Utilising Language Games as an Effective Teaching Method to Improve Listening Comprehension Skills of Outstanding EFL Iraqi High School Students

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استخدام الألعاب اللغوية كطريقة تدريس فعالة لتحسين مهارات الفهم الاستماعي لدى طلبة المدارس الثانوية المتفوقين العراقيين دارسي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية

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Abstract:

The current study aims to know the effect of language games in improving the listening comprehension skills of fifth-grade preparatory students at Almutafaweqeen High School for Boys in Babylon Governorate, Iraq. The study adopted the quasi-experimental approach, and the study sample consisted of 103 students. To achieve the aims of the study, a pre- and post-test of listening comprehension skills was prepared. The results of the study revealed that language games have a statistically significant effect on listening comprehension skills in favour of the experimental group. The study recommends the necessity of fostering a more inclusive learning environment by incorporating language games into the classroom, encouraging challenging questions and respecting learners' ideas and perspectives.

Key Words: Language games, Listening comprehension skills, Outstanding EFL Iraqi students.

الملخص:

تهدف الدراسة الحالية الى معرفة أثر الألعاب اللغوية في تحسين مهارات الفهم الإستماعي لطلاب الصف الخامس الإعدادي في ثانوية المتفوقين للبنين في محافظة بابل في العراق. إعتمدت الدراسة المنهج شبه التجريبي، و تكونت عينة الدراسة من ١٠٣ طالباً. و لتحقيق أهداف الدراسة، تم إعداد إختبار مهارات الفهم الاستماعي القبلي و البعدي. و قد كشفت نتائج الدراسة ان الألعاب اللغوية لها أثر دال احصائياً في مهارات الفهم الاستماعي و لصالح المجموعة التجريبية. توصي الدراسة بضرورة تعزيز بيئة تعليمية أكثر شمولاً من خلال دمج الألعاب اللغوية في الفصل الدراسي، وتشجيع الأسئلة الصعبة وإحترام أفكار و وجهات نظر المتعلمين.

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الكلمات المفتاحية: الألعاب اللغوية، مهارات الفهم الإستماعي، الطلبة العراقيين المتفوقين دارسي اللغة الانجليزية كلغة اجنبية.

1. Introduction:

English has become the world's most widely learned and used language, especially in education. The ministry of education in Iraq aims to improve English language to meet the needs of the future labor market. To achieve this, serious steps must be taken to identify low levels of learners, improve their efficiency, and enhance the quality of their language.

Learning a language involves developing four major skills, including listening, a receptive skill that includes perceiving, interpreting, and responding to sounds. The effective listening prevents misunderstanding and irritation for both the listener and the speaker (Harling, 2017). The active listening comprehension is a communication skill that requires understanding the meaning and intent behind another person's words, not just hearing them. It calls for paying attention and reflection. The paying attention component implies nonverbal cues such as: focusing on what a speaker is saying, nodding, watching body language, and maintaining the eye contact. The reflection component shows involvement in the conversation by repeating and paraphrasing the speaker's words to clarify that what he has said, demonstrating that the listener actually understands what he is saying (Spataro & Bloch, 2018).

Research has shown that developing listening skills is crucial for learning the English language. However, mastering listening can be challenging and negatively impact academic performance. Previous studies have shown a general weakness in students' listening comprehension skills as confirmed by Nawe (2020) and Jassim (2021). These studies suggest that developing through integrating technology and focusing on listening comprehension skills is crucial for effective English language curricula. Moreover, Al-Furaiji's study (2022) highlights the importance of listening comprehension skills for English language learning. The findings of these studies underscore the need for effective listening comprehension skills.

The researcher identifies a lack of modern methods and strategies in teaching listening comprehension skills among students, attributed to teachers' hack of interest in developing these skills. Studies like Tahir (2023) and Abbood (2024) support this. The researcher believes language games are a suitable strategy for developing listening comprehension skills, as they are based on the learner's activity and are suitable for teaching listening lessons. Previous

literature has found their effectiveness in various educational aspects, supporting the importance of modern methods in teaching listening comprehension skills.

The language games, characterized by rules, competition, and fun, can boost students' motivation by providing exercises in language skills, including listening, and offering pleasurable and stress-free learning environment (Syafii et. al, 2020). Moreover, the use of language games in listening activities can enhance communicative competence, adapt to everyday life, and aid students in improving listening skills, thereby enhancing their overall English proficiency (Ngiwline & Haruansong, 2020).

Based on the above, it is clear that developing listening comprehension skills in the English language requires serious and rapid thinking about methods and techniques that help achieve them. The researcher believes that the language games play an important role in improving the learning process, as they are one of the most effective learning methods that can enhance the quality of learning and help achieve the desired goals.

1.1 Problem of the study

Listening comprehension is a critical skill for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, yet it is often neglected in traditional educational approaches for outstanding students. In Iraq, some of outstanding high school students face limited exposure to innovative language learning methods, with a primary focus on reading and writing rather than auditory skills. While advanced societies increasingly integrate educational games into curricula, the role of language games in enhancing listening comprehension remains underexplored in the Iraqi context. The current study problem is defined as a lack of listening comprehension skills among EFL Iraqi outstanding high school students. One of the causes of this problem is the use of traditional teaching tactics in teaching listening comprehension, which needs new models such as the language games to improve these skills. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the effect of language games on improving listening comprehension skills of outstanding fifth-grade preparatory high school students, addressing the gap in instructional strategies and providing insights into more effective language acquisition methods.

1.2 Aims of the study

The current study aims to:

- Identify the effect of language games on developing listening comprehension skills of outstanding EFL Iraqi high school students.
- Develop listening comprehension skills of outstanding EFL Iraqi high school students.

1.3 Significance of the study

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This study is expected to be beneficial in the field of English language teaching to high school students in general and specifically in developing their listening comprehension skills through language games. It benefits students, teachers, curriculum planners and designers, and researchers by providing a guide on modern teaching models (language games), a list of appropriate listening comprehension skills, and enabling researchers to focus on these skills and conduct studies based on the current research approach.

1.4 Hypotheses of the study

The study hypotheses are as follows:

1. There is no significant difference at the (0.05) level between the mean scores of experimental group students who are taught listening comprehension using language games and the mean scores of control group students who are taught using the conventional method in the post-listening comprehension skills test.

2. There is no significant difference at the (0.05) level between experimental group students' pre-post listening comprehension skills test mean scores.

3. There is no significant difference at the (0.05) level between control group students' pre-post listening comprehension skills test mean scores.

1.5 Limits of the study

This study was limited to the following limits:

●Objective limits: This study was limited to knowing the effect of language games on developing the listening comprehension skills of outstanding EFL Iraqi high school students.

●Human and place limits: This study was conducted on a sample of 103 outstanding fifth-grade preparatory students at Almutafaweqeen High School for Boys, General Directorate of Education in Babylon Governorate, Iraq.

●Some listening comprehension skills, including making inferences, identifying the main idea, drawing conclusions, and finding evidence.

●Time limits: The study was conducted in the second semester of the academic year 2023-2024.

●Johnston et al. textbook entitled "English for Iraq".

1.6 Tool of the study

The following instrument was administered after ensuring its validity and reliability:

●A pre-post listening comprehension skills test for outstanding fifth-grade preparatory students designed by the researcher.

1.7 Key terms and definitions

- **Language Games:**

Kalmpourtzis (2019) defines the language games as interactive problem-solving structures that aim to create intrinsically learning experiences and to enhance listening skills by presenting players with many options, resulting in positive outcomes.

Younis (2019) states that language games are a set of classroom activities that engage language practice development, supervised by teachers, aimed at enhancing language skills within established rules.

In this study, the language games are defined as structured activities with roles, goals, and fun, providing a therapeutic and motivating environment for fifth-grade preparatory talented students at Almutafaweqeen High School for Boys to practice and express their ideas, foster meaningful language acquisition, enhance their listening comprehension skills, expand their concepts, reinforce their development, promote their focus, attention, and communication abilities, and participate actively in the listening learning process.

- **Listening Comprehension (LC)** is simply defined as an active process that involves constructing meaning from aural input, focusing on selected aspects, and relating what is heard to existing knowledge. It involves discriminating between sounds, understanding vocabulary, grammatical structures, interpreting stress and intonation, and retaining data within the utterance's immediate and large context (Turel, 2021).

Melissa (2019) states that Listening Comprehension Skills (LCS) refer to the ability to actively receive, process, interpret, clarify, comment, and respond to the spoken language and utilize cognitive functions like attention, memory, inference-making, and critical thinking.

In this study, the listening comprehension skills are defined as the ability to hear spoken language and understand its meaning, where outstanding fifth-grade preparatory students actively interact with the text being listened to in order to generate creative ideas and new meaning characterised by fluency, flexibility, and originality. This capability is measured by the students' scores they obtain on a listening comprehension skills test prepared for this purpose.

2. Literature

2.1 Game-Based Learning

Chen et al. (2018) claim that game-based learning, which uses games to explore difficult settings and concepts, strikes a balance between theoretical content and learning process. It is particularly effective in English-language learning contexts.

Educational games have been an effective method for teaching and learning English to non-native English speakers, offering lifelong learning and interdisciplinary opportunities. The game-based learning is an annotative and creative way to offer a distinctive framework for learning environments and has proven effective in teaching and learning English as a second or foreign language (Adipat, 2021). Games should be both educational and instructive, developed and created by scholars and teachers using appropriate academic criteria. Instructors need to keep an eye on game-based learning classes and motivate learners to improve in future levels. They ought to instruct and inform not to criticize those who lose, and success is not the final target. Learners should be motivated and engaged by game-based learning as they cultivate a growth mentality.

2.2 Language Games

The growing popularity of educational games has led to interdisciplinary conferences and a surge in language game studies. This has led to increased literature, research scope, and new perspectives. As a result, language games design and composition programs have emerged in educational institutions worldwide (Collins, 2013).

By using effective language games, the learners can understand listening, identify mistakes, recognize why they couldn't hear, and learn good listener behaviours (Forrester, 2016). Language games, also known as learning by doing, recreational learning, or learning through fun, are a modern, scientifically substantial method of learning, encompassing verbal and sound games, communicative games, and pedagogical games (Kostikova, 2017). These games are organized means built on a set of controls to present important mechanisms and concepts, simplify them, and link them to the educational aspects (Adarsh et al., 2023). They play a crucial role in developing basic linguistic cognitive skills such as pronunciation, auditory and visual discrimination, communication, and social interaction (Bilak & Henrietta, 2024).

Moreover, language games are an effective educational technique that engage language learners by allowing them to interact with educational materials and other learners to achieve specific goals. These games are purposeful activities that involves specific actions and rules, aiming to achieve emotional and cognitive goals (Hilderbrand, 2024). By incorporating language games, learners may gain a true understanding and develop their listening comprehension skills, leading to achievement of desired goals.
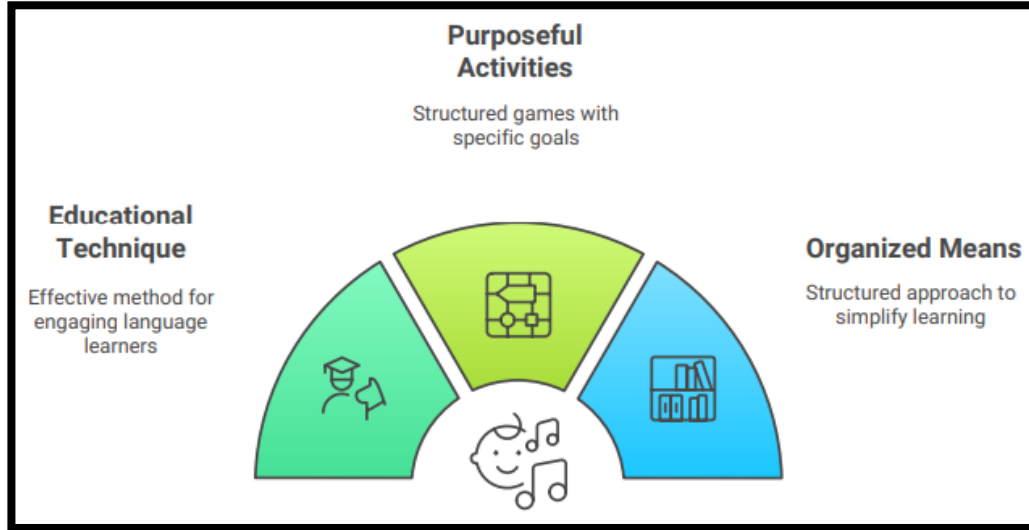

Fig. (1): The Concept of Language Games

2.3 Types of English learning Games

According to different writers, there are different categories of games. Upadhyay (2019) and Mahto (2024) divide English learning games into the following categories: spelling games, vocabulary games, arranging games, search games, number games, guessing games, conversation games, writing games, reading games, listening games, structure games, miming and role-play games, pronunciation games, and discussion games.

Similarly, with Ngiwline, & Haruansong (2020) who argued that there are two types of games: competitive games where students race to reach goals, and cooperative games where teams work together towards a common goal. These two types promote both challenge and cooperation.

Educators should select games according to the aim of the lesson. Language games are selected for this study in order to help students recall what they had heard and develop their listening comprehension skills. They should select appropriate games for class, ensuring language and participation are appropriate, and not interrupting or compeling participation as games can create interesting activities (Kostikova, 2017). The present study is limited to the following language games: Story Around The Circle game, Omit The Obvious game, Listen, Listen, Listen game, Drawing Task game, Simon Says game, and task-based games. Moreover, the researcher can offer some tips on selecting language games for learners, including making them fun, engaging, friendly,

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focusing on language use, and providing opportunities to practice or review specific language material, ensuring a positive learning experience.

The researcher chooses these games to enhance listening comprehension skills because they actively engage the learner in relevant and dynamic learning experiences. These games encourage active listening, improve memory and retention, foster critical thinking, and develop predictive abilities. For example, the Simon Says game can optimize instruction-based listening, increase the ability to concentrate and follow verbal instructions accurately, and reduce anxiety in learning. The Story Around the Circle game and Drawing Task game can develop listening accuracy, help visualize spoken information, foster innovative thinking and stimulate creativity, and strengthen multimodal learning. Studies demonstrate that language games improve students' ability to process spoken language, which provides credence to the idea that game-based learning can improve listening comprehension (Abidi, 2024).

- ***Story Around The Circle Game***: Storytelling is the social and cultural activity of sharing stories, often with improvisation, for preservation, education, entertainment, or moral values, involving, plot, characters, and narrative perspective (Ahmed et al., 2023). Therefore, Story Around the Circle game is a 5-15 minute improvising story-building activity for 5-8 participants. The game continues until everyone contributes, aiming to learn listening, acceptance, and creative solutions. It can enhance students' learning process by allowing them to express ideas, explore listening skills, and develop motivation in listening, thereby, promoting effective communication and learning (U.S. Department of Arts & Culture, 2020). The following procedures can be used by the learners to play this game:

  - The instructor asks the participants to sit around in a circle.
  - Participants improvise a narrative or any certain topic without following a defined structure.
  - Duration: 5-15 minutes; participants 5-8.
  - Guidelines: storytelling begins with instructor's first line(s). For example:" In April 2024, the 11th edition of the international Babylon Festival of World Cultures and Arts began on Monday evening in the ancient city of ……. ."
  - The instructor asks the next listener to continue the story.

- Then, this listener continues the story until the instructor calls and engages the next listener.
- Until everyone shares and responses to the story, the series continues.

- *Omit the Obvious Game*: This activity displays the importance of attentive listening for retaining information. It also shows how repetition helps to reinforce the memory (Khan,2024). The following procedures can be used by the learners to play this game:
  - Choose a familiar topic.
  - Learners given a set of words related to that topic.
  - Words repeated multiple times, omitting an obvious word.
  - Under the topic of "Space", the instructor can give the following set of words: "sun, black hole, planets, asteroids, dark matter, comets".
  - The instructor can repeat the words comets and planets 2-3 times.
  - After reciting words, a 5-minute gap was provided for un related topics
  - The instructor can leave out the obvious word "Stars".
  - Learners are asked to identify words on the list.
  - Learners are expected to remember the repeated words.

- *Listen, Listen, Listen Game*: This game enhance patience and helps to helps to boost reflective capabilities by focusing on the speaker's words rather than imagining what to say next. The following procedures can be used by the learners to play this game:
  - Divide the team into two groups.
  - Have each member talk about a significant topic for 4-5 minutes.
  - The other members cannot speak during this time. They have to listen quietly.
  - At the end of speaking, the listeners try to paraphrase what the speaker said in their own words.

- *Drawing Task Game:* This game shows how to teach the significance of seeking clarifications and framing questions to enhance understanding and obtain the necessary information. The following steps can be used by the learners to play this game:
  - This two-person game involves dividing teams into groups.
  - Make the two members of each group sit back to back.
  - Give one person a sheet with a simple drawing on it, like a combination of different shapes, and do not show the other person.

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- A blank piece of paper and pencil are given to the person without sheets so he can draw.
- Then, based on their partner's responses, they can ask questions and make inferences about what they think they are hearing.
- Finally, both the sheets are compared to see how accurately the drawing has been replicated.

- *Simon Says Game*: It is a popular game in English learning classes for its numerous benefits, including improved active listening, motor skills, language development, emotional regulation, concentration, and directed learning (Pica, 2024).The learners can implement the subsequent instructions to engage in this game:

  - Gather a small group of players. One person has to be Simon. It involves one person giving commands to other learners, who must follow them only if they begin with "Simon Says." All the other players become the "listeners."
  - Give commands as Simon to eliminate players. Start with easy commands like "flutter like a butterfly" or " be a firefighter putting out a fire."
  - Obey "Simon says" commands as a listener.
  - Mix up the commands with funny ones like " show me a star shape with your hands" or " form a square shape with your fingers."
  - Once the players get the hang of it, introduce a command without saying "Simon Says."
  - Win the game if you're the last remaining listener.

- *Task-Based Games*: Task-based games (TBGs) can enhance language learner's competency by encouraging interaction with others and teamwork among learners, which improves listening comprehension skills and facilitates efficient learning (Blancaflor et al., 2021). *Step by Step Challenge game* is one of the task-based games that enhances learners' listening skills. It focuses on listening comprehension using prepositions, requiring learners to listen to all words in the entire direction in order to be successful. This game encourages learners to listen to the entire instructions before responding and reacting, and helps them practice prepositions (before, after, under, above, etc.) and sequential order (first, second, etc.) (Speech time fun.

Com, 2024).The following guidelines can be used by the learners to play this game:

- Start by giving the learner a worksheet that displays a collections of letters arranged in several rows, each containing 8-10 letters. Verify that a few of the letters are repeated across the group.
- Next, read aloud instructions that incorporate prepositions. Depending upon your letter set, it could look something like this:
  - a- Draw a square around the second T before crossing out the first T.
  - b- Draw a star above the first R after drawing a line beneath the first U.
  - c- After crossing out the first Z, point to the first M.
  - d- Draw a line over the second K after you have circled the second H.

2.4 The Importance of Language Games in Educational Process

Language games can enable learners to work with partner and groups, promoting independent learning. These games encourage creativity, spontaneity, experimentation, and cooperation, allowing learners to learn from mistakes and experiment with the target language. Yaccob & Yunus (2019) suggest that some of the language games, which promote learner-centeredness and 21st century teaching styles, are recommended to replace traditional teaching methods. They help reduce anxiety, build self-confidence, and foster positive emotions and behaviours of learners.

Language games improve teamwork, discussions, and instruction by providing a safe environment for the development of listening, responding, summarizing, and engaging skills. They are particularly beneficial for learners with diverse communication styles or cultural backgrounds (Spataro & Bloch, 2017). They are effective educational tools that promote engagement, motivation, enhancing critical skills development, and retention of information development among learners through interactive experiences (Varghese & Philip, 2017).

Moreover, language games are useful resources for learners' integral development. They can be used to fulfill a serious of functions. The most important functions is the following (Esteve & Primitivo, 2017):

- Affective: Games create a tension-free classroom environment, enhancing learning effectiveness. They encourage creative and spontaneous use of language.
- Social: Games foster social behaviour development.

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- Pedagogical: Games provide a meaningful context for language use, fostering competitive atmosphere and intrinsic motivation.
- Physical: Games aid physical development, like the total physical response method, in which students respond physically to verbal actions.
- Cultural: Games foster curiosity and positive attitudes towards the target language's culture.
- Cognitive: Games enhance attention, memory, and imagination skills, aiding language concentration. They are a good way to review and extend language contents.
- Linguistic: Games can practice linguistic skills and repetitive structure drills.

Fig. (2): Language Games Functions Cycle

2.5 Characteristics of Language Games

With an emphasis on motivation, participation, self-determination, and collaborative learning, language games are a dynamic and successful approach to teaching and learning language. They provide an entertaining diversion in English classes by offering structured play, enjoyable aspects, clarity in language mechanics, defined goals, and therapeutic impact (Savitri, 2013).

Furthermore, language games have the following characteristics (Kostikova, 2017):
- They are based on a learning objectives.
- They offer the learner control over his own destiny.

- They incorporate manageable challenges.
- They are inspiring and interesting, thus motivating.
- They are based on reality for intrinsic motivation.
- They require communication and interaction.
- Everyone must be included.

With respect to the characteristics previously mentioned, language games are essential for English teaching and learning, but not all games can be suitable for all learners. Educators should consider factors such as preparation time, organization ease, intrinsic language skill, and justifying the amount of language used. Language games can add fun and variety to conversation sessions, but for maximum benefit, educators should select the best games from the hundreds available. Moreover, good games should require little preparation, be easy to play, short enough, and not cause the group to get out of control. Collectively, these characteristics determine the game level of popularity and ability to serve as an effective teaching instrument that caters to a certain group of learners.

2.6 Challenges of Using Language Games at English Lessons

Teaching English to young learners using games is a potential way for engagement and motivation, but some instructors find it difficult to integrate games into their teaching practices.

Language games can enhance youth's learning interest, but also they have drawbacks like non-scientific design, unreasonable teaching methods, and unsatisfactory games results. Challenges include insufficient equipment, poor teacher training, weak government support, insufficient time, poor curriculum, and high costs (Mohamed & Shaaban, 2021). Additionally, continuous gaming can lead to physical ailments and addiction, making it difficult to separate teaching from language games. Further research should focus on developing specific strategies for game use (Taghizadeh et al., 2017).

2.7 Listening Definition

Listening is a crucial English communication skill, yet rarely taught in schools, alongside speaking, reading, and writing. It enables students to acquire other skills, but is often overlooked (Woottipong, 2014).

Additionally, listening can be defined as the process by which spoken language is converted to meaning in the mind (Mee, 2017). He states that the definition of listening includes the three components:

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- Hearing: It is psychological process involving auditory acuity and perception.
- Listening: It is the act of perception involving focus, awareness, and cue selection.
- Auding: It is the act of comprehension process starting with hearing and listening. It includes meaning-seeking, sound association, organization, imagination, appreciation of what is heard.

Fig. (3): Components of Listening Process According to (Mee, 2017)

Listening is an essential ability for successful communication and creating deep connections with others. It is the active focus on uttered words to comprehend and process information. It involves components such as perception, interpretation, response, attention, and remembering (Bennetch et al., 2021).
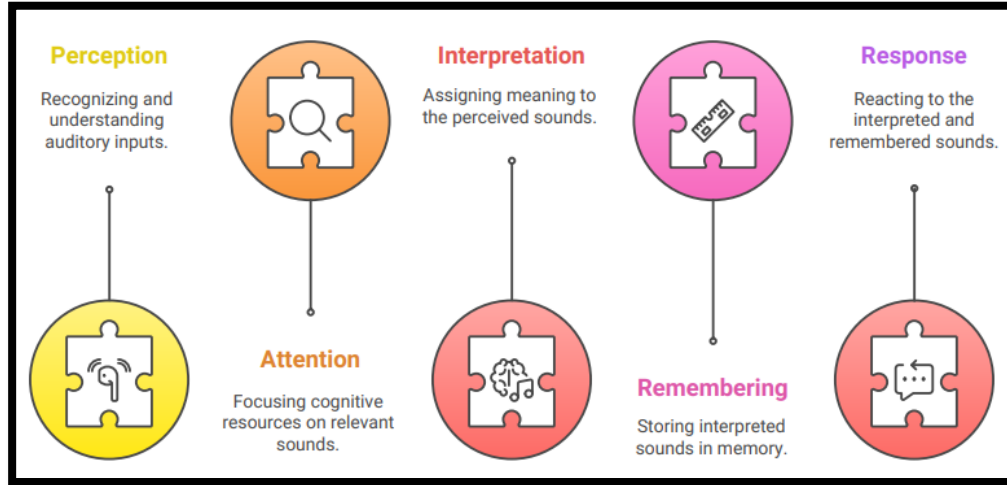
Fig. (4): Components of Listening Process According to Bennetch et al. (2021)

As regards to the above-mentioned definitions, listening is an active process that involves paying attention to a sound, assigning meaning, and responding to it. listening is a language skill that requires understanding another person, respect, acceptance, and openness to different perspectives. It requires a high level of concentration and a desire to understand others' perspectives.

2.7.1 Listening Processes

Listening comprises four components: hearing, sounds categorisation, word recognition, and comprehension (Rost, 2011). It occurs in five stages: hearing (receiving), understanding, remembering, evaluating, and responding. Rothwell (2010), Mohamed et al. (2023), and Murgia (2024) explain these stages as follows:

- Hearing: It involves sensory responses to sounds.
- Understanding: It helps interpret and comprehend the message, requiring interaction to clarify meaning. It helps understand the symbols that are seen and heard and analyze the meaning of stimuli which are perceived.
- Remembering; It involves interpreting and adding a message to memory.
- Evaluating: It weighs evidence and determines bias or prejudice.
- Responding: It requires verbal and nonverbal feedback from the receiver.

2.7.2 Types of Listening

Brown (2012) identifies four types of listening: intensive, responsive, selective, and extensive. Intensive listening involves perceiving language components like phonemes and intonation, while responsive listening involves understanding short phrases for quick responses. Selective listening processes the conversations to scan for specific information, such as names and facts. Extensive listening develops a comprehensive understanding of spoken

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language, ranging from lengthy lectures to conversations. Each type has different purposes and ways for listeners to understand the message and meaning. In this study, the researcher uses both selective and extensive listening to influence the language games technique, as they both aim to actively receive, process, interpret, clarify, comment, and respond to the spoken language.

2.7.3 The Importance of Listening skill in English Classes

Effective communication relies on effective listening, which prevents misinterpretation and frustration, ensuring that messages are accurately received and interpreted (Mamasharifovich, 2020). Eatough (2022) underscores the importance of listening as a key component of effective communication , a crucial part for productive collaboration, and vital tool for effective learning. According to Karimova et al. (2020) listening is very important because it takes up a lot of our time communicating in a language, provides valuable information for learning a second language, especially for improving speaking skills, and helps with understanding language in a more flexible way while encouraging learners to develop overall strategies for working with texts.

To conclude, mastering listening skill is crucial for understanding all communication components. Learning cannot improve without appropriate understanding input. Communication is impossible without listening. Studies show that 45% of language competence is gained from listening, 30% from speaking, 15% from reading, and 10% from writing (Nabiyev and Idiyev, 2022). Therefore, listening is a language forerunner as it has the highest percentage of involvement in the exchange of information in effective communication (Gultom et al., 2023). Moreover, listening is crucial for language acquisition and understanding. It provides information, values, and ideals, and is essential for learning purposes. It is also a medium through which learners receive information and gain insights.

2.7.4 Listening Comprehension (LC)

Listening Comprehension (LC) involves understanding spoken language at the discourse level, including conversations, stories, and informational oral texts, involving the extraction and construction of meaning (Kim & Pilcher, 2016). LC is a fundamental cognitive process that involves understanding spoken language to enhance the ability to process and retain auditory information in academic settings (Kotorowicz-Jasińska, 2020). Moreover, Wang (2020) states that LC is an interactive process that involves the brain processing raw speech. There are eight processes in comprehension: processing raw

speech, determining speech event type, inferring speaker objectives, recalling background information, assigning literal meanings, determining whether information should be retained in short-term or long-term memory, and deleting the original form of the message. To conclude, LC encompasses the individual's capacity for interpreting, absorbing, and analyzing the spoken language that has been delivered to them using auditory methods.

2.7.5 Strategies of Listening Comprehension (SLC)

LC depends on three types of strategies: meta-cognitive, cognitive, and socioaffective (Mahdavy & Mousavi, 2023). Metacognitive strategies entail planning, monitoring and evaluating comprehension. Cognitive strategies comprise summarizing and processing data (Erniwati et al., 2024). Socioaffective strategies represent learners' relationships with others, which include collaboration and positive reinforcement, i.e., self-encouragement (Awinindia, 2023). LC tasks entail both bottom-up and top-down cognitive strategies. Bottom-up mechanisms contain the listener's spoken language skills (linguistic competence) being built and developed towards comprehension by creating meaning from sounds and recognition of words, i.e., the listener relies on the language in the message, that is, the combination of sounds, words, and grammar that creates meaning (Tyagi, 2013). These tasks impose an emphasis on both the working memory and consciousness (mental focus). On the contrary, top-down tasks comprehend and identify the message depending on the listener's prior understanding (background knowledge of the topic) and predictions (to interpret what is heard and anticipate what will come next). This understanding and knowledge, identified as schemata, facilitate bridging gaps in unplanned language (spontaneous speech) and reaching broad interpretations without focusing on every word of the message (Utomo & Sulistyowati, 2022).

2.7.6 Listening Comprehension Skills (LCS)

Effective communication relies on good listening skills. Yang (2015) emphasizes the importance of listening skills in foreign language teaching, but learners still face frustration and helplessness in listening.

Early detection of sound is crucial for language development, with students learning to recognize and understand speech from their parents and siblings. Listening skills are essential in school environments and social development. Hearing provides pleasure through music, songs, stories, radio, and television. However, students with communication difficulties may need to improve their listening comprehension skills (LCS), as auditory information may be distorted or not audible (Williams, 2018).

LCSs refer to the ability to understand, interpret, and analyze spoken language. This cognitive process involves decoding auditory information, integrating it with prior knowledge, and deriving meaning from verbal communication, which is essential for effective communication and learning.

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Renukadevi (2014) states that there are some of LCSs, namely listening to the main idea, predicting, drawing inferences, and summarizing. Ahmed Eldesouky (2022) mentions that LCSs consist of five indicators: listening for gist, listening for main ideas, listening for details, listening for inferring meaning, and listening for determining the listener's attention.

The present study is limited to some of the listening comprehension skills, including making inferences (asking students to make inferences as they listen to audio texts, interpreting what is said by going beyond the literal meaning), identifying the main idea (asking students to identify the central idea or gist of an audio texts), drawing conclusions (asking students to draw conclusions by synthesizing information in an audio text), and finding evidence (asking students to identify statements or details in an audio text that provide evidence to support claims or conclusions).

In order to enhance learners' LCSs, collecting data, targeted instruction, and practising ought to be accomplished and conducted based on their performance and areas of need. LCSs can vary across the contexts. For example, learners ought to work on identifying fundamental ideas in audio texts that come with a different structure than those that are printed. They ought to think about tone, emphasis, and speed (rhythm) to interpret and analyse the speaker's arguments. Effectively improving LCSs using audio texts may offer further advantages, as they enable learners to create inferences and understand claims and ideas.

2.7.7 Teaching Listening Comprehension to Young Learners

According to Sevik (2012), listening is the initial stage in first and second language acquisition. He states that the enhancing of young learners' speaking and listening skills lies at the heart of effective learning in all subjects of the curriculum. As a consequence, ESL/EFL instructors need to prioritise the development of young learners' listening skills in their classroom instruction while providing them with the best strategies for effective listening.

Moreover, Al Bloushi (2024) explains that there are three stages of a LC lesson: pre-listening, while-listening, and post-listening. In the pre-listening stage, the instructors may utilise some techniques that comprise picture description, teaching key words, free conversation, brainstorming relevant lexis, and story prediction. These activities and techniques can help learners be active listeners by increasing confidence and interest. To facilitate conversation and prediction, the instructors may use visuals (images) related to the listening lesson or start by presenting the listening topic (title) to encourage learners to

predict and infer the content. Win and Maung (2019) state that the while-listening stage is a key component of the listening lesson, allowing learners to listen and pay close attention to specific details. It enhances the ability to elicit messages from spoken language. According to the instructor's intention, learners may need to listen multiple times to find out the answers. This stage is viewed as a vital stage in listening comprehension lesson because it directly implies the learner's competence. In the post-listening stage, students work in detail applying both top-down and bottom-up strategies to link up the classroom activities and their real lives The bottom-up process encompasses learners concentrating on necessary words and phrases, gradually forming information and meanings through the integration of the sounds. This process enables learners to cultivate phonemic recognition for absorbing spoken language, leading them to produce and build cohesive text as a final stage of learning (May et al., 2020). The top-down process promotes the metacognitive skills of LC by having learners focus on their own personal factors, task strive, and previous mastered strategies to comprehend the spoken language (Denzler, 2024).

2.7.8 Challenges in Teaching EFL Listening Comprehension Skills

One challenge in listening comprehension instruction is how to teach these multiple language and cognitive skills in a limited school day. As educators all know very well, school days are already overloaded(Kim & Pilcher, 2016).

LC is the cognitive process of interpreting and constructing meaning from auditory texts, involving phonematic identification, speech signal recognition, and understanding semantic and syntactic aspects. Namaziandost & Keshmirshekan (2019) explain that there are several challenges that learners endure in listening comprehension, including speech that is unfamiliar (unfamiliar vocabulary), new information and ideas, fast speech rate, and strange and uncommon accents. These challenges may affect their comprehension of the speakers' accent, which leads to reduced focus and amount of time devoted to tasks. Moreover, learners may have trouble with unfamiliar words or having a lack of previous information on the subject, culminating in a decreased discourse rate. Learners frequently need to listen actively and repeatedly so as to build up their listening comprehension skills. Windsor (2024) states that there are three challenges and barriers that can block effective communication in teaching LCS: environmental challenges (noise and poor acoustics), psychological challenges (stress and anxiety), and language-related challenges (unfamiliar vocabulary and accents). The strategies for overcoming these challenges can be: finding quiet spaces, using noise-cancelling headphones, practicing mindfulness, expanding vocabulary, practicing with native speakers. As a final point, practising listening comprehension skills encourages learners to overcome difficulties while

cultivating an improved comprehension of the message and raising their retention and grasp of the information and knowledge.

2.7.9 Teaching and Learning English as a foreign language Using Language Games

One of the best methods of teaching listening skills to the learners is getting help from language games (Valipour & Aidinlou, 2014). Therefore, language games cater to various intelligences, including auditory, making listening practice accessible to a diverse number of learners through interaction and response (Varghese & Philip, 2017). Gozcu and Cagnaga (2016) highlight the significance of language games in teaching and learning English as a foreign language as they create a relaxed environment, facilitating effective teaching and simplifying the learning process. Ibrahim's study on Sudanese basic education found that using language games effectively in teaching English as a foreign language helps students establish a deep connection with the language (Ibrahim, 2017).

Language games can enable EFL learners to work with partners and groups, promoting independent learning and fluency. The 21st century teaching styles such as role-playing and experimentation games, focusing on learner-centeredness, can be a valuable alternatives for conventional teaching techniques and methods, building self-confidence, reducing anxiety, and fostering behaviours and emotions (Yaccob & Yunus, 2019). Language games teaching is a student-centered approach where learners take responsibility for learning, often working with classmates. (Ngiwline, & Haruansong, 2020). Moreover, learning a foreign language through games is an effective method for learners education, enhancing their motivation. These games help maintain interest and create conditions for communicative functions. By incorporating oral communication into plying activities, learners can effectively engage in the learning process. language learning is a challenging process that requires effort to comprehend, manipulate, and use the language effectively. Language games can help sustain interest and work by creating meaningful contexts for language use. These games practice listening, speaking, reading, writing, and various communication forms, allowing learners to express their thoughts and points of view. (Syafii et al., 2020).
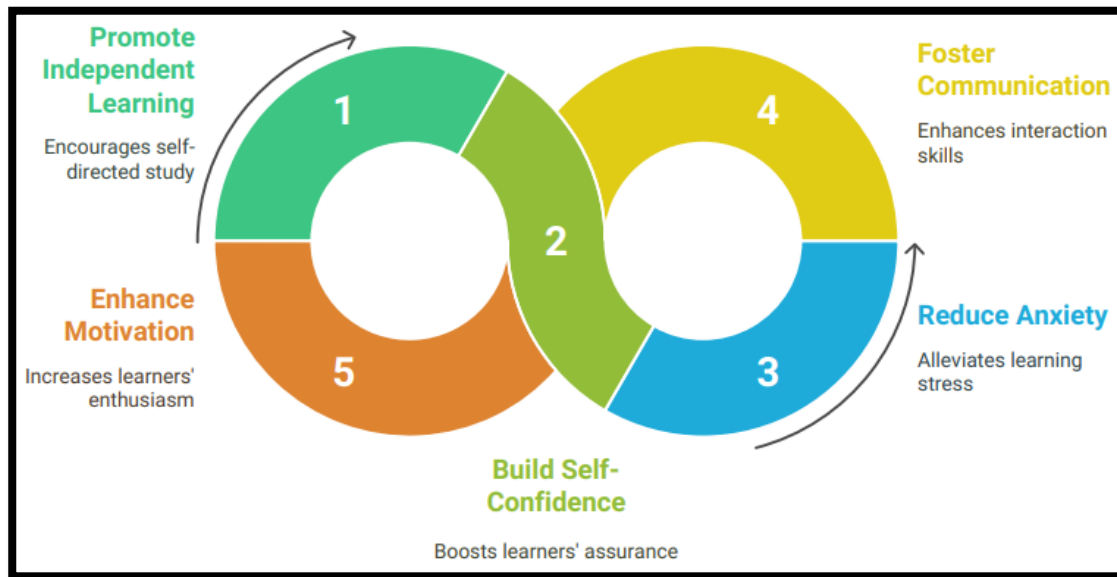
Fig. (5): Benefits of Language Games in Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language

Mgecha's study (2024) in Tanzania analyzes the impact of language games on students' English secondary school achievements. The study found the games significantly improved students' achievements and created an interactive learning environment, suggesting the use of the games at the secondary level of teaching and learning a second language.

3. Research Procedures

3.1 Participants

The study adopted the quasi-experimental design. The researcher utilised the outstanding fifth-grade preparatory students at Almutafaweqeen High School for Boys, General Directorate of Education in Babylon Governorate, Iraq, who were enrolled for the academic year 2024-2025. The whole number of students chosen was 103. Fifty-two students were included in the control group and fifty-one students for the experimental group. The average age of the participants was around 17-18 years old.

3.2 Sampling Technique

The researcher selected randomly students by draw lots from the two sections. He picked a piece of paper marked with A and B. Those who picked A were served as experimental group and all those who got B served as control group. The control group was taught using the conventional method, and the experimental group utilized language games in improving the listening comprehension skills.

3.3 EFL Listening Comprehension Skills Test

The Listening Comprehension Skills Test (LCST) assesses the talented fifth-grade preparatory students ability to understand and interpret spoken language accurately. It measures listening comprehension, recall, and response.

It reveals students' ability to understand instructions, communicate effectively, and convey information accurately, making it an essential tool for identifying strong communication skills.

For the pre-test, the researcher created an eight-item multiple-choice listening comprehension skills test for the pre-testing (referred to as appendix A). The researcher also constructed an equivalent version for the post-test (see appendix B). The two tests were constructed in order to measure students' level in EFL listening comprehension skills before and after the treatment. They were prepared to correspond with the goals of students' EFL course in order to uncover and measure some listening comprehension skills, including making inferences, identifying the main idea, drawing conclusions, and finding evidence. In the two equivalent versions of the test, students were required to choose one correct answer out of four options.

3.3.1 The Validity and Reliability of the Test

The test's validity was verified through presenting it to a jury of TEFL experts to find out if it actually reflects the information and criteria it purports to measure. They were asked about the validity of the test content of EFL listening comprehension skills, the games' suitability to the objectives, and the order of the items. Their suggestions and comments were regarded in order to enhance and optimise the test before it was conducted and administered. The experts were agreed that the test was an authentic and valid in its final version.

The test's reliability was verified by employing the test-retest procedures, which showed a 0.90 correlation coefficient. The test was piloted in the second semester of the 2023 – 2024 school year. Modifications and improvements were made. The test lasted for 40 minutes, and the total mark was 8 marks: one mark for each item since they are equal in their importance, one mark for the correct answer and zero for the incorrect answer.

3.4 The Experimentation

The experiment aims to find out the level of EFL listening comprehension skills in two groups of students. The experiment started in the second semester of the 2023 – 2024 school year and extended 6 weeks (3 sessions per week). The experimental group (EG) was taught using language games, and the control group (CG) was taught by the way of audio recordings. After the intervention, both groups were posttested to measure and figure out their listening comprehension skills. The researcher reviewed and evaluated the pre-test and post-test versions. The CG and EG implemented the following procedures, which comprised three stages for each listening comprehension class:

1. Pre-Listening Phase:

- CG (Conventional Method):

- Students undertake a teacher-centred method, revising and memorising lists of words (vocabulary lists) and debating topic-related knowledge, whereas the instructor outlines listening objectives and asks predictive questions.

- EG (Language Games):

- To improve listening comprehension skills, students play and participate in word scrambling competitions, memory matching, and vocabulary games. Listening comprehension goals and requirements are covered using interactive storytelling or role-play warm-ups that highlight activating and engaging prior knowledge in a humorous context and playful manner.

- In this phase, the researcher utilised the (Story Around the Circle) game as follows:

Purpose: Activate prior knowledge and motivate the learners to listen to their classmates.

Setup: The learners sit in a circle. The researcher introduces a story with a single sentence.

Task: Each learner listens thoughtfully and supplies a sentence that logically completes and follows the story.

Focus: Imagination, creativeness, vocabulary use, and listening continuity.

Variation: Offer theme-related vocabulary before initiating the game.

Moreover, the researcher utilised the game (Omit the Obvious) as follows:

Purpose: Encourage and boost predictions and inferences.

Setup: The researcher sets forth an activity (e.g., cleaning teeth) but omits essential steps and words.

Task: The learners listen and figure out what is missing.

Focus: Listening for meaning and thinking strategically and critically.

2. While-Listening Phase:

- CG (Conventional Method):

- The learners listen to audio records and tracks and respond comprehension questions silently.

- The researcher breaks the audio recording for clarification, then continues.

- The main focus is on accuracy, with limited discussion among peers.

- EG (Language Games):

- Listening is blended with activities that involve games (game-based activities) like: Listen, Listen, Listen game and Drawing Task game.

- Listen, Listen, Listen game:

Purpose: Improve focus and detailed perception.

Setup: The researcher plays a short story or audio piece.

Task: As learners hear an allocated target word or expression, they clap or raise their hands.

Focus: Communicating effectively and identifying the main idea.

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<u>Variation:</u> Change the chosen (target) word periodically (each round), or turn it into a competition.
- The researcher also utilised the Drawing Task game as follows:
<u>Purpose:</u> Listening for detail and visualizing.
<u>Setup:</u> The researcher generates a set of oral directions for drawing (e.g., Draw a moon in the top right corner).
<u>Task:</u> learners listen to the directions and then draw what they've heard.
<u>Focus:</u> Listening accuracy and sequencing.

3. Post-Listening Phase:
   - CG (Conventional Method):
- In the traditional method, the CG students perform worksheets and answer subsequent enquiries while the researcher leads and directs the discussion with limited self-aware or imaginative interaction with content.
   - EG (Language Games):
- The researcher utilised games like "Simon Says" and "Step-by-Step Challenge" to help the learners elaborate and recall what they've heard. Using the audio games, the learners create memes, comic strips, and descriptions. Moreover, peer feedback and discussion in groups are included.
- Simon Says game:
<u>Purpose:</u> Enhance vocab (language, words, and terms) and command comprehension.
<u>Setup:</u> "Simon Says" format, with more complex EFL instructions (e.g., Simon says float like an astronaut, press imaginary buttons, and say "Mission complete").
<u>Task:</u> For learners to efficiently implement instructions and commands, they must listen carefully.
<u>Focus:</u> Understanding action expressions, verbs, and the structure of sentences.
- Step-by-Step Challenge game
<u>Purpose:</u> The recall and reproduction the information that is spoken.
<u>Setup:</u> The researcher presents and proposes a multistep task by audio or live instruction (e.g., stand up, walk to the board, turn right, take three steps forward, then look under the desk, what do you see?)
<u>Task:</u> The learners do and complete the each step (the actions) in the correct order and sequence.
<u>Challenge:</u> The researcher gradually increases the level of complexity, or create a group race (relay).

4. Results and Discussion

The researcher offers statistical analysis of gathered data. He also discusses and clarifies the results of applying statistical procedures for both CG and EG. The mean scores were used to compare pre-test and post-test results of the two research groups, with t-test results presented in the tables below.

4.1 Presentation of Results

4.1.1 The Results of the First Null Hypothesis:

The researcher tested the first null hypothesis that there is no significant difference at the (0.05) level between the mean scores of experimental group students who are taught listening comprehension using language games and the mean scores of control group students who are taught using the conventional method in the post-listening comprehension skills test. After correcting the test and analysing data, the mean, variance, and standard deviation were calculated.

The table (1) indicates that the students in the EG had higher post-test results, with a mean of 5.69, than the students in the CG, who had a mean of 4.02. Thus, the table reveals that there is a significant difference between the EG and CG's post-test scores as confirmed by the calculated t-value of 5.42, which is significantly greater than the tabulated t-value of 1.98 tested at the 0.05 level of significance in post-listening comprehension test scores, in favour of the EG. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. The results are presented in table (1). Moreover, the researcher used Eta-squared η^2 to calculate the effect size. The values of Eta-squared η^2 are:

- A value of (0.01- 0.05) means a small effect size.
- A value (0.06 – 0.14) means a medium effect size.
- A value of (0.14 -) means a large effect size.

The effect size of the independent variable (language games) on the dependent variable (listening comprehension skills) was 1.07. This is a very large effect size, confirming the strong influence of experience on the results.

Table (1): Analysis of t-test Results of the Two Research Groups in Their Listening Comprehension Post-test

Group	No	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-test Value		Degree of Freedom	Level of Sig. at 0.05
				Cal.	Tab		
EG	51	5.69	1.26	5.42	1.98	101	Statistically significant
CG	52	4.02	1.81				

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Table (1) demonstrates significant variations in listening comprehension test scores between the EG and CG, showing that the EG taught with language games outperformed the CG.

4.1.2 The Results of the Second Null Hypothesis:

The researcher tested the first null hypothesis that there is no significant difference at the (0.05) level between experimental group students' pre-post listening comprehension skills test mean scores.

The results in table (2) indicate a significant difference between the experimental group's mean scores on the pre-test (4.43) and post-test (5.69) in listening comprehension skills. The standard deviation decreased from 2.26 before the experiment to 1.26 after, indicating greater convergence in students' levels after using the language games. The calculated t-value (3.48) is significantly larger than the tabulated value (2.6) at a significance level of 0.00 with a degree of freedom (50) , confirming the statistical significance of the difference (indicating the superiority of the experimental group students after conducting the experiment and introducing the language games). Thus the second null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Table (2): Analysis of Mean Scores and T-values of the Experimental Group Students in their Listening Comprehension Pre-Post Tests

Group	No	Test	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-Test Value		Statistical Significance	Degree of Freedom	Level of Sig.
					Cal.	Tab.			
EG	51	Pre	4.43	2.26	3.48	2.6	0.00	50	Statistically significant
		Post	5.69	1.26					

The researcher used Cohen's (1988) equation to calculate the effect size (d), which resulted in a value of (0.69), a value that explains the effect size with a medium amount of the teaching variable, indicating a significant impact of teaching using the language games on developing listening comprehension skills. Cohen states that:

- A value of (0.2 – 0.4) means a small effect size.
- A value (0. 4 – 0.7) means a medium effect size.
- A value of (0.8 -) means a large effect size.

The table (3) explains that the use of language games had a significant and positive impact on improving the listening comprehension skills of the

experimental group members, with strong statistical significance and a very large effect size according to Cohen's *d*.

Table (3): The Effect Size of the Independent Variable (Language Games) on the Dependent Variable (Pre and Post Listening Comprehension Skills Tests) of the Experimental Group.

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Value of effect Size (*d*)	Effect Size
Language games	Listening comprehension skills	0.69	medium

4.1.3 The Results of the third Null Hypothesis:

The researcher verified the third null hypothesis that states there is no significant difference at the (0.05) level between control group students' pre-post listening comprehension skills test mean scores. The researcher applied the pre-post test to find out the value of improvement in the listening comprehension skills on the CG students. Using the t-test for two correlated samples, it was appeared that the mean scores of the CG students in the pre listening comprehension test was (3.92) with a standard deviation (2.31), while the mean scores of the CG students in the post listening comprehension was (4.02) with a standard deviation (1.81). The Cal. t-value (0.64) was smaller than the Tab. t-value (3.50) with freedom degree (51), which indicates that there is no statistically significant difference between the means of the two tests in the CG. This reveals that there is no improvement in the listening comprehension skills of the CG students who are taught by the traditional way. Thus, the third null hypothesis is accepted and the alternative hypothesis is rejected. The table (4) shows this:

Table (4): Analysis of Mean Scores and T-values of the Control Group Students in their Listening Comprehension Pre-Post Tests

Group	No	Test	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-Test Value		Statistical Significance	Degree of Freedom	Level of Sig.
					Cal.	Tab.			
CG	52	Pre	3.92	2.31	0.64	3.50	0.00	51	Not significant
		Post	4.02	1.81					

The researcher used Cohen's (1988) equation to calculate the effect size (d). The amount of the effect size (d) was (0.09), indicating a value that explains the effect size with small amount of the variable of teaching in the traditional way on the variable of listening comprehension. The table (5) shows this:

Table (5): The Effect Size of the Independent Variable (Language Games) on the Dependent Variable (Pre and Post Listening Comprehension Skills Tests) of the Control Group.

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Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Value of effect Size (*d*)	Effect Size
Traditional way	Listening comprehension skills	0.09	Small

4.2 Discussion of Results

The statistical analysis presented earlier, resulted in verifying all the hypotheses of the study. It also achieved the main aim of this study, which was to develop the listening comprehension skills for the 5th preparatory stage school students through the implementation of the language games.

The EG students feel satisfied when using these games, which they improve their attitudes towards learning with language games. Moreover, during the implementation of the study, it is realized that the students seek to find an alternative learning methods to use them instead of the rigid learning methods which are boring. The researcher also attributes this result to the fact that the students always try to stay away from learning by traditional methods that make them feel bored and reduce their learning motivation. This result is supported by Valipour & Aidinlou (2014) and Syafii et al. (2020) who state that one of the best methods of teaching listening skills to the learners is getting help from language games.

It was noted from comparing the mean scores of the EG and the CG that the progress accomplished by the EG in the necessary listening comprehension skills was higher than the CG students on the post administration of the listening comprehension test. This progress could be attributed to many factors among which were the following:

1. *Continuous Training:*

   Continuous training and learning play a crucial role in improving listening comprehension skills. By continuing to train, learn new methods, and improve the necessary skills, the students in the EG enhanced their ability to listen effectively.

2. *Good Eye Contact by Learners:*

   Maintaining good eye contact with the speaker, while avoiding staring, helps demonstrate interest and attention, which enhances listening effectiveness.

3. *Reframing and Providing Feedback:*

Using strategies such as rephrasing and providing timely feedback enhances the EG students' understanding of information and helps them remember it better.

4. *Ask Clarifying Questions:*

Asking questions that help clarify vague or unclear points enhances the learners' understanding of information and gives them the opportunity to delve deeper into the topic.

5. *Attention to Detail:*

Paying attention to small details in a conversation, such as tone of voice and nonverbal cues, can help the learner understand the message more deeply.

6. *Avoid Distractions:*

Avoiding distractions while listening, such as talking with a colleague or thinking about other things, helps the learner focus on the speaker and better understand what he is saying.

7. *Active Listening:*

Active listening involves engaging in the listening process by asking questions, summarising information, and providing feedback, which enhances the learners' understanding and consolidates the information in their mind.

8. *Awareness of Biases:*

Awareness of personal biases that may affect listening, and trying to avoid them, helps the learner understand the speaker's point of view more objectively.

9. *Listening to a Variety of Sources:*

Listening to a variety of sources, such as talks, lectures, and podcasts, helps develop listening comprehension skills in different contexts.

10. *Setting Goals:*

Setting clear listening goals, such as understanding the main idea or gathering specific information, helps guide the listening process and makes it more focused and effective.

11. *Increased Motivation and Interest:*

Language games make the learning process more fun and engaging, increasing learners' motivation and interest in developing their language skills.

12. *Promoting Active Participation:*

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Language games encourage active participation and interaction among learners, helping them acquire language effectively.

13. Providing a Safe Environment:

Language games provide a safe and informal learning environment where learners can make mistakes without fear of being judged.

14. Providing Immediate Feedback:

Language games provide immediate feedback on performance, helping learners identify their strengths and weaknesses.

15. Improving Memory:

Language games require learners to remember information and instructions, enhancing their ability to retain information.

16. Developing Self-Confidence:

When learners feel successful in practising language games, it enhances their self-confidence and ability to use language.

In short, several factors combine to develop listening comprehension skills, including training, awareness of biases, focusing on details, asking questions, providing a safe environment, and providing immediate feedback. By practising these factors, EG students have developed their ability to listen effectively and achieve significant benefits in various aspects of their learning process.

4.3 Conclusions:

The researcher's findings have led to the following conclusions:

1- Enhancing listening comprehension is crucial for mastering English and becoming a confident communicator. Utilizing language games can help improve listening comprehension skills. Moreover, these games not only improve listening comprehension, but they also foster and encourage motivation, collaborative work, and confidence in how to speak English.

2- In addition to fostering creativity, problem-solving skills, and teamwork, games-based learning also create low-stakes settings that lower anxiety and promote taking risks during learning.

3- Language games can improve focus and attentiveness, as students must listen carefully to execute the correct action. They can incorporate movement, reinforcing auditory comprehension through kinesthetic learning.

4- Using language games in the learning of the English language, gives students an interactive learning opportunity that helps them comprehend instructions, follow discussions, and absorb information– all of which improve listening comprehension skills.

5- Based on its characteristics, language games can help students develop their imagination in listening process, where not only how they convey it in the form of auditory activities, but students are also free to explore expressions and listening comprehension skills in their way so that the information conveyed or heard is more realistic with the condition of the students.

6- Language games can encourage interpretative listening, as students must understand verbal descriptions and translate them into drawings. They can support multimodal learning, combining auditory and visual elements for deeper understanding.

7- Language games help shy learners by generating a positive, social environment where errors are not highlighted, allowing them to express themselves freely, and increasing their confidence and learning.

8- Language games that incorporate entertainment, competitiveness, and rewards can increase intrinsic interest and motivation, which subsequently leads students to focus on English learning and improve listening comprehension skills.

9- Language games can help educators to create fun learning materials to arouse learners' interest and motivation as well as to suit their proficiency level and learning styles. It definitely makes learning easier and more relatable for learners.

4.4 Recommendations:

Based on the aforementioned findings and conclusions, the researcher recommends the following:

1- Language games should be accessible and meaningful to learners, linking to the textbook activities or personal experiences. Careful listening and observation are essential for directing and facilitating learning for all learners.

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2- Creating a well-structured classroom environment based on language games where challenging questions are encouraged and learners' ideas respected, fostering curiosity and allowing for a better understanding of their perspectives, thereby fostering a more inclusive learning environment.

3- Listening-based games ought to have established and concise aims, helping EFL Iraqi learners to choose their areas of interest and encouraging them to achieve their goals.

4- Designing suitable language games to teach other language communication skills in the curriculum of preparatory stage.

5- Providing extracurricular activities that allow learners to learn and play in order to expand their vocabulary.

6- Training preparatory school teachers on how to use language games to develop and improve language skills.

4.5 Suggestions:

In light of the findings of this study, the researcher saw the possibility of carrying out some studies, so that these proposed studies address the following topics:

1- The effectiveness of digital games on developing the writing skills of middle school students.

2- The role of interactive games on improving academic writing skills among university students.

3- The effect of dialogue games on developing speaking skills among high school students.

4- The effectiveness of group games on enhancing oral communication skills among middle school students.

5- The effect of language games on improving reading comprehension skills among middle school students.

6- The effectiveness of language games on developing prediction and inference skills during reading among high school students.

7- Conducting experimental studies to compare language games with other teaching styles and strategies for learners.

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Appendix (A) : Listening Comprehension Skills Pre-Test
Name: …………………………………………….. .
Class: …………………………………………….. .
Date: …………………………………………….. .
Listen carefully to the passage and then answer the questions by choosing a, b, c, or d.
1- The main idea of the passage is ……………….. .
    a. Gym is the only effective way to stay fit.
    b. A journey from gym workouts to walking and self-care.
    c. The need of joining a gym to lose weight.
    d. Gym helps improve mental health.
2- What does Sally think about joining a gym?
    a. It helps to lose weight.
    b. It doesn't provide enough variety for her.
    c. It's a waste of money.
    d. It motivates her to exercise.

3- Why did Sally likely stick with walking instead of returning to football or jogging?

    a. Her friends enjoyed jogging more than walking.

    b. Her office encouraged walking groups.

    c. She had a free time.

    d. Walking was cost-effective and consistent.

4- What can be concluded about Sally's attitude toward exercise now?

    a. She regrets ever starting her fitness journey.

    b. She has found a balance between fitness and social benefits.

    c. She is a competitive with fitness.

    d. She prefers social interaction and hates solo workouts.

5- Which detail supports the idea that Sally became more socially engaged?

    a. She used gym equipment and the pool but got bored.

    b. She sold her car to walk more.

    c. She met others for swimming and jogging.

    d. She disliked walking at first due to the weather.

6- What does Sally reveal about her college days?

    a. She was focused mostly on academics and work.

    b. She disliked sports.

    c. Fitness came through casual activities.

    d. She was part of a competitive football team.

7- What does Sally's decision to sell her car imply?

    a. She had access to public transportation.

    b. She wanted to maintain her walking habit.

    c. She preferred driving but couldn't afford repairs.

    d. She planned to invest in a bicycle instead.

8- How has Sally's fitness journey evolved over time?

    a. From isolation to social interaction through fitness.

    b. From competitive sports to professional training.

    c. From organized team sports to becoming a coach.

    d. From gym routines to abandoning exercise.

Appendix (B) : Listening Comprehension Skills Post-Test

Name: ………………………………………….. .

Class: ………………………………………….. .

Date: ………………………………………….. .

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Listen carefully to the passage and then answer the questions by choosing a, b, c, or d.

1- The main idea of the passage is ……………….. .

    a. A description of Sarah's work responsibilities.

    b. A series of unrelated events from Sarah's life.

    c. A chronological overview of Sarah's daily activities.

    d. A detailed explanation of Sarah's weekend routine.

2- Why does Sarah prefer comfortable clothes?

    a. She values ease and relaxation throughout her day.

    b. Her commute involves walking long distances.

    c. Her career requires physical labor.

    d. She is sensitive to the temperature.

3- What can be concluded about Sarah's mornings?

    a. She starts work before eating breakfast.

    b. She always skips breakfast due to lack of time.

    c. She walks to work immediately after waking up.

    d. Her routine includes both household chores and self-care.

4- Which detail supports the idea that Sarah stays organized?

    a. She reads story before bed.

    b. She talks to her sister in the evening.

    c. She relaxes on sofa after work.

    d. She tidies up her room after breakfast.

5- What does the phrase "pretty much my daily routine" suggest?

    a. The routine is disorganized.

    b. She follows this schedule every day,

    c. Her day varies widely depending on the weather.

    d. Some minor activities may change from time to time.

6- How does Sarah's commute affect her schedule?

    a. It allows time to read during transit.

    b. It shortens her working hours.

    c. It defines when she arrives at work.

    d. It determines what she wears.

7- What evidence shows that Sarah values social interaction?

a. She prefers taking bus over walking.

b. She brushes her teeth once a day.

c. She chats with her friends during lunch.

d. She wears makeup every morning.

8- Which activity marks the transition to her evening routine?

a. Chatting with her friends.

b. Taking the bus.

c. Leaving the coffee.

d. Cooking dinner.