of the variable covered in this study.

## II Literature Review

### Language Learning Curiosity

Different definitions have been given to the idea of curiosity as a fundamental aspect of humanity. Tulgar (2018) sites that it has been labeled as the urge to explain the unexpected by Piaget (1969), the drive to resolve uncertainty by Kagan (1972), and the want to obtain knowledge by Haughton (2014). Arnone, et al (2011) offer a more thorough definition of the term curiosity by suggesting that it is "a basic instinct, an innate mechanism that enabled intelligent species to learn about and master new things in their environments, promoting survival, use of tools, and ultimately technological advances," (p. 181).

Curiosity is regarded by certain academics as an inherent characteristic that manifests in individuals with varied degrees and intensities. As stated by Silvia (2017), some people "experience curiosity more often (frequency)," "more strongly when they feel it (intensity)," or "they need less input for curiosity to be sparked (sensitivity)" (p.103). There exists variability among individuals with regard to their inclinations toward curiosity and their reactions to situations with uncertainties (Litman & Jimerson, 2004; Litman, 2005).

### Curiosity and Language Learning

It nearly goes without saying that curiosity typically improves academic learning. In fact, two authors have gone so far as to say, "That we take curiosity to be

instrumental to and even essential for education, inquiry, and knowledge is confirmed by the fact that teachers frequently prefer techniques of instruction that excite curiosity...Stimulating curiosity is central to education and learning"(Schmitt and Lahordi, 2008).

Numerous studies have demonstrated a significant correlation between curiosity and academic success. According to Asmin (2020), there exists a strong correlation between curiosity and intellect, with the former playing a crucial role in academic success in general and language learning in particular. According to Schmitt and Lahroodi (2008), curiosity has a positive impact on academic learning, particularly in the context of pedagogy. The deliberate selection of instructional strategies by classroom teachers that arouse curiosity highlights the significance of interest as a tool and crucial component in education, research, and information acquisition. Therefore, it is necessary within the realm of academia, particularly in the context of the teaching and learning process.

Curiosity has a variety of links with different ideas on many different levels, especially in light of its relationship to language learning and, consequently, mastering new language skills (Tulgar, 2018). While Kashdan and Yuen (2007) highlight the connection between curiosity and success in language learning in general, White (1995) links curiosity to competence in particular. Arnone et al. (2011) discuss the relationship between curiosity and exploratory behavior in relation to the pursuit of learning a new language.

### **Curiosity and English Language Learning**

Language learning curiosity is specifically defined as "an affective-cognitive variable specific to language learning that reflects an inquiry-driven interest and desire to learn and use a foreign language" by Mahmoodzadeh and Khajavy (2018). They believe that language learners exhibit a particular kind of curiosity that produces and sustains interest, enjoyment, and willingness to engage in situations involving language learning because they are already familiar with at least one native language system in all its parts (Kellerman 1995). This is due to the fact that it is well-established that knowledge of a person's first or other languages is a useful resource in EFL/ESL research. They postulate that this irrational curiosity-based interest and intrinsic desire are intrinsically linked to language learning and can be conceptualized within the context of the I/D model of curiosity (Litman and Jimerson 2004). These two orientations are: (a) language curiosity as a feeling of interest (LCFI); and (b) language curiosity as a feeling of deprivation (LCFD).

Given that language learning is one of the most fundamental and specialized fields of education, it is possible to say that it has been influenced by the innate human attribute of curiosity. Language learning encompasses various components, including those pertaining to language and culture. It is an area where fostering

curiosity can serve as a motivating factor for language learners to persist in their extensive and challenging language studies. Despite its effects on second language acquisition, curiosity as a specific notion has not gotten much attention in language literature (Tulgar, 2018).

In contrast, it is noteworthy that the field of ESL/EFL has seen a notable shift in research focus from negative emotions experienced in the acquisition of a second or foreign language (e.g., anxiety, apathy, lack of motivation, disinterest, and grief) to a greater emphasis on investigating positive emotions (e.g., enjoyment, pleasure, excitement, motivation, curiosity, interest, and satisfaction) within the framework of the burgeoning positive psychology movement (MacIntyre and Mercer, 2014). According to Mahmoodzadeh and Khajavy (2018) investigating the manifestation of positive emotions, such as curiosity, in the context of language learning can provide valuable insights into psychological factors involved in this process.

In Gumartifa et al., (2022) six key factors that stimulate curiosity in language acquisition, promoting the learning process through various components are identified.

1. Novelty. Students have a rapid inclination towards engaging with new media as a means of enhancing their learning experience.
2. Change. Students may exhibit a strong attraction towards a shooting star that undergoes a sudden and striking alteration in the tranquil celestial expanse.
3. Surprise. Students may be surprised when a media file continues to play after they have pressed the stop button.
4. Uncertainty. The presence of uncertainty regarding the answer to a question may motivate a young individual to actively pursue an accurate response.
5. Conflict. Students may exhibit curiosity when faced with the decision of activating the forward button on a toy vehicle in order to secure victory in a race or, alternatively, using the reverse button to circumvent a barrier, despite the inherent incongruity between the concepts of progress and regression.
6. Complexity. One illustrative case is when a pupil exhibits a preference for a jigsaw puzzle consisting of ten pieces as opposed to a puzzle with just two components.

These factors have been considered and have an impact on academic success. Additionally, all learners must try to apply the design used to develop those factors. The desire and effort students put forth to advance their skills in particular scientific subjects is one of the elements that contribute to their interest. For

instance, compared to students with other majors, English department majors had superior language proficiency. As a result, a student's level of curiosity has an impact on their comprehension of English (Gumartifa et al., 2022).

### **Curiosity and English Language Receptive Skills**

Research on curiosity in language learning settings, particularly for second language acquisition, indicates that while curiosity has been studied extensively, more research is needed. Current studies suggest that curiosity significantly influences language learning, but further investigation is needed in second language learning as it allows learners to observe and immerse themselves in the target language's genuine setting (Tulgar, 2018).

Even though listening comprehension is critical to learning and assessing a foreign language, not much work has been done to identify and categorize the elements that influence or are associated with the complex process of comprehension. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to ascertain the relationship between university students' curiosity about language acquisition and their listening comprehension.

One crucial personal attribute that ought to be linked to reading comprehension is the reader's level of curiosity, which holds significant importance to learners when it comes to digesting a text. In accordance with the definition of curiosity, learners with high levels of curiosity explore their surroundings more thoroughly than those with low levels of interest do. Those learners with high levels of interest seem to be more alert and actively pursue knowledge while reading. Readers with high levels of interest are far more inclined to understand crucial connections and concentrate on the most important parts of sentences than readers with low levels of interest who are less actively interested in learning (Aulia, 2021).

The rational reasoning behind this assertion lies in the correlation between students' heightened curiosity and their greater interest in the learning process, as well as their heightened enthusiasm toward the tasks assigned by the instructor. According to Sibarani and Pulungan (2017), the cultivation of personal interests can enhance students' interaction with textual information, fostering a sustained interest in reading and a heightened ability to discern subsidiary ideas within the text. The learner's understanding of the text improves with increasing curiosity. Hence, a positive correlation exists between students' level of curiosity and their comprehension of the content (Dweek, 2006).

Students who exhibit low levels of interest tend to make less effort to attain optimal outcomes in the context of gaining reading comprehension. This phenomenon can be readily noticed throughout the process of teaching and learning. Individuals with lower degrees of curiosity tend to acquire lower levels of



reading comprehension compared to those with higher levels of curiosity. Therefore, it may be inferred that variations in students' levels of curiosity have an impact on their aptitude for reading comprehension (Gurning & Siregar, 2017).

### **Receptive Skills**

Receptive skills is a term used to refer to the two language skills of listening and reading (Niknahad & Mohamadi, 2021). The process of listening comprehension involves the listener receiving information and engaging in a step-by-step process to interpret the auditory input. This activity requires the listener to integrate their background knowledge with the information presented in the listening text (Tabeei et al., 2013). According to Zare-ee (2007), reading is a receptive "psycholinguistic process" that starts with a writer's linguistic surface representation and ends with meaning that the reader creates. The majority of foreign language learners begin their process of learning a new language by observing, reading, and accumulating linguistic experience (Yasir and Abbas, 2022).

#### **Listening Skill**

Numerous researchers have described the listening idea. According to Underwood in Altun (2023), listening is "the activity of paying attention to and trying to get meaning from something we hear" (p. 1). The capacity to identify and comprehend what others are saying is known as listening, according to Howatt & Dakin (cited in Nurhayani, 2019). This process entails the listener's knowledge of the speaker's grammar and vocabulary, as well as their understanding of the accents and pronunciations of the speaker. These actions ought to be simultaneous for the listener.

Based on phonological variations (enunciation, pronunciation, accent, etc.) delivered at a pace determined by the speaker, Vandergrift (2011) contends that listening is a particularly complex cognitive skill because listeners must process discourse while attending to new input. Moreover, they must segment the input message into meaningful chunks where the word limits are not always obvious, as in reading content.

As stated by Gilakjani and Ahmadi (2011) "In terms of language teaching, listening refers to an activity that allows students to understand a spoken language. It is the process of receiving what the speaker states, understanding and expressing meaning, reasoning the meaning and giving a response, and lastly, generating meaning through participation, imagination, and understanding" (p. 978).

#### **Reading Skill**

According to Widdowson (1979), reading is the "process of getting linguistic information via print.". Reading encompasses various cognitive processes such as guessing, predicting, checking, and self-questioning. It requires the reader to

accurately recognise and pronounce words, possess language knowledge, and comprehend the meaning conveyed by the text. Additionally, reading involves the reader's ability to make educated guesses, perceive information, engage in psychomotor movements, and elicit emotional responses. It also relies on the reader's understanding of syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic aspects of language (Rahman, 2007).

Reading is typically understood to involve script recognition and letter vocalization. It entails the translation of symbols into sounds. However, reading is not just about understanding written language and speaking letters (Ghimire, 2009). Comprehending a passage or written text necessitates reading. It has to do with seeing, taking in, mentally grasping, and comprehending a passage or written language. As Sari stated (2020) reading is the process of deriving meaning from a text. Additionally, Linse (2005) notes that reading is a set of abilities that entails understanding and extrapolating meaning from the written word. Decoding (sounding out) the printed words and understanding what we read are equally necessary for reading. A complete understanding is necessary for this. Reading is the act of mentally securing and responding to a writer's message, which is expressed in written or printed symbols. Recognising words and understanding the author's thoughts are prerequisites for reading (Basnet, 2021).

### III Methodology and Procedures

#### Population and Sample

The term "population" refers to a group of people who share a particular trait (Creswell, (2012) as cited by Al saadi & Alwey, (2023)). The population of this study includes students at the departments of English at the colleges of education.

The sample is a subset of the target population that the researcher intends to analyze in order to draw conclusions about the target population as a whole (Fraenkel et al, (2009) as cited by Abed & Abbas, 2022). Only (375) 3<sup>rd</sup> year students who are randomly selected from the English Departments in the Colleges of Education of Baghdad, Tikrit, and Wasit Universities are included in the sample of the study.

#### Instruments

1. **Language Learning Curiosity Scale** is a self-report questionnaire. Depending on the interest - deprivation theory of curiosity (Litman and Jimerson 2004), literature and related scales, this scale is developed. The questionnaire consists of 25 items to cover two subscales of language curiosity as a feeling of interest, and as a feeling of deprivation.

2. For the purpose of assessing students' performance in listening and reading skills, a two-part test is developed by the researcher.

The first part of the test is devoted to assess students' performance in listening comprehension. Students will have the chance to demonstrate in this part how well they can decipher implicit meaning in English conversations. It has 25 brief conversations, each of which is followed by a multiple-choice question. On their exam sheets, the students must listen to the conversations and select the proper response from four options.

The second part of the test is devised to measure students' comprehension in reading and understanding passages. It includes four questions. Question one is formed of a passage which is followed by a question and two branches. The first one includes 7 multiple-choice items, while the second consists of 3 completion items. Question two includes a passage followed by a true/false question of 5 items. Question three takes the form of a cloze test with 5 blanks to be filled. Finally, question four is of matching type with 5 items.

### **Validity**

Validity basically refers to "(1) What precisely does the test measure?" and "(2) How well does the test measure?" (Harris, 1969:19) as cited in Albakri, 2018).

#### **Face Validity:**

McNamara (2000) states that face validity of a test or an instrument is "the extent to which it meets the expectations of those involved in its use", i.e., instrument makers, administrators, teachers, and candidates (p. 138). A panel of specialists reviews the scales, test, and scoring rubric to confirm the instruments' apparent validity. (17) TEFL and educational psychology experts make up the jury (Appendix D). They are tasked for determining whether or not the items of the instruments are appropriate and valid for the study's sample and aims. The jury members have, however, given their approval of the appropriateness of the items for the topic and sample concerned with some recommendations.

#### **Construct Validity**

It contains logical and empirical analyses. It is concerned with the theoretical construct or trait being determined (Westen & Rosenthal, 2003). To achieve the construct validity of language learning curiosity scale, its psychometrics are examined by two indicators:

## 1. Discrimination Power of Items

### 2. Item - Total Correlation

In addition to the above mentioned two indicators, coefficient of ease, difficulty, effectiveness of distracters have been used to achieve the construct validity of the receptive skills test items.

## Reliability

The tool is considered reliable if it performs the same results when it is repeated, especially if the conditions surrounding the tool and the respondent are similar in both applications (Joppe, 2000). So calculating reliability is important because it indicates accuracy or consistency in the scores of the scale. . In other words, it assesses a study's dependability, accuracy, consistency, and reproducibility, among other things (Chakrabartty, (2013) as cited by Khalil & Saalh, (2023). To achieve this, three method are employed which are Test- Retest method, Alpha Cronbach Formula, and Kuder – Richardson Formulas 20.

For the purpose of extracting reliability of language learning curiosity scale in this way, the scale is applied for a second time to the pilot sample, which consists of (50) students, with a time interval of (14) days from the first application. Pearson correlation coefficient is employed to find the differences between the scores of the first and second application and the correlation coefficient is found (0.91) for language learning curiosity scale. This value indicates the stability of the individuals' answers to the measure over time. Where Litwin (1995) indicates that if the correlation coefficient between the first and second applications is (0.70) or more, then this is a good indicator of the stability of tests in educational and psychological sciences.

One of the major methods for assessing the test's internal consistency is Cronbach's Alpha (Franzen, 2002). An Alpha Cronbach coefficient of (0.65-0.80) is often considered adequate for a measure used in human dimension research (Vaske et al., 2016). Accordingly, the two scales of the study are found to be of high internal consistency with r- values of (0.89, 0.88), respectively, all of which indicate good reliability.

Kuder-Richardson Formula 20, often abbreviated KR-20, is used to measure the internal consistency reliability of a test in which each question only has two answers: right or wrong. The value for KR-20 ranges from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating higher reliability. In order to extract the reliability of the test in this way, the equation is applied to the scores of the sample (375) students, and after applying the equation, the reliability values is 0.88, as shown in Table (13), 0.89 and 0.90 respectively.

## Scoring Scheme of the Instrument

A likert scale of Five points (1-5) is used in the scoring of language learning curiosity scale which includes 25 items. The highest score that can be given is 125 and the lowest is 25. There are five possible responses—strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree.

As for the receptive skills test, participants' performance in listening and reading comprehension is scored according to their responses. The two parts of the test consist of 25 items in each. Each accurately answered one is given 1 score. The total score of each part is 25. The highest score can be achieved in the receptive skills test is 50 while zero is the lowest one.

## IV Results, Conclusions, Recommendations, and Suggestions For further studies

### Results Related to the First Aim

As far as EFL students' level of language learning curiosity is concerned, the calculated results show that the mean score is (98.336) with a standard deviation of (9,835). For the purpose of identifying the significance of the variance between the mean score and the theoretical mean which is (75), t-test for one independent sample is used. It reveals a calculated t-value (45,947) which is higher than the tabulated one (1.96) at a level of significance (0.05) and degree of freedom (374). Accordingly, it is statistically significant and the sample has an accepted level of language learning curiosity. See table (13).

**Table (13)**  
**Mean and Hypothetical Mean of the Language Learning Curiosity Scale**

Variable	Sample	Mean	Standard Deviation	Hypothetical mean	T-Value		Significance (0.05)
					Calculated	Tabulated	
Language Learning Curiosity	375	98,336	9,835	75	45,947	1,96	Significant

It is worth mentioning that the results related to students' performance in receptive skills are achieved according to their scores in the receptive skills test which includes two parts; listening and reading. As illustrated in the table (16) below:

**Tablet (16)**  
**Mean, Standard Deviation and T-Value for Listening and Reading Skills**

Receptive Skills	Sample	Mean	Standard Deviation	Hypothetical mean	T-Value		Significance (0.05)
					Calculated	Tabulated	
Listening Skill	375	9,269	3,310	12,5	18,900	1,96	significant in favor of the hypothetical mean
Reading Skill	375	10,696	4,901	12,5	7,128	1,96	significant in favor of the hypothetical mean

For the listening skill, the mean of the sample's responses is (9,269), with a standard deviation of (3,310), and the hypothetical mean is (12.5). The calculated T-value (18,900) is statistically significant and in favor of the hypothetical mean, as it is higher than the tabulated value of (1.96) at a level of significance (0.05) and degree of freedom (374). This indicates that the study sample has achieved a low level in listening skill.

With regard to reading skill, the sample's responses mean is (10,696) with a standard deviation of (4.901) and hypothetical mean (12.5). The calculated T-value (7,128) is statistically significant in favour of hypothetical mean as it is higher than the tabulated value (1.96). Thus, the study sample has a low level in reading skill because the hypothetical mean is higher than the mean of the sample and the difference is significant and in favor of the hypothetical mean.

### **Results Related to the Second Aim**

Pearson correlation coefficient is used and reveals the results shown in table (17).

**Table (17)**

**The correlation between Language Learning Curiosity and Receptive Skills**

Receptive Skills	Sample	correlation Coefficient Value between Language Learning Curiosity and Receptive Skills	T-Value		Significance (0.05)
			Tabulated	Calculated	
Listening Skill	375	0,459	1,96	9,978	Significant
Reading Skill	375	0,384	1,96	8,170	Significant
Skills as a whole	375	0,472	1,96	10,261	Significant

It can be seen from the table above that:

The value of the correlation coefficient between language learning curiosity and listening skill is (0.459). The calculated t-value (9,978) is higher than the tabulated value of (1.96) at a level of significance (0.05) and degree of freedom (373). This reveals that the correlation between the curiosity of language learning and the listening skill is a positive, statistically significant one.

On the other hand, the value of the correlation coefficient between language learning curiosity and reading skill is (0.384). T-test reveals a t-value (8,170), which is higher than the tabulated value. This shows a statistically significant correlation between two variables.

The value of the correlation coefficient between language learning curiosity and receptive skills is (0.472). To find out the significance of the correlation coefficient, t-test is used. As a result, the calculated t- value is found (10,261) which is higher than the tabulated one (1.96) at a level of significance (0.05) and degree of freedom (373). This indicates that there is a statistically significant correlation, i.e., the higher level of the language learning curiosity students have, the better their receptive skills are.

#### 4.1.3 Results Related to the Third Aim

To achieve this part of the third aim, the multiple regression coefficient is calculated to find out the correlation between the listening skill, the dependent variable, and the curiosity of linguistic learning, the independent variables of the study sample. The multiple regression coefficient is found (0.642) while the square of the regression coefficient is (0.412). To find out the effect size of the variables of the study on each other, the (Inter) method regression analysis is used. The results of the regression variance analysis appear as shown in table (19).

**Table (19)**  
**Results of Regression Variance Analysis**

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Squares	F-Ratio	F-Tabulated	Significance (0.05)
Regression Value	1688,504	2	844,252	130,354	3.00	Significant
Residual Value	2409,294	372	6,477			
Total Value	4097,797	374				

It is evident from table (18) that the F-value of the computed regression analysis (130,354) is higher than the F-tabulated value (3.00) at the level of significance (0.05) and two degrees of freedom (372, 2). This reveals that there is a variant effect of the studied variables.

To determine the relative contribution of the influence of each variable in explaining the correlation between the variables, the values of beta (B), the

standardized error, the beta value of the standardized relative contribution, and the partial correlation coefficients (PART) are calculated. The t-value is calculated to identify the contribution of the independent variables to the dependent variable. Tables (20) and (22) show this.

Table (20)

**The contribution of the independent variables to the total variance of the dependent variable in the study sample**

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		The Beta Standardized Coefficients	Partial Correlation	T-Value	Significance (0.05)
	Beta	Standardized Error				
Constant	3,004	1,347	-	-	2,230	Significant
Language Learning Curiosity	0,039	0,017	0,115	0,092	2,304	Not Significant

With respect to listening skill performance, the following is obvious from the table above:

**1- constant:** The Beta correlation is (3,004), and its t-value (2,230) is greater than the tabulated value (1.96) at a level of significance (0.05), and degree of freedom (373). This indicates that there are other variables that have an effect on listening skill other than those included in the current study.

**2.** The effect of language learning curiosity in explaining the variance in listening skill, in isolation from the other variable, is (0.092) when using the partial correlation. This indicates that (0.84%) of the variance in the listening skill is due to the effect of language learning curiosity and it is statistically significant as the calculated t-value (2.304) is higher than tabulated one.

**The contribution of language learning curiosity in students' performance in reading skill.**

The multiple regression coefficient is found to be (0.551), while the square of the regression coefficient is (0.304). Regression analysis is used to identify the effect of the variables on each other. The findings are shown in Table (21).

Table (21)

**Results of Regression Variance Analysis**

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean	F-Ratio	F-Tabulated	Significance (0.05)
Regression value	2727,518	2	1363,759	81,095	3.00	Significant
Residual value	6255,826	372	16,817			
Total value	8983,344	374				



It is clear from the table above that the F-value of the computed regression analysis (81,095) is higher than the F-tabulated value (3.00) at the level of significance (0.05) and with the two degrees of freedom (2, 372). This indicates that there is a variant effect of the studied variables.

**Table (22)**

**The Contribution of the Independent Variables to the Total Variance of the Dependent Variable of the Sample**

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		The Beta Standardized Coefficient	Partial Correlation	T-Value	Significance (0.05)
	Beta	Standardized Error				
Constant	4,331	2,171	-	-	1,995	Significant
Language Learning Curiosity	0,041	0,027	0,082	0,065	1,501	Not Significant

Concerning reading skill performance,

1- The Beta correlation value of the regression coefficient is (4,331) degrees, and its calculated t-value (1,995) is higher than the tabulated one (1.96) at a level of significance (0.05) and degree of freedom (373). This indicates that there are other variables which might have an effect on reading skill other than those included in the current study.

2- The effect of language learning curiosity in the variance of reading skill, when taking away the effect of the other variables, is (0.065) when employing the partial correlation coefficient (PART). This effect is independent of the effect of other variable, which is reflected by the PART square which is (0.0042). This indicates that (0.42%) of the variation in reading skill is due to the effect of language learning curiosity in isolation from the other variable, and it is not statistically significant as the calculated t-value (1,501) is smaller than the tabulated t-value (1.96).

### **Discussion of Results**

Results show that students have an accepted level of language learning curiosity and a low level in the receptive skills performance.

Having an accepted level of language learning curiosity is attributed to several factors, including students' interest in new phenomena, their ability to allocate cognitive resources, enhance memory retention, and perseverance. They also possess the ability to navigate unfamiliarity, ambiguity, and unpredictability during exploratory endeavors, demonstrating a high level of curiosity. (Kashdan, 2009).

Concerning students' level of performance in receptive skills, they have shown a low level of performance in listening and reading. This result may be attributed to several factors. In the process of learning English as a foreign

language, the listening ability is viewed as one of the hardest language skills to be promoted because when learners have a listening exercise, they confront numerous challenges to comprehend the message totally. Among these various challenges which can be gone up against in listening assignments are obscure vocabulary, new points, quick discourse rate, and prior knowledge. As it can be seen, students need to confront these challenges each day in each errand in the classroom. Students complete a listening action; however, they don't comprehend the distinctive elocutions or accents from the speakers.

Limited exposure to the target language leads to learners' lack of comprehension of acculturated texts. This is due to their limited exposure to the target culture. Additionally, less focus on listening instruction as far as the syllabus is concerned is yet another aspect to be considered. It is mainly because the lack of classroom environment, technological facilities, and student numbers (Dhumad and Kamil, 2022). Listening comprehension is often seen as a test rather than a teaching skill, and has received little attention (Yassen and S'eed, 2011).

Furthermore, Listeners often struggle with ineffective listening due to bad habits such as daydreaming, personal problems, distractions, and a lack of active participation. They may fake attention, avoid difficult material, and overlook the essence of the message, focusing only on facts and concepts (Rega, 2000; Miller ,2002).

Challenges in communication can lead to students' misunderstandings, frustration, and failure, causing breakups and missed interactions with colleagues. These challenges also affect students' motivation and intention to engage in further conversations.

As far as reading comprehension is concerned, EFL students face significant challenges in understanding written material due to incompetent language skills, inadequate understanding of text ideas, inappropriate use of prior knowledge, and complexity in distinguishing text structures (Ismini, 2003).

Al-Saadi (2019) states that Iraqi EFL students struggle with reading comprehension due to difficulties in efficient text processing, poor word identification, decoding capacities, and language proficiency.

Lack of reading strategies is another problem that hinders comprehension, as they explain how readers perceive tasks, process information, and respond to difficulties. Without these strategies, readers cannot overcome reading difficulties (Singhal, 2001). Iraqi EFL students often use bottom-up procedures for word investigation, abandoning top-down procedures for the entire text (ULaywi, 2012).

Students often experience anxiety, worry, and nervousness during reading, hindering their ability to concentrate and understand text, particularly during reading tests (Deutsch, 2005).

### **Discussion Related to the Second Aim**

Results indicate a positive correlation between EFL students' level of language learning curiosity and their performance in receptive skills. This positive correlation may be attributed to the fact that learning a language, including all its skills is motivated by a variety of factors and goals that learners set for themselves to achieve better behavior and academic outcomes. High curiosity in students leads to increased engagement and excitement in their education.

The findings of the current study confirm those of Abd Al-Nabi Fahady (2022) which finds out that the students have a level of curiosity in addition to a level of language proficiency and there is a correlation between students' curiosity and their Language proficiency. This result is also similar to Aulia (2021) which shows that there is a significant correlation between students' curiosity and students' reading comprehension.

### **Discussion Related to The Third Aim**

In relation to the third aim of the study, results show that independent variable contributes to the variance. In light of the findings, it can be inferred that language learning curiosity, which accounts for (0.84%) of the contribution, has an influence on the study sample's listening performance. Given that the calculated T-value for variable is statistically significant, its effect on listening skill is an actual effect.

According to the results provided, the proportion of language learning curiosity's contribution to reading skills is weak and not statistically significant, therefore it has no meaningful impact on reading skills.

Results of previous studies report significant correlation between language learning curiosity and EFL students' performance in listening and reading skills, on the one hand, and language performance, on the other. Students understand the material better when they are more inquisitive. Students that are highly curious will be very motivated to fill in the gaps in their knowledge, look for new information and expertise, respond to specific inquiries, and pay close attention to what they are learning, whereas students who are not as motivated would perform differently. (Dweck, 2006).

As far as the receptive skills are concerned, students would set for themselves motives and reasons for engaging in communication tasks.

## Conclusions

The following conclusions have been made after taking into account the results achieved in the current study.

1. EFL university students have an accepted level of language learning curiosity.
2. EFL university students have a low level in the receptive skills performance.
3. There is a positive statistically significant correlation between language learning curiosity the students' level in receptive skills on the other. This is applicable to both listening and reading.
4. Contribution of language learning curiosity to receptive skills (both listening and reading) is found to be weak and not significant.

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